

**NORTH PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
JUNE 2015 MEETING NOTES**

DATE: JUNE 18, 2015

TIME: 6:30 PM

The first part of this meeting was a Business Meeting of the North Park Historical Society (NPHS) Board of Directors, and the second part was the activities discussion for the organization. These notes include updates as of June 28, 2015.

The next meeting will be **THURSDAY** July 16, 2015 at 6:30 pm in a second floor meeting room at Grace Lutheran Church, 3967 Park Boulevard.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The following members of the NPHS Board of Directors were present:

Katherine Hon	Hilda Yoder
Steve Hon	Paul Spears
Michael Thornhill	George Franck
Sharon Turner	Robert Bauer
Randy Sappenfield	

The following members of the NPHS Board of Directors were absent:

Bill Vivian	Jody Surowiec
Louise Russell	

Members Claudia, Turner, and visitor (now member) Sue joined us. Welcome!

2. AGENDA REVIEW AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Steve announced that Louise has resigned from the Board due to other commitments. We wish her well. We now have 11 Board members. As we have a maximum of 15, there is room for another active member or two to join the Board if they would like. Katherine will send out an invitation to our distribution list.

Also, George would like to step back from being Vice-President, but will stay on the Board. The main duty of the Vice-President is to perform the duties of the President (most likely running a meeting) in case of the President's absence. After we ascertain if there are any new Board members, we will poll the Board to see who might like to step into that role.

Steve announced he gave his presentation of our grant request to the County. He also noted that La Playa Heritage is considering doing an Arcadia book on the history of Point Loma, and they asked him about the experience of NPHS. **Update:** Steve met with the organization's representative, and shared our initial proposal and photo rights form with them. We wish them luck and look forward to their book.

3. MINUTES ACCEPTANCE

The minutes from the May 21, 2015 NPHS meeting have been posted on the website.

BUSINESS PORTION OF MEETING

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

The financials were sent to the Board in advance of the meeting. In the period from May 20 to June 13, 2015, the following numbers of original North Park history books were sold: 6 to Paras Newsstand and 1 to Amazon, and 1 Burlingame book to Amazon. One NPHS member renewed. The car show action continues with one more entry and five \$100 sponsors. The total income in this time period was \$627. Expenses of approximately \$572 included portapotties for the Car Show, and two years of website hosting on GoDaddy.

ACTIVITIES PORTION OF MEETING

5. CAR SHOW PLANNING

Vince is working on the poster, and we are eager to see what car he picked for this year. If you know someone with a cool car, please tell them about the Car Show on September 12 and send them the registration flyer (ask Katherine at info@northparkhistory.org if you would like a paper or electronic copy).

6. OLD HOUSE FAIR

Update: NPHS had a fine day at the Old House Fair in South Park on June 20. Thank you to everyone who joined Steve and Katherine in the NPHS booth throughout the day, including Sharon, Michael, Randy, Jody, Claudia, Turner, Hilda, and Bob. The water tower donation "can" inspired \$7 in cash donations. We sold four Arcadia books, and one member renewed. If you doubt that the water tower is inspirational, see the photo below of a painting being sold by an artist at the event.



Michael and Steve are ready for visitors to the booth.



Water Tower art for sale!

7. WATER TOWER RELATED ACTIVITIES

By August we hope to hear if our application for a County grant has been approved. The grant would enable NPHS to hire the very experienced public art consultant Gail Goldman to help us initiate planning for an educational public art installation at the Water Tower. We are also awaiting the results of a condition assessment report.

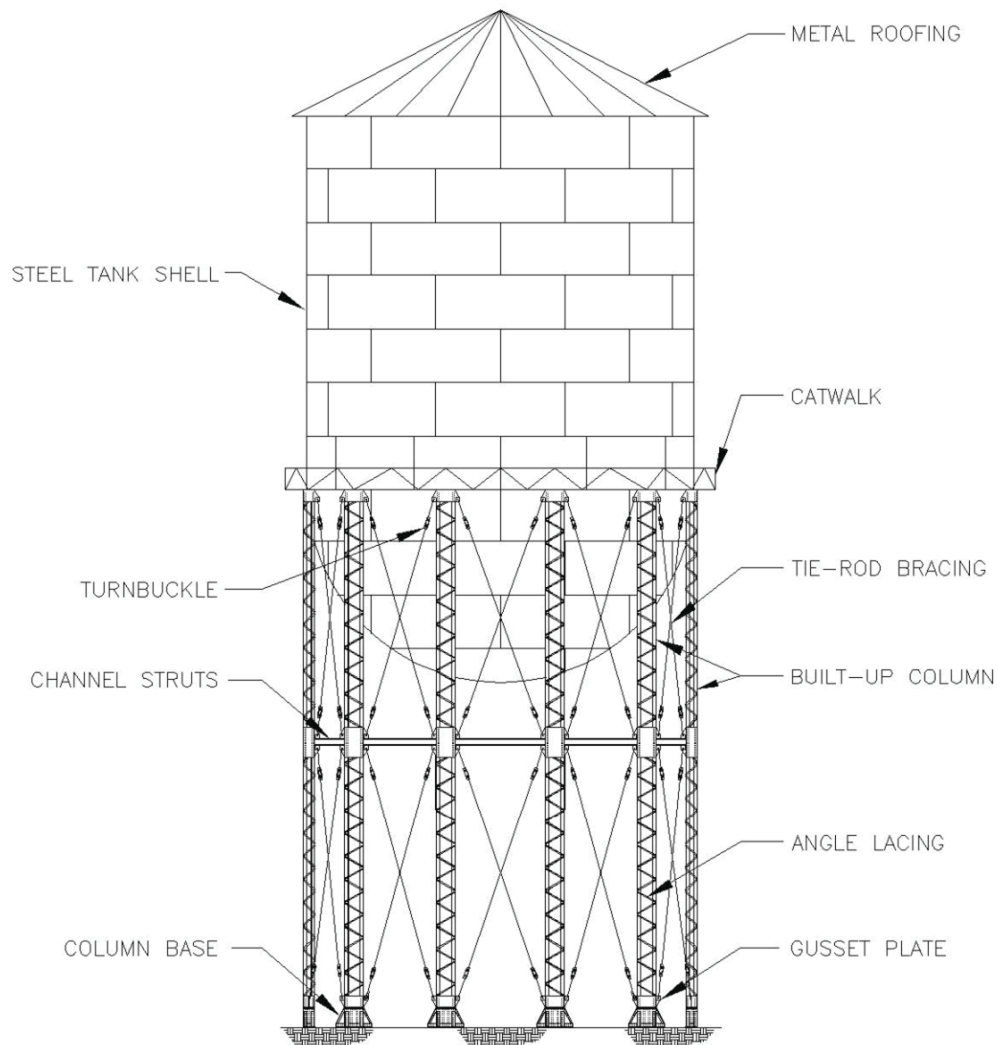
Update: The City of San Diego had the consultant Kleinfelder add an assessment of the Water Tower to their Assessment of Potable Water Reservoirs. The report on the Water Tower (which is empty and will remain so) was distributed to Councilmember Todd Gloria's office on June 22, and shared with representatives of NPHS and North Park Planning Committee. The report concluded:

"The structural elements of the water tower are in overall fair condition. The existing coating system is starting to fail and should be removed by hydraulic or abrasive blasting to allow for all exterior surfaces of the water tower to be recoated. Minor to moderate surface corrosion was observed on several of the structural members and should be addressed during recoating by grinding the elements to clean metal prior to application of the new coating system. Where appreciable metal loss is encountered, the member should be replaced in kind. The tie-rod bracing used for lateral resistance was observed to have heavy corrosion and defects and should therefore be replaced in kind. Additionally, the column footing condition and depth should be investigated by excavating two feet of soil at two column locations.

Prior to future repair and retrofit work, the interior surfaces of the water tower and roof framing should be observed to determine whether additional improvements are required.

The water tower was checked for compliance with the current design codes and standards adopted by the City. Analysis for gravity, seismic, and wind loads were performed. The majority of the structural elements were determined to meet existing code requirements with the exception of the gusset plates and pin connectors for the tie-rod bracing. The gusset plates should be reinforced with additional plates to increase their strength and a new connection should be detailed for the tie-rod to the gusset plate to transfer forces between the two."

This diagram from the report identifies the different structural elements of the Water Tower.



At this time the City is only considering reinforcing the gusset plates at the base of the Water Tower for seismic retrofit purposes. The City is not currently planning on implementing the re-coating and other improvements such as replacing the corroding catwalk, which could cost more than \$1 million.

8. MAY HISTORY PRESENTATION: 100 YEARS OF JAPANESE LEGACY IN BALBOA PARK

About 30 people attended this special presentation. Thank you to everyone who attended! It was especially gratifying that every Board member who came also brought a friend and/or family member. We sincerely appreciate NPHS member Linda Canada for making this excellent and informative presentation.

9. DRYDEN WALKING TOUR JULY 11

We will be conducting a Dryden Historic District tour on Saturday, July 11 at 9:00 am. Contact Katherine at info@northparkhistory.org or 619-294-8990 if you want to be a helper and experience this popular tour for free. Use of Brown Paper Tickets for advance sign-ups was approved by the Board and set up by Steve. The flyer with sign-up information is below. Advance registrations are very helpful. We currently have five sign-ups! This is the link to Brown Paper Tickets site for event registration:

<http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/1707986>

DISCOVER HISTORIC NORTH PARK!

**Docent-led walking tour features 30 homes in the
North Park Dryden Historic District
(House Exteriors Only)**

Date: Saturday, July 11, 2015

Time: 9:00 am

Cost: \$10 per person

Place: 28th and Upas Streets ("the Portal")

Distance: Less than 1 mile

Duration: About 90 minutes

Advance tickets recommended

Purchase with credit card:

<http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/1707986>

Purchase by check and mail-in form:

<http://northparkhistory.org/>



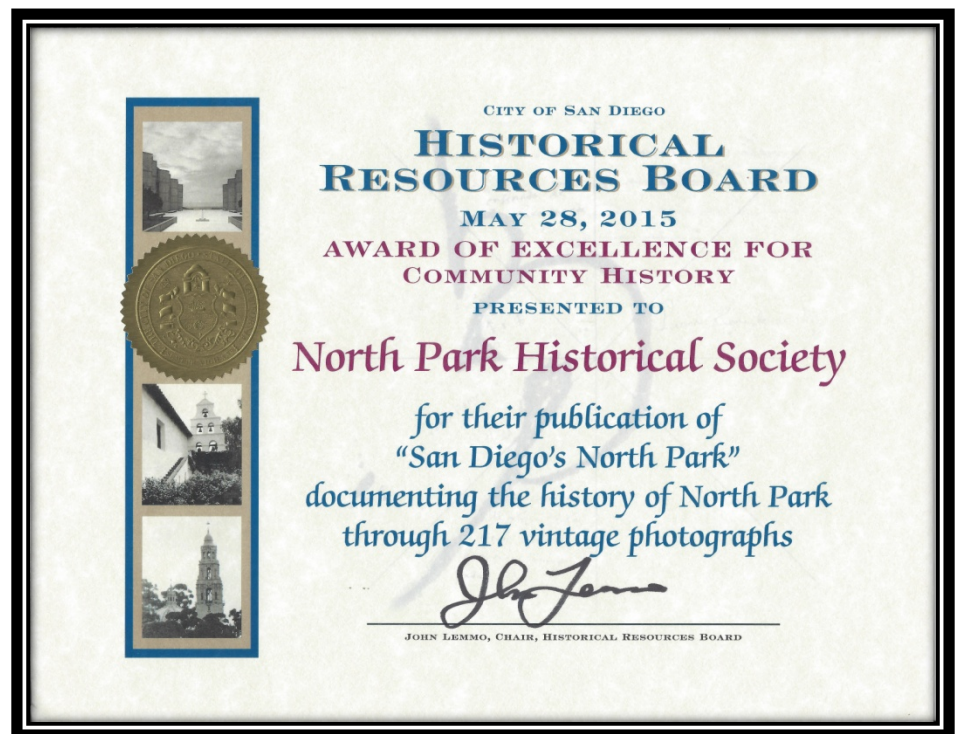
Questions? info@northparkhistory.org 619-294-8990

10. PLANNING ISSUES

George and Paul continue to monitor planning issues.

12. NPHS COMMUNITY HISTORY AWARD

The City of San Diego Historical Resources Board gave NPHS a 2015 Excellence in Historic Preservation Award for our preparation of the *Images of America: San Diego's North Park* book published by Arcadia last September. The awards ceremony was May 28th at 1:00 pm in the Copper Room at the San Diego Civic Concourse. Our poster, which features the book cover and several photos from the book, was on display with those of other award recipients in the City Administration Building lobby, and at the awards ceremony.



13. ARTICLES IN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

Uptown News continues to feature historical articles from NPHS. The latest article Katherine submitted is about master builder Pear Pearson. This article appeared in the June 19-July 2, 2015 issue of *Uptown News*.

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COMMUNITY VOICES

www.sdcnn.com



Pear Pearson built this house at 3351 Thorn St. in North Park in 1926.
(Courtesy of Katherine Hon)

Pear Pearson: Master builder and master businessman

By Katherine Hon

It is rare to get a glimpse into the minds of North Park builders from before the 1930s. They and most of their children have passed on, leaving unlabeled photographs and bits of paperwork to be puzzled over by grandchildren and distant relatives.

Recently the North Park Historical Society (NPHS) had the good fortune of connecting with descendants of Pear Pearson, one of San Diego's premier builders from the early 1920s. Through their family records we have gained valuable insights into how he conducted an exemplary

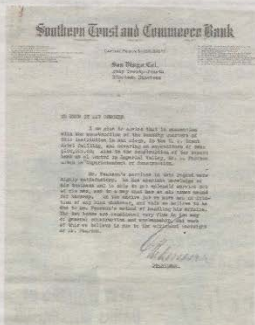
career in commercial and residential construction.

Pearson was an early North Park resident who has been recognized by the city of San Diego as a master builder. He was born Per Olsson in Sweden in 1887 and changed his name upon arrival in the United States in 1905. He lived in Denver, Colorado, where he was a cabinetmaker and contractor. He later moved to Berkeley, California and was responsible for many bank remodels in association with San Francisco architect H. H. Winner.

Perhaps attracted by the building boom stimulated by the 1915 Exposition, Pearson began



(above) Pear Pearson and his wife Helen proudly advertise a home he built. (Courtesy of Kari Koskinen) (left) Prominent San Diego banker G. Aubrey Davidson provided this letter of recommendation to Pear Pearson in 1919. (Courtesy of Kari Koskinen)



building homes in San Diego in the early 1920s. One of his first homes was 3602 Villa Terrace, which he built in 1921 for Fredrick and Ada Sedgwick. This wood-sided Craftsman home with tall, square porch columns has been designated as a significant historical resource by the city.

In 1922, Pearson built a home at 3636 Villa Terrace, where he lived with his wife Helen and daughter Vernette for several years.

In 1925, he built a Spanish Revival bungalow at 2536 San Marcos

Ave. in what is now the Burlingame Historic District. The family lived there until 1936, when they moved to a house on Herman Avenue and later to Boundary Street before settling in La Mesa in the 1970s. He died in 1973 at age 86.

Although Pearson typically built in the Craftsman or Spanish Revival/Mission Revival style, several of his homes uniquely reflect his Swedish roots, particularly the charming bungalows at 2624 San Marcos Ave. built in 1925, and 3351 Thorn St. built in 1926. He had a long career building high-quality homes throughout the San Diego region, including in North Park, Loma Portal, Mission Hills and La Mesa. He also was responsible for commercial buildings, notably the large brick and concrete store at 1007 University Ave. in Hillcrest currently housing Ace Hardware, built for \$30,000

in 1926. The businesses at this location in the 1927 city directory are listed as University Avenue Furniture Co. and University Window Shade Co., at 1003 and 1009 University Ave., respectively.

One of the keys to Pearson's success was always doing high-quality work. Letters of recommendation saved by the family attest to his knowledge and supervisory skills. One letter, dated 1919, is from prominent San Diegan G.A. Davidson, president of the Southern Trust and Commerce Bank, complimenting Pearson on supervising construction of their banking quarters in the U.S. Grant Hotel. G. Aubrey Davidson was founder of the bank, president of the Chamber of Commerce, and is known as the father of the 1915-16 Panama-California Exposition because the idea for the Exposition began with him. Pearson was still using G. Aubrey Davidson as a reference in 1943 when applying for federal construction work.

Another key to success was Pearson's organization and careful tracking of expenses. A ledger book saved by the family presents meticulous notes on prices of various materials and labor. Costs are recorded for 17 houses, including his own home on San Marcos Avenue in Burlingame. Items listed for a large Spanish Colonial Revival home Pearson built for his friend Leo Hoffman at 2704 Teresita St. in 1928 range from nearly \$800 for carpenter labor, \$535 for lumber, and \$400 for millwork sash and doors to \$6 for a folding ironing board.

The ledger is also an interesting source for names of specialty contractors of the time. The log for 2536 San Marcos Ave. includes Fred A. Heilbron Plumbing, Benton Roof Co. and Fred Cottrell Plastering. A favored source of hardware was Berger Hardware, a store still operating in North Park after more than 100 years.

NPHS is indebted to the grandchildren of master builder Pear Pearson for sharing their family photographs and records. We invite anyone with an interesting North Park ancestor or historical story to contact us at info@northparkhistory.org. For an outdoor lecture about many other early North Park builders, join our docents for a guided walking tour of the Dryden Historic District on July 11, 2015 at 9 a.m. Visit our website at northparkhistory.org for more information.

—Katherine Hon is the secretary of the North Park Historical Society. Reach her at info@northparkhistory.org or 619-294-8990.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be **THURSDAY** July 16, 2015 at 6:30 pm in a second floor meeting room at Grace Lutheran Church, 3967 Park Boulevard, corner of Park and Lincoln Avenue.

Prepared by

Katherine Hon

Katherine Hon
Secretary, North Park Historical Society