

# BALBOA PARK DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

## Proposal for a Design Review Assistance Subcommittee

Balboa Park Design Review Exploratory Committee \_ March 3, 2022

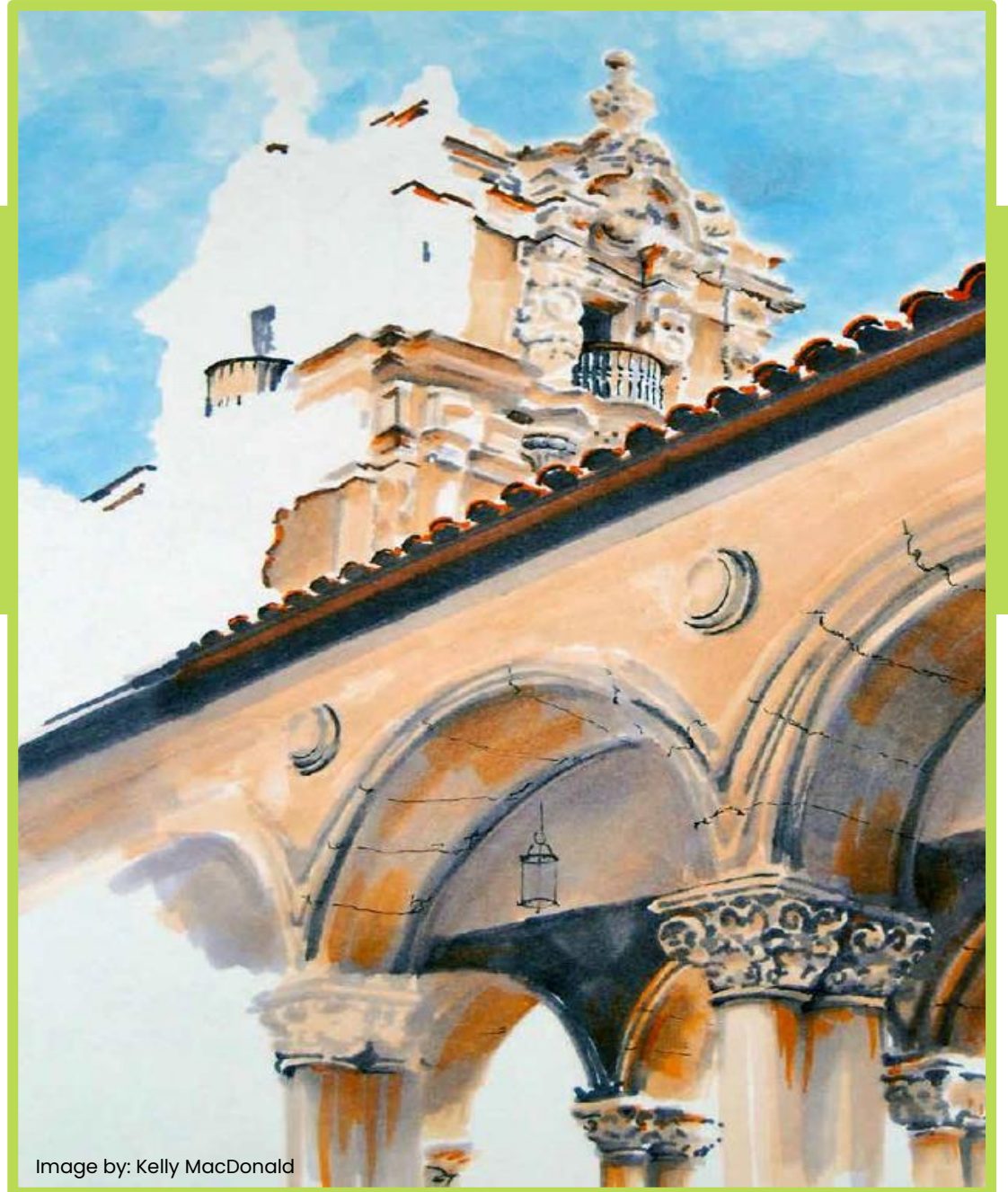


Image by: Kelly MacDonald

# Purpose of presentation

To outline our proposal to establish an Advisory Subcommittee of the Balboa Park Committee to evaluate potential projects at the request of the Committee – in response to encouragement received from the Balboa Park Committee at its April 1, 2021 meeting.

# Balboa Park Design Review Exploratory Committee

**Composed of diverse individuals with highly relevant expertise, experience, and responsibilities.**

**Michelle Abelia-Shon**, Parks & Rec Department

**Kevin Carpenter**, Committee of 100

**Christina Chadwick**, Parks & Rec Department

**Jackie Higgins**, Forever Balboa Park

**Jim Kidrick**, Balboa Park Cultural Partnership

**Bill Lawrence**, Balboa Park Cultural Partnership

**David Marshall**, Forever Balboa Park

**Connie Matsui**, Forever Balboa Park

**René Smith**, Committee of 100

**Mike Stepner**, Exploratory Committee Chair,  
Committee of 100

# Why we came about

## Controversy and polarization over projects proposed for Balboa Park.

### Concerns regarding design of:

- The Plaza de Panama
- Pan American Plaza revitalization
- West Mesa Comfort Stations

## Feedback from Balboa Park Stakeholders

“Design review by volunteer professionals has, in the past, saved time and money as well as resulted in successful improvements in the park.”  
*(Committee of 100)*

“The new [design] committee will help maintain Balboa Park’s historic character, charm, and beauty without complicating the approval process for park projects.”  
*(Friends of Balboa Park)*

# Legacy



Image by: Kelly MacDonald

“Our generation is passing to the future a heritage of an astoundingly expanded economy devoted primarily to practical aspects of our Civilization. Compounded with this, we pass on a massive debt and a seemingly disregard for the preservation of many natural resources. It is our profound duty, therefore, that we pass intact to the future Balboa Park this transcendent work of the hands of men, some of whom have passed and some of whom are still present in our day.”

**Balboa Park Study Committee – Final Report 1957**

# What is our charter

Design Review Exploratory Committee Charter

**The goals of the renewed design review process will be to:**

- Speed up review and approval of projects, both by the City and Park stakeholders and supporters.
- Identify mechanisms to reduce controversy and polarization.
- Identify benefits to be gained and issues to be resolved at the outset.
- Confirm that projects fit visually and physically in the park, comply with existing park plans, and enhance the park experience.

# What was our process

We sought to learn as much as possible about the perceived advantages and disadvantages of the former Design Review Board (DRB) through:

- Interviews with former DRB members, staff, and clients and
- Briefings on the Historical Resources Design Assistance Subcommittee and on park planning and design.

**This research, as well as the knowledge of our Design Review Exploratory Committee members, shaped our recommendations.**

# Our process affirmed ...

## **the purpose of a Design Assistance Subcommittee:**

- Provide professional advice to ensure that projects fit visually and physically in the park, comply with existing park plans and design guidelines, and enhance the park experience.
- Increase efficiency, clarity, transparency, and predictability in project initiation and approval.
- Reduce design-related impediments to the progress and completion of park improvement projects.



# What we propose

Recommend that the **Balboa Park Committee**, in its role **as Community Planning Group #1**:

- **Review proposed projects early** in the design process after receiving comments from the Design Review Assistance Subcommittee.
- Consider revisions to the Balboa Park Committee Bylaws to **establish the Design Review Assistance Subcommittee** as a standing Subcommittee.

# What are the next steps

## **We recommend that the Balboa Park Committee, in its role as Community Planning Group #1, should:**

- Work with Parks & Recreation staff and schedule a Workshop at its next meeting. Formally appoint members of the Design Assistance Subcommittee.
- Modify the Committee's Bylaws and other required City policies to institutionalize the Subcommittee.
- Encourage future CPGs to seek Committee members from the identified professional communities.
- Incorporate design review into the Balboa Park Committee's regular meetings until the Subcommittee is established. Once established, schedule Subcommittee meetings three weeks prior to each regularly scheduled Balboa Park Committee meeting
- Adopt guidelines defining purpose, scope of work, and ways of work.

# In closing...



Image from: San Diego History Center

"In building a city, let us remember that the material things which will endure the longest are those that express the spirit of man in art. In the arts of landscape and architecture, the spirit of a city can be preserved for the ages."

**George W. Marston, 1926** – On the dedication of Presidio Park

**Balboa Park Design Review Exploratory Committee**

**Thank** you