FLORIDA BUILDINGS I LOVE



Dwight James Baum's Sarasota County Courthouse. The Mediterranean-influenced building, among the most attractive courthouses in the state, if not the nation, opened in 1927, just six years after Sarasota County broke away from Manatee County. HAROLD BUBIL PHOTOS/SARASOTA HERALD-TRIBUNE

Sarasota County Courthouse, 1927, Sarasota

Harold Bubil Real Estate Editor Emeritus Sarasota Herald-Tribune | USA TODAY NETWORK

A rush of development in the 1920s put Sarasota on the map for northerners looking to get rich quick in Florida real estate.

One of their own, New York society architect Dwight James Baum put the young city on the architectural map, too.

Baum, then in his late 30s, came to Sarasota to design a mansion for John and Mable Ringling. We know it as Ca'd'Zan ("Florida Buildings I Love," No. 3,

While he was here, Baum also designed nearly a dozen notable struc-

tures — houses for professional people, apartment and office buildings, and the Sarasota County Courthouse.

The Mediterranean- influenced building, among the most attractive courthouses in the state, if not the nation, opened in 1927, just six years after Sarasota County broke away from Manatee County.

A renovation in 1999 and a recent clean-up have the structure, with its distinctive tower in the courtyard between two wings, fulfilling its status as a Sarasota landmark.

Baum used terra cotta accents and

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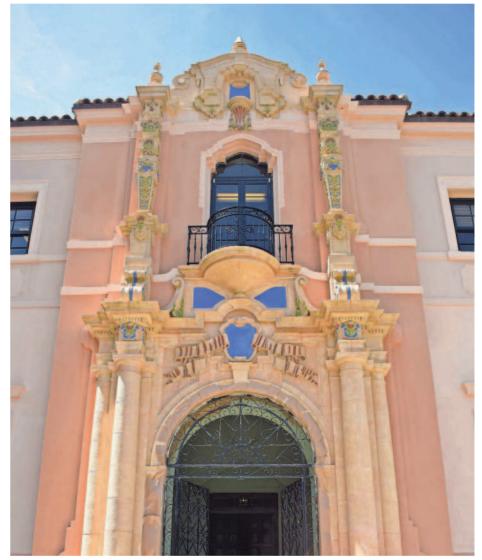
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Restoration work has brought out the original, brighter colors and details of the 1927 Sarasota County Courthouse.

Sales

Continued from Page 1I

Where have home prices dropped the most in the US?

Home prices in the Northeast and the West were down both month-overmonth and year-over-year. Meanwhile, new home sales in the South and the Midwest were on an upward trajectory. New single-family homes sold in the Northeast dropped 59% compared to March of this year and 47% compared to April of last year. In the West, sales of new homes were down 9% compared to March of this year and down by 3% compared to April of last year.

Homes sold in the Midwest, meanwhile, increased 12% compared to March of this year and were up 21% compared to April of last year. In the South, new home sales were up 18% in April compared to March of this year and up 23% compared to April of last year.

Rate

Continued from Page 11

est rates influence rates on home loans.

The Fed has raised its benchmark interest rate 10 times in 14 months in a bid to lower stubbornly high inflation. Fed Chair Jerome Powell and other central bank officials have recently signaled that the Fed may forego another interest rate hike at this month's meeting of policymakers. Such a move would give the Fed time to evaluate the economic impact of its previous rate increases.

Still, a pause now doesn't mean the Fed couldn't resume hiking later this year. And other Fed officials continue to express support for more hikes, given

inflation remains elevated. The consumer price index, which tracks inflation at the consumer level, rose 4.9% in April from 12 months earlier.

April from 12 months earlier.

The U.S. housing market has been slow to regain its footing this year, with elevated mortgage rates and a thin inventory of homes on the market working to limit sales. As a result, home purchase loans were down 44.3% in the first quarter compared to the same period last year, according to an analysis released Thursday by real estate data

The higher rates have sharply reduced demand for mortgage refinancing loans, which slumped 72.5% in the first quarter from a year earlier, Attom

Courthouse

Continued from Page 21

cast-stone classical architectural elements to give the building its stately appearance. Barrel tiles on the roof were imported from Spain. Wrought-iron details were done by the noted metal artist Samuel Yellin, whose work also is seen at Bok Singing Tower ("Florida Buildings I Love," No. 60).

The building, constructed by Stevenson & Cameron, once had a handsome landscape and façade facing Ringling Boulevard, but additions in 1955 and 1965 obliterated or obscured them.

Baum could be considered Sarasota's first "star" architect. He attained "wide recognition as a master of the suburban country house" in Fieldston, The Bronx, and other northern suburbs of New York City, writes Ronald McCarty, keeper of Ca' d'Zan, in his introduction for the 2008 revision of the 1927 monograph "The Work of Dwight James Baum" (edited by William Morrison, Acanthus Press, 232 pages, \$69).

Baum also did a number of homes in the Tampa suburb of Temple Terrace.

At a time when Sarasota was booming, Baum's arrival from New York helped raise its architectural profile, McCarty said in a 2008 interview. "He was their most prominent of the architects of the 1920s.

"Baum received the gold medal from the architectural league of New York, and that put him into a national standing. That's one of the major reasons John Ringling hired him" for the Ca' d'Zan project.

Baum, born in 1886 in Little Falls, New York, had an architectural degree from Syracuse and was right at home with the Fieldston's self-made executives. His work also appealed to the very rich. as illustrated by John and Mable Ringling's decision, 15 years earlier, to set aside Thomas Reed Martin's concept for their bayfront palace and instead let Baum design Ca' d'Zan.

While Martin designed many more structures in Sarasota than did Baum, the New Yorker made his mark with the big jobs — the Sarasota County Courthouse, the El Vernona Hotel (later the John Ringling Hotel) and the Broadway Apartments (still standing as the Belle Haven office building near the Hyatt Regency Sarasota). They were the landmarks of the 1920s real estate boom.



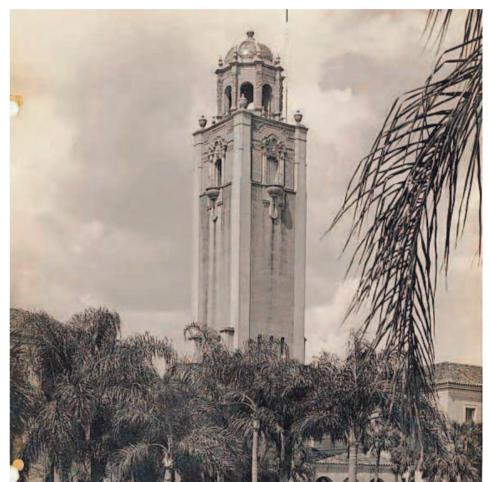
A fountain at the base of the courtyard tower at the Sarasota County Courthouse. HAROLD BUBIL/ SARASOTA HERALD-TRIBUNE

Baum's Sarasota houses: Ca' d'Zan; Kennedy home, Oak Street; Schueler House, South Washington Drive, St. Armands; Edwards House, Flamingo Avenue, Siesta Key. His public buildings in Sarasota: Sarasota County Courthouse, Main Street; Sarasota Times building, First Street; Broadway Apartments/ Belle Haven, Fourth Street; Pineapple Apartments/Herald Square building, Orange Avenue at Pineapple; real estate office/Karl Bickel house, North Trail (demolished); El Vernona/John Ringling Hotel, North Trail (demolished).

After just 25 years in architecture, Baum died of a heart attack on a New York City sidewalk on Dec. 13, 1939, while rushing to catch a bus home to Fieldston, where he designed 90 of the 250 architecturally distinctive houses. He also did about 60 houses in nearby Riverdale.

"Florida Buildings I Love" is Harold Bubil's homage to the Sunshine State's built environment. This article originally ran on Feb. 10, 2018.

A photograph of the Sarasota County Courthouse, circa 1940. COURTESY OF SARASOTA COUNTY HISTORICAL RESOURCES



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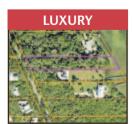
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