

**NORTH PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MARCH 2019 MEETING NOTES**

DATE: MARCH 21, 2019

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 April 5, 2019.

THERE WILL NOT BE A MEETING IN APRIL. The church will not be available to us because April 18 is Holy Thursday. The next meeting will be **THURSDAY May 16, 2019 starting at 6:30 p.m.** in a second floor meeting room at Grace Lutheran Church, 3967 Park Boulevard, corner of Park Boulevard and Lincoln Avenue.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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

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

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

Bob Bauer	Michael Thornhill
Randy Sappenfield	

Member Michael B. joined us. Welcome all!

2. AGENDA REVIEW AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The latest Pacific Beach Historical Society newsletter was circulated for viewing.

The February 2019 PastMatters column in Uptown News was entitled "Stories at our feet" and discussed three contractors who installed sidewalks in the early 1900s through the 1920s. See the scan at the end of these notes. The March 2019 PastMatters column in *Uptown News* will discuss the results of our recent project developing detailed historic information about the homes in Pauly's Addition.

George, who conducts tours for Save Our Heritage Organisation (SOHO), shared that he presented a lecture on the Nolan Plan that was developed for the City of San Diego in 1926, funded by George Marston. SOHO will be offering several "Terrace Talks" through the spring on the terrace of the 1905 Marston House. Talks include "Why Old Places Matter" on May 11. See the SOHO website for details.

The Friends of the Villa Montezuma have released their 2019 tour dates, including June 1, August 17, and October 19. They are also conducting their "Permanent Victorians" Walking Tour of Mount Hope Cemetery on October 26. All these great tours are free! See their website at www.VillaMontezumaMuseum.org for details.

Long-time North Park residents are sad to see the Pekin Cafe at 2877 University Avenue has closed. The classic Chinese restaurant opened in July 1931 and has operated continuously since then. The food and ambience will be missed!

3. MINUTES ACCEPTANCE

The minutes from the February 21, 2019 NPHS meeting have been posted on the website.

BUSINESS PORTION OF MEETING

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

The financials for the period of February 19 through March 19, 2019 were sent to Board Members before the meeting. During this period, five members renewed (thank you, Cia, Louise, Colleen, Robert, and David!), and one member gave us a donation of \$55 (thank you, Cia!). Total income in this period was \$155.00. Expenses in this time period consisted of two easels to hold posters for \$179.40, as approved by the Board at the February 21 meeting.

Katherine noted that our SSL certificate with Go Daddy should be renewed for our northparkhistory.org website to continue to be an https address. Sharon moved and Claudia seconded for this renewal to take place. The motion was approved unanimously.

Steve stated that the County Community Enhancement Grant for the current year includes \$600 for NPHS to purchase equipment for converting slides to digital files. Research on Amazon indicates a Pacific Image PrimeFilm Slide Scanner is available for \$369, and an A4 Led Light Box Light Pad to help view slides is available for \$31. Claudia moved and George seconded that these items be purchased. The motion was approved unanimously.

Update: These items were purchased online through Amazon and have arrived at NPHS headquarters.

ACTIVITIES PORTION OF MEETING

5. WATER TOWER PUBLIC ART PROJECT

The final conceptual design was presented to the selection committee by the artist team of Bhavna Mehta and Lynn Susholtz on November 7, 2018. The final conceptual design was approved by the selection committee at that meeting, and by the NPHS Board at the November 15, 2018 meeting.

A draft permit application for consideration as a 5-year loan was prepared and submitted to Christine Jones, our contact at the City, on December 4, 2018 for her review and guidance regarding if the application appeared ready to submit formally to the Commission for Arts and Culture. Steve sent her an email reminding her the Board needs her input, and she replied that she is compiling City review comments and will be back in touch soon.

6. POTENTIAL HISTORICAL DESIGNATION OF "PEKIN CAFE" NEON SIGN

The Fong family owns the building at 2877 University Avenue. They have been operating the Pekin Cafe for decades and they are working with a local real estate company to find a new operator for a compatible business in the building. North Park Main Street has been in touch with the family and has emphasized that preservation of the unique facade and neon sign would be very important to the community. However, we do not know if the family wants to achieve historic designation of the building, or if they are committed to preserving the facade and sign.

Before NPHS considers preparing a historic designation nomination, which George noted would be a substantial amount of work, the group agreed NPHS should consult with the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board (HRB) staff to determine if the facade and sign are at risk. Katherine will email Shannon Anthony, Planner with HRB staff, to learn what she knows.

Update: Katherine did some research on the origins of the building facade and sign, and she sent the following email to Shannon, whose reply appears below Katherine's email message.

Hi Shannon - The North Park Historical Society (NPHS) understands that the owners of Pekin Cafe at 2877 University Avenue will be pursuing other operators for their recently closed restaurant. We are concerned about possible changes to the building facade and neon sign, which are important historical resources for downtown North Park. The facade and neon sign have high integrity, as indicated in the attached photo taken by Steve Hon in 2019.



Our research indicates the neon sign was installed by San Diego Neon Sign Co in 1931. Our references are:

- July 10, 1931: Evening Tribune, Building Permit by S.D. Neon Sign Co, per Byrum, Electric sign, 2877 Univ., \$250
- July 10, 1931: Evening Tribune, Electrical Permit by S.D. Neon Sign company per Byrum, 2877 University (4 trans)
- July 11, 1931: Evening Tribune, Electrical permit, wiring, for Pekin Cafe, per Carr, 2877 University (4 trans, on sign)

Our research also indicates the current building facade is consistent with the building as advertised by Pekin Cafe in 1935. See the drawing of the building in the attached "clip" from the San Diego Union for July 14, 1935. NPHS would like to know if we should consider developing a significant historical resource nomination for the building and sign to protect them from changes. Or can we be assured the City HRB has already communicated the importance of this building and neon sign to the owners/potential new operators?

We appreciate any guidance you can offer. Katherine



RESPONSE

Good evening Katherine,

While current HRB staff has talked with the current owners about the potential historicity of the neon sign and the storefront; nothing is in writing and has all been verbal. Nominating the property and the neon sign for historical designation may be the best way to ensure that they are fully evaluated and preserved.

Please let me know if you have any questions, Thanks!

Shannon Anthony, Junior Planner

City of San Diego Development Services – Historical Resources

7. REVIEW OF BUILDING PERMITS FOR HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE: CHANGES IN CITY PROCEDURES

The City suddenly changed its process for receiving community input about building permits being requested for properties older than 45 years. Now the City is just posting addresses on a web page for only 5 days, and it is up to anyone concerned to keep checking the website. Paul reported that SOHO had a meeting with staff of the City's Development Services, resulting in a little more information being provided but no significant changes in the new procedures. Paul will continue to monitor the website and provide input.

Paul noted that the City determined that the Pueblo style apartment complex on Adams Avenue did not qualify as an individually significant resource, so a historical report was not required in advance of changes requested by the owner. NPHS prepared a letter to the HRB in November 2018 supporting preservation of this complex, citing the 2010 North Park Historical Survey that identified the 1928 complex as a potential individually significant resource, so this was disappointing news.



At the end of the meeting, Steve demonstrated the California Historical Resources Inventory Database (CHRID), which has information on every address in the City. Paul uses this database in his evaluations. The website is: <http://sandiego.cfwebtools.com/search.cfm?display=search>

8. PAULY'S ADDITION ASSESSMENT FOR A POTENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Last summer, NPHS investigated the potential for the historical subdivision of Pauly's Addition to qualify as a historic district. Pauly's Addition encompasses 20 blocks extending from Alabama Street on the west to Arizona Street on the east, and from University Avenue on the north to Upas Street on the south. At the February 2019 meeting, Katherine said she would write about the Pauly's Addition research project for her PastMatters column, and the article is expected in the next Uptown News which should appear in driveways by March 24. One other suggestion from last month still to be enacted is developing a walking tour of the best parts of Pauly's Addition.

9. UPCOMING COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

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

- Table at San Diego History Center: Tuesday, March 12, 2019. NPHS had a display table in the lobby of the San Diego History Center. Steve and George manned the table. This annual opportunity to connect with people visiting the History Center on a free Tuesday is always interesting.
- North Park Festival of the Arts: Saturday, May 11, 2019. Our booth fee has been waived.
- North Park Car Show: Saturday, September 7, 2019, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The Balboa Tennis Club has agreed to host us for our 10th and Final Car Show, and Steve has already obtained the permit from the City to use the parking lot. We hope it will be our best. It has been a good run, but we also look forward to re-focusing on core activities like walking tours and other educational outreach.
- Toyland Parade: Sunday, December 8, 2019. This is the second Sunday in December, a change from being held on the first Saturday. North Park Main Street has taken over organization of this event, which is a good thing.

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Prepared by

Katherine Hon

Katherine Hon
Secretary, North Park Historical Society

Stories at our feet

PastMatters
Katherine Hon

O Nelson, John Engebretsen, F. Anderson — do these names look familiar? Do you get the sense you have seen them in writing but can't place where? They are just a few of the many names of contractors who installed the sidewalks in San Diego in the early 1900s through the 1920s.

The University Heights Historical Society (UHHS) has estimated that the first concrete sidewalks in San Diego were laid during the 1880s, and contractors began embedding their names or company logos in them by the 1890s. The names and dates set in concrete help tell the story of San Diego's development.

In 2013, to celebrate the 125th year of University Heights, UHHS volunteer Bill Ellig compiled an online map with photos of more than 350 historic contractor sidewalk stamps, some as early as 1910. (View the interactive map at uhcdc.org/contractor-stamps.html.)

Enthusiastic fans of Ken Kramer's KPBS television show "About San Diego" have posted photos of sidewalk stamps around the county on the show's Facebook

page. Joseph Kelley — who engraved "Contractor in Cement, Office 964 Fifth Street" below his name with in his oval stamp — laid and marked some of the earliest sidewalks in Downtown.

He is listed as a contractor in the 1893 San Diego City Directory. A photo of his 1906 stamp at Second Avenue and Maple Street, taken by John Pagenkopp, is posted online.

The stamp "O. Nelson" appears frequently with various dates on North Park sidewalks south of University Avenue, including Texas Street (1912), Spruce Street (1916) and Dwight Street (1924). This is the stamp for Olaf Nelson, who was born in Sweden in 1858 and came to the U.S. in 1883, when he was 25 years old. He became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1892. The 1904 San Diego City Directory listed him as part of "Engebretsen & Nelson, contractors for paving, grading and all kinds of cement work, concrete construction, stone and brick work, 614 5th rms 5 and 6." However, this partnership did not last — the following year the two had independent advertisements in the directory.

Nelson installed sidewalks in various parts of the city, including along National Avenue, Falcon Street and Grand Avenue, sometimes beating his former partner John Engebretsen for the

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Olaf Nelson advertised as a grading contractor in the business classifieds of the 1905 San Diego City Directory (Photo by Katherine Hon)

successful bid. He also graded many roads, including Park Boulevard, Thorn Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. He even installed some fire hydrants in La Jolla. Nelson lived with his wife Carrie on E Street from 1905 until he died in 1937. They had two sons, Chester and Carl.

John Engebretsen was born in Norway in 1858 and came

to the U.S. in 1882, when he was 24 years old. He became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1888. Although his name is not spelled correctly, he is likely listed in the 1897 San Diego City Directory as "John Engebret, contractor." One of his stamps from 1923 is in the sidewalk at the southeast corner of Lincoln Avenue and Utah Street. He built roads in

Coronado on North Island, as well as in Point Loma.

Engebretsen and his wife Julianna lived at 641 12th Ave. from 1914 until his death in 1935. In addition to his job as a grading contractor, he served as the vice consul for Sweden and Norway starting in 1896; he later became dean

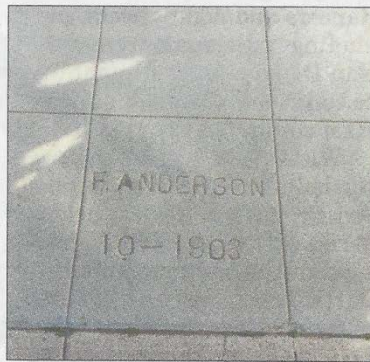
PHOTOS COURTESY OF UHHS



Present-day contractors must save and reset historical street name and contractor stamps. This relocated stamp for Olaf Nelson dated November 1912 is at the northwest corner of Texas Street and Myrtle Avenue.



John Engebretsen's somewhat faded October 1923 sidewalk stamp is located at Lincoln Avenue and Utah Street.



Frederick Anderson's sidewalk stamp on the east side of Pershing Avenue between Myrtle Avenue and Upas Street is a "typo" and should have been engraved 1913 like most of his other stamps along Pershing Avenue. (Photos by Katherine Hon)

FROM PAGE 8

PASTMATTERS

of the consular corps. The King of Norway made him a Knight of St. Olav in recognition of his long and excellent diplomatic work.

The stamp "F. Anderson" belongs to Frederick Anderson, who was born in Denmark in 1861. He came to the U.S. in 1881 at age 20 and became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1891. He appeared in the 1903 San Diego City Directory as a cement worker for J.P. Christensen, who was the proprietor of Pioneer Artificial Stone Works. In the 1904 San Diego City Directory and later, Anderson was listed as a cement worker on his own. He and his wife Henrietta had two daughters, Charlotte and Josephine.

F. Anderson sidewalk stamps, with dates ranging from 1913 to 1915, appear along Pershing Avenue south of University Avenue and north of Upas Street. Interestingly, one stamp reflects an interesting typo. The date engraved in the sidewalk on the east side of Pershing Avenue between Myrtle Avenue and Upas Street is 1903. This is wrong, not only because development in this part of North Park did not begin that early, but also because Anderson was working for J.P. Christensen at this time. The date likely should have been 1913.

[Editor's note: Future PastMatters columns will feature more stories at our feet on Uptown streets.]

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