



CITY OF SAN DIEGO

A. V. GOEDDEL
CITY MANAGER

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

April 27
19 33

THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

GENTLEMEN:

Having completed a very comprehensive survey of the old exposition and other buildings in Balboa Park, I deem it my duty to submit this report and call your attention to the necessity for prompt remedial action to prevent possible accidents which might result in death or injury to park patrons, and to avoid possibility of the City having to pay out large sums of money in damage claims similar to the one recently paid for the Plaza palm tree death.

The various investigations undertaken on my orders date back to December, 1932, and for your detailed information in this connection I have attached hereto the following official reports:

Budget Officer's Park Department Report of December 20, 1932;
Acting Chief Building Inspector's Report of January 10, 1933, which resulted in the issuance of instructions to change the location of benches and remove some decorative work to prevent possible accidents to casual sightseers;
Park Director's Report of February 2, 1933;
City Electrician's Report of March 22, 1933, covering unsafe conditions as regards electrical installations;
Chief Building Inspector's complete report of March 23, 1933, which was followed by my order to the Fire Department to destroy West Rock in the Indian Village;
City Engineer's comprehensive report of March 29, 1933, which includes an itemized estimate of the cost of rehabilitating the exposition buildings showing a total of \$270,230.00;
Director of Public Works' communication of April 1, 1933, reviewing previous reports; Park Director's Report of April 15, 1933, containing Park Commission's recommendations; and
Final report and recommendations of the Superintendent of Public Buildings, who, at my direction, has made a detailed study and analysis of the problem as reported on by the various officials whose opinions merited consideration.

The necessity for having made these investigations so thorough and for having each and every report checked and rechecked, arises from the fact that the general public seems to have a very sentimental attachment for these once beautiful buildings, and under the circumstances it was deemed advisable to carry on this survey work over a period of several months during which time the public could become acquainted with the dangerous situation existing.

While these investigations were under way we were greatly assisted by the daily press which made public various disclosures as they became available. In addition the members of the Park Commission co-operated intelligently and former members of

the various Park Boards, including Mayor John F. Forward, Jr., Mr. Hugo Klauber, and Mr. Wm. Templeton Johnson, displayed great interest in and gave careful consideration to the problem. In particular Mr. Johnson gave freely of his advice and assistance from time to time. Almost without exception interested citizens deplored the apparent necessity for drastic action and, at the same time, expressed the belief that it would be impossible and unwise to raise a large sum of money for complete rehabilitation, and the thought that public safety decreed the razing of at least seven of these buildings.

All of these old exposition buildings were originally constructed without due regard for existing building regulations and with the thought in mind that they were to be torn down at the end of the exposition. By 1921 these buildings were in very bad shape and were rehabilitated at considerable expense by public subscription. Since that time most of them have again fallen into a very bad state of repair, partly because they were not originally constructed for permanency and partly because the City has failed to provide funds with which to properly maintain them. At the present time they are in a very dangerous condition as is more fully explained in the reports attached hereto.

An earthquake of slightly more than average intensity would demolish most of these buildings with loss of life.

Each and every one of these old buildings is more or less of a fire trap.

I think that if, for lack of funds, you are unable to provide for razing at least seven of these old buildings this year, you should authorize and direct the City Manager and the Park Director to remove facades and ornamentations from all of the old buildings without delay; providing such funds as may be necessary for the employment of labor from the accumulated savings in the Salary and Wage Sections of the various departmental budgets.

(The transfer of \$1,000 from the Public Works to the Park Department Budget -- Salaries and Wages -- would suffice and would obviate the necessity for using County Welfare labor and thus give those employed the full protection afforded by City compensation insurance.)

I cannot under any circumstances recommend the complete rehabilitation of all these Park buildings because the cost would probably exceed \$270,000 and for the added reason that we would have to do the job all over again in a few years.

I do favor razing seven of the old exposition buildings this year and the remainder at some future date as conditions warrant. (The buildings in question are covered more specifically in the Building Inspector's report of March 23, 1933.)

I also favor repairs for those buildings, listed hereafter, which are being put to good use and which are at present in fairly good shape.

In razing any or all of these buildings it is quite possible, as reported by Mr. R. M. Gregory, to advertise for bids and sell to the high bidders, the successful bidders to demolish the buildings and remove the debris and salvaged materials. It is not likely, however, that under present conditions the City would receive any substantial cash return. In fact we would be fortunate to get the buildings razed and removed without having to make any cash outlay.

In concluding this report I wish to respectfully submit the following recommendations for your careful consideration:

1. That you call a special meeting with the Park Commissioners, the City Manager, the Park Director, the Building Inspector, the City Engineer, and the Superintendent of Public Buildings, for the purpose of considering the reports submitted herewith;
2. That the City Engineer be authorized to prepare specifications for razing the following buildings: Nos. 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 16;
3. That as soon as specifications are available you authorize the Purchasing Agent to advertise for bids for razing the seven buildings;
4. That the Park Director be directed to furnish an estimate of the cost of landscaping the sites of the razed buildings;
5. That the Planning and the Park Commissions be authorized to prepare a plan and outline a definite program for the possible eventual replacement of the razed buildings with desirable and necessary structures of a permanent nature;
6. That the Building Inspector be directed to furnish an estimate of the cost of repairing the following buildings; and that an appropriation to cover such cost be provided in the new budget or else made available from the Unappropriated Balance Fund:

(See Pages 4 and 5, Building Inspector's report.)

- No. 1...Administration Building. (In good condition.)
- No. 11...Botanical Building. (In fair condition.)
- No. 22...New Mexico Building. (In fair condition.)

7. That the Building Inspector be directed to prepare an estimate of the cost of repairing the following buildings; and that you authorize the raising by public subscription of a fund sufficient to cover such cost:

(See Pages 4 and 5 of the Building Inspector's report.)


- No. 15a..Girl Scout Headquarters. (In good condition.)
- No. 15b..Girl Scout Recreation Hall. (In good condition.)
- No. 17...Central School Library. (In fair condition.)
- No. 20...Organ Pavilion. (In good condition.)
- No. 25...Floral Association Bldg. (In good condition.)
- No. 26...Canadian Legion Bldg. (In good condition.)
- No. 31...Zoo Reptile House. (In fair condition.)
- No. 33...Zoo Administration Bldg. (In fair condition.)
- No. 34...O'Rourke Institute. (In fair condition.)
- No. 37...Boy Scout Indian Village. (In fairly good condition.)

The Council --- #4

4/27/33

This report represents a compilation of all authoritative data available this date, and in concluding it I wish to make the following statement: I am aware of the fact that necessity exists for the exercise of the most rigid economy at this time; but I am also aware of the fact that human life is irreplaceable, and that your honorable body and the general public are entitled to know these conditions and to realize that financial responsibility accrues to you and to the City in the event deaths or injuries occur in the Park due to the condition of these buildings. With these thoughts in mind, and not with any idea of being an alarmist, this report is respectfully submitted as a series of statements of facts and recommendations.

Respectfully,



A. V. Goeddell

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encs

City Manager

DOCUMENT No. 38257

Filed APR 28 1933

ALLEN H. WRIGHT
FRED W. SICK City Clerk

By _____ Deputy

COMMUNICATION

FROM

CITY MANAGER

Reporting on condition of
Exposition & other buildings
in Balboa Park

*Continued to 5/29/33
2 copies
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Filed 5/29/33