

**NORTH PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MARCH 2017 MEETING NOTES**

DATE: MARCH 16, 2017

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 April 3, 2017.

The next meeting will be **THURSDAY** April 20, 2017 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:

Steve Hon	Katherine Hon
Michael Thornhill	George Franck
Jody Surowiec	Claudia Watts
Sharon Turner	Paul Spears
Judy Ciampoli	Hilda Yoder

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

Randy Sappenfield Bob Bauer

Members Turner and Kate also joined us. Welcome!

2. AGENDA REVIEW AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Information from Mission Hills Heritage and Friends of the Villa Montezuma was circulated for viewing. Katherine shared her latest PastMatters column in *Uptown News* (see the end of these notes). Her article was about the Trepte Construction company and its North Park roots and houses. Thank you, NPHS member Ed for providing great historical information and photos for the article. A copy of the South Bay Historical Society Bulletin that covered the history of Rohr Aircraft Corporation was passed around for the group to see.

3. MINUTES ACCEPTANCE

The minutes from the February 16, 2017 NPHS meeting have been posted on the website.

BUSINESS PORTION OF MEETING

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

The financials for the period of February 15 to March 14, 2017 were sent to Board Members in advance of the meeting. During this period, one member renewed (thank you, Rob!). Amazon paid us for two North Park history books. We sold three North Park history books and four Burlingame books to the West Grove Collective. We received \$420 for conducting the UCSD Osher Lifelong Learning Dryden District walking tour and sold one extra Dryden guidebook. We had no expenses in this time period.

ACTIVITIES PORTION OF MEETING

5a. WATER TOWER PUBLIC ART PROJECT UPDATE

As discussed in the February 2017 meeting notes, the focus of the art proposal will be the approximately 100-foot-long expanse of fence along the top of the concrete reservoir facing Howard Avenue eastward from the intersection of Howard Avenue and Oregon Avenue. Also, the City may consider a "loan" process where the art would be displayed for up to 5 years, which could be a good compromise between a short-term exhibition of up to a year and a permanent donation of the art to the City.

The draft Call for Artists was revised to reflect these changes and the draft was sent via email to the NPHS Board for review. Eight Board members approved the revised draft (Sharon, Randy, Hilda, Jody, Claudia, Judy, Katherine and Steve), which is a majority. Because several Board members expressed concerns about changing from a permanent installation to a more temporary installation, this issue was discussed at the meeting. Katherine shared a March 12, 2017 *San Diego Union-Tribune* news article about the public art process Solana Beach is going through ("With 3 Finalists, Solana Beach Art Decision Looms"). It is apparent that developing permanent public art is challenging even for cities. Planning an art installation with a 5-year lifespan may be an appropriate goal for our organization.

Update: The approved draft Call was sent to Christine Jones, Senior Public Art Manager with the City's Commission for Arts and Culture, and she suggested some minor edits that were incorporated. Our art consultant, Gail Goldman, now has the final Call and she is developing a list of possible artists for us to consider sending it to. Also, a selection committee is being formed to review the proposals and narrow them to three finalists and one Selected Artist for NPHS Board approval.

5b. WATER TOWER BRONZE PLAQUE UPDATE

The bronze plaque designating the Water Tower a Local Historic Civil Engineering Landmark by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) will be a separate installation from the artwork. The City is open to considering a type of installation where the plaque is set in a boulder, which could be placed near the stucco building on the Water Tower site. We will need to prepare a more specific proposal for the City and the indoor soccer leaseholder to consider. A company that does such work is Seaman-Poe Monument Company. An example boulder installation by this company is below on the right; a photo of the Water Tower plaque is on the left.



6. NORTH PARK PLANNING COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

Steve reminded the group that the North Park Planning Committee will hold elections for new board members on March 21, 2017. There are 13 people running for 9 slots. Our newest member, Kate, mentioned she is running, and we wish her good luck.

7. NPHS SPECIAL PRESENTATION BY ELSA SEVILLA

Elsa Sevilla, who hosts "San Diego's Historic Places" on KPBS, will give a lecture at our special history presentation evening on May 18 at 6:30 pm at Grace Lutheran Church. The lecture will be free and open to all. The draft flyer was circulated (see the last page of these notes). An article in *Uptown News* was suggested also.

Update: The early April issue of *Uptown News* will feature an article about Elsa and her presentation for NPHS in the PastMatters column. Also watch social media, including NextDoor (thank you, Sharon!) for postings about the event.

8. OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE LECTURE AND DRYDEN DISTRICT TOUR FOLLOW-UP

Katherine and George presented a PowerPoint lecture about North Park's history and architecture for this adult education group on March 7, 2017 at 1:00 pm at UCSD. There were about 30 attendees. On March 11, we conducted a tour of the Dryden District for the class. There were 42 attendees! George, Michael and Katherine each guided a group. Thank you to our guides, and helpers Claudia, Jody, Randy, Tim, Christine and Steve. It was a very successful event. The Osher coordinator may be interested in arranging for a lecture and tour of the Burlingame Historic District in the fall or next spring.

9. ANNUAL EVENTS

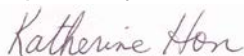
The annual events NPHS is participating in or organizing include the following:

- Table at San Diego History Center Free Tuesday: April 11, 2017. Steve will man the NPHS table and share our activities with visitors to the San Diego History Center. If you are in Balboa Park on April 11, come in to say hello.
- NPHS Special Presentation by Elsa Sevilla: May 18, 2017. Elsa Sevilla, who presents "San Diego's Historic Places" on KPBS, has agreed to give a lecture at our special history presentation evening on May 18 at 6:30 pm at Grace Lutheran Church. The lecture will be free and open to all. There may even be cookies!
- North Park Festival of the Arts: May 20, 2017. We are getting our booth fee waived in exchange for George conducting a commercial walking tour for North Park business owners and staff on a day and time to be arranged by Angie at North Park Main Street.
- North Park Car Show: September 9, 2017. The Balboa Tennis Club has agreed to host us for our 8th Annual Car Show, and Steve has already obtained the permit from the City to use the parking lot.
- Old House Fair - although Maureen is not organizing this event, as she is retiring from her store in South Park, we believe this event will go on in June. More later.
- Toyland Parade: December 2, 2017. We expect the parade to be held the first Saturday in December like last year. This year, Steve and Katherine will not be in town on parade day, so we will be looking for other volunteer(s) to coordinate participants and delivery of the water tower to the parade site if Victor is inspired to dance again as the most popular entry in the parade. **Update**: Michael may be able to provide transport.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be **THURSDAY** April 20, 2017 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
Secretary, North Park Historical Society



Walter Trepte built this Spanish Colonial Revival house at 3553 Pershing Ave. in the North Park Dryden Historic District in 1922. (Photo by Ed Cronan)

Built by Trepte and built to last

PastMatters Katherine Hon

Trepte Construction Company has a long history in San Diego extending back more than 120 years. The company built many San Diego landmarks, including the Park Manor Hotel (Inn at the Park) at 525 Spruce St. in 1927, Ryan Aeronautical's plant building in 1939, Grossmont Hospital in 1960, and San Diego Sports Arena in 1966.

But did you know that there is a North Park connection to this major construction company? Several Trepte buildings grace Pershing Avenue in the North Park Dryden Historic District. Both buildings are charming homes with very different styles.

The Trepte story in San Diego begins with Moritz Trepte, who was born in Germany in 1864 and immigrated to the United States in 1886. He worked as a carpenter in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for two years, then moved to San Francisco in 1888.

Seven years later, Moritz and his wife Christine came to San Diego with Walter, their first-born son. Moritz became a naturalized citizen one year later, in 1896 in San Diego. He used his carpentry skills to build the Crown Room ceiling at Hotel del Coronado, and in 1897 he joined with Herman Stroele, who was operating a business that manufactured store fixtures and mantels, to form Stroele & Trepte, a carpentry, cabinetry and remodeling company.

M. Trepte is listed as an independent building contractor in the City Directory in 1901. He built his family home at 155 20th St. in 1905, an attractive American Foursquare-style house that is still standing in Sherman Heights.

In 1913, Moritz Trepte joined builder Edward Rambo to form Rambo & Trepte, and they built many fine homes together over the next five years. One of their first was 2903 28th St. on the northeast corner of Palm Avenue in the Blair's Highlands tract of North Park. At this time, 20-year-old Walter Trepte was working as a carpenter with R.P. Shields & Son, but by 1918, Trepte & Son General Contractors had been

established. Moritz and Walter Trepte proceeded to build much of Downtown's skyline over the ensuing decades.

In the early 1920s, Walter built two houses on Pershing Avenue (then Oregon Avenue), both of which contribute to the North Park Dryden Historic District.

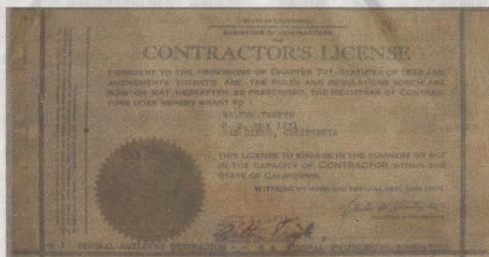
In 1920, he built a classic one-story Craftsman home at 3675 Pershing Ave., where he and his wife Margaret and their son Walter B. lived for several years.

In 1922, he built a two-story Spanish Colonial Revival house at 3553 Pershing Ave. The unadorned style of the stucco house creates an interesting contrast with the ornately bracketed and wood shingled Craftsman homes built by David Owen Dryden on either side of it. Dryden briefly owned the vacant lot for 3553 Pershing Ave. in 1917, but sold the lot that

of California, Walter Trepte obtained Contractor's License Number 13. He was president of the Associated General Contractors of America, San Diego Chapter, in 1939.

Walter died in 1985 at age 92. The impressive and varied list of landmark San Diego buildings constructed by the Trepte company provided in Walter's obituary in the San Diego Union include the Old Spaghetti Factory restaurant at Fifth Avenue and K Street; the Pacific Square Ballroom, formerly at Pacific Highway and Ash Street; seaplane ramps and hangers at North Island Naval Air Station; and roads, parking lots and grottos at the San Diego Zoo.

His company is credited with saving many buildings of the 1915-16 Exposition in Balboa Park. This is the story told in Walter Trepte's obituary:



Walter Trepte's contractor's license was just the 13th to be issued by the state of California. (Courtesy of Ed Cronan)

year without building anything.

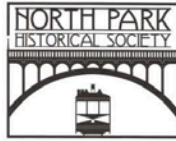
Trepte built the home at 3553 Pershing Ave. for Alice Welstead, secretary-treasurer of Welstead Oil Company, and her son Charles, president of the company. The imposing house featured an innovative triple-zone climate control system for the living room and bed chambers, and a foot-activated servant call button in the floor of the dining room. Although these systems are no longer active, the warm and bright home retains its original narrow-plank wood floors, lath and plaster walls and coved ceilings, and a partial basement hewn from the unyielding cobble and clay underlying much of North Park.

Walter Trepte was president of Trepte Construction Company for more than 40 years, from the mid-1920s to 1966, when he turned over the company to his son Gene. On July 1, 1931, the very first day that contractor's licenses were issued by state

"The old family friend, George Marston, and Dr. Harry Wegeforth, the first director of the San Diego Zoo, were getting ready for the 1935-1936 California Pacific International Exposition in Balboa Park. Mr. Trepte was one of two contractors asked to survey the buildings in the park to see if they should be demolished or refurbished. Partially based on his recommendations, the Museum of Man, House of Hospitality, Casa del Prado and the botanical building are still standing."

The story of Trepte Construction Company continues to be written, but North Park can be proud to be part of the original chapters.

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



SPECIAL PRESENTATION

*Sponsored by the North Park Historical Society
TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL PRESERVATION MONTH*

An Evening with Elsa Sevilla

« Elsa Sevilla is a three-time Emmy nominated, Multi-Award Winning Journalist. Elsa established Sevilla Productions in 1998 with her husband and business partner, Guillermo Sevilla. In 2008, Elsa and Guillermo created "San Diego's Historic Places" for KPBS-TV. For nine years, "San Diego's Historic Places" has been producing great stories on the history of San Diego County as well as Baja California. Elsa has been given a Historic Preservation Award by the City of San Diego's Historic Resources Board for her contributions to local history. »



FREE!

**EVERYONE IS
WELCOME!**

DATE AND TIME

**Thursday, May 18, 2017
6:30 pm-7:30 pm**

LOCATION

**Grace Lutheran Church
Fellowship Room, 2nd Floor
3967 Park Boulevard**

Free parking at back of church.
Enter through the small gate and
come up the stairs or elevator.

NorthParkHistory.org

619-294-8990

info@northparkhistory.org