



100

THE COMMITTEE OF ONE HUNDRED

Dedicated to the Preservation of Spanish Colonial Architecture in Balboa Park

FALL 2007

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NEWSLETTER

Our First Success: 1968-1971

Balboa Park's Food and Beverage Building Becomes Casa del Prado

When The Committee of One Hundred was founded in 1967, a badly deteriorated Food and Beverage Building, now known as Casa del Prado, provided an immediate challenge. The Committee quickly became instrumental in garnering public support to preserve the building, which would become Balboa Park's first reconstruction project.



It wasn't long after the closing of the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition before the "temporary" buildings became threatened with demolition. Built of materials that were not meant to last, temporary repairs could keep them open for a few years at a time. Remarkably, four of those temporary buildings managed to survive for more than fifty years, through the efforts of concerned San Diegans who had come to love their "Dream City."

In early 1968, The Committee of One Hundred and the San Diego Chamber of Commerce called for the City to repair the crumbling exterior of the Food and Beverage Building in preparation for the City's 200th anniversary in 1969. Cultural groups lobbied for a proposal to spend \$50,000 to refurbish the building's exterior. Professor of Art History Robert Wallace, one of the founding members of The Committee of One Hundred, stated that "every effort should be made by the city to restore the building to a presentable condition." Others campaigned to tear the building down, suggesting that the site could provide much-needed parking. There was talk of replacing the building with a modern one, like the Timken and west wing of the Fine Arts Gallery.

Closed and Condemned

In April of 1968 the Food and Beverage Building was declared unsafe and was condemned at the recommendation of a task force appointed by the City Manager and composed of 2 architects, 2 contractors, 2 structural engineers, the Director of Building Inspection, the Fire Marshal, the Chairman of the Facilities Committee, the Chairman of the Park and Recreation Board, the Chairman of the Balboa Park Committee, the

Director of Public Works, and the Assistant City Manager.

"When the building was condemned, the Committee raised over \$10,000 to take the ornamental specimens from the building so they could be saved," Bea Evenson said. Another \$2,500 from the Committee went toward research as to the best means of restoration of those pieces of sculpture. "The city agreed to put up \$5,000 to catalog and photograph the items."

Proposition M

The City Council placed a proposal on the November 1968 ballot for a \$3.5 million bond issue to restore the Food and Beverage Building. "It looked like it would be impossible to pass the bond issue and, at first, we didn't know what we should do," Mrs. Evenson was quoted as saying. "But we wanted it so badly, we decided to go ahead and try to get the proposition passed." The Committee of One Hundred joined with the San Diego Botanical Garden Foundation, the San Diego Civic Youth Ballet, Youth Symphony, Youth Chorale, and Junior Theater groups, various garden clubs, senior citizens, the PTA and others to support passage of the bond issue.

Proposition M passed by an overwhelming 72 percent!



Bea Evenson kept a close watch on Casa del Prado reconstruction

40th Anniversary Meeting a Success by Darlene G. Davies

The annual meeting of of The Committee of One Hundred in June was an opportunity to celebrate our 40th anniversary.



Wayne Donaldson and Joy Perez at annual meeting

Our featured speaker was Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA, California's State Historic Preservation Officer. Having been a practicing architect in San Diego for many years, specializing in historical preservation, Wayne took a delighted audience on an illustrated journey which covered the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition and the 1935-1936 California Pacific Exposition. He was a generous speaker, sharing great stories and

providing examples which aptly captured times and contexts.

The glue of this wonderful event was the guest list. Many luncheon attendees were local living treasures in whom the collective memories of Balboa Park reside. There were guests who

represented more than the last half century of San Diego history, and they brought to the gathering broad perspectives of the park, enlivening the day.

The Committee took the opportunity to celebrate its founders. Our special guests were Anne Ryan, the daughter of Bea Evenson, and Bea's son, Bill Evenson. We were so pleased that each brought along their children to join us in honoring their grandmother's founding of The Committee of One Hundred. Peter Ellsworth, one of the founding members, was among our honored guests. Others included Gerrie Wheeler, wife of founder and architect Richard Wheeler; Klonie Kunzel, wife of founder, Fritz Kunzel, who later served as president; and Phil Ward, board member and brother of founder Mifflin Ward. "First Lady of San Diego," Rana Sampson, and State Senator Christine Kehoe were also guests.

A special thanks to Kay Rippee for planning the luncheon, which once again displayed Kay's own gracious touch. It was a lovely event, which celebrated the past, while keeping an eye on the future of Spanish Colonial architecture in Balboa Park.

Our Current Fundraising Projects



Alcazar Garden Tile Restoration Fund

People who see the fountains in their current state of disrepair continue to ask how they can help support this worthy project. All funds not used for the current restoration will go directly into this segregated fund, which will finance a 20% overage on each of the tiles being made for the current restoration project.

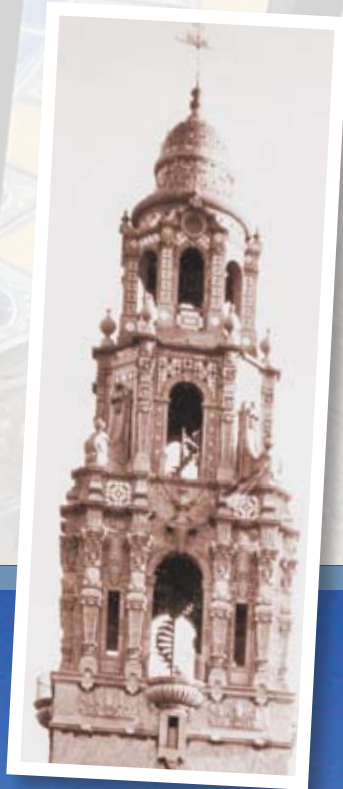
California Tower Earthquake Retrofit

The California Tower needs support! What a tragedy it would be if an earthquake were to topple this San Diego landmark. Work will be done in two stages:

- 1) assessment and development of an earthquake retrofit plan, and
- 2) implementation of the earthquake retrofit.

The Committee of One Hundred has pledged \$10,000 in matching funds for the planning stage.

Cost estimate: \$600,000 for planning, \$6 million for the earthquake retrofit itself.



Food and Beverage Building (Continued from page 1)

With this show of support the citizens of San Diego made a clear choice for preservation of Balboa Park's "Dream City."

Reconstruction

Architect Richard George Wheeler & Associates, AIA, submitted plans for the new structure to replace the Food and Beverage Building in March, 1969, and a ground-breaking ceremony was held on November 9, 1969.

The Committee of One Hundred raised \$113,000 toward restoration of the architectural ornamentation. Two hundred specimens of deteriorated ornamentation had been removed from the Food and Beverage Building in August, 1968. L.J. Ninteman Construction Company was awarded the contract to make molds and cast the new ornamentation in concrete. The work was done at the Ninteman warehouse on Custer Street, just off Morena Boulevard north of Old Town. After being labeled, catalogued and photographed the specimens, most of them badly damaged, were cleaned and patched up. Molds were made from the plaster models by five local model-makers under

the supervision of Christian Mueller, an architectural sculptor from Burbank who worked for Walt Disney and on the sets of major motion pictures. In 1924 Mueller had worked on the facade of the Fine Arts Gallery as an apprentice to his father. The hundreds of concrete replicas Mueller's team created looked like the plaster 1915 originals, but were three times heavier.

The new building was given a new name—the Casa del Prado. Architects Richard George Wheeler, AIA, and consulting architect Samuel Wood Hamill, FAIA, were both founding members of The Committee of One Hundred. While their plans were generally faithful to the original design by Exposition architect Carleton Winslow, the new building's footprint and exterior was altered. It was divided into two buildings joined by a concrete patio. The church-like section was moved farther north, its west apse eliminated along with a memorial to Father Serra.

The Final Hurdle

There was a flurry of concern when, during the summer of 1970, the replacement of the ornate loggia on the balcony overlooking El Prado was eliminated from plans because of its cost. Ultimately a contribution of \$50,000

by Jeannette Pratt saved the loggia from the fate met by the west apse.

The Casa del Prado was formally dedicated by the City of San Diego on November 14, 1971, amid folk dancing, singing, and thousands of balloons. At the dedication ceremonies, Mayor Curran presented Bea Evenson, as president of The Committee of One Hundred, with a key to the City.

The Casa del Prado building has served as home to garden clubs, dance and theater groups, and other organizations over the years. Its theater/auditorium provided the venue for the San Diego Gilbert and Sullivan Company, which became the San Diego Comic Opera, and was renamed the San Diego Lyric Opera before moving to North Park. The San Diego Civic Youth Ballet holds classes in the building and performs on the auditorium stage.

Every success provides inspiration as we carry out our mission to preserve Balboa Park's Spanish Colonial architecture.

The Committee of One Hundred will continue to speak for the wonderful buildings that together became our Dream City in 1915.

Michael Kelly



Simulation by Heritage Architecture and Planning

Administration Building Façade

The original ornamentation around and above the entrance has been long missing from this building—the first building completed for the Panama-California Exposition of 1915. The Committee of One Hundred intends to restore this entrance to its original condition. The image shows the missing ornamentation at the left of this photo simulation.

Cost estimate: \$700,000

Please contribute to one or all of these deserving projects. Make your check to The Committee of One Hundred and mail it to:

The Committee of One Hundred
Balboa Park Administration Building
2125 Park Blvd.
San Diego, CA 92101-4753

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Welcome to our newest board members:

Darlene Davies has long been involved with Balboa Park. She has served on the San Diego Park & Recreation Board, the City of San Diego Commission for Arts & Culture, and recently completed a term as Chairperson of the Balboa Park Committee. She is Professor Emeritus at SDSU in the School of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences. Mayor Jerry Sanders presented Darlene with the 2006 Millennium Award given by the Friends of Balboa Park for exceptional contributions to the park. She served for twelve years on the board of the Old Globe and is currently a member of boards of the San Diego Natural History Museum and the Women's History Museum.

Nancy Moors is a native San Diegan. Her career began at the Union Tribune and continued in management as a corporate advertising director for a newspaper company located on the central coast. Upon returning to San Diego in 2002 she and her partner, Ann Garwood, created HillQuest, an annual urban guide to 92103 and beyond which is a conduit to www.HillQuest.com. Nancy is on the board of directors of the Hillcrest Business Association and a co-founder and Vice President of the Hillcrest History Guild.