

## NORTH PARK DRYDEN HISTORICAL DISTRICT

### Supplemental Statement of Significance: Criterion A

The City of San Diego Guidelines for Preparing a Historic District Nomination in Consultation with Staff dated July 14, 2008 require a proposed district to meet one or more of the following criteria to be eligible for designation:

- A. Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's, a community's or a neighborhood's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development.
- B. Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history.
- C. Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period or method of construction or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship.
- D. Is representative of the notable work of a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist or craftsman.
- E. Is listed or has been determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or is listed or has been determined eligible by the California State Office of Historic Preservation for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources.

The May 2007 application for the North Park Dryden Historical District briefly described the historical importance of the proposed District in terms of HRB criteria B (historic persons), C (architecture), and D (work of a master). This Supplemental Statement of Significance documents qualifications of the proposed District under **Criterion A** (special elements), based on the detailed discussion presented in the Supplemental Boundary Justification that follows this section. In this Supplemental Statement of Significance, the focus is on how the proposed District exemplifies special elements of North Park's historical, social, economic and architectural development. These issues are discussed below, but are perhaps best summarized by Don Covington's words in the bronze plaque at the "Portal" at 28<sup>th</sup> and Upas Streets, shown at right.



## **Historical Development**

As described in the Supplemental Boundary Justification, this neighborhood is associated with some of the earliest subdivision mapping of San Diego, being part of the Park Villas and West End tracts (mapped in 1870 and 1872, respectively). These tracts were formed as the pueblo lands were purchased by the city's founding political and entrepreneurial figures, a development process that created New Town and Horton's Addition. The pattern of blocks and lots laid out in Park Villas set the grid for many other tracts in what would become North Park, with the notable exception of neighboring West End, which instead followed the pattern of Horton's Addition. The Park Villas pattern of 60-foot wide streets and 50-foot by 125-foot lots clashed with the West End configuration of 80-foot wide streets and 50-foot by 100-foot lots at 28<sup>th</sup> Street, where the two tracts met. Also, there were two additional east-west streets in the West End tract (now Gunn and Capps). The resulting dog leg intersections created more corners and view angles than a consistent grid pattern would have, a fact that would have architectural significance nearly 40 years later, when economics and infrastructure finally allowed the urban development that was envisioned in the 1870s. The complex history of the Park Villas tract involved some of San Diego's most colorful and active real estate developers and land investment companies, including Joseph Nash and the founders of the College Hill Land Association.

The neighborhood is also intertwined with the history of City (Balboa) Park. The park is the development boundary for the neighborhood's southern edge, and constrained the construction of transportation facilities, delaying residential development until the early 1900s. Because of the delay, the predominant architectural styles of the proposed District are Arts and Crafts, Mission Revival/Spanish Revival and California Bungalow. The Mediterranean stucco homes in the proposed District were strongly influenced by the buildings constructed for the 1915-1916 Panama-California International Exposition in Balboa Park. The park held views and was an attraction that became compelling selling points for the lots. Also, one of the few roads that threaded through early City Park was the roadway that became Pershing Drive, and it led directly to the northeast corner of the park at the future intersection of Upas and 28<sup>th</sup> streets.

## **Social and Economic Development**

Once North Park began to grow with a sustainable water supply and the advent of public transportation through the "electric roads" along University Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Street, the proposed District drew some of the most prominent designer-builders of the early 1900s with its unique building sites. As documented in the Supplemental Boundary Justification, 28<sup>th</sup> Street and Pershing Avenue (then Oregon) were extremely attractive because they were at the top of the mesa and had view lots to Balboa Park and the City's newest attraction, the Exposition, and the lots at multiple dog-leg intersections offered unique views of the builder's handiwork. The area was also well connected to downtown by multiple transportation facilities: two trolley lines (University Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Street), and Pershing Drive, which was one of the few automobile roads through Balboa Park.

The 1912 “Barnson for Bargains” ad included in the Supplemental Boundary Justification illustrates the desirability of the area:

“Panoramic view of all creation to the horizon at every point of the compass. Unobstructable view of the mountains to Mexico, Point Loma, Coronado Islands and down over the big park to the EXPOSITION grounds. Considering the magnificent view, unequalled car facilities, proximity to what is very soon to be most unique play grounds and wonderful International Botanical Gardens in the world, and its nearness – 20 minutes by car, or 10 minutes through park to the business district. This section is sure to become the favorite residence district of the city and will undergo a most wonderful change in the next twelve months.”

Among the builders who bought lots and constructed houses to sell or built homes for buyers were David Owen Dryden, Alexander Schreiber, Ralph Hurlburt and Charles Tifal, and Melhorn Construction Company, all of whom are on the HRB List of Established Masters (November 2008). In particular, Dryden set a standard for high quality homes in the neighborhood, building 20 homes, 16 of them 2-story (and altering 2 homes built by others) in this six-block area, representing the highest concentration and approximately 40 percent of his homes in San Diego. The attraction of the neighborhood for Dryden is discussed in detail in the Supplemental Boundary Justification. One of the unique aspects was the high number of corner lots created by the mismatched street grids along 28<sup>th</sup> Street between the Park Villas and West End tracts. In addition, the neighborhood was favored by Edward F. Bryans (for whom justification as a Master Builder is presented in this supplemental application), who built 15 homes in the proposed District.

The residents attracted to the neighborhood included some of North Park’s most prominent business people. Emil Klicka lived at 3506 28<sup>th</sup> Street and later at 3404 Pershing Avenue. His brother George Klicka lived at 3543 Pershing Avenue. John Held lived at 3562 Pershing Avenue, Charles Small lived at 3527 Pershing Avenue, and Dudley D. Williams lived at 3594 28<sup>th</sup> Street. The importance of these San Diego businessmen to the development of North Park and the city in general is discussed in the Supplemental Boundary Justification.

Thus, the neighborhood was desirable for real estate speculators selling lots, designer-builders selling houses, and residents eager for a high-quality home with a view. This is the engine that fueled residential and subsequently commercial growth in North Park, creating a second downtown that nearly became an independent city. As Emil Klicka, one of North Park’s most prominent historical figures, said in June 1928: “. . . Balboa Park, as you know, separates this business section from the downtown districts, and only recently a banker from San Francisco called my attention to this fact . . . As to North Park, I believe that within a few years we are going to have a city of our own in this district” (Covington 2007, page 135). The September 29, 1930 issue of the *San Diego Daily Transcript* noted that 2,000 residents of the North Park District petitioned the City Council for an adjunct city hall in the 30<sup>th</sup> and University neighborhood. However, the

City Manager reported that a branch city hall would cost approximately \$345 a month to maintain, and later concluded there was no need for branch city halls in San Diego (Covington 2007, page 183).



Although it did not achieve independence, North Park did become a destination shopping area in the 1940s and 1950s that rivaled San Diego’s downtown, until the 1960s when regional shopping malls initiated decades of downturn. Even now, as the circle turns and North Park undergoes a social and economic renaissance, this neighborhood is clearly special. It is the site of the “Portal” constructed by the City that closed 28<sup>th</sup> Street at Upas Street to through traffic, and is adjacent to Bird Park, an enhanced part of Balboa

Park’s northeast corner that is a community gathering place of picnics, summer concerts, and year-round play.

### Architectural Development

The predominant architectural styles within the proposed District are Arts and Crafts, Mission Revival/Spanish Revival and California Bungalow. The styles identified in historical surveys of North Park are compiled and compared in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Architectural Styles Identified in Historical Surveys of North Park**

	<b>DRYDEN DISTRICT*</b>		<b>GREATER NORTH PARK**</b>
<b>Style</b>	<b>Number of Buildings</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Buildings</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Buildings</b>
Craftsman	46	34	2
California Bungalow	53	40	36
Spanish Colonial Revival	13	10	13
Mission Revival	7	5	12
Mediterranean	1	1	
Italian Renaissance	1	1	
Prairie	2	1	
Colonial Revival	1	1	3
California Ranch	3	2	16
Not Classified/Other	7	5	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>100</b>	

\*Source: North Park Dryden District Application DPR forms (2007)

\*\*Source: Gensler Survey (2003 Draft)

**Arts and Crafts:** Approximately one-third of the homes in the proposed District were built in the Craftsman style. Dating from the earliest period of District development, generally prior to 1922, these homes are distributed throughout the District. For comparison, only about 2% of the buildings in Greater North Park date from the Arts and Crafts period based on a draft survey conducted in 2002-2003.

Most of the 22 homes in the proposed District built or modified by Master Builder David Owen Dryden are Craftsman Style, including three of his historically designated houses on 28<sup>th</sup> Street: the John Kenney House at 3571 28<sup>th</sup> Street (#428); the Theresa J. Kline House at 3505 28<sup>th</sup> Street (#452); and the John Carman Thurston House at 3446 28<sup>th</sup> Street (#456). In addition, Master Arts and Crafts Builder Alexander Schreiber built a home at 3432 Pershing Avenue, identified as a Colonial Revival style structure.



*3432 Pershing Avenue*

**Mission Revival/Spanish Revival:** Based on the Southern California regional style popularized at the 1915 Exposition held in adjacent Balboa Park, slightly more than 15% of the homes in the proposed District are in Spanish eclectic styles. In the larger North Park community about 25% of buildings are Spanish /Mission Revival style.

The team of Master Architect Ralph Hurlburt and Master Builder Charles Tifal built two homes in the proposed District: an outstanding Spanish Colonial Revival house at 3404 Pershing Avenue and an adjacent Mission Revival home at 2628 Upas Street. Both homes are oriented toward Balboa Park, located across Upas Street. The historically designated James Blaine Draper Spec. House #1 at 3563 28<sup>th</sup> Street (#835) is built in a similar Italian Renaissance style. Master Builder Melhorne Construction Co. built a Mediterranean style home at 3529 28<sup>th</sup> Street.



*3563 28<sup>th</sup> Street*

**California Bungalow:** Approximately 40% of the homes in the proposed District are classified as California Bungalows. In Greater North Park, about one-third of all structures are California Bungalows. California bungalows primarily were built in the 1920s and 1930s. These homes have much in common with Craftsman homes: low-pitched roofs with significant overhang eaves, front porches and large windows.

When compared with Craftsman homes, California Bungalows have simpler details, often have enclosed eaves and can have stucco siding, although many have wood or shingle siding. A recently designated home built by Dryden at 3503 Pershing Avenue (#839) was identified as a California Bungalow. It is a single story home and, although it retains

many Dryden details, it has a relatively simple structure when compared with the other designated Dryden houses.

Because most of the homes in the proposed District were built in the relatively short time frame from 1910 to 1926, the neighborhood is cohesive and notable in its integrity. Many of the homes in the proposed District exemplify the distinctive characteristics of these styles with high-quality, well-preserved details. Because only two post-war homes were built and because significant modifications have been made to relatively few homes, the neighborhood retains the character from the beginning of the Second World War.

***Architects and Designer-Builders:*** The Supplemental Boundary Justification discusses how the demand for suburban housing in the early 1900s was filled by building companies and independent craftsmen who contracted out their services. As shown in Table 2, the architect or designer-builder is known for more than 80% of the homes in the proposed District. A master-architect or master-builder as identified in the HRB November 2008 list is associated with 26 homes in the District. David Owen Dryden designed 20 and designed alterations to two additional homes. Master-builders Alexander Schreiber and the Melhorn Construction Company were each associated with one home; the team of master-architect Ralph Hurlburt and master-builder Charles Tifal designed and build two adjacent homes across from Balboa Park at the southern boundary of the proposed District. In addition, Edward F. Bryans, who is nominated as a Master Builder in this Supplemental Application, built 15 homes in the proposed District. Table 2 lists architects and designer-builders in alphabetical order, and provides the resource numbers of the homes as identified in the May 2007 application.

**Table 2**  
**Architects and Designer-Builders**  
**of Houses in the Proposed North Park Dryden Historical District**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Resource Number in 2007 Application</b>
Atlas Building Co./M.A. Dunne	117
Augustus (Agustus) H. Blaisdell (5 houses)	18, 23, 56, 79, 116
Edward F. Bryans (15 houses) (nominated for Master Builder)	3, 9, 11, 12, 13, 21, 26, 43, 52, 53, 57, 74, 80, 121, 126
Earle Chaddick	63
John A Chisholm	37
Lewis S. Class	29
Charles W. Clendinning (2 houses)	92, 118
Gordon Cloes	16
G.S. Coding	120
Walter C. Cole (2 houses)	112, 113
Lance V. Consaul (2 houses)	72 (with Theodore Lohman), 125
John F. Cordrey	122
James Blaine Draper (5 houses)	81, 87, 88 (altered by Dryden), 89, 109
* David Dryden (20 + 2 altered) (Master Builder)	35, 41, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50, 67, 71, 73, 76, 77, 78, 85, 88 (altered, originally built by Draper), 93, 96, 103, 108, 110, 127 (altered, originally built by Lassiter), 129
Frank Garside	31
William Gibb	66
John N.D. Griffith (3 houses)	40, 54, 55
Eugene C. Harrington	68
Charles E. Harris (Maude)	100
Edgar Hastings	32
George Hauser	107
Weston M. Hicks (2 houses)	101, 102
* Ralph Hurlburt (2 houses) (Master Architect)	1, 124 (both houses with builder Charles Tifal)
C. Roy Job	60
Ingemore M. Johnson	115
William B. Johnson	30
J.C. Kelley (2 houses)	83, 94
Thomas J. Lassiter (3 houses)	65, 127 (altered by Dryden), 128
A.C. Leich	123
James G. Lennon	99
Theodore Lohman (2 houses)	72 (with Lance V. Consaul), 114
Harry A. Malcolm (4 houses)	58, 86, 91, 119
* Melhorn Constr. Co. (Master Builder)	106
Frank A. Morgan	28
John B. Moss	36

<b>Name</b>	<b>Resource Number in 2007 Application</b>
Edward W. Newman	105
Soren Nielsen	90
John Pearson	104
Quality Building Co./Security Co. (2 houses)	6, 7
A.H. Riddell	34
John A. Robinson (2 houses)	59, 61
Karl Sachs (2 houses)	4, 38
Tom Schalinski	19
* Alexander Schreiber (Master Builder)	5
John Smith	39
Columbus F. Stephens	2
* Charles Tifal (2 houses) (Master Builder)	1, 124 (both homes with designer Ralph Hurlburt)
M. Tripte & Son	62
Walker & Hazen	10
Charles M. Williams	15
Woolsey Brothers Contractors	27
Not Attributed	8, 12, 17, 20, 22, 24, 25, 33, 45, 47, 49, 51, 64, 69, 70, 75, 82, 84, 95, 97, 98, 111, 130-134.

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\* On City of San Diego HRB List of Masters (November 2008)