PROPOSAL FOR
VASCO NUÑEZ DE BALBOA
STATUE

BALBOA PARK
SAN DIEGO

PROPOSAL FOR
VASCO NUÑEZ DE BALBOA
STATUE

BACKGROUND

Vasco Nuñez de Balboa - Explorer

Early life

Vasco Nuñez de Balboa was born in Jerez de los Caballeros, a small town in the Province of Extremadura, Spain, in 1475. He first sailed for the New World in 1501 and explored the northern coast of modern Colombia. He later settled in Hispaniola and turned to farming without success. In 1510 Balboa stowed away on a ship bound for the Gulf of Urabá to escape his creditors and founded the colony of Darien, of which he was appointed governor in 1513.

Balboa set out on September 1, 1513 with 190 Spaniards and 1,000 Indian porters as guides, and his dog Leoncico, to cut through dense jungle, avoid treacherous swamps, and cross rugged mountains to finally see on September 25 a view of a vast ocean to the south, which he reached on September 29 and named "El Mar del Sur." Balboa claimed all of the territories along its shore in the name of Spain. He no doubt underestimated the extensive shoreline of the Pacific Ocean as it stretched from southern Chile to Alaska. Not a single person was lost on the trek and Balboa returned with samples of gold and pearls to Darien in January 1514.

Balboa was able to maintain good relations with a majority of the natives, even taking a native woman as a bride. In the meantime, his rival Spaniards convinced the king of Balboa's insubordination and had him replaced by Pedro Arias de Avila as governor of Darien. Despite seemingly improved relations, Pedrarias, as he was called, arrested Balboa on trumped-up charges of treason as he was planning to explore the Pacific Coast. Denied an appeal to Spain, Balboa was executed in January 1519. Among the letters preserved in the Spanish archives are those from Balboa asking for protection of the Indians from the cruelties inflicted by his fellow Spaniards. One phrase in particular indicates his philosophy:

"I have tried, everywhere that I have gone, that the natives of this land be treated well, not allowing any harm to them whatsoever, telling them the truth, and giving them many things from Castile to attract them and be friends." (Feliciano Correa, Balboa)

Hubert Herring, well-recognized historian, called Balboa "one of the wisest and most merciful of conquerors," who was beheaded by Pedrarias, a harsh man who ruled Darien arbitrarily for sixteen years. (*A History of Latin America*, p. 128)

Rational for a statue of Balboa in Balboa Park:

For the past four years, the House of Spain has informed visitors from around the world about Vasco Nuñez de Balboa including: where he was born, what Balboa discovered, why the park was named for him in 1910, as well as many other facts about his life. About 95% of the visitors do not know a lot about Balboa the Explorer and guests are amazed to hear that there is not a statue of Vasco Nuñez de Balboa in Balboa Park.

In 1868, a 1400-acre park was set aside in the City of San Diego and approved by the Trustees in 1870. When plans were being formed in 1909-1910 to celebrate the opening of a canal through the Isthmus of Panama in 1914, it was decided that City Park should be renamed "Balboa Park" to honor Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, first European to gaze upon the Pacific Ocean a proposed new gateway to the west coast of America and specifically San Diego as California's first port of call. As park plans were being developed, San Diegans planned several "pre-opening" celebrations. Ground breaking for the park took place in 1911 and thereafter clearing of the area, planting of gardens and trees, and building construction commenced.

To encourage public participation in the event, a "Carnival Cabrillo" was planned for September 24-17, 1913. *The San Diego Union* reported on the activity as follows: The third day of the celebration was named "Balboa" in honor of Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, the first European to see the Pacific Ocean, and as an acknowledgment of the Panama-California Exposition which is to be held in Balboa Park, San Diego, beginning January 1, 1915. Citizens [were] to erect a monument to Balboa costing $15,000 at the east end of El Prado that would be surrounded by a semicircle of columns. Believing that mentioning the sum needed would produce the reality, promoters of the monument considered it unnecessary to specify a source. (79).

There are a number of appropriate locations for such a statue. An appropriate plaque would explain why Balboa is being so honored. He would take his place along side of others whose presence in the park represents Spain or California in various ways, even though they were never physically present in the park.

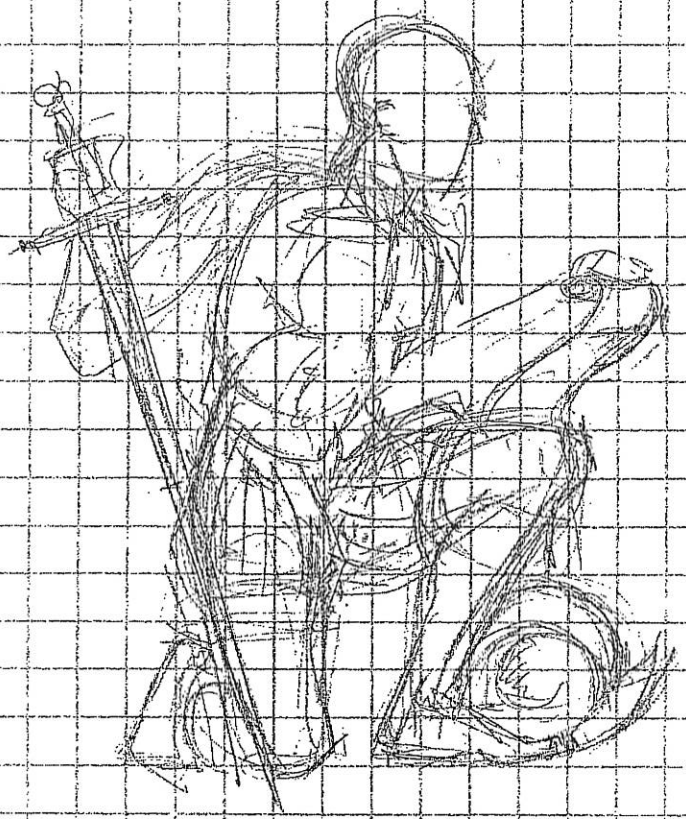
PROPOSAL FOR

VASCO NUÑEZ DE BALBOA

STATUE

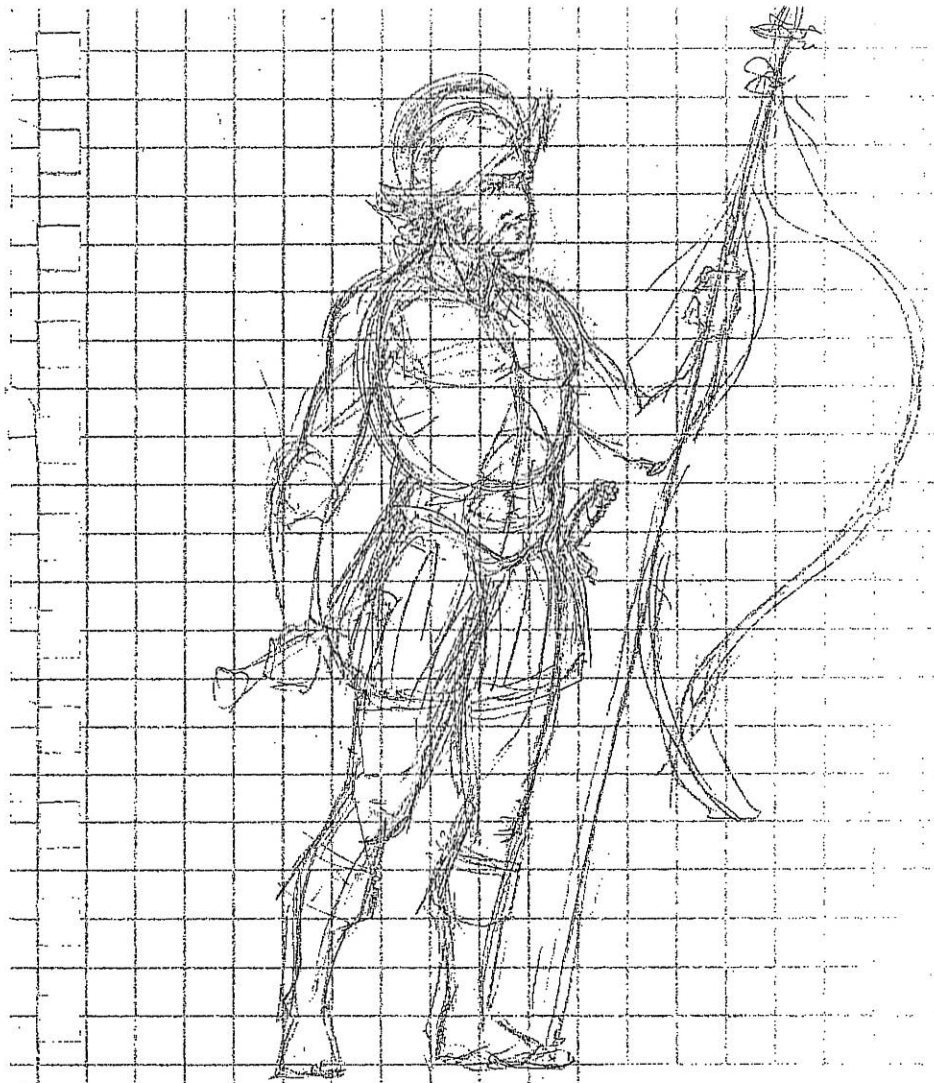
SKETCHES

2015



Studios®

~~Evans&Brown~~



Studios®

~~Evans&Brown~~

PROPOSAL FOR

VASCO NUÑEZ DE BALBOA

STATUE

LOCATIONS

PROPOSAL FOR

VASCO NUÑEZ DE BALBOA

STATUE

SUPPORT LETTERS

HOUSE OF SPAIN, CASA DE ESPAÑA, in San Diego

August 4, 2014
Honorable Mayor Kevin Faulconer
City of San Diego

Dear Mayor Faulconer:

House of Spain in San Diego would like to offer to the City of San Diego a statue of Balboa (Vasco Núñez de Balboa) and for this purpose, it is most important to know if the city would accept it. It would constitute Spain´s contribution to the Centennial Celebration of the 2015 Panama-California Exposition. As you know, there is no statue of Vasco Núñez de Balboa in Balboa Park and we are willing to work towards the acquisition of a replica of the bronze statue in his home town of Jerez de los Caballeros, Spain. We would bring it to the Port of San Diego and present it to the City, with the intent that the City would place it in Balboa Park.

The statue would honor Balboa for his accomplishments in not only discovering the Pacific Ocean but for his humanitarian concerns for the indigenous people of Panama. Balboa was an explorer who explored the American continent and discovered the Pacific Ocean guided through the difficult terrain across the isthmus by the natives of Panama because of their trust in his person and endeavors.

There are a number of areas in Balboa Park for the statue, in the central core, at the Plaza de Balboa or at the Plaza de Panama on the grass area extending in a direct line from the Spreckels Organ Pavilion. The statue of Balboa would remind visitors of San Diego's heritage from Spain, and reinforce our connection with the Pacific Ocean, Panama and indeed all the Americas. Of course the city would decide where is the best location in Balboa Park for the statue.

Attached are a photo of the statue and three photos of the town of Jerez de los Caballeros. Since our committee hopes to have the statue in place by the Centennial of 2015, we would appreciate your support. We have received support for the statue by various organizations and believe that it will be an important asset to the City of San Diego.

Awaiting your response

Jesus Benayas
President
House of Spain, Casa de España in San Diego

P.O. BOX 33064, SAN DIEGO, CA., 92163 Tel (619)-615-3188 www.casadeespanasd.com

University of San Diego
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
5998 Alcalá Park
San Diego, CA 92110-2492
P: (619) 260-4756
F: (619) 260-2372
www.sandiego.edu

August 6, 2014

Mayor Kevin Faulconer
City of San Diego
Dear Mayor Faulkner:

This letter is written to support the acquisition of a bronze statue of Vasco Nuñez de Balboa from the town of Jerez de los Caballeros--the birthplace of Balboa in the region of Extremadura in Spain. San Diego's reproduction of this statue from the mold of the rare original in this Spanish town is particularly fitting to celebrate the Centennial of the 1915 Panama-California Exposition and to strengthen our ongoing ties with both Spain and Panama.

The statue would honor Balboa for his accomplishments in not only discovering the Pacific Ocean but for his humanitarian concerns for the indigenous people of Panama. Balboa was not a conquistador but an explorer who was guided through the difficult terrain across the isthmus by the natives of Panama because of their trust in his endeavors.

There is an ideal space in Balboa Park for the statue on the grass area extending in a direct line from the statue of El Cid to the Spreckels Organ Pavilion. El Cid reminds visitors of San Diego's heritage from Spain, and Balboa would complement this idea by reinforcing our connection with Panama and indeed all the Americas.

Enclosed is a photo of the statue from the town of Jerez de los Caballeros. Since our committee hopes to have the statue in place by the Centennial of 2015, we would appreciate your support. We have received support for the statue by various Park committees and believe that it will be an important asset to the City of San Diego.

Sincerely,

Iris Engstrand
Professor of History

RECEIVED
AUG 7 2014
Office of Mayor
Kevin L. Faulconer

7 August 2014

Honorable Kevin Faulconer
City of San Diego

Dear Mayor Faulconer,

As a resident of San Diego living near Balboa Park, I support the initiative of the House of Spain to procure and have placed in Balboa Park a statue of Vasco Núñez de Balboa, after whom our magnificent park is named. The absence of a statue of Balboa in the park which bears his name is surely an oversight on part of us San Diegans.

The statue would honor Balboa not only for his accomplishments as the first European to see and report to Europe the existence of this grand ocean, but also as a humanitarian who exemplified great concern for the treatment of the indigenous populations of Central America. What an appropriate addition to our park for our Centennial Celebration of the Panama-California Exposition as Panama was the area he traversed to view the Pacific Ocean for the first time. Such a statue of Balboa would make apparent the current as well as historical connection between California, Panama, the Pacific Ocean and certainly, their association to Spain.

We would appreciate your support of this project, Mayor Faulconer. It will enhance the esthetic as well as the historical attraction of Balboa Park which is the jewel and pride of San Diego.

Very sincerely,

Penelope Bledsoe

Penelope Bledsoe
2732 2nd Ave D3
SD CA 92103

RECEIVED
AUG 12 2014
Office of Mayor
Kevin L. Faulconer

Consulado Honorario de España

September 6, 2014

The Honorable Kevin Faulconer
Mayor of the City of San Diego
202 C Street, 11th Floor
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Mayor Faulconer:

I have the pleasure of writing you on behalf of the community of San Diego in regards to Balboa Park. I have been a resident of San Diego County for the last forty-one years, and have had the opportunity of enjoying all the wonderful sites San Diego has to offer, to visitors and residents.

One of these wonderful places is Balboa Park. I believe San Diego should be proud of it. It has everything a person needs to enjoy an outdoor day and a number of outings, like visiting museums, the cottages of the House of Pacific Relations, Spanish Village, Theatres, etc.

This wonderful park originally named "City Park" was set to play host to the 1915 Panama-California Exposition. As the name "City Park" was a less-than memorable or distinctive name for such a prestigious event, in 1910 the Park Commissioners announced plans to rename City Park. Many names were thought out but finally it was decided to name it Balboa in honor of the Spanish Explorer Vasco Núñez de Balboa, the first European to spot the Pacific Ocean while on exploration in Panama. Although some time in 1915 the city planned to place a statue of the explorer in the park, it never happened.

As the celebration of the Centennial of the 1915 Panama-California Exposition approaches, I strongly support the House of Spain/Casa de España in San Diego to offer the city of San Diego a statue of Vasco Núñez de Balboa to be placed in the park. There is an ideal space in the park for the statue on the grass area extending in the direct line from the statue of El Cid to the Spreckels Organ Pavilion. El Cid reminds visitors of San Diego's heritage from Spain, and Balboa

10922 [illegible] - La Mesa, CA 92040-2717
Tel. 619-448-7282 - E-mail: [illegible]

Consulado Honorario de España

would complement this idea by reinforcing our connection with Panama and all the Americas.

During the visit of the Ambassador of Spain to your office, this project was brought to your attention and at the time you seemed in favor of it. I hope you still find it of interest and give your support to placing the statue of Vasco Núñez de Balboa in the park that bears his name.

Best regards,

María Angeles O'Donnell-Olson
Honorary Consul of Spain in San Diego

10922 Anja Way - Lakeside, CA 92040-2717
Tel. (619) 448-7282 – E-mail: conhon.espana.sd@gmail.com

FRIENDS OF BALBOA PARK

21(rk Boulevard
San Diego, CA 92101
(619) 232-2282 p
(619) 232-2281 f
info@friendsofbalboapark.org
www.friendsofbalboapark.org

FOUNDER
Betty Peabody

CHAIR
Ann E. Wilson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Barbara J. Brown
Jack C. Carpenter
Scott Carr
Libby Carson
Dean M. Crowder
James M. Hughes
Todd R. Kinnear
Maureen Lamberti
Gary Marcus
Lukar[illegible] Singh
Marvin A. Spi[illegible]
Lincoln Stice
Ken Ta[illegible]berger
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Heath[illegible]H. Xitco

ADVISORY COUNCIL
Sandra Alcosser
Toni Atkins
Rita Atkinson
Martha Barnette
Jodie Bruhn
Geoff Chase
James Dawe
Iris Engstrand
Kevin Faulconer
Ben Haddad
Louise Hay
Chris Kehoe
Bob Kelly
Jessie Knight, Jr.
Dorothea Laub
Bill Maheu
Stanley Malov
Toby Reschan
Ron Roberts
True Ryndes
Jerry Sanders
Tom Scott
Nancy Spector
Bonnie Stewart
Alan Sweedler
Michael Von Hartz
Rosetta Volkov
Steven Walt
Dorothy G. Yeckel

STAFF
Lorraine E. Schmidtenberger
Leslie Ye[illegible]

August 18, 2014

Mayor Kevin Faulconer
City Administration Building
202 C Street, MS# 10A
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Mayor Faulconer,

This letter is written to support the acquisition of a bronze statue of Vasco Nuñez de Balboa from the town of Jerez de los Caballeros--the birthplace of Balboa in the region of Extremadura in Spain. San Diego's reproduction of this statue from the mold of the rare original in this Spanish town is particularly fitting to celebrate the Centennial of the 1915 Panama-California Exposition and to strengthen our ongoing ties with both Spain and Panama.

The statue would honor Balboa for his accomplishments in not only discovering the Pacific Ocean but for his humanitarian concerns for the indigenous people of Panama. Balboa was not a conquistador but an explorer who was guided by the natives of Panama because of their trust in his endeavors.

There is an ideal space in Balboa Park for the statue on the grass area extending in a direct line from the statue of El Cid to the Spreckels Organ Pavilion. El Cid reminds visitors of San Diego's heritage from Spain, and Balboa would complement this idea by reinforcing our connection with Panama and indeed all the Americas.

We hope to have the statue in place by the Centennial of 2015, we would appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Ann E. Wilson
Chair, Friends of Balboa Park

RECEIVED
Rich
AUG 21 2014
Office of Mayor
Kevin L. Faulconer

Carol Lindsay
P.O. Box 131242
Carlsbad CA 92013-1242
carol@bookartcorner.com

August 19, 2014

Honorable Mayor Kevin Faulconer
Mayor City of San Diego
202 "C" Street. 12th floor
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Mayor Faulconer:

As a writer since the 1970s, when I worked as writer/photographer for Home Federal Savings and Loan headquarters on Broadway, I have loved San Diego. As a mother who raised her four kids with assistance from Sea World, Mission Beach, the Bay and Balboa Park, I feel as if I am a San Diegan though I've lived in El Cajon and Carlsbad. As a grandmother of ten, I continue the familial tradition and also, at this point in my life, I often spend Sunday afternoons listening to the Spreckels organ and wandering through the various houses in the park.

This past Sunday, when I was in the House of Spain, I learned of a controversy surrounding the placement of a bronze statue of Vasco Núñez de Balboa in the center of Balboa Park, Since our park was named after this Spanish explorer, and there is an offer for a statue to be reproduced from the mold of the rare original located in Balboa´s birth place in Extremadura, Spain, I am requesting your support for this effort. It certainly seems totally appropriate to have a Balboa statue at this point in time since the city plans to celebrate the Centennial of the 1915 Panama-California Exposition.

I consider it vital that we honor the man for whom the park is named. This statue could also be the spark to educate people regarding Balboa's impact on the USA. This might also be a grand opportunity to share with people, who visit the park, the strong influence the Spanish people had in the establishment of the United States of America.

Sincerely,

Carol Lindsay

RECEIVED
Dan
AUG 21 2014
Office of Mayor
Kevin L. Faulconer

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

School of Social Work
College of Health and Human Services
San Diego State University
5500 Campanile Drive
San Diego CA 92182 - 4119
Tel: 619-594-6865
Fax: 619-594-5991

August 23, 2014

Honorable Mayor Kevin Faulconer
Mayor City of San Diego
202 "C" Street.- 12th floor
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Mayor Faulconer:

This letter is written to support the project of placing a bronze statue of Vasco Núñez de Balboa in the center of Balboa Park, since the park was named after this Spanish explorer who discovered the Pacific Ocean. This proposal is particularly fitting now that we prepare to celebrate the Centennial of the 1915 Panama-California Exposition and to strengthen our ongoing ties with both Spain and Panama.

The statue would honor Balboa for his accomplishments in not only discovering the Pacific Ocean but for his humanitarian concerns for the indigenous people of Panama.

There is an ideal space in Balboa Park for the statue on the grass area at the Plaza de Balboa or Plaza de Panama extending in a direct line from the statue of El Cid to the Spreckels Organ Pavilion. Balboa would complement the historical Spanish exploration with our connection with the Pacific Ocean, Panama and indeed all the Americas.

Since the committee hopes to have the statue in place by the Centennial of 2015, I would appreciate your support. I know that there is support for the statue by various Park committees and believe that it will be an important asset to the City of San Diego.

Sincerely

Joaquin Anguera, Ph.D.
SDSU School of Social Work