

# **CITY OF SAN DIEGO HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE AGENDA**

**Monday, July 9, 2018, 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM**

## **4<sup>th</sup> Floor Training Room**

Development Services Building  
1222 First Avenue, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, San Diego, CA 92101

***The Policy Subcommittee is a subcommittee of the City of San Diego's Historical Resources Board. It is primarily composed of Historical Resources Board members who are interested in policy matters. In general, the Subcommittee is not a voting entity, but rather a forum for discussing issues and policy matters related to historic resources and their preservation. Comments at the meeting do not predispose future positions on any matter by the Historical Resources Board.***

***Members of the public will be allowed an opportunity to speak, for up to one minute each, at the end of the Subcommittee's discussion on an agenda item. Each member of the public is required to state their name and the organization (if any) that they represent prior to their one minute presentation.***

## **MEETING AGENDA**

1. Introductions
2. Public Comment (on matters not on the agenda)
3. Subcommittee Comment (on matters not on the agenda)
4. Melhorn & Son Historic District: Staff is seeking the Policy Subcommittee's review of the draft historic context statement, statement of significance, period of significance and boundary description and justification for the Melhorn & Son Historic District, formerly referred to as the Shirley Ann Place Expansion Historic District.
5. Amendments to the Historical Resources Board Procedure on Establishing Historic District: Staff will be introducing proposed amendments to the Historical Resources Board Procedure on Establishing Historic Districts. The proposed amendments arose out of the successful completion of the first year of the historic district work program, and the lessons learned and feedback received during that process. Staff will be presenting the amendments in concept and seeking the Policy Subcommittee's feedback before presenting written amendments at a future meeting of the Subcommittee.
6. Adjourn

Next Policy Subcommittee Meeting will be on Monday, August 13, 2018 at 3:00 PM.

Previous Policy Subcommittee meeting notes available at <https://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/historical/board/subcommittees/policy>

For more information, please contact Sonnier Francisco by phone at (619) 685-1360 or email at [sfrancisco@sandiego.gov](mailto:sfrancisco@sandiego.gov)



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
**M E M O R A N D U M**

DATE: July 5, 2018

TO: Historical Resources Board Policy Subcommittee

FROM: Kelley Stanco, Senior Planner, Historic Preservation Planning

SUBJECT: Melhorn & Son Historic District: Review of Context, Statement of Significance, Period of Significance and Boundary Description and Justification

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Background

The Melhorn & Son Historic District was first identified in the reconnaissance-level *North Park Community Plan Area 2016 Historic Resources Survey* as a proposed expansion to the existing Shirley Ann Place Historic District, which was designated by the Historical Resources Board in 2000. The Shirley Ann Place Historic District was designated in 2000 under HRB Criterion F (at a time when our designation Criteria were applied differently), and was limited to the parcels immediately adjacent to Shirley Ann Place. The Shirley Ann Place Historic District was found to be significant as an excellent example of a post WWI speculative middle-class builder/contractor-designed housing tract, and as one of two known mini-tract housing projects initiated by the Alberta Security Company (the other being Alberta Place in Mission Hills). At the time of designation, the Alberta Security Company's founder, Martin Melhorn, had been established by the Board as a Master. The designation of the Shirley Ann Place Historic District extended that Master Builder status to include his son William, who ran the Alberta Security Company with his father and oversaw the dissolution of the company shortly after work began in the Shirley Ann Place Historic District. It is believed that at the time the Shirley Ann Place Historic District was designated, it was not well understood that Martin V. Melhorn and William Melhorn were responsible for the construction of the other properties in the same block along Louisiana Street and Texas Street, perhaps due to the stylistic differences between these properties.

While they have a largely shared historic context, the Melhorn & Son Historic District has been identified as a separate historic district enveloping the Shirley Ann Place Historic District, due to subtle yet distinct differences in the significance of the two districts that was discovered during the intensive survey evaluation. The Melhorn & Son Historic District is significant both as a resource that reflects a special element of the City's historical, economic and architectural development – that of working class builder/contractor-designed street-car suburb development in a vernacular Craftsman and Minimal Traditional bungalow expression; and as a resource that reflects the work of two Master Builders – Martin V. Melhorn and his son William Melhorn – at the end of their career together. The period of significance for the Melhorn & Son Historic District is 1924–1948. Whereas the Shirley Ann Place Historic District was designated as a resource that reflects a working-class builder/contractor-designed street-car suburb development in a

vernacular Spanish Colonial Revival and Minimal Traditional bungalow expression; and as a resource that reflects the work of one Master Builder – William Melhorn – at the beginning of his career as an independent designer/builder. The period of significance for Shirley Ann Place is 1920s and 1939–1949.

#### 2018 Intensive Survey & Nomination

The Melhorn & Son Historic District includes 29 parcels containing 29 buildings and one vacant lot, as well as right-of-way improvements such as historic sidewalks (including concrete color, texture, scoring, and stamps). The intensive survey evaluation and historic district nomination prepared by staff has revealed that the district consists of 21 contributing resources, all built between 1924 and 1948, and 9 non-contributing resources. The contributing resources include primarily modest, working-class vernacular Craftsman bungalows with Colonial Revival influences that were constructed between 1924 and 1926 by Master Builders Martin V. Melhorn and William Melhorn working in collaboration as Melhorn & Son. The contributing resources also include several Minimal Traditional bungalows that reflect later infill construction within this streetcar suburb. The district retains all seven aspects of integrity and has the ability to convey its significance at the local level.

The Melhorn & Son Historic District is significant under HRB Criterion A as a special element of San Diego's historical, economic and architectural development from 1924, when Alberta Security Company purchased block 51 in University Heights, through 1948, when the district was ultimately built-out with a few infill properties constructed in the Minimal Traditional style. More specifically, the district is significant as a reflection of streetcar suburban development during the population boom of the Post-Exposition and Post-World War I era, at a time when the surrounding North Park Community was considered the fastest growing area of San Diego; and as a reflection of the efforts of a developer/builder to provide working class housing on a resubdivided block intended to maximize the number of developable lots during a substantial population boom and resulting housing shortage. The district also reflects Craftsman architecture in a vernacular, working class expression towards the end of the style's popularity; as well as Minimal Traditional architecture popularized during the Depression era by the FHA "minimum house". Craftsman styling can be seen in the moderately pitch side gable and jerkinhead roofs; overhanging eaves; wood lap and shingle siding; single and multi-lite wood frame and sash windows in double hung, casement and awning varieties, and partial width porches with covers supported by wood columns or wood brackets. Minimal Traditional styling can be seen in the low-to-medium pitched gable roofs; minimally overhanging or clipped eaves; stucco cladding; single and multi-lite wood frame and sash double hung windows; and small porches with stoops or partial width porches.

The Melhorn & Son Historic District is also significant under HRB Criterion D as a resource that reflects the notable work of two Master Builders, Martin V. Melhorn and William Melhorn working together as Melhorn & Son construction company. Specifically, the district reflects their last larger-scale collaborative effort building modest working-class housing on a resubdivided block intended to maximize the number of developable lots during a substantial population boom and resulting housing shortage. The homes reflect the design and construction which the Melhorn's were noted for, and exhibits features and decorative elements similar to the sketches in their design book. The district was constructed at a unique period of transition for the Melhorn family.

Martin V. and William began design and construction of the district together as Melhorn & Son in 1924; and upon Martin's death in mid-1925, William finished construction of the district, dissolved the Alberta Security Company, and embarked on his own career as WB Melhorn construction. The period of significance related to HRB Criterion D is 1924-1926, which reflects the period of time in which Melhorn & Son was designing and building homes within the district.

Taken together with the existing Shirley Ann Place Historic District that the Melhorn & Son Historic District envelopes, these two districts illustrate two distinct expressions of the masterful work of the Melhorn family. The Melhorn & Son Historic District, constructed in a vernacular Craftsman bungalow aesthetic, reflects the collaborative effort between a skilled and experienced master builder/developer at the end of his career and his son learning the craft in a fledgling partnership with his father; while the Shirley Ann Place Historic District, constructed in a Spanish Colonial Revival style aesthetic, reflects the solo effort of a newly emerging Master Builder in the wake of his father's untimely death.

At this time, staff is seeking the Policy Subcommittee's review of the draft historic context statement, statement of significance, period of significance and boundary description and justification for the Melhorn & Son Historic District. In preparation for the discussion at the July 9<sup>th</sup> Policy Subcommittee meeting, staff encourages members of the subcommittee to visit the district independently. Following the Policy Subcommittee meeting, staff will review all comments and direction received and revise the nomination as appropriate as we proceed with the designation process. Please note that because the document is an early draft, it is not in its final format. As the district nomination is finalized, it will be formatted on the applicable Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) forms.



Kelley Stanco  
Senior Planner

KS/ks

- Attachments:
1. Draft Melhorn & Son Historic District Historic Context, Statement of Significance, Period of Significance and Boundary Description and Justification
  2. Draft Melhorn & Son Historic District Resource Analysis Spreadsheet

## **DRAFT MELHORN & SON HISTORIC DISTRICT NOMINATION**

### **DESCRIPTION:**

The Melhorn & Son Historic District is located in the University Heights neighborhood in San Diego. The district boundary includes all of the western and eastern-most parcels in Block 51 of the University Heights Subdivision. The Melhorn & Son Historic District surrounds the existing Shirley Ann Place Historic District, which was designated in 2000 and is comprised of the parcels fronting onto Shirley Ann Place. The Melhorn & Son Historic District includes 29 parcels containing 29 buildings and one vacant lot, as well as right-of-way improvements such as historic sidewalks (including concrete color, texture, scoring, and stamps).

The district consists of 21 contributing resources, all built between 1924 and 1948, and 9 non-contributing resources. The contributing resources include primarily modest, working-class vernacular Craftsman bungalows with Colonial Revival influences that were constructed between 1924 and 1926 by Master Builders Martin V. Melhorn and William Melhorn working in collaboration as Melhorn & Son. The contributing resources also include several Minimal Traditional bungalows that reflect later infill construction within this streetcar suburb. The district retains all seven aspects of integrity and has the ability to convey its significance at the local level.

The 21 Contributing Resources include:

4509 Louisiana Street (APN 4451531300); 1924, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4521 Louisiana Street (APN 4451531100); 1924, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4531 Louisiana Street (APN 4451531000); 1924, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4535 Louisiana Street (APN 4451530900); 1924, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4549 Louisiana Street (APN 4451530700); 1924, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4555 Louisiana Street (APN 4451530600); 1924, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4561 Louisiana Street (APN 4451530500); 1925, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4573 Louisiana Street (APN 4451530300); 1925, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4579 Louisiana Street (APN 4451530200); 1946, Minimal Traditional  
4581 Louisiana Street (APN 4451530200); 1946, Minimal Traditional  
2305 Mission Avenue (APN 4451530100); 1948, Minimal Traditional  
4516 Texas Street (APN 4451534200); 1924, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4522 Texas Street (APN 4451534300); 1924, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4530 Texas Street (APN 4451534400); 1925, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4536 Texas Street (APN 4451534500); 1925, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4558 Texas Street (APN 4451534800); 1925, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4562 Texas Street (APN 4451534900); 1924, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4564 Texas Street (APN 4451535000); 1925, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4570 Texas Street (APN 4451535100); 1925, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4576 Texas Street (APN 4451535200); 1925, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4586 Texas Street (APN 4451535300); 1926, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences

The 9 Non-Contributing Resources include:

4503 Louisiana Street (APN 4451531400); 1924, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences

4515 Louisiana Street (APN 4451531200); 1924, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4541 Louisiana Street (APN 4451530800); 1924, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4567 Louisiana Street (APN 4451530400); 1925, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4502 Texas Street (APN 4451534000); 1924, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4510 Texas Street (APN 4451534100); 1924, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4542 Texas Street (APN 4451534600); 1925, Craftsman with Colonial Revival Influences  
4548 Texas Street (APN 4451534700); 1925, Craftsman with Ranch Influences  
4594 Texas Street (APN 4451535400); Vacant Lot/Parking Lot

**BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:**

The Melhorn & Son Historic District is located in the University Heights neighborhood of North Park, and is bounded by Madison Avenue to the north, Texas Street to the east, Monroe Avenue to the south, and Louisiana Street to the west. The Melhorn & Son Historic District surrounds the existing Shirley Ann Place Historic District located along Shirley Ann Place between Madison Avenue and Monroe Street.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:**

The boundary of the Melhorn & Son Historic District encompasses Block 51 in the University Heights subdivision. Block 51 was purchased by Martin V. Melhorn and William Melhorn's Alberta Security Company, and was resubdivided to provide small-lot working class housing. The Melhorn & Son Historic District surrounds the existing Shirley Ann Place Historic District, which was designated in 2000, but does not include it.

While they have a largely shared historic context, the Melhorn & Son Historic District has been identified as a separate historic district enveloping the Shirley Ann Place Historic District, due to subtle yet distinct differences in the significance of the two districts. The Melhorn & Son Historic District is significant both as a resource that reflects a special element of the City's historical, economic and architectural development – that of working class builder/contractor-designed street-car suburb development in a vernacular Craftsman and Minimal Traditional bungalow expression; and as a resource that reflects the work of two Master Builders – Martin V. Melhorn and his son William Melhorn – at the end of their career together. The period of significance for the Melhorn & Son Historic District is 1924-1948. Whereas the Shirley Ann Place Historic District was designated as a resource that reflects a working-class builder/contractor-designed street-car suburb development in a vernacular Spanish Colonial Revival and Minimal Traditional bungalow expression; and as a resource that reflects the work of one Master Builder – William Melhorn – at the beginning of his career as an independent designer/builder. The period of significance for Shirley Ann Place is 1920s and 1939-1949.

**SIGNIFICANCE THEME:** Streetcar Suburb; Working Class Development; Master Builders

**AREA:** University Heights

**PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE:** 1924-1948

## APPLICABLE CRITERIA AND SIGNIFICANCE:

### THE GREAT BOOM & ESTABLISHMENT OF UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS

Into the 1880s, the city made progress in the development of modern, necessary public utilities to build an urban center, including a potable water supply, sewerage, street lights, and means of transportation. In 1881, the city had a gasworks and gaslights; in 1882, a telephone exchange; and in 1886, electric lights<sup>1</sup>. The 1885 arrival of the transcontinental railroad line to Southern California generated tremendous growth in San Diego, marking a period referred to as the Great Boom (1885-1888). During the Great Boom, land speculation was rampant, with a plethora of new subdivisions created for quick profits. The economic growth led to new infrastructure and amenities. San Diego's first horse-drawn streetcar system began operation in 1886, the first electric streetcars in 1887, and the first cable cars in 1890<sup>2</sup>. At the peak of the boom, there were at least 17 streetcar and interurban companies operating from downtown San Diego<sup>3</sup>.

During San Diego's Great Boom in the mid-1880s, several investment companies incorporated to purchase large land tracts in San Diego for subdivision and speculation, including the areas north of downtown San Diego and City Park (now Balboa Park) (Figure 1). Lot sales were initially successful on the mesa overlooking Mission Valley, which had an advantageous location and "the most delightful of all climates – the mesa climate, soft, dry, invigorating, and cool, without being damp." The area prior to development was characterized by "jackrabbits running through brush-covered territory"<sup>4</sup>.

One real estate investment company, the College Hill Land Association, was incorporated on July 17, 1886, with significant investments from its major shareholders led by Daniel Choate. Their initial investment capital of \$865,500 and control of 1,600 acres north of City Park supported the Association's mission to "buy, sell, improve, mortgage, lease and otherwise generally deal in real estate in the County of San Diego, State of California"<sup>5</sup>. The Association also had a stated intent to support the establishment of a college on the mesa. Championed by Reverend Edwin S. Chase of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the college was to be the San Diego College of Arts, a branch of the Methodist Episcopal University of Southern California<sup>6</sup>. The Association created a subdivision and donated every other lot of its subdivision to the church to raise \$200,000 for construction of the college, and an estimated \$2 million to fund its endowment. A 16-acre parcel for the location of the college was reserved towards the center of the subdivision<sup>7</sup>. The Association planned to "erect upon a beautiful eminence of this property" the college building, "in the most impressive style of architecture"<sup>8</sup>. Therefore, they named the subdivision "University Heights."

By December 1887, the Association's agent, the real estate firm W.H. Holabird & Company, had already begun advertising lots in University Heights<sup>9</sup> (Figure 2). Colonel William Hyman (W.H.) Holabird was a successful real estate agent who had colorfully promoted Coronado and several boomtowns along the California Southern Railroad in the mid-1880s, earning him the nickname the "Father of the Boom"<sup>10</sup>. According to an article in the magazine *Golden Era*, the first day of sales of University Heights property in December 1887 amounted to \$105,000 and was "one of the greatest real-estate sales of Southern California"<sup>11</sup>. W.H. Holabird & Company advertised University Heights in *The San Diego Union* on January 1, 1888, describing its primary advantages, including its altitude, prevailing winds, the promise of "a magnificent college," and the rapid transit to the heart of the city that "greatly enhances its value"<sup>12</sup>.

The Association filed Subdivision Map #558 with the San Diego County Recorder for the University Heights subdivision on August 6, 1888 (Figure 3). The subdivision plan consisted of a rectilinear grid of streets, 210 urban blocks, reservations at the bluffs overlooking Mission Valley for parks and recreation, a manmade "Mystic Lake," and an area reserved for the college. The college campus was located at the intersection of major thoroughfares through the center of University Heights, where University Boulevard (present-day Washington and El Cajon Boulevards), Park Boulevard, and Mission Avenue met. The east-west streets of the subdivision were named after U.S. presidents, including Adams Avenue towards the northern boundary and Fillmore Avenue (present-day University Avenue) at the southern boundary. The north-south streets were named after U.S. states and, from west to east, in a roughly clockwise geographical order starting in the northeast with Maine and ending in the Midwest with Missouri. Although there was some variation in the subdivision parcels, typical blocks were 600 by 300 feet, and typical lots were 25 by 140 feet. Boulevards were 150 feet wide, streets were 80 feet wide, and alleys, which were predominantly north-south through the center of each block, were 20 feet wide<sup>13</sup>.

Unfortunately, the Great Boom of the mid-1880s was short-lived. By the spring of 1888, Southern California's real estate market was crashing and property values plummeted. Thousands of investors went from "paper millionaires" to nearly penniless<sup>14</sup>. Despite the real estate crash, many of the most important public and private improvements in San Diego were completed in the years immediately following the crash, including completion of Hotel del Coronado; construction of the Spreckels coal bunkers and wharves; the court house; extensive street paving; the extension of the electric railway to University Heights; the completion of a water flume to supply water to the city; and construction of the San Diego, Cuyamaca & Eastern Railway to El Cajon<sup>15</sup>. By 1889, economic stagnation truly began, marked by a series of bank failures<sup>16</sup>. The California National Bank failed in 1891, creating further economic distress<sup>17</sup>. Most of the speculative real estate transactions of the Great Boom involved the sale of vacant parcels at inflated property values; thus, many subdivisions, including University Heights, remained undeveloped and rural<sup>18</sup>. The promise of development faded through the economic depression of the 1890s.

Despite the implosion of the Great Boom in the spring of 1888, Choate spearheaded several improvements for the subdivision, including installing water main pipes down every street and a steam-powered streetcar line to the college<sup>19</sup>. According to another W.H. Holabird & Company ad in December 1888, "[h]undreds [o]f men are at work grading the boulevards on University Heights," which was "the choice residence property of the city," and the Electric Motor Rapid Transit Railroad was completed<sup>20</sup>. Trees along the boulevards and streets were planned, and new owners began transforming their lots, although the majority of University Heights remained undeveloped.

By November 1888, the firm of Norcross & Howard was the sole real estate agent of the Association, according to its advertisements<sup>21</sup>. The firm, led by H.F. Norcross, L.B. Howard, and Major E.A. Howard, claimed to "have sold more property during the last few months than any other real estate firm in the city"<sup>22</sup>. Norcross & Howard touted the view from the bluffs and the convenience of half-hour trips on the Electric Motor Rapid Transit Railroad in its ads for University Heights. Despite the promises of its promoters, the sales of lots in University Heights suffered as the real estate market in San Diego collapsed in 1889. The plan for the College of Arts failed, and the college site and building were abandoned due to lack of funds. The Association held its shares in University Heights, but speculation in San Diego otherwise ceased.



Although the real estate market failed spectacularly in 1888, some important public and private improvements in University Heights continued to be developed<sup>23</sup>. For example, the transit corridors between downtown San Diego and University Heights continued to evolve. The Electric Motor Rapid Transit Railroad completed an electric streetcar route up Fourth Avenue to the college site in University Heights in 1888, but quickly ended service in 1889 because it was not profitable. The San Diego Cable Railway Company redeveloped the same route with cable cars in 1890, and then extended the cable car system to the intersection of Adams Avenue and Park Boulevard in 1891. As part of its marketing scheme, the company developed "The Bluffs," a five-acre park with a pavilion at the Adams Avenue terminus as an attraction for daytrippers and to promote sales of the lots along the right-of-way owned by the company<sup>24</sup>. Due to economic hardship related to the crash, the San Diego Cable Railway Company folded but was reorganized in 1895 as the Citizens' Traction Company. The company converted the cable cars into electric streetcars, and redesigned The Bluffs into Mission Cliff Park with additional entertainment and attractions<sup>25</sup>. Eventually, the San Diego Electric Railway Company acquired the line in 1898, incorporated it into its existing system, and then widened the right-of-way through Hillcrest to Mission Cliff Park. John D. Spreckels, the owner of the company, had the park redesigned as Mission Cliff Gardens, turning the popular attraction into an elegant botanical garden.

In addition to the development of transit lines and recreational attractions, educational institutions were developed. The University Heights School, the first elementary school in the neighborhood, opened in 1893. New plans for an institution of higher learning in University Heights also began in 1897. The original campus site was donated to the State of California for a teacher-training college, the Normal School. Local architects William S. Hebbard and Irving Gill designed a grand Classical Revival building for the site, which opened in 1899. Hebbard and Gill also designed east and west wings for the building that were completed in 1904. The Teachers Training Annex, a separate Italian Renaissance Revival-style building, was added to the campus in 1910. The Normal School finally fulfilled the vision of the Association for a civic institution at the center of the University Heights community, although its eventual designation first as a State Teacher's College in 1921, and then as an exalted State College in 1925 eventually led to its relocation in 1931.

#### DEVELOPMENT IN THE EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

As the economy rebounded, real estate development in San Diego slowly regained momentum. On November 25, 1899, a new investment company, the South-Western Investment Company, led by "Colonel" David Charles (D.C.) Collier, Jr. and George M. Hawley, was incorporated and began focusing on the acquisition of land holdings in University Heights. Collier and Hawley were each involved in several real estate ventures in the early 20th century, but particularly focused on the University Heights, Normal Heights, and City Heights neighborhoods in San Diego. Collier and Hawley formed the University Heights Syndicate in 1902, incorporating their interests to the east of Mission Cliff Gardens. With Collier's and Hawley's investments, the South-Western Investment Company controlled nearly all of the College Hill Land Association's stock by March 1907<sup>26</sup>.

In February 1902, real estate agent C.A. Scott advertised several lots in 10 blocks in University Heights "at bargain counter prices to insure a quick sale." Agent representatives would meet prospective buyers arriving on the electric streetcar at Mission Cliff Gardens, "every car Thursday and Friday," to tour the properties. Lots were priced between \$40 and \$100<sup>27</sup>.

Collier's Ralston Realty Company began selling University Heights lots by 1904<sup>28</sup>. The company was instrumental in promoting University Heights and encouraging speculation on the sparsely developed subdivision. More improvements were rapidly available in University Heights in the 1900s, including water access. Substantial development of University Heights was not possible until a consistent water supply was available on the mesa. In 1907, Spreckels gained control over the Southern California Mountain and Water Supply Company, which then supplied the city<sup>29</sup>. In 1907, the College Hill Land Association donated the 160,000-gallon water tank to the city "whereby this district was for the first time connected with the city water system. The tank, located on block 15, was long one of the most prominent and much-admired landmarks in the eastern part of the city, visible for many miles around"<sup>30</sup>. The tank would supply an estimated 20 blocks east of the Mission Cliff Gardens pavilion, with a main pipeline along Idaho Street to downtown<sup>31</sup>. By 1910, a tank "mounted on the little knoll, having a capacity of 490,000 gallons" was installed to serve University Heights.

Also in 1907, the San Diego Electric Railway Company, in conjunction with Ralston Realty Company, completed an extension of the line down Adams Avenue to Normal Heights. With the supply of water assured and the extension of the San Diego Electric Railway route along Adams Avenue, development in University Heights boomed. In October 1907, Ralston Realty Company acquired Hawley's interests and oversaw the sales of lots in University Heights. Eventually, the companies' real estate interests in University Heights and Normal Heights were consolidated under the Western Investment Company of San Diego, which was incorporated on November 30, 1907.

#### STREETCAR SUBURBS

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the location and density of commercial and residential development were largely determined by proximity to public transportation. Real estate along transit routes was extremely valuable. Early subdivisions closely followed established streetcar routes, and businesses and residences were built within short distances of the streetcar lines<sup>32</sup>. Unlike areas that developed with a primary focus on automobile activity, areas surrounding streetcar lines developed at nodes. Commercial activity was centered at the intersection of streetcar routes, with commercial and residential development expanding outwards from the node. For University Heights, first the arrival of horsecars in 1886, then the electric streetcar in 1888, then the cable car in 1890, and again the electric streetcar in 1895 were especially important to the development of the neighborhood. The 1891 arrival of streetcars at the intersection of Park Boulevard and Adams Avenue defined the development and layout of northern University Heights.

Starting in June 1890, a cable car line operated between downtown San Diego and University Heights. In 1888, John C. Fisher, David D. Dare, and C.W. Collins organized the San Diego Cable Railway Company (also known as the San Diego Cable Car Company). Dare and Collins were officers at the California National Bank, which was born of San Diego's real estate boom. Construction for the cable car system began in August 1889, despite the economic downturn<sup>33</sup>. The first cable car ran through town on June 7, 1890, followed by a parade with the City Guard band<sup>34</sup>. The first paying customer was beloved horticulturalist Kate Sessions<sup>35</sup>. The cable car system had one route, which began at Sixth Avenue, turned west at C Street, then continued north on Fourth Avenue along the Electric Rapid Transit Company's original route to the college site in University Heights. The entire line was powered by two large coal-fired steam engines located within a powerhouse near the intersection of Fourth Street (present-day Fourth Avenue) and Spruce Street. The engines turned

massive 12-foot-diameter wheels that pulled the cables<sup>36</sup>. In 1891, the line was extended north on Carolina Street (present-day Park Boulevard) and terminated at Adams Avenue, where the company created The Bluffs park and pavilion<sup>37</sup>. Turntables for the one-ender cars were built at the present-day intersections of Sixth Avenue and L Street, Fourth Avenue and Spruce Street, and Park Boulevard and Adams Avenue.

While the cable car line was popular, it was not profitable. The cable car only ran for a brief period of time, but it played a pivotal role in the development of northern University Heights. It was the first means of public transportation that reached the intersection of Park Boulevard and Adams Avenue, and it led to the creation of the immensely popular Mission Cliff Gardens. The cable car route eventually returned to electric streetcars, making the land surrounding the intersection of Park Boulevard and Adams Avenue increasingly valuable to real estate prospectors in the early 1900s.

John D. Spreckels, the sugar and shipping magnate, first began investing in San Diego development in 1887. Spreckels' significant wealth and influence shaped multiple aspects of San Diego's development. During the economic downturn of the late 1880s and the depression in the 1890s, Spreckels revived several projects in San Diego that faced bankruptcy and closure, including a real estate development company, the Coronado Beach Company, and its crown jewel, the Hotel del Coronado. The Coronado Beach Company was owned by Story and Babcock, who were also major stakeholders in the San Diego Street Car Company. When Spreckels acquired the Coronado Beach Company's holdings in 1889, he also gained a stake in the San Diego Street Car Company.

Spreckels believed that "transportation determines the flow of population," and promoted electric streetcar lines to spur suburban development<sup>38</sup>. As early as 1891, Spreckels began initiating the modernization and expansion of San Diego's interurban lines<sup>39</sup>. In 1892, Spreckels bought the remaining shares of the San Diego Street Car Company and formed the San Diego Electric Railway Company<sup>40</sup>. The new company quickly began converting horsecars to electric motor cars and, within four years, horsecars were no longer operating in San Diego.

In 1898, the San Diego Electric Railway Company acquired the defunct Citizen's Traction Company and its holdings, including the electric railways, Mission Cliff Park, and 327 lots in University Heights<sup>41</sup>. The San Diego Electric Railway Company abandoned the Fourth Street route but connected the University Heights line to its Fifth Street route, and widened the right-of-way for the line leading up to Adams Avenue. Into the early 1900s, the company continued to improve and expand its lines. As mentioned in Ralston Realty Company's prospectus: "The San Diego Electric Railway Company is busy double-tracking its line and will shortly be running a ten-minute service to supply demand for a faster schedule to the Pavilion and Mission Cliff Park"<sup>42</sup>.

In January 1906, the San Diego Electric Railway Company announced the new Adams Avenue line with the stated purpose "to open up a new residence district to be known as Normal Heights"<sup>43</sup>. Construction started on May 27, 1907, and reached the City limits by mid-July. On August 25, 1907, the inaugural streetcar traversed the Adams Avenue line from east to west, terminating at a formal celebration in Mission Cliff Park. The Ralston Realty Company hosted the event that was attended by board members of the College Hill Land Association, City and County officials, and other real estate representatives. The collaboration of Ralston Realty Company and the San Diego Electric Railway Company to open the route extension along Adams Avenue, combined with the streetcar's

affordability and convenience, stimulated sales of cheap land and suburban growth in the streetcar suburbs of University Heights, Normal Heights, and eventually Kensington<sup>44</sup>.

The San Diego Electric Railway Company continued to grow into the 1910s (Figure 4). In 1913, the San Diego Electric Railway Company constructed a large, brick and reinforced concrete building to store and service the streetcars, or trolley cars, on Adams Avenue opposite the block between Georgia and Florida Streets. Hundreds of streetcars came through University Heights to be serviced in the trolley barn<sup>45</sup>. Streetcars continued to operate for the next 36 years in San Diego, until the last trolley was retired into the Adams Avenue trolley barn on the morning of April 24, 1949<sup>46</sup>.

## POST-EXPOSITION AND POST-WORLD WAR I BOOM

Early in the twentieth century, the parcels along streetcar routes became valuable to real estate speculators, and these tracts were again purchased, subdivided and re-subdivided. Developers installed the subdivisions' infrastructure – water and sewer hook-ups, street lighting, shrubs, sidewalks, paving, street trees, etc. Several local real estate developers built several speculative houses on their tracts to boost sales. However, most developers were merely interested in selling lots, not homes. It was up to the individual property owner to contract either an architect or a craftsman/builder to design and construct a home. Largely middle-class households moved into North Park and built modest, small-scale residences that make up the bulk of the community's built environment<sup>47</sup>.

As the streetcar lines were connecting North Park to greater San Diego, the city was making plans for an exposition to take place in 1915. It was to be a celebration of the completion of the Panama Canal, but was in fact a national advertisement for the City of San Diego. The themes and activities of the exposition were intended to educate the public about the cultures of the Southwest. The town enthusiastically supported what was to be called the Panama-California Exposition, despite the fact that another exposition was being planned for the same time in San Francisco. San Diegans were aware that they could not compete with San Francisco in staging a "world's fair." For this reason, they characterized their endeavor as a regional exposition showcasing the history and culture of the Southwest and Southern California. The Panama-California Exposition opened January 1, 1915 and ran for two years. The Exposition attracted over 3.7 million visitors and would ultimately have a significant impact on not only the development of San Diego, but in city planning and the built environment throughout Southern California.<sup>48</sup>

Exposition architect Bertram Goodhue chose an eclectic Spanish style for the buildings, setting it apart from the more formal European Renaissance and Neo-Classical styles popular at the time, which were being employed at the San Francisco World's Fair. Goodhue's architecture featured stylistic references to the Catholic missions and churches of Southern California and Mexico, as well as to grand palaces of Mexico, Spain, and Italy. The success of the Exposition was largely attributed to its exotic architecture and beautifully landscaped gardens and park grounds. However, the Exposition had a practical, as well as a romantic, purpose. Beyond promoting a new architecture and the region's temperate climate, the Exposition illustrated the great opportunities to be found in this burgeoning western metropolis. In addition, San Diego had invested approximately \$2 million in physical improvements in preparation for the Exposition -- buildings, landscaping, roadways, and infrastructure.<sup>49</sup>

The success of the Exposition helped to create one of the greatest local building booms in San Diego's history. Many visitors chose to relocate to San Diego during this period. Due to this steady stream of new residents, local realtors began to buy and subdivide numerous tracts of land neighboring the downtown area, particularly in North Park.

The 1920s was an era of unprecedented speculative real estate, not only in San Diego, but in all of Southern California. In addition to the new residents drawn to San Diego via the Exposition, many veterans returning from World War I, who had either trained or been stationed in San Diego, decided to make it their home. The influx of prospective home buyers saw a tremendous demand for middle-class housing in San Diego. For some decades before the War, a certain set of ideals for such housing had been evolving: a home should be owned and occupied by the family that lives in it. Likewise, the home should be aesthetically pleasing but not overly ornate, and should blend in well with its immediate surroundings. It should also be soundly constructed, but also economical and practical to live in. The pace of construction in the 1920s has been categorized as being midway between the slow expansion of homes in the nineteenth century and the massive tract developments of the post-WWII era<sup>50</sup>.

## THE MELHORNS

Martin V. Melhorn (Figure 5) was born in Indiana in February 1865 to German-born parents<sup>51</sup>. By 1880, at age 15, he was living in Falls City, Nebraska working for his room and board<sup>52</sup>. He remained in Falls City in 1885, where he worked as a Fire Insurance Agent and lived with his mother, Mary and sister in the home of his brother-in-law<sup>53</sup>. He moved to Denver, Colorado circa 1889/1890, the same year that he married his wife Alberta<sup>54</sup> (née Abell, born in Missouri in March 1870). Martin and Alberta had one child, a son, named William Harmon Buchtel Melhorn<sup>55</sup>, who was born May 25, 1894 in Denver. While in Denver, City Directory listings reveal that he worked in various fields related to real estate, building and development. The following lists the professions and residences listed for Martin V. Melhorn during his 20 years in Denver:

1890: Denver Fire Insurance Agency (Secretary and Treasurer); r. 3213 Marion  
1891: People's Fire Insurance Agency (Secretary and Treasurer); r. 3213 Marion  
1892: Real Estate, loans, and investments. 1029 17<sup>th</sup>, r. 2923 Humboldt  
1893: Loans, 15, 1622 Arapahoe, r. 1249 Gaylord  
1894: Real Estate, 716 Cooper Bldg, r. 1249 Gaylord  
1896: (no occupation listed) 716 Cooper Bldg, r. 1249 Gaylord  
1897: (directory could not be located)  
1898: (directory could not be located)  
1899: Real Estate, 525-528 Cooper Bldg, r. 1579 Franklin  
1900: Real Estate, 525-528 Cooper Bldg, r. 1579 Franklin  
1901: President Colorado Building & Lumber Co, r. 1579 Franklin  
1902: (directory could not be located)  
1903: (directory could not be located)  
1904: Contractor and builder, r. 979 S Pennsylvania Avenue  
1905: Real Estate, r. 979 S Pennsylvania Avenue  
1906: (directory could not be located)  
1907: Bldg Contractor, r 389 Lafayette  
1908: Real Estate, r. 389 Lafayette

1909: (directory could not be located)

1910: (directory could not be located)

Initially working in insurance, Melhorn quickly transitioned to construction and property development. Records from the City and County of Denver indicate that he pulled 7 building permits in 1892 (the year in which the directory lists his occupation as “real estate, loans, and investments”), and another building permit in 1902, just after he appears as president of the Colorado Building & Lumber Company<sup>56</sup>. In 1891, within Melhorn’s first two years in Denver, a New York native named John J. Wahrenberger and his wife Emilie would move in next door to Martin and Alberta on North Marion Street. The two men worked in similar fields, as the 1891 Denver City Directory lists Martin (3213 Marion Street) as secretary and treasurer of the People’s Fire Insurance Agency, and Wahrenberger (3225 Marion Street) as secretary and treasurer of Denver Loan and Trust. Both homes remain extant in Denver (Figure 6). Directory listings for Wahrenberger are not as complete as they are for Melhorn; however, it appears that Wahrenberger worked primarily as a secretary and treasurer for the organizations he served:

1889: (not listed)

1891: Denver Loan and Trust (Secretary and Treasurer), r. 3225 Marion

1892: Denver Trust and Safe Deposit Co (Secretary and Treasurer), 926 17<sup>th</sup> Street, r. 218 S. Lincoln

1893: Denver Trust and Safe Deposit Co (Secretary and Treasurer), 926 17<sup>th</sup> Street, r. 218 S. Lincoln

1894: Denver Trust and Safe Deposit Co (Secretary and Treasurer), 926 17<sup>th</sup> Street, r. 835 Emerson

1896: (no occupation listed) r. 224 S. Lincoln

1897: (directory could not be located)

1898: (directory could not be located)

1899: (not listed)

1900: (not listed, 1900 US Census lists him living in New Jersey and working in fire insurance)

1901: (not listed)

1902: (directory could not be located)

1903: (directory could not be located)

1904: (directory could not be located)

1905: treas Mining Reporter, r. 218 S. Lincoln

1906: (directory could not be located)

1907: (directory could not be located)

1908: asst sec Chamber of Commerce, r. 613 Grant

1909: (directory could not be located)

1910: (directory could not be located, US Census lists him living in Denver occupation “Private”)

While no evidence could be found in the Denver City Directories that John Wahrenberger and Martin V. Melhorn worked together while living in Denver, the two men quickly joined forces upon relocating their families to San Diego in late 1910 or early 1911. Together with realtor and investor John C. Rice, Wahrenberger and Melhorn formed the Bay City Construction Company on June 30, 1911, with each partner owning 50 shares of the business. The Bay City Construction Company chartered to build houses, carry out cement work, reinforced concrete, brick and stone work, steel construction, buy and/ or sell building materials, deal in real estate, subdivide and plat tracts of land, improve lands, build lease or maintain wharves, general merchandise, and many more duties. Melhorn’s work with the Bay City Construction Company, as well as his later career, has been well researched and documented by other researchers and historians who have prepared individual

historic resource nominations for properties associated with Melhorn. In particular, Legacy 106, Inc. has prepared several successful nominations that included detailed research into the various phases of Melhorn's career. The portions of those nominations most relevant to this context and district nomination are compiled below and cited to the extent possible. (For a list of nominations referenced, please refer to the "References" section of this nomination.)

In 1911, Melhorn and his partners bought all of Block 59 in the Arnold & Choate's Addition in North Florence Heights. Bay City Construction Company built all the lots between 1912 and 1915 in the Craftsman style, which included the house at 1309 Fort Stockton for Melhorn's own family. The best preserved example of a Block 59 Bay City Construction Company house is the Melhorn-King Bungalow, which is now City of San Diego, Historic Landmark No. 318, located at 1302 Washington Place on the corner of W. Washington and Ingalls. Another corner Bay City Construction Company /Melhorn bungalow of note on Block 59 is at the northeast intersection of Fort Stockton and Lark Street. This house also has sloping porch entry elements. Instead of cobblestone, this house uses brick accents.<sup>57</sup>

Homes built by the Bay City Construction Company were constructed primarily in the Craftsman style of the Arts and Crafts movement popular prior to World War I. However, they did design and construct buildings in a wide range of style and types. Records from 1912 listed in the Los Angeles Building and Contractor reveal Bay City Construction Company built more than custom homes. The following is a list of over \$150,000 worth of construction projects Bay City Construction Company built<sup>58</sup>:

1. W. R. Syfert hired them to build a three-story, reinforced concrete and hollow clay tile store and hotel on State, between "D" and "E" Streets for \$20,000. (Los Angeles Building and Contractor, July 12, 1912: 13,23).
2. Mary E. Ready hired Bay City Construction to build a three-story plaster apartment for \$25,000 at 705 25th Street (Los Angeles Building and Contractor September 12, 1912:18,25).
3. Under their ownership, Bay City Construction Company built a six-room cottage at 1109 Washington for \$3,000 and another house at 4120 Ingalls for \$3,000 (Los Angeles Building and Contractor September 26, 1912:24).
4. Omer C. Thompson hired Bay City Construction Company to build a 90-room, three-story apartment building with basement at 1213-1219 "E" Street, for \$50,000 (Los Angeles Building and Contractor, December 5, 1912: 11). They also built an apartment complex for Thompson at 1230 12th Street for \$50,000 (Los Angeles Building and Contractor, December 5, 1912: 25).

In 1913, Melhorn created his own financing company to ensure that he continued to receive payments and dividends on construction loans for several years after completion of the project. Melhorn joined with W.F. McCoy and George L. Mayne to incorporate Alberta Security Company on August 1, 1913. He named the company in honor of his wife, Alberta. The Articles of Incorporation for Alberta Security Company lists Martin V. Melhorn as owning 40 shares, W.F. McCoy owning five shares, and George L. Mayne owning another five shares. The stated purpose

of the company was to conduct real estate development, construction, subdivision of land, mortgage, lease, or operate gas, lighting, or power plants, wharves or wharf franchises and other property transactions. Mayne worked as secretary and treasurer of the West Coast Hotel Company, Inc. and W.F. McCoy was vice president<sup>59</sup>.

Melhorn acquired some lots and built speculation houses to be used as collateral for loans to build other houses. These "collateral houses" were rented through Alberta Security Company as another part of the income stream and to ensure long-term maintenance. If a client defaulted, Alberta Security Company would simply get the property back and resell it to someone else. Melhorn also worked with furniture and appliance outfitters and landscapers to help the new homeowners complete their homes. After incorporation in 1913, Alberta Security Company acquired and sold land and financed construction of Bay City Construction Company projects. Eventually, all speculation houses were sold off to homebuyers<sup>60</sup>.

In 1916, John Wahrenberger's health began to fail and the Bay City Construction Company was dissolved. Wahrenberger died two years later in 1918.

Martin Melhorn shifted from the carpentry-oriented Craftsman style to greater use of stucco in Prairie style houses after 1916. He often designed two story houses with wide windows and broad horizontal visor overhangs that shaded the upstairs windows. During this era, he experimented with modern construction materials, pre-constructed doors and windows, and manufactured appliances that could be installed to heat and make life more comfortable and convenient. From 1918 to 1919, Melhorn simply listed his occupation in the directory as "investments", although he continued to experiment with Prairie and other dramatic architectural styles during this period. Based on simple observation of the street view of the Mission Hills houses produced by Melhorn during this important period of his career, he toyed with larger dimensions, larger rooms, and worked with orienting windows and French doors to capture greater sunlight throughout the houses<sup>61</sup>.

In 1922, Melhorn's career entered a new phase when he was joined by his son, William. William was 16 when his family relocated from Denver to San Diego, where he attended San Diego High School. Following graduation he attended Kelsey-Jenney Commercial College while living with his parents. He moved away from San Diego briefly to attend Stanford University, returning home during school vacations to assist his father in his construction business<sup>62</sup>. In 1916 and 1917 he is listed in the directory as a clerk living in the home of his parents. In June of 1917 he registered for the World War I Draft in Imperial County, with his occupation listed as "farmer"<sup>63</sup>. Upon his return from WWI he is listed as working at the "Mission Hills Service Station in 1919 directory. William married his wife Lillian (née Nelson, born in 1898 to Swedish-born parents) in Los Angeles in November 1919<sup>64</sup> and continued his work as manager/proprietor of the Mission Hills Service Station through 1921. By 1922, William joined his father in the newly renamed "Melhorn & Son" construction company. That same year, William and Lillian would welcome their daughter Shirley Ann, followed by son Martin William in 1926.

This turning point is significant as the beginning of the family-owned company. The family orientation assumed greater significance when they built their own subdivisions and named the streets. Alberta Place was named in honor of Martin's wife and William's mother. Shirley Ann Place was built in honor of William's daughter<sup>65</sup>.



This was a very productive period for Melhorn & Son, who employed a team of carpenters, draftsmen, and foremen. The 1924 City Directory lists no less than nine employees, including CA Fright (carpenter), Gustav Geranson (carpenter), Cliff Grief (carpenter), Charles Holstrom (draftsman), Howard Jones (foreman), Andrew Jordan (carpenter), Charles Montgomery (carpenter), Bert Wills (carpenter), and LE Zimmerman (carpenter). This greatly increased their capacity, allowing them to construct at least 16 houses in Mission Hills in 1922 and 1923 (according to researcher Allen Hazard); construct 15 houses in the Valle Vista Terrace Historic District between 1920 and 1924; and undertake a large, full-block project in University Heights that would become the subject district and the previously designated Shirley Ann Place Historic District.

The Alberta Security Company purchased block 51 of University Heights from local landholder and real estate investor D.L. Pixley. Melhorn & Son began constructing homes in 1924, first along Louisiana Street and then Texas Street. In doing so, they deviated from the established development pattern of long lots backing up on to alleyways. Instead, they constructed small homes on the front half of the lots, fronting on to Louisiana Street and Texas Street. The rear half of the lots were reserved for future development along a new street comprised of the alleyway and 7.5' feet of the lots abutting the alley. This would become Shirley Ann Place, named after William's daughter. As a result, the lots fronting Louisiana Street and Texas Street are 70-feet deep, while the lots along Shirley Ann Place are 62.5-feet deep.

The first permit was pulled in January of 1924, and was quickly followed by over a dozen others, primarily on Louisiana Street. An undated photo from the San Diego History Center shows the first 4-5 houses along Louisiana Street, with relatively little development in the surrounding neighborhood (Figure 7). Based on the permit data, it is estimated that this aerial photo was taken in early-to-mid-1924. Construction in the district continued into 1925.

Architecturally, Martin and William moved away from the Spanish and Mission Revival styles that they had gravitated to in the late 19-teens and early 1920s in the wake of the 1915-1916 Exposition. Homes along Louisiana Street and Texas Street were constructed as vernacular Craftsman bungalows with some Colonial Revival elements and influences that can be seen in carved wood brackets and slender wood columns supporting the partial-width porches. Many of these details are very similar to original sketches made by Martin V. Melhorn for Alberta Place (Figure 8). The vast majority of homes along Louisiana Street and Texas Street – 25 of 30 – were completed in 1924 and 1925. Tragically, on August 14, 1925<sup>66</sup>, Martin V. Melhorn took his own life after battling an unknown illness. His untimely and unexpected death created a degree of chaos for his son.

The probate records located in the Superior Court in downtown San Diego indicate at least forty houses and commercial buildings were under construction at the time of Martin V Melhorn's death in 1925. At least two of his creditors filed suit soon thereafter. To pay construction crews for carpentry, plaster work, concrete work, and other building specialties on jobs in University Heights, North Park, and South Park in 1925, [Melhorn's widow] Alberta filed papers to urge the court to appoint William as special administrator of the estate. The court approved the appointment, but required detailed accounting during the probate. This enabled William to continue construction work, settle debts, and reply to the lawsuits as president of the company. At that point in time, M.V. Melhorn and Son changed unofficially to Wm. B. Melhorn Construction<sup>67</sup>.

It appears that as part of the debt settlement, the Alberta Security Company declared bankruptcy, with a bankruptcy trial scheduled for March 22, 1926<sup>68</sup>. Thus, the years 1925-1926 brought to a close Martin V. Melhorn's Alberta Security Company and Melhorn & Son construction company, and marked the start of a new chapter for his son William. Working as a general contractor, William completed the final two resources along Texas Street in 1926. He then turned his attention to the homes along Shirley Ann Place, which he named after his 4 year old daughter, and began construction of the first homes in 1926, which were constructed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Construction along Shirley Ann Place proceeded at a slower pace, with 19 homes constructed between 1926 and 1933, and an additional 5 homes completed by 1949.

The 30-year era of Wm. B. Melhorn Company is reflected in a change from residential housing to commercial construction projects. William found those larger building jobs to be more lucrative and better suited to his organizational skills. This shift also served the company well during the Great Depression years, as the larger corporations were better suited to obtaining construction loans. The architectural styles ranged from Spanish Eclectic through the mid-1930s to Art Deco up to World War II in the 1940s and through the Mid Century Modern styles of the Post World War II era<sup>69</sup>.

Examples of Wm. B. Melhorn Company projects between 1926 and 1956 include Mission Hills Plumbing (now L.B. Powers Plumbing); Burnett's Furniture; Dryer's Furniture; Standard Furniture Company; Lloyd's Furniture; San Diego Burglar Alarm Company; San Diego Electric Company Showroom; United States Savings, San Diego Branch; Arcade Building; Grand Rapids Home Furnishing Company; Van's Market; Hotel Knickerbocker; Christian Science Church of Coronado; La Jolla High School; V.A. Turner Plumbing; Allied Food Stores; Kalmia Apartments; Carrell's Drug Store; The Modern Furniture Store; Morrison Stores of Los Angeles; Moorsteen Manufacturing Company; Globe Furniture Company; and Monterey Apartments<sup>70</sup>.

William's mother, Alberta, passed away in 1955. At the 30-year anniversary of the Wm. B. Melhorn Company, the family changed the name to Melhorn Construction Company. They incorporated in 1956 and shifted their emphasis to include highway construction and capital improvements, as well as the commercial buildings. William retired in 1958 and handed the reins of the corporation over to his son, Martin "Marty" W. Melhorn. Marty served as vice president, manager, and eventually chief executive officer. William passed away in 1969. William's daughter, Shirley Ann McHenry, had a son named Jerry McHenry, who currently serves as chief executive officer of Melhorn Construction Company<sup>71</sup>.

Both Martin V. Melhorn and his son William Melhorn have been established by the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board as Master Builders. Martin V. Melhorn's status as a Master Builder was established in 1993 with the designation of the Melhorn-King House at 1302 Washington Place (HRB Site #318). Since then, no fewer than 15 individual resources have been designated for an association with Martin V. Melhorn and his Alberta Security Company. He is recognized for his quality design and construction – as well as his craftsmanship – across a range of architectural styles from Craftsman to Prairie to Spanish Colonial Revival to Mission Revival to Colonial Revival. William was established as a Master Builder in 2000 with the designation of the Shirley Ann Place Historic District, which he constructed beginning in 2006 following his father's death. Since then, two individual resources have been designated for an association with William Melhorn - the Albert D. &

Allie M. Hagaman/William B. Melhorn House at 219-221 Kalmia Street (HRB Site #870) and the Alfred and Helen Cantoni/Ralph L. Frank and William B. Melhorn House located at 2412 Pine Street (HRB Site #1160).

#### SHIRLEY ANN PLACE HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION

The Shirley Ann Place Historic District was designated in 2000 under HRB Criterion F, and was limited to the parcels immediately adjacent to Shirley Ann Place (Figure 9). The Shirley Ann Place Historic District was found to be significant as an excellent example of a post WWI speculative middle-class builder/contractor-designed housing tract, and as one of two known mini-tract housing projects initiated by the Alberta Security Company (the other being Alberta Place in Mission Hills). At the time of designation, the Alberta Security Company's founder, Martin Melhorn, had been established by the Board as a Master. The designation of the Shirley Ann Place Historic District extended that Master Builder status to include his son William, who ran the Alberta Security Company with his father and oversaw the dissolution of the company shortly after work began in the Shirley Ann Place Historic District. It is believed that at the time the Shirley Ann Place Historic District was designated, it was not well understood that Martin V. Melhorn and William Melhorn were responsible for the construction of the other properties in the block along Louisiana Street and Texas Street, perhaps due to the stylistic differences between these properties.

While they have a largely shared historic context, the Melhorn & Son Historic District has been identified as a separate historic district enveloping the Shirley Ann Place Historic District, due to subtle yet distinct differences in the significance of the two districts. The Melhorn & Son Historic District is significant both as a resource that reflects a special element of the City's historical, economic and architectural development – that of working class builder/contractor-designed street-car suburb development in a vernacular Craftsman and Minimal Traditional bungalow expression; and as a resource that reflects the work of two Master Builders – Martin V. Melhorn and his son William Melhorn – at the end of their career together. The period of significance for the Melhorn & Son Historic District is 1924-1948. Whereas the Shirley Ann Place Historic District was designated as a resource that reflects a working-class builder/contractor-designed street-car suburb development in a vernacular Spanish Colonial Revival and Minimal Traditional bungalow expression; and as a resource that reflects the work of one Master Builder – William Melhorn – at the beginning of his career as an independent designer/builder. The period of significance for Shirley Ann Place is 1920s and 1939-1949.

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Melhorn & Son Historic District is directly associated with the themes outlined in the North Park Community Plan Area Historic Context Statement:

- **Development of North Park, 1907-1929:** The city saw an influx of primarily working and middle-class residents during this period, largely attributable to two events: the arrival of the United States Navy in San Diego, and the growth of tourism following the Panama-California Exposition... The development of North Park during this period was influenced by the completion of the streetcar lines, which ran along Adams Avenue, University Avenue, and 30th Street... According to the San Diego Union, in 1924 North Park was considered the fastest growing district in San Diego... Residential and commercial areas that were in tracts

that had been subdivided previously began to be developed rapidly in order to accommodate the area's growing population...

- **Post-World War II Development of North Park, 1946-1970:** In the years immediately following World War II, the population of Southern California grew exponentially... This was particularly true throughout San Diego, given its proximity to military installations and its significance in the defense and aviation industries. Development in North Park during this period was primarily infill in previously established neighborhoods... It was also during this period that the FHA's "minimum house" would proliferate in the form of the Minimal Traditional-style tract house.

The Melhorn & Son Historic District is significant under HRB Criterion A as a special element of San Diego's historical, economic and architectural development from 1924, when Alberta Security Company purchased block 51 in University Heights, through 1948, when the district was ultimately built-out with a few infill properties constructed in the Minimal Traditional style. More specifically, the district is significant as a reflection of streetcar suburban development during the population boom of the Post-Exposition and Post-World War I era, at a time when the surrounding North Park Community was considered the fastest growing area of San Diego; and as a reflection of the efforts of a developer/builder to provide working class housing on a resubdivided block intended to maximize the number of developable lots during a substantial population boom and resulting housing shortage. The district also reflects Craftsman architecture in a vernacular, working class expression towards the end of the style's popularity; as well as Minimal Traditional architecture popularized during the Depression era by the FHA "minimum house". Craftsman styling can be seen in the moderately pitch side gable and jerkinhead roofs; overhanging eaves; wood lap and shingle siding; single and multi-lite wood frame and sash windows in double hung, casement and awning varieties, and partial width porches with covers supported by wood columns or wood brackets. Minimal Traditional styling can be seen in the low-to-medium pitched gable roofs; minimally overhanging or clipped eaves; stucco cladding; single and multi-lite wood frame and sash double hung windows; and small porches with stoops or partial width porches.

The Melhorn & Son Historic District is also significant under HRB Criterion D as a resource that reflects the notable work of two Master Builders, Martin V. Melhorn and William Melhorn working together as Melhorn & Son construction company. Specifically, the district reflects their last larger-scale collaborative effort building modest working-class housing on a resubdivided block intended to maximize the number of developable lots during a substantial population boom and resulting housing shortage. The homes reflect the design and construction which the Melhorn's were noted for, and exhibits features and decorative elements similar to the sketches in their design book. The district was constructed at a unique period of transition for the Melhorn family. Martin V. and William began design and construction of the district together as Melhorn & Son in 1924; and upon Martin's death in mid-1925, William finished construction of the district, dissolved the Alberta Security Company, and embarked on his owner career as WB Melhorn construction. The period of significance related to HRB Criterion D is 1924-1926, which reflects the period of time in which Melhorn & Son was designing and building homes within the district.

Taken together with the existing Shirley Ann Place Historic District that the Melhorn & Son Historic District envelopes, these two districts illustrate two distinct expressions of the masterful work of the Melhorn family. The Melhorn & Son Historic District, constructed in a vernacular Craftsman

bungalow aesthetic, reflects the collaborative effort between a skilled and experienced master builder/developer at the end of his career and his son learning the craft in a fledgling partnership with his father; while the Shirley Ann Place Historic District, constructed in a Spanish Colonial Revival style aesthetic, reflects the solo effort of a newly emerging Master Builder in the wake of his father's untimely death.

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<sup>9</sup> Golden Era 1887  
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<sup>13</sup> Ralston Realty Co. 1906  
<sup>14</sup> City of San Diego 2010  
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- <sup>25</sup> SOHO 2006
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- <sup>61</sup> Legacy 106, Inc 2016
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- <sup>71</sup> Legacy 106, Inc. 2016






MELHORN AND SON HISTORIC DISTRICT RESOURCE ANALYSIS SPREADSHEET																								
PHOTO	STREET NUMBER	STREET NAME	APN	LEGAL DESCRIPTION	SUBDIVISION	ARCH STYLE	YEAR BUILT	CONTRIBUTING OR NON- CONTRIBUTING	STATUS CODE	Non-Historic Awnings	Landscape Features & Overgrowth	In-Kind Window Replacement	Inconsistent Roofing	Non-Historic Stucco Texture	Added Veneers	One or more Non-Historic Windows Replaced in Same Opening	Replacement of Porch Railings and/or Posts	Enclosure of Porch with Original Framing Intact and Evident	Highly Visible Aluminum Garage Door	Minor Additions and/or Remodeling	Windows Replaced in New or Altered Opening	Replacing One Siding Type with Another	Enclosure and/or Expansion of Porch with Original Framing/Structure Lost	Inconsistent Additions and/or Remodeling
	4503	Louisiana Street	4451531400	BLK 51 LOT 21 W 70 FT OF S 15 FT LOT 20 & W 70 FT	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1924	Non-Contributing	6L								X					X		X
	4509	Louisiana Street	4451531300	BLK 51 POR	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1924	Contributing	5D1								X			X				
	4515	Louisiana Street	4451531200	BLK 51 LOT 18 W 70 FT OF S 20 FT LOT 17 & W 70 FT OF N 20 FT	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1924	Non-Contributing	6L							X				X		X		
	4521	Louisiana Street	4451531100	BLK 51 POR	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1924	Contributing	5D1											X				
	4531	Louisiana Street	4451531000	BLK 51 LOT 15 W 70 FT LOT 14 & W 70 FT OF N 15 FT	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1924	Contributing	5D1							X								








MELHORN AND SON HISTORIC DISTRICT  
RESOURCE ANALYSIS SPREADSHEET

PHOTO	STREET NUMBER	STREET NAME	APN	LEGAL DESCRIPTION	SUBDIVISION	ARCH STYLE	YEAR BUILT	CONTRIBUTING OR NON-CONTRIBUTING	STATUS CODE	Non-Historic Awnings	Landscape Features & Overgrowth	In-Kind Window Replacement	Inconsistent Roofing	Non-Historic Stucco Texture	Added Veneers	One or more Non-Historic Windows Replaced in Same Opening	Replacement of Porch Railings and/or Posts	Enclosure of Porch with Original Framing Intact and Evident	Highly Visible Aluminum Garage Door	Minor Additions and/or Remodeling	Windows Replaced in New or Altered Opening	Replacing One Siding Type with Another	Enclosure and/or Expansion of Porch with Original Framing/Structure Lost	Inconsistent Additions and/or Remodeling
	4535	Louisiana Street	4451530900	BLK 51 LOT 13 W 70 FT OF S 15 FT LOT 12 & W 70 FT	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1924	Contributing	5D1							X								
	4541	Louisiana Street	4451530800	BLK 51 POR	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1924	Non-Contributing	6L							X	X					X		
	4549	Louisiana Street	4451530700	BLK 51 LOT 10 W 70 FT OF S 20 FT LOT 9 & W 70 FT OF N 20 FT	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1924	Contributing	5D1								X			X				
	4555	Louisiana Street	4451530600	BLK 51 POR	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1924	Contributing	5D1							X								
	4561	Louisiana Street	4451530500	BLK 51 LOT 7 W 70 FT LOT 6 & W 70 FT ON N 15 FT	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1925	Contributing	5D1							X				X				













MELHORN AND SON HISTORIC DISTRICT RESOURCE ANALYSIS SPREADSHEET																								
PHOTO	STREET NUMBER	STREET NAME	APN	LEGAL DESCRIPTION	SUBDIVISION	ARCH STYLE	YEAR BUILT	CONTRIBUTING OR NON- CONTRIBUTING	STATUS CODE	Non-Historic Awnings	Landscape Features & Overgrowth	In-Kind Window Replacement	Inconsistent Roofing	Non-Historic Stucco Texture	Added Veneers	One or More Non-Historic Windows Replaced in Same Opening	Replacement of Porch Railings and/or Posts	Enclosure of Porch with Original Framing Intact and Evident	Highly Visible Aluminum Garage Door	Minor Additions and/or Remodeling	Windows Replaced in New or Altered Opening	Replacing One Siding Type with Another	Enclosure and/or Expansion of Porch with Original Framing/Structure Lost	Inconsistent Additions and/or Remodeling
	4567	Louisiana Street	4451530400	BLK 51 LOT 5 W 70 FT OF S 15 FT LOT 4 & W 70 FT	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1925	Non-Contributing	6L															
	4573	Louisiana Street	4451530300	BLK 51 POR	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1925	Contributing	5D1															
	4579	Louisiana Street	4451530200	BLK 51 POR	University Heights	Minimal Traditional	1946	Contributing	5D1															
	4581	Louisiana Street	4451530200	BLK 51 POR	University Heights	Minimal Traditional	1946	Contributing	5D1															
	2305	Mission Avenue	4451530100	BLK 51 LOT 1 POR	University Heights	Minimal Traditional	1948	Contributing	5D1															

MELHORN AND SON HISTORIC DISTRICT RESOURCE ANALYSIS SPREADSHEET																								
PHOTO	STREET NUMBER	STREET NAME	APN	LEGAL DESCRIPTION	SUBDIVISION	ARCH STYLE	YEAR BUILT	CONTRIBUTING OR NON- CONTRIBUTING	STATUS CODE	Non-Historic Awnings	Landscape Features & Overgrowth	In-Kind Window Replacement	Inconsistent Roofing	Non-Historic Stucco Texture	Added Veneers	One or more Non-Historic Windows Replaced in Same Opening	Replacement of Porch Railings and/or Posts	Enclosure of Porch with Original Framing Intact and Evident	Highly Visible Aluminum Garage Door	Minor Additions and/or Remodeling	Windows Replaced in New or Altered Opening	Replacing One Siding Type with Another	Enclosure and/or Expansion of Porch with Original Framing/Structure Lost	Inconsistent Additions and/or Remodeling
	4502	Texas Street	4451534000	BLK 51 LOT 23 E 70 FT LOT 22 & E 70 FT OF S 15 FT	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1924	Non-Contributing	6L							X						X		
	4510	Texas Street	4451534100	BLK 51 POR	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1924	Non-Contributing	6Z												X	X		
	4516	Texas Street	4451534200	BLK 51 LOT 26 E 70 FT OF N 20 FT LOT 25 & E 70 FT OF S 20 FT	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1924	Contributing	5D1		X													
	4522	Texas Street	4451534300	BLK 51 POR	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1924	Contributing	5D1															
	4530	Texas Street	4451534400	BLK 51 LOT 29 E 70 FT OF N 15 FT LOT 28 & E 70 FT	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1925	Contributing	5D1															



MELHORN AND SON HISTORIC DISTRICT  
RESOURCE ANALYSIS SPREADSHEET

PHOTO	STREET NUMBER	STREET NAME	APN	LEGAL DESCRIPTION	SUBDIVISION	ARCH STYLE	YEAR BUILT	CONTRIBUTING OR NON- CONTRIBUTING	STATUS CODE	Non-Historic Awnings	Landscape Features & Overgrowth	In-Kind Window Replacement	Inconsistent Roofing	Non-Historic Stucco Texture	Added Veneers	One or more Non-Historic Windows Replaced in Same Opening	Replacement of Porch Railings and/or Posts	Enclosure of Porch with Original Framing Intact and Evident	Highly Visible Aluminum Garage Door	Minor Additions and/or Remodeling	Windows Replaced in New or Altered Opening	Replacing One Siding Type with Another	Enclosure and/or Expansion of Porch with Original Framing/Structure Lost	Inconsistent Additions and/or Remodeling
	4536	Texas Street	4451534500	BLK 51 LOT 31 E 70 FT LOT 30 & S 15 FT OF E 70 FT	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1925	Contributing	5D1															
	4542	Texas Street	4451534600	BLK 51 POR	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1925	Non-Contributing	6L							X						X		
	4548	Texas Street	4451534700	BLK 51 LOT 34 N 20 FT OF E 70 FT LOT 33 & S 20 FT OF E 70 FT	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Ranch Influences	1925	Non-Contributing	6L							X								X
	4558	Texas Street	4451534800	BLK 51 POR	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1925	Contributing	5D1															X
	4562	Texas Street	4451534900	BLK 51 LOT 37 E 70 FT OF N 15 FT LOT 36 & E 70 FT OF	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1924	Contributing	5D1															

MELHORN AND SON HISTORIC DISTRICT RESOURCE ANALYSIS SPREADSHEET																								
PHOTO	STREET NUMBER	STREET NAME	APN	LEGAL DESCRIPTION	SUBDIVISION	ARCH STYLE	YEAR BUILT	CONTRIBUTING OR NON- CONTRIBUTING	STATUS CODE	Non-Historic Awnings	Landscape Features & Overgrowth	In-Kind Window Replacement	Inconsistent Roofing	Non-Historic Stucco Texture	Added Veneers	One or More Non-Historic Windows Replaced in Same Opening	Replacement of Porch Railings and/or Posts	Enclosure of Porch with Original Framing Intact and Evident	Highly Visible Aluminum Garage Door	Minor Additions and/or Remodeling	Windows Replaced in New or Altered Opening	Replacing One Siding Type with Another	Enclosure and/or Expansion of Porch with Original Framing/Structure Lost	Inconsistent Additions and/or Remodeling
	4564	Texas Street	4451535000	BLK 51 LOT 39 E 70 FT LOTS 38 & E 70 FT OF S 15 FT	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1925	Contributing	5D1		X					X				X				
	4570	Texas Street	4451535100	BLK 51 POR	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1925	Contributing	5D1															
	4576	Texas Street	4451535200	BLK 51 LOT 42 E 70 FT OF N 20 FT LOT 41 & E 70 FT OF S 20 FT	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1925	Contributing	5D1							X								
	4586	Texas Street	4451535300	BLK 51 POR	University Heights	Craftsman Bungalow with Colonial Revival Influences	1926	Contributing	5D1															
	4594	Texas Street	4451535400	BLK 51 LOT 45 N 15 FT OF E 70 FT LOT 44 & E 70 FT	University Heights	Vacant	N/A	Non-Contributing	6Z															

## CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: Melhorn & Son Historic District Figures

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\*Date

July

2018

☒ Continuation    ☐ Update

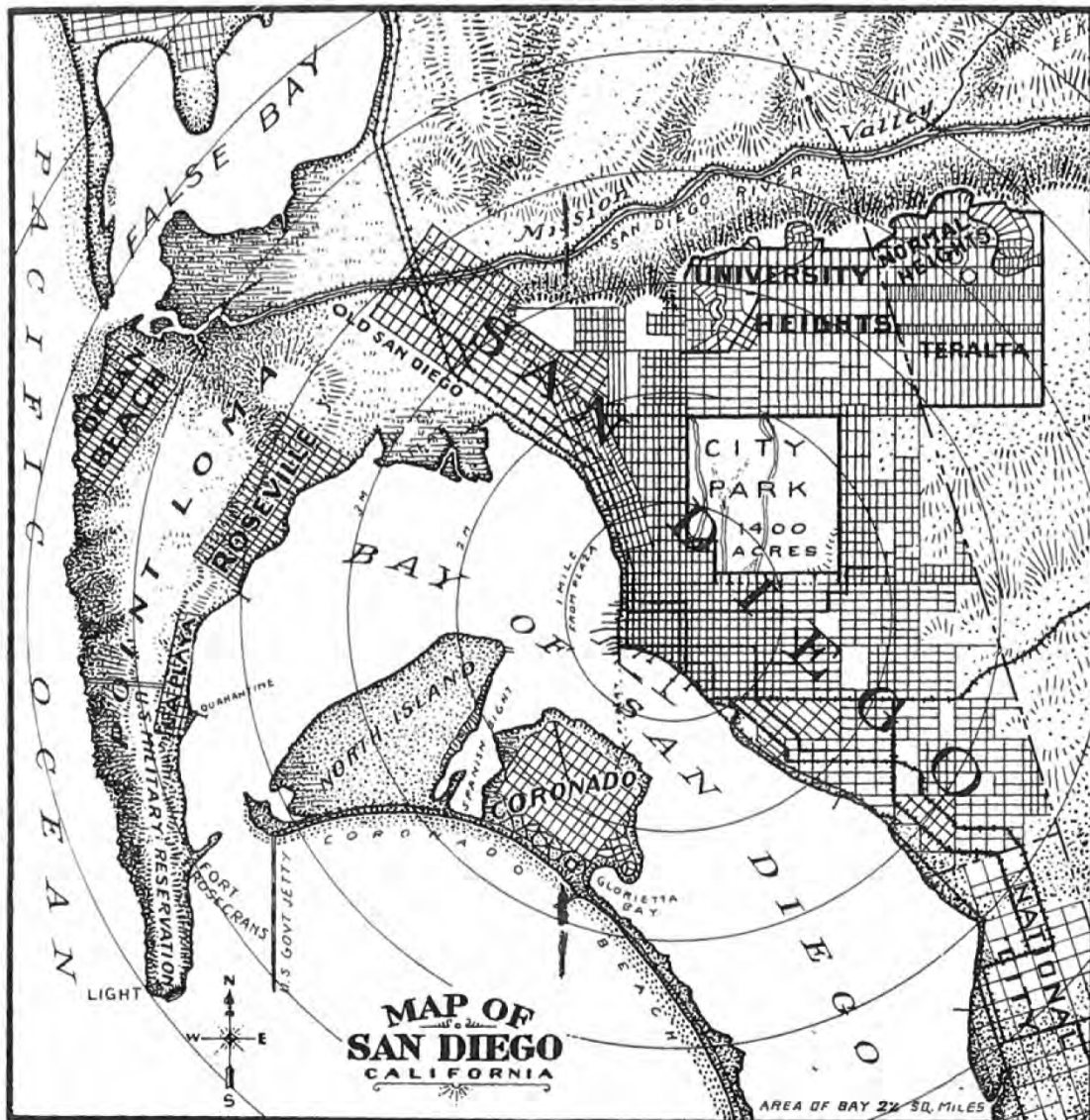


Figure 1.

Map showing location of University Heights above City Park (Ralston Realty Co. 1906).



## CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: Melhorn & Son Historic District Figures

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Figure 2.

W.H. Holabird & Company advertisement on Broadway in downtown San Diego, 1887  
(San Diego History Center)

## CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: Melhorn & Son Historic District Figures

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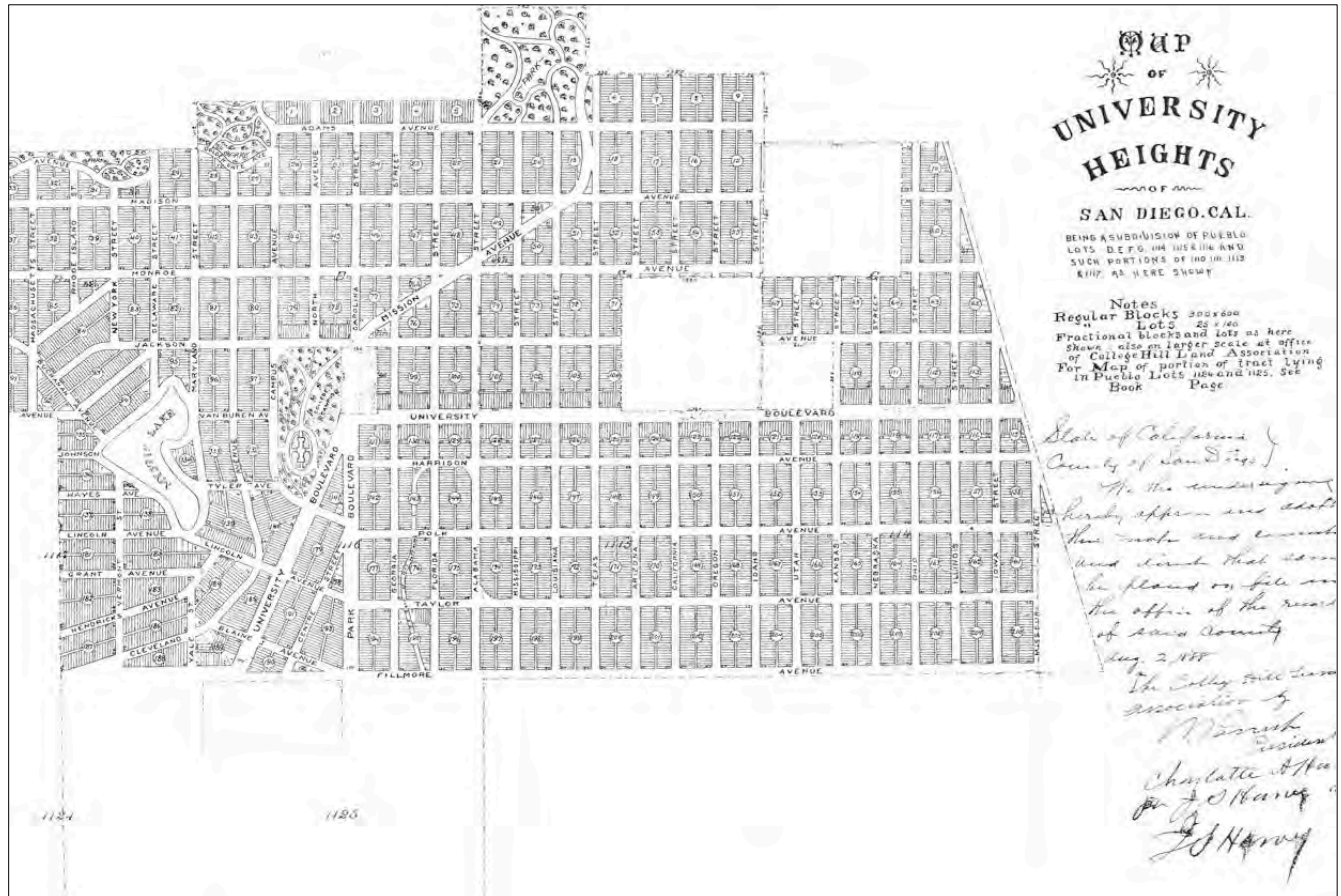


Figure 3.

Subdivision Map #558 of University Heights, 1888.

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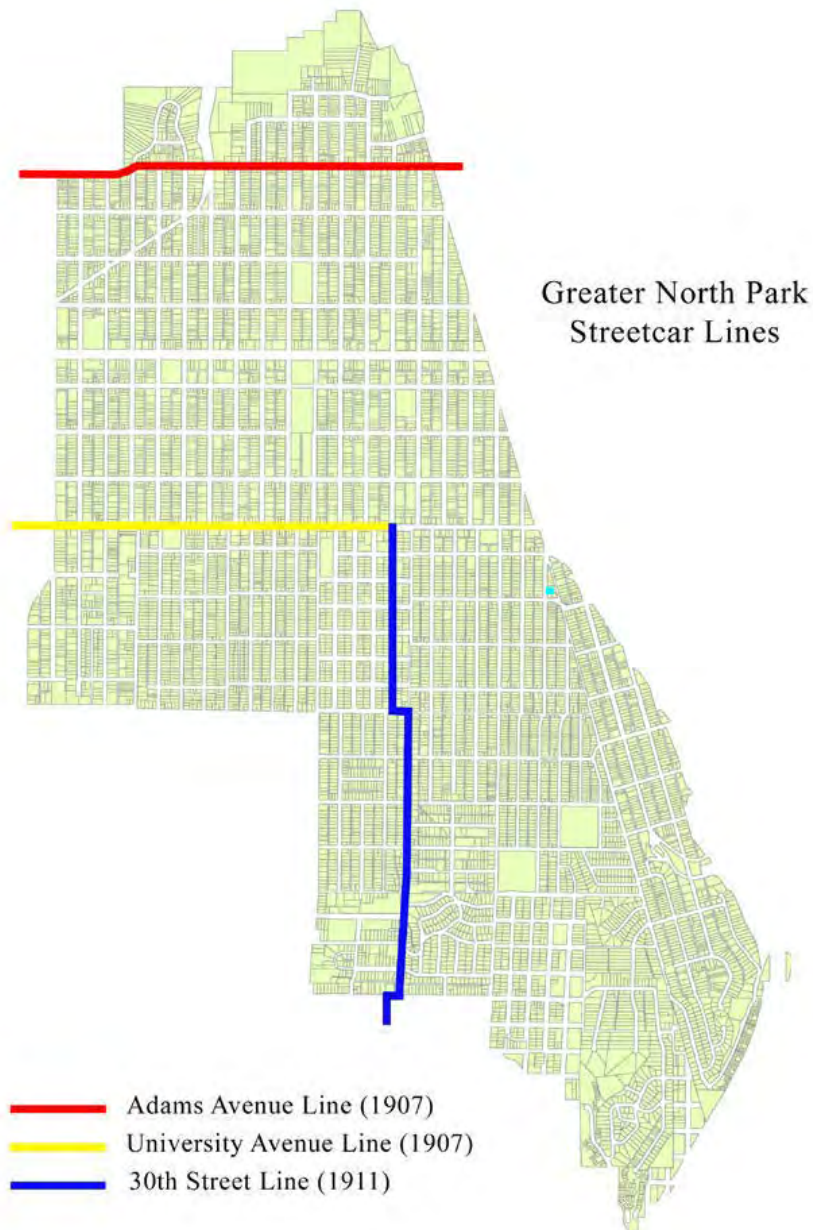


Figure 4.

Early Streetcar Lines in North Park



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Figure 5.

Photo of Martin V. Melhorn, c.1910. Photo courtesy of Melhorn Family Archive/Melhorn Construction Company and Legacy 106, Inc.

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Figure 6.

Google Street View image showing the homes of Martin V. Melhorn (left) and John Wahrenberger (right) on Marion Street in Denver, Colorado



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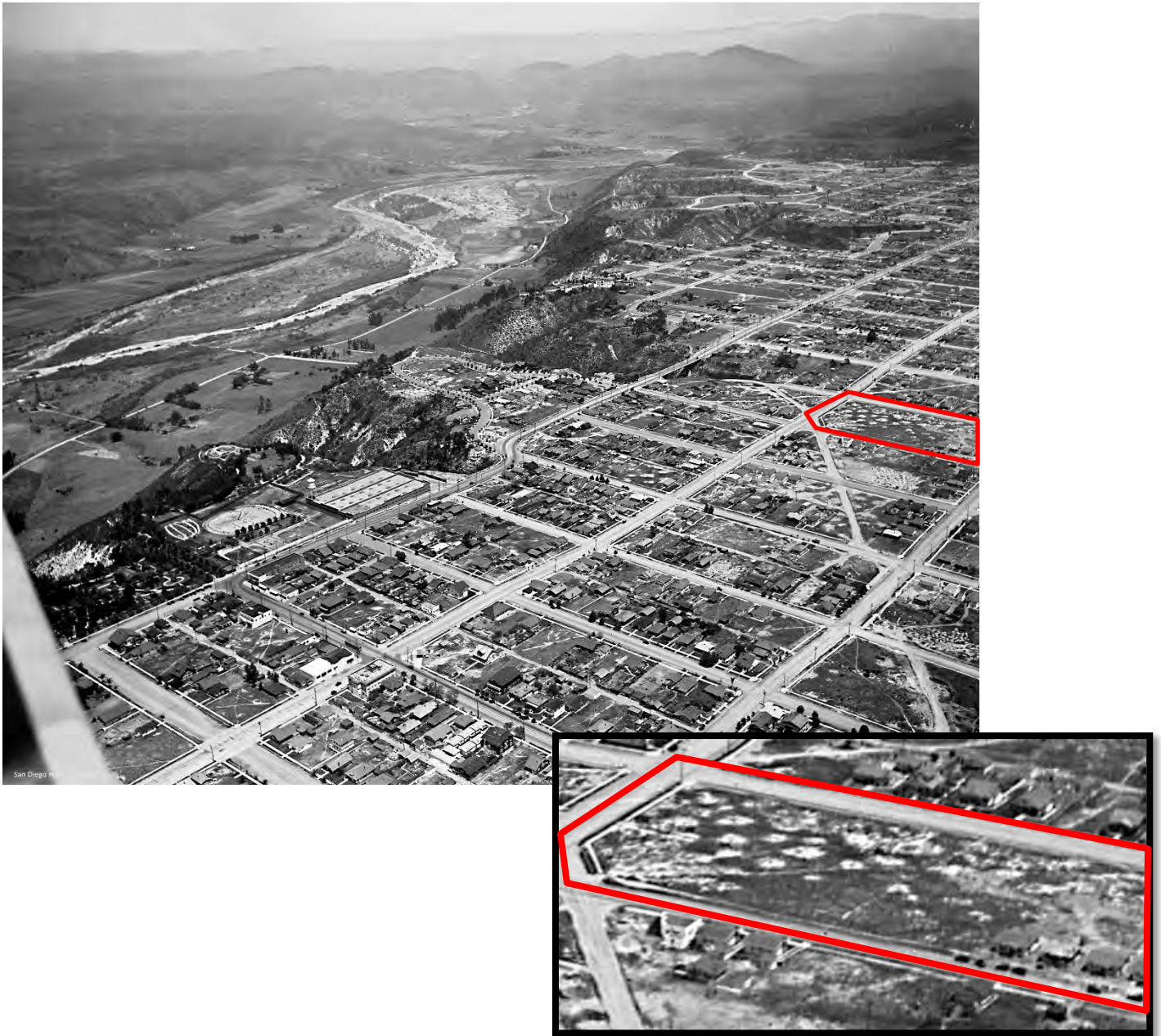


Figure 7.

Aerial photograph of Valle Vista Terrace, circa 1924 (San Diego History Center).

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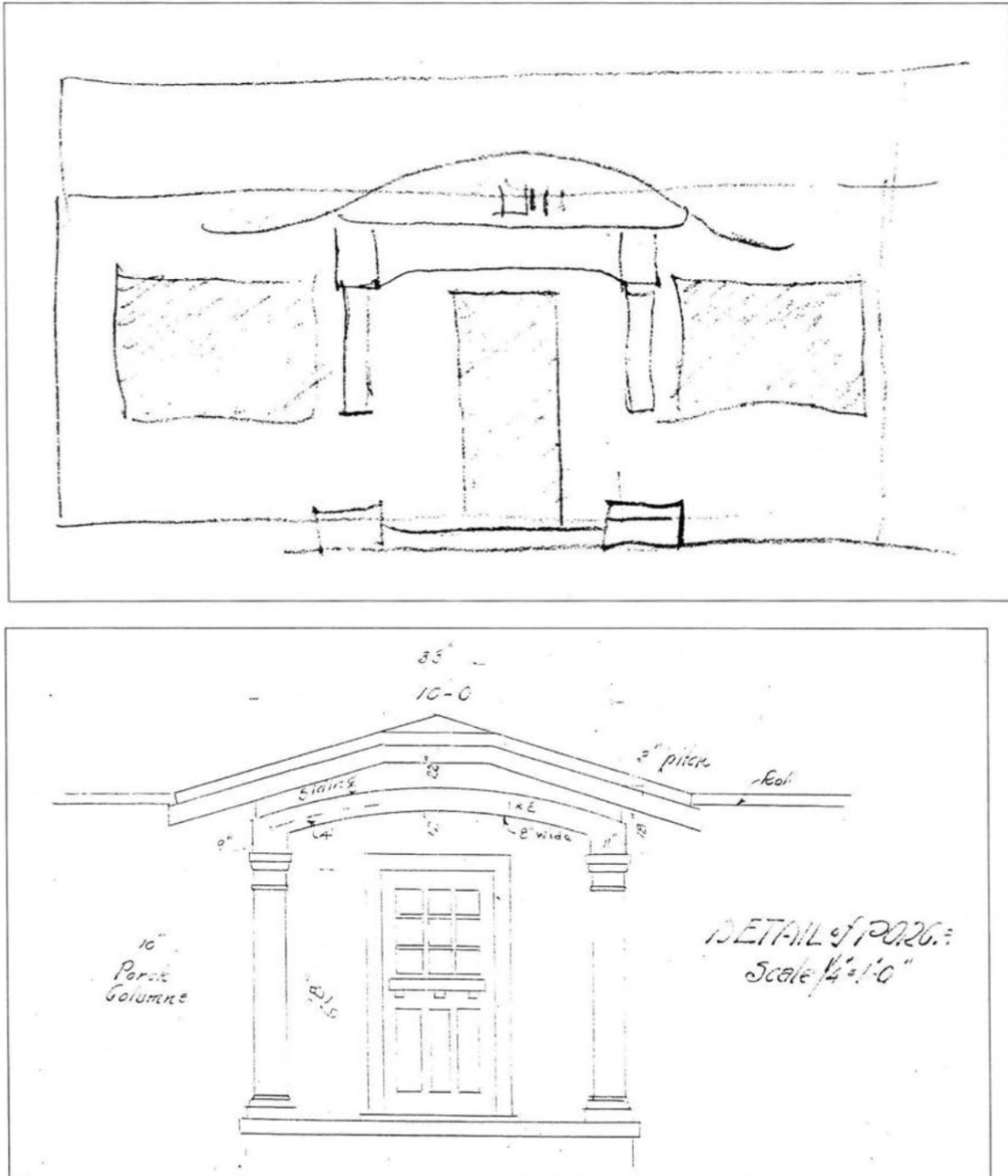


Figure 8.

Martin V. Melhorn's Original Sketches, Courtesy of Jerry McHenry and Legacy, 106, Inc.

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Figure 9.

Photos of Shirley Ann Place Historic District

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[[MAP PENDING]]

Figure 10.

Map of the Melhorn & Son Historic District



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Figure 11.

Looking East Southeast Along Louisiana Street (City of San Diego)



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Figure 12.

Looking West Southwest Along Texas Street (City of San Diego)