

CONTINUITY

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*Preservation Action Council of San Jose
Dedicated to Preserving San Jose's Architectural Heritage*

Summer 2020

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PAC*SJ's New Executive Director

PAC*SJ is pleased to announce the selection of the new Executive Director of Preservation Action Council of San Jose (PAC*SJ). Ben Leech has been highly recommended for his strength in advocacy, a particularly important talent in present-day San Jose.

His fascination with history and with architecture took him to a career in historic preservation. His wife's move to a new job in Silicon Valley brought him here. This magical combination led Ben Leech to PAC*SJ.

Ben is a historic preservation planner and architectural historian with more than 12 years of professional experience working for and collaborating with non-profit organizations, community groups, property owners, and governmental agencies to document and preserve the historic built environment.

A graduate of Reed College, he earned a Master of Science degree in Historic Preservation from the School of Art Institute of Chicago. He served as the Director of Advocacy for the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, and as an adjunct instructor in historic preservation and architectural history at a number of colleges and universities. He has authored more than three dozen historic resource reports to protect a wide variety



*Ben Leech, Executive Director, PAC*SJ*

of architectural and cultural landmarks, from 18th-century farmhouses to 19th-century social halls to 20th-century supermarkets. He is a past board member of several preservation organizations. An accomplished artist and illustrator, he is also the founder and principal of Archi-volt Press, a small independent publisher of architectural ephemera.

The PAC*SJ Board of Directors is happy to introduce Ben and looks forward to opportunities for all preservation enthusiasts to meet him.

Welcome Ben!

— André Luthard
PAC*SJ Board President

Message from our Executive Director

I hope this issue of Continuity finds you healthy and safe in these challenging times. Like you, PAC*SJ is learning to adapt to this new world of physical distance, and as we all eagerly await a return to “real life,” we are also reminded of how much we have to be thankful for. As a newly-minted San Josean with plenty to discover, I’ve been spending much of my time in quarantine reading back-issues of Continuity, learning more about San Jose history and compiling lists of local historic sites I can’t wait to visit or revisit.

Of course, many of these places wouldn’t exist today if not for the dedication and hard work of PAC*SJ members and supporters past and present. And I assure you that this work continues even as we shelter in place—PAC*SJ is continuing to monitor development proposals, advocate for preservation alternatives, and plan for future educational initiatives, walking tours, and yard sales. There is

much work to be done, and there are many ways you can help, from watching your email inbox for advocacy alerts, to purchasing one of our commemorative *Sunset Magazine* posters online, to making a donation to the newly-established Joan Bohnett Historic Neighborhood Preservation Fund.

But most important of all, June is PAC*SJ’s annual membership and renewal drive. If you are not currently a member, please join us! If you are a member, thank you, and please renew! Your membership dues not only support our ability to monitor development projects and advocate for preservation solutions and adaptive reuse opportunities, but also demonstrate to elected officials and others that preservation truly matters to the citizens of San Jose. Without your support, we simply could not do what we do. Thank you.

—Ben Leech,
PAC*SJ Executive Director

Your PAC*SJ membership expires in

June, 2020. Still only \$40/year.

Family-\$55. Seniors/students-\$25.

Watch for your renewal notice!

With increasing development threatening our historic assets in San Jose, your membership is more important than ever. And, invite a friend to join us. Convince a family member to belong. Let’s grow and use our strength in numbers to declare our mission—saving our architectural heritage.

Virtual Tours Offered

While sheltering in place, you might want to check out the National Trust website at <https://savingplaces.org/>. All sorts of virtual tours, projects and ideas are available for adults and children, including, *13 Virtual Ways to “Edutain” Kids About History and Preservations*. This site includes virtual tours, museums, lesson plans, and lists of books, video games and resources for children of all ages. Introduce your child to architecture, and check out the National Trust article on *How to Explore Architecture With Kids*.



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OF SAN JOSE**

The opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of PAC*SJ.

Editor: Gayle Frank

Please submit your letters and comments to info@preservation.org. 408-998-8105 or to 1650 Senter Rd, San Jose, CA 95112-2599

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San Jose's Sphinx

PAC*SJ has distributed a petition for residents to support PAC*SJ's efforts to "Save the Sphinx," the former Bank of California designed by world-renowned architect César Pelli. We are happy to report that the San Jose Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) voted unanimously on May 6th to initiate the process of designating the Bank of California an official San Jose City Landmark, with a final advisory vote expected on June 3rd. These are important first steps, but there are many challenges ahead.

At press time, the San Jose Planning Commission is to review the City View Plaza's DSEIR (Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report) and project permits on May 27th. PAC*SJ believes the DSEIR fails to demonstrate that the demolition of the Pelli designed Sphinx is necessary. We strongly urged the Planning Commission to recommend denial of the project as proposed.

Following the Planning Commission's advisory vote, the project is scheduled for final review by the City Council on June 9. We are urging Council to defer action on the project until all preservation alternatives have been fairly considered and Council has reviewed HLC's landmarking recommendation, which won't appear before Council until June 16.



**Former Bank of California/Family Court at 170 Park Ave.
Designed by renowned César Pelli in Brutalist style.
Below, rear view of building. (Photos: Gayle Frank)**

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Forward our petition to a friend and share on social media. www.preservation.org/savethesphinx
- Donate to PAC*SJ. Your tax-deductible contribution supports our ability to monitor development issues and advocate for preservation outcomes and adaptive reuse opportunities. www.preservation.org/donate

➤ All Landmarks Commission, Planning Commission, and City Council meetings are open to the public, and are being held via remote conference until further notice. As meeting agendas are finalized, we will be distributing instructions for remote participation via telephone and internet, and are encouraging all of our supporters to testify in support of preservation. ☞

We thank you for participating in this important preservation endeavor.

—José Antonio de la Cruz,
Architect, CM
PAC*SJ Board Member



The Demise of Park Center Plaza

The City View Plaza high-rise office project intends to demolish all structures and ten buildings (offices, commercial and parking) on the 8.1-acre site immediately west of Plaza de Cesar Chavez. The former Park Center Plaza, borders S. Market St., W. San Fernando St., Park Ave., and Almaden Blvd. The Alpha Media Building (former Japan-California Bank), on the SE corner of W. San Fernando and Almaden, is excluded from demolition.

According to the Historic Report,¹ the Park Center Plaza (now City View Plaza) qualifies as a Candidate City Landmark District. This was the first major redevelopment project for the San Jose Redevelopment Agency (RDA). All buildings were constructed between 1968-1985, many under the auspices of Gruen Associates with master architect César Pelli,² Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), and managing partners, all internationally renowned. At the time, the project was recognized as “an outstanding example of how private enterprise can operate in conjunction with the public works to the benefit of all.”¹

Besides the unique 3-story Pelli Building (San Jose’s Sphinx) at 170 Park Avenue, the proposed demolition of other significant buildings include the 9-story Wells Fargo Building (distinctively designed by SOM), Bank of America Wing and 14-story Tower (designed by Gruen Associates under César Pelli), and the 3-story United California Bank Building (also designed by Pelli). All qualify for listing on the California Register and are eligible as city landmarks.

The list of buildings, numbered on photo and proposed for demolition, in order of their completion dates are as follows:

- 1) Landmark Building, Plaza pavilion buildings and underground garage. 1968-1969. 100 W. San Fernando St. (1), 115 S. Market St. (1a); and 130 S. Almaden Blvd. (1b)
- 2) Wells Fargo Bank - 121 South Market St. 1969-1970
- 3) Bank of America and Tower - 125 S. Market St. 1970-1971



Former Park Center Plaza/Present City View Plaza

(Photo: Leslie Dill, Archives & Architecture Historic Report¹)

- 4) United California Bank (Morton’s Steakhouse) - 177 Park Ave. 1971-1973
- 5) Bank of California/Sumitomo Bank/Family Court)- 170 Park Center. 1971-1973
- 6) Mitsui Manufacturers Bank/Heritage Bank and Kiosk (6a) - 150 South Almaden Blvd. 1984-1985
- 7) Parking Garage and Scott’s Seafood at 183-185 Park Ave. 1985

Wells Fargo Building (#2)

The 9-story Wells Fargo Building, on the SW corner of Market and W. San Fernando Streets, is a prime example of the Brutalist style but differs from the other Brutalist buildings in the Plaza. SOM project designer is listed as Lawrence S. Doane.



Ribbed concrete

The smooth concrete pilaster and rough-textured, ribbed (or corrugated), concrete panels have been painted but were always a light color. This repetitive pattern of rough surfaced, cast concrete is characteristic of early Brutalism. (Cont’d p. 5)

Plaza (Cont'd)



Wells Fargo (2), Market Street entrance.

The entrances at the SW and SE corners are indented with angular panels. The high-rise window treatment suggests a horizontal emphasis.

The building has maintained its integrity and was updated in 2014, receiving LEED silver certification. It qualifies for city landmark designation and is eligible for listing on the California Register of Historic Resources because of “its excellence in architectural design, detail materials, and craftsmanship,” and its association with the renowned architectural designers.¹

Bank of America Building (3)

This massive structure that includes a 14-story tower and a sculptural 2-story southern wing relates to the other buildings in the Plaza with its classical form, construction and repetitive formwork. The tower has a square-shaped footprint while the lower structure wraps around it. Both sit close to the Market Street sidewalk facing Plaza de Cesar Chavez.

The Tower’s window configuration appears the same on the east, west (both eight columns) and south (only six columns) sides. However, the north end of the tower is mostly concrete panels with a column of windows at each side and a narrow recessed strip down the center. A wide band of concrete separates the lower two stories and another wide band lies at the top of the tower. Striking triangular canopies, appearing as brushed steel, were installed at the north tower entrances in 2006 along with new polished metal frames. The main entrance to the tower also has a fixed canopy of glass and steel at Market Street.

Looking at the building from the west, inside the Plaza, the wing’s two rows of recessed windows compliment the tower’s eight columns of windows. The wing overlaps part of the tower. (See photo on page 4.) The south side of the wing faces Park Avenue, has few windows and a fixed, large canopy of glass and steel added in 2006. Its two massive concrete blocks and recessed entrance relates nicely to the Pelli Building (#5 on map) at the other end of Park Avenue.

All corners of the building are indented, opposite of some major buildings in the Plaza, where corners are cantilevered.

(Cont’d p. 6)



*Bank of
America
Tower (3)
on
Market
Street,
looking at
the north
wall and
entrance.*

*(Photos: Gayle
Frank)*

Plaza (Cont'd)



Buildings (3)

B of A Tower

Bank of America Wing: entrance on Park Avenue.

**Former United California Bank Building/Morton's
The Steakhouse (4)**



Building (4)

One look at this building and the Acropolis comes to mind. The design is described as “New Formalism with some Brutalist influences.” Repetition and classicism were interpreted with a mix of modern and tradition; a common style during the second half of the twentieth century. Again, it relates to the other buildings in the Plaza yet differs in design.

The large rectangular structure, raised six steps from the sidewalk, stands three stories above the Plaza. Between tall concrete pilasters there are recessed, tinted glass. Windows wrap around the corners.

Most of the building’s integrity has been kept except the entrances. César Pelli (Gruen Assoc.) designed this building. It qualifies for city landmark designation and is eligible for listing on the California Register of Historic for the same reasons mentioned earlier.

Former Bank of California/Family Court (5)

This building is the gem of the Plaza. Designed by César Pelli, we have described it many times in previous *Continuity* issues and on our website (also see page 3). It is the one building we are hoping to save out of this massive demolition project. The Historic Report¹ describes it as “monumental in scale while relatively small in size.” The building is not only a Candidate City Landmark, but has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A and C. San Jose needs this building to be landmarked and saved. We call it the San Jose Sphinx. Visit www.preservation.org for more details.

Other Buildings

Three additional buildings remaining from the original Park Center Plaza are the Landmark Building (1), and inside the Plaza, Pavilions #104 (1a) and #130 (1b). Three other pavilions were demolished in 2006.

The Landmark Office Building at 100 W. San Fernando St. has Brutalist traits and relates to the three major Plaza buildings: former United California Bank (4), former Bank of America (3), and the former Union Bank (1a). (Cont'd p. 7)



Landmark Building (1)

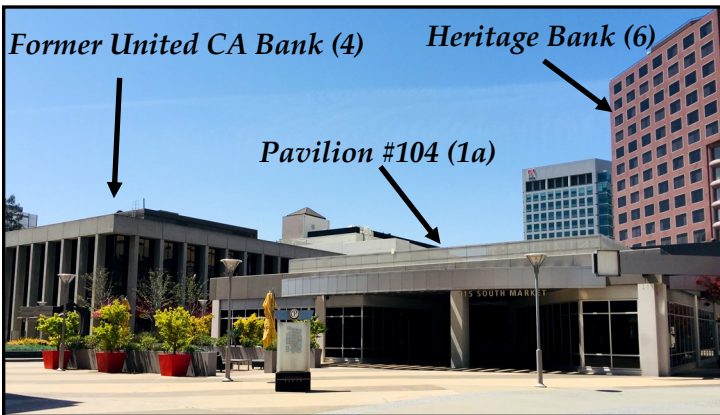
Wells Fargo (2) far right.

Plaza (Cont'd)

Its repetitive design in concrete is said to be “a classically inspired modern building.”¹ It was the first major building built for the Park Center Plaza, designed by Gruen Associates and completed in 1971.

The long, rectangular, 5-story structure with a recessed ground-story, sits on top of the underground parking structure. Since 2006, a long red canopy extends the south and north lengths of the building. The north side is elevated on W. San Fernando. The concrete grid of square windows, all of equal appearing dimensions, give a horizontal emphasis with wider horizontal beams and wrap-around windows at the corners. The building has maintained its integrity except for modernized entrances.

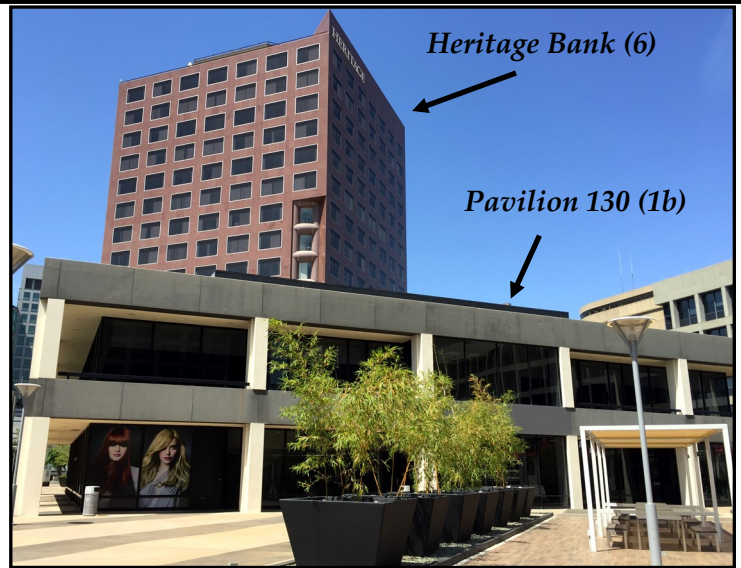
The two pavilions have flat roofs, exposed concrete with indented corners, matching a few of the larger perimeter buildings. Pavillion #104 (1a on photo map), the former 1-story Union Bank and later café building, has been altered and painted, hiding the original concrete texture. It does not integrate with the original Plaza designs.



Pavilion #130 (1b on photo map) is a 2-story office building, square with much of its integrity intact, except for being painted.

Heritage Bank of Commerce Building (6)

The other large structure in the Plaza to be razed includes the 15-story, red granite, 1985 Heritage Bank of Commerce, a non-contributor to the historic site. At 150 Almaden Boulevard, this structure (formerly Mitsui Manufacturers Bank) has a 50-foot granite atrium and a 2-story high crystal chandelier. The building was the tallest building in



San Jose for a time. It does not relate to the Brutalist theme of the earlier Park Center Plaza buildings but is described in the Historic Report¹ as “excellently designed.” The bank’s small kiosk sits to the east (6a on photo map).

The Plaza

The Park Center Plaza design used the raised open area as the roof for underground parking. The pavement and landscaping were replaced in 2006 when the name changed to City View Plaza. At that time the low round fountain, paved patterns, planted areas and large geometric or round planters were installed. At least eight large art sculptures are placed throughout the spacious site.



The remaining building that is not part of the City View Plaza project, Alpha Media (historic Japan-California Bank), is also a quality design for its time, (Cont'd p. 8)

Plaza (Cont'd)

but is only 44 years old, and is not of exceptional importance to qualify for listing on the California Register or as a Candidate City Landmark. Both Heritage Bank and Alpha Media buildings qualify as Structures of Merit.

The significance of the Park City Plaza structures built circa 1970 are summarized from the Historic Report¹ as follows:

- ◆ Exemplifies the economic historic heritage of San Jose.
- ◆ Portrays a “distinctive corporate architectural style” and a “local financial sector” of San Jose’s history.
- ◆ Expresses “distinguishing characteristics of modern Brutalist architecture in 1960s-70s.
- ◆ Illustrates the designers influence on the development of San Jose: César Pelli—Gruen Associates, and John Merrill Jr. and Lawrence Doane—SOM.



- ◆ Embodies building materials, design, and details that are “significant architectural innovations” locally and are unique in our built environment.

The Park Center Plaza is a significant array of mid-century buildings that show off Brutalist styles that complement and relate to each other. Walking through the Plaza is like a lesson in architecture on the modern commercial designs popular in the 1960s-1970s. The coordination of the integral parts conveys a feeling of organization, strength and structure. The variety of design approaches and heights ensures interest and appreciation for 20th century architecture. The City View Plaza Project proposes to demolish the entire Plaza and ten buildings to make way for three high-rise, boxy, glass office buildings that all look similar.

On a final environmental note, demolishing this complete site is disturbing. Adaptive reuse is one of the most sound strategies we can implement to create more sustainable cities. The carbon load of new construction (three 19-story glass buildings) and the costs, loss of embodied energy, and environmental impacts from tons of demolition waste make this huge project environmentally unsound. The thought of all that concrete filling waste sites is heart-breaking. San Jose can do better. ☿

—Gayle Frank

Source:

¹ *Historic Resource Project Assessment, City View Plaza; 12/18/2019, Revised 2/7/2020; Archives & Architecture; Prepared for San Jose Department of Planning, Building & Code Enforcement.*

² *César Pelli, world-renowned architect, was designated Partner for Design for the prestigious Gruen Associates in 1968 when founder Victor Gruen retired. Pelli had been Director of Design at another Los Angeles firm from 1964-68.*

Left, Heritage Bank of Commerce, built in 1985, is the 15-story red granite building at 150 S. Almaden Blvd. One of the ten structures City View Project proposes to demolish.

(Photos: Gayle Frank)

Google's Downtown West Mixed-use Plan Update

The target date for the San Jose City Council to consider Google's Downtown West Draft Amended Plan is now proposed for early 2021 (instead of late 2020). In addition, the release of the Draft Amended Plan for the Diridon Station Area Plan (DSAP) is expected this fall.

Since restrictions to limit meetings are still in place, outreach and interaction will continue to use online methods. The www.diridonsj.org website describes the following schedule.

2020 SUMMER

- City Review of Google's Proposal | Draft Development Agreement
- DSAP Amendments + Area-Wide Studies | Draft DSAP Amendments + CEQA Document
- DSAP Amendments + Area-Wide Studies | Draft Areawide Studies
- Commercial Linkage Fee Study | Update on Small Business Anti-Disp. Strategy
- Downtown Transportation Plan | Preferred Network Identification

2020 FALL

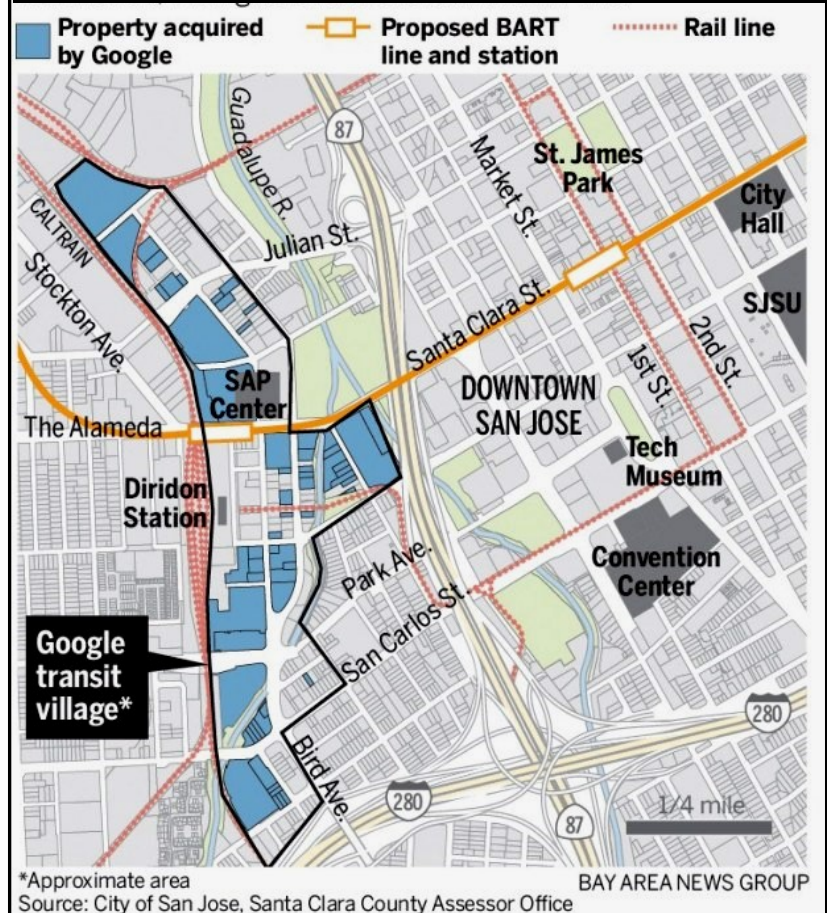
- City Review of Google's Proposal | Final EIR and Project Hearings
- DSAP Amendments + Area-Wide Studies | Final DSAP Amendments + CEQA Document and Project Hearings

2021 WINTER

- Diridon Integrated Station Concept Plan Continues
- Downtown Transportation Plan Continues

As described on the website: "The City is also preparing studies and implementation plans that would cover the entire area and address parking, infrastructure financing, and affordable housing. The City Council will consider the City-initiated amendments to the Diridon Station Area Plan and Google's Downtown West project as part of a

Downtown San Jose



comprehensive planning review process through 2020 and 2021. Community engagement is continuing throughout this period. If City Council approves the project, Google could then begin applying for building permits.

It is expected that the project would be constructed in several phases. In addition to the Google project, other development projects have been built or initiated in the area since the adoption of the Diridon Station Area Plan. The City will continue to process these other applications and take them into account as part of the Diridon Station Area Plan amendment process."

Interested parties can visit www.diridonsj.org to review the Community Engagement Strategy, review plans, sign up for emails, or submit questions and make comments.

⌘

ON THE RADAR



River Street Hotel Project

This new project has not entered the EIR (Environmental Impact Report) process yet but the Historic Preservation Officer has advised the developer that an EIR would be required since the proposed project impacts the River Street Historic District.

McCabe Hall

The Civic Auditorium Loading Dock Project plans to demolish McCabe Hall, which is attached to the Civic Auditorium on W. San Carlos St. PAC*sj opposes this project because of the obvious impact to the historic Civic auditorium and Montgomery Theater. Although McCabe Hall was built later, it is an integral part of the complex and would diminish the historic footprint along W. San Carlos Street. It is also important that McCabe Hall and the Civic Auditorium are supported operationally by the Parkside Plaza and Park Avenue-to-San Carlos Paseo—key to the function of the Civic Auditorium and McCabe Hall.

City View Plaza

PAC*sj's response was delivered to the DSEIR (Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report). Our prime interest is in saving the Pelli Building (Former Bank of California/Family Court). The Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) meeting on June 3 will hold a hearing on landmarking the building. However, the City Council may vote on June 9th to demolish the building before ever considering the landmark nomination. We are requesting that any review be postponed to at least June 16th, when Council is scheduled to consider the landmark nomination. There has been good press coverage about the Pelli Building, including the national "Preservation" magazine and we have received 135 signatures on our petition to save the building as of May 20.

Block 8 Sobrato Tower

PAC*sj met with the developer to discuss massing options for the four towers at the corner of W. San Carlos, Market and First Streets. PAC*sj is waiting for the EIR. Further, PAC*sj also requested that the City provide a forum for developers to coordinate their projects when in close proximity to historic resources and other proposed developments.

Santa Clara County Historic Grant Program

PAC*sj was pleased to be awarded reimbursable grant funds for digital documentation and interpretation of four historic areas: Diridon Station, Lick Observatory, IBM, Temple Laundry and the Alviso Historic District. We are waiting for the Grant Contract documents from the County prior to taking action.

Schiele Neighborhood

The Schiele Neighborhood group is working toward gaining historic status for its area, either as a Conservation Area or Historic District which will take time. The Landmarks Commission will discuss adding the neighborhood to the Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) in June. Meanwhile, the San Jose Historic Preservation Officer is working with individual homeowners to secure landmark status.

Former San Jose City Hall

The Santa Clara County is expressing interest in demolishing the former City Hall (right) at Mission and N. First Streets. The



1958 structure is an excellent example of mid-century architecture. PAC*sj is monitoring the process and is also exploring a development strategy to protect mid-century buildings from being demolished.

PAC*sj is Still Keeping An Eye On—



- Century 21
- Graves House
- Winchester Ranch Park
- Diridon Station Area
- Wehner Mansion

In Memory of Joan Bohnett

Joan E. Bohnett (1942-2020) was a consummate historian with a love of both history and her personal heritage. Joan grew up in San Jose, attended Willow Glen elementary schools and was in the first class to graduate from Del Mar High School. There she was active in student affairs, serving on student body commissions, as Senior Class President, and was voted Del Mar's first Christmas Dance Queen.

Joan graduated from San Jose State University in education. She excelled at teaching (Fremont School District), loved children, and her favorite part of the job was introducing history to her students. She married briefly after college but never had any children of her own. During her teaching career she fought for teachers' rights and became an outspoken leader for the teachers' union.

Joan's friend, April Halberstadt, said that "Joan's love of history and her personal heritage was her avocation and touched every aspect of her being." Her interest in history came naturally, coming from both sides of her family. Her grandfather, attorney L.D. Bohnett, was a Progressive Republican and Assemblyman, serving the 44th District. Her grandmother Ivadelle was active in the San Jose Woman's Club, To Kalon Club, and served on the board of the San Jose Day Nursery. Joan spent much time organizing the family records and documents, no easy task. Joan the archivist spent months sorting out the enormous treasure of scrapbooks, photos and personal



papers, much which was donated to Bancroft Library..

In the 1970s, Joan inherited from her grandparents a lovely 1919 home in the Palm Haven neighborhood of San Jose. She began restoring it to its original glory in 1995, and the home became a San Jose

City Landmark in 2008. She was known for her tasteful eye and decorated her home with unusual antiques, art objects, vintage artifacts and lush plants. The surrounding gardens were beautiful.

PAC*SJ members may remember

attending a hat and doll sale at Joan's house years ago. Hats and treasures were everywhere—the porch, living room, dining room, bedroom and hall. The guests raved about her home and décor.

Besides being an active member, donor, and volunteer extraordinaire for PAC*SJ, Joan participated in other historical organizations such as History San Jose, and the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County. Other groups she was committed to included San Jose Woman's Club and the Master Gardeners. PAC*SJ members will especially remember Joan as the cashier at our famous garage sales. She was the go-to person for pricing sale objects, often sitting under the canopy at the cash table. She eagerly assisted buyers with their questions about a new-found treasure.

Active in the Willow Glen Neighborhood Association, Joan chaired the book project "Touring Historic Willow Glen: Ten Walking Loops." She, along with the 15-member team, worked many long hours toward its 2007 printing. By then, she was retired and had time to help preserve her neighborhood history, so dear to her heart.

Friends have described Joan as helpful, thoughtful, affectionate, conscientious, a fun bridge partner, and a great lady. She was a generous and trusted friend to many. Joan's passing is a sad loss for her family, friends, and the many organizations with which she was involved. ☞



Joan Bohnett

(Below, Joan circa 1960s)

PAC*SJ 2020 Calendar

Jun	15	Monday, PAC*SJ Board Meeting, 6:30—8:30 PM. History Park, 2nd Floor Firehouse.*
July	20	Monday, PAC*SJ Board Meeting, 6:30—8:30 PM. History Park, 2nd Floor Firehouse.*
Aug	17	Monday, PAC*SJ Board Meeting, 6:30—8:30 PM. History Park, 2nd Floor Firehouse.*
Sept	21	Monday, PAC*SJ Board Meeting, 6:30—8:30 PM. History Park, 2nd Floor Firehouse.*

** Board meeting may take place online*

PAC*SJ During the Pandemic

Since the Covid-19 pandemic has descended upon us, PAC*SJ has had to curtail its fundraising events, garage/yard sales, walking tours, members events, in person poster sales, and all other get-togethers. We hope to bring back some of our activities in the Fall, but only the next few months can predict whether that can happen. So stay tuned, and if we are able to move ahead with a few events, such as a walking tour, yard sale, and fundraiser, we will send out details with eblasts and communicate information on our website and Facebook. It has been a sparse year and we are eager to get back to some kind of different normal.

Be assured that PAC*SJ is still meeting as a Board and with the Planning Department online or by phone. We continue to monitor and act on threats to our historic assets. We are still writing letters to the city and keeping in touch with developers and partners. We have not gone away.

Notable Quotable

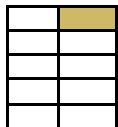
“Most architects know that there are some buildings that speak, very few buildings that sing, and very many that are mute ... We appreciate buildings that sing.”

—César Pelli, ‘Spotlight on Design’

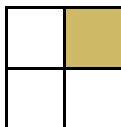
National Building Museum Lecture Series, 2010

ADVERTISE IN CONTINUITY!

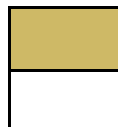
Continuity is distributed to over 500 San Jose preservationists, homeowners and decision-makers. It's a great way to get your message out to your best potential customers! For ads larger than the business card, you must supply camera-ready artwork, or PAC*SJ can provide it at an additional charge.



Business Card
Single issue \$50
3 issues \$120



1/4 Page
Single issue
\$100



1/2 Page
Single issue
\$200



Full Page
Single issue
\$375

Joan Bohnett Historic Neighborhood Preservation Fund

PAC*SJ is mourning the loss of Joan Bohnett. We are announcing the Joan Bohnett Historic Neighborhood Preservation Fund. The fund will support the efforts of neighborhood groups in protecting and celebrating their historic character, pursuing historic district status, or

developing walking tours and other educational programs about their history. Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution in Joan's memory by donating online at www.preservation.org. Keep Joan's passion for historic neighborhoods alive.

PAC*SJ Selling Sunset Magazine Art Posters

We are currently selling large format, high quality posters celebrating 100 years of Sunset magazine. Choose from 18 different prints highlighting the years from 1898 to 1998. \$22 each (includes tubed shipping cost of \$7). Most are 20 inches x 30 inches. The two Native American themed prints are \$47 each, including shipping.

To order your poster visit www.preservation.org.

These posters were printed by Lane Publishing Company several years ago and recently donated to PAC*SJ. **Join or renew your membership at the \$100 level and receive one poster free.**

PAC*SJ Spring Sale a Success

Thank you, neighbors, members, friends and shoppers, for donating to PAC*SJ's huge Spring Garage and Treasures Sale held before the rain and the virus hit. We hit the \$9000 mark with sales including the early donations from several estates we collected. We seem to be the "go to" organization for families looking to donate items their loved ones no longer need. Thank you.

The sale covered five houses for three days including the Halberstadt Home, The Liesenfelt—Wangness Home, the Curia Family, the Salas Home, and the Mason Home. The entire block of South 13th gets a hug (respectful of social distancing).

Head cashiers were Wini Leeds and Sandy Swirsky along with assistance from Lynda Sereno, Gilda Messmer, Ron Hagen, and Rebecca Evans. Volunteers included Leslie Masunaga, Art Carroll, Lucille Boone, John Mitchell, Lyle Merithew, Gayle Frank, Heinz Boedecker, Robert Carter, Lynne Stephenson, Bonnie Montgomery, Bronwyn Johnston, Connie Foley, Gratia Rankin, Sara Bruce, Clarice and Cameron Coles, Steve Grant, Marni Kamzan, Jim Bunce,

Gabi Solleder, Tim McAuliff, Tom Aldridge, Ted Essy, Scott D'Agostino, Jim Norvell, Marilyn Messina, John Froli, Catherine Pellizzari, the Nemmer-Buis Family, Ephrat Shahar, Julia Howlett, Dev Rendler and Steve Cohen.

A big shout-out to the 20 volunteers from S.J.S.U. service fraternity, Alpha Phi Omega, who donated over 30 hours of assistance by moving tables, sorting goods and generally being helpful to all.

Some eager shoppers illegally parked and inconvenienced neighbors. We apologize for that and will take steps to monitor sidewalks more frequently. We hope to organize a sale in the Fall when it is deemed safe.

Our Ephemera sale is now online and you can buy beautiful posters created by Sunset Magazine. These can be picked up from my porch on 13th Street or mailed. Please see all 20 images on our website at www.preservation.org.

Until we can hug again,

—Patt Curia

San Jose Needs a History Museum

San Jose has a remarkable history. From the first Native people and the Europeans who followed, all have contributed greatly to our city and the surrounding valley.

From the abundance of orchards and fields that produced the “Valley of Hearts Delight” to the latest electronic marvels with which the world has been gifted, San Jose has been a pioneering leader. But much of our present population, which is largely new and ever changing, is not familiar with our past and what made San Jose what it is today. The present-day population, including our young people and visitors to our city, have no way of connecting to the amazing events and people that brought us to where we are today.

We are presently in the middle of a period of renaissance growth, yet we are leaving our past further behind every

day. Many smaller cities throughout Santa Clara County have museums touting their history, citing events, places and people that have made contributions which enhance our present day lives.

San Jose has no such museum in our downtown. History Park sits across the street from the History San Jose Archives on Senter Road, but there is no central and inclusive exhibit of San Jose’s history that can be visited in a large convenient space. History Park has multiple recreated or restored buildings, each a page from our past. An important focus for History Park includes promoting social events and gatherings to bring income for its maintenance and operations. It is a bucolic place set in the 10th largest U.S. city yet it cannot offer the panoramic history that a true museum could.

The Archives have large warehouses filled with everything from vintage farm equipment, household items, early technologies, photos, amazing art and other antique treasures. Packed away from public view, is the complex radio used by Charles “Doc” Herrold for the world’s first radio broadcast. Sitting nearby is the first Apple Computer. Here is a 1777 leather bound folio of San Jose’s “First City in California”

Census. In another room are dozens of shelves of very early electronic inventions that can be deemed the genesis of “Silicon Valley.”

Another unseen collection of extremely historic value is located atop Mt. Hamilton at the James Lick Observatory. As the world’s first permanent mountain top observatory built in the 1880’s, the Lick facility has had nearly a century and a half of scientific discoveries. There are rooms of equipment and data from these early breakthroughs.

At one time there was a larger community that lived atop Mt. Hamilton (there was even a school) and people

would visit, taking day-long, scheduled wagon trips from downtown San Jose. The twenty-two-mile trip edged around 365 turns up to

the summit. There the visitors could behold the scientific marvels of that age plus gorgeous views.

Lick contributed to the industrial and technologic development of the valley but today its achievements go largely unrecognized. There is no place down in the valley to appreciate the contributions made by the Lick scientists who labored there for countless nights in the cold dark. San Jose needs a history museum.

Many speculate that San Jose has had a “complex” about itself in comparison to the city to the north of us, which has beautiful vistas, abundant history and museums, as well as cable cars. But San Jose used to have trolley cars, bountiful agricultural, industries and technologies that supported the nation through two world wars and boosted us to a pinnacle of our modern tech world. Yet no one can see the progression of how the people, places and events brought us to where we are today. We have missed the transition from orchards to Apple. It is like a collective historic amnesia. We don’t know where we came from. How did the microchip evolve from an apricot pit?

(Cont’d p. 15)

Something just happened here ~ a long time ago. We need these stories ~ they must be told.

Former PAC*SJ E.D. Receives Award

PAC*SJ's former Executive Director, Brian Grayson, who retired last year, was awarded a commendation by the Santa Clara County Supervisors earlier this year

The certificate states that Grayson "ensured San Jose kept its essential connection to its past during his 19-year service with PAC*SJ" and "he achieved significant victories in preserving San Jose's architectural heritage." Further, he was commended for building "a strong and effective relationship with the San Jose Planning Department" and "served effectively in multiple public service roles."

Congratulations Brian!



In the Santa Clara County Supervisor Boards' Chambers from left, Supv. Joseph Simitian, Supv. Dave Cortese, Brian Grayson, Nina Grayson, Supv. Susan Ellenberg, Supv. Cindy Chavez and Supv. Mike Wasserman. The Supervisors awarded Brian Grayson a commendation on Jan 28th, 2020.

Museum (Cont'd)

That is but one good story and there are thousands more. To know who we are and how our future unfolds we need the trajectory of the past to guide us.

San Jose is presently undergoing a revitalization with increased development, especially in the downtown area. But for our population, especially our youth, we must be able to know and understand when and how San Jose came to be. The city has witnessed great achievement in the last century and a half. We need visual representations of how all the pieces of our past came to make San Jose. This will help ensure that our future can be firmly rooted.

We have the pieces. They are locked away in storerooms and warehouses. These pieces, the vast collections of artifacts and treasures, serve only as reminders. Most importantly the

pieces hold the stories and it's these stories that tell who we are. San Jose needs a history museum.

That so many smaller cities around us have history museums is testament to the collective wisdom of presenting the past so the future can continue to grow in orchards of success.

Everyone possesses some DNA of preservation. We all hold dear something from the past. Old letters, baseball cards, a lock of a child's hair, all monuments of past significance that bring forth the nobility in each of us.

San Jose holds much from its past. This is a great city; we just need to show it off. San Jose needs a history museum. Preservation Action Council of San Jose seeks to preserve our history; without history there is nothing to preserve. ☘

—John Mitchell, PAC*SJ Board Member

Exploring San Jose's City Landmarks

Here is the next San Jose Landmark from the City list. Check previous *Continuity* issues for earlier landmark descriptions on our website. www.preservation.org.

HS92-84 Tilden/Laine House; 970 Elizabeth Street, Alviso

This well-preserved city landmark, the Tilden/Laine House on Elizabeth Street, is a two-story wood frame home with an architectural design described as a blend of Italianate and Eastlake Stick styles. The house was built in 1887 by a widow, Susan Ortleby Tilden. The wrap-around porch, supported by thin, decorative posts and brackets, has a main double door and secondary entrance, both with stained glass transoms. Short wrought iron balustrades appear at the first-floor porch and at the small balcony above. Two-story dramatic bay windows enhance the structure, one at the façade, and one on each side toward the rear. Other features of the house include wide eaves supported by large brackets, rustic channel siding, quoins and dentil trim at the first story, stickwork, and a secondary cornice at the porch.

The pale green siding is accentuated with white, burgundy and dark blue trim to set off the decorative features. The garden and landscaping are well-manicured, beautifully surrounding the house. To this day, the house is a handsome reminder of Alviso's past.

The site, which also contains a two-story water tank and a small one-story gabled barn, is a contributing structure to



The Tilden House (1887) on Elizabeth St., in Alviso.

the National Alviso Historic District and received city landmark designation in 1992. The Tilden/Laine Store is also listed as part of the site but through non-use and neglect it finally collapsed in 2017.

The Tilden/Laine Store

The Tilden/Laine Store next door was a rectangular building with a gabled roof and a commercial false front, once with an elaborate cornice. The front had tri-lap siding, thought to be added when Mrs. Tilden began operating the store, but the original clapboard siding was exposed on the rear at the time of the 1992 survey. The sides of the building were covered in corrugated metal siding. The plain wood-frame windows had fixed sashes. The painted "Laine's Grocery" was faintly apparent in 1992. A rear shed addition was beginning to cave in at that time. The old store was believed to have been built in the 1850s-1860s and was one of the oldest buildings in Alviso.

(Cont'd p. 17)

Left, Tilden House, side view of wrap-around porch. (Photos: G. Frank)



City Landmarks (Cont'd)

Who Were the Tildens?

Susan Ortley, aged 19, with her orphaned half-brother (Charles H. Harker) and half-sister (Louisa Harker), arrived in Alviso in 1852. They had sailed from New York around Cape Horn to be with Susan's older brother John J. Ortley, an Alviso transporter of goods to and from San Francisco. While on the clipper ship their mother died half-way through the voyage.

While living in Alviso, Susan Ortley married Henry LaBau in 1856 and six years later they purchased for \$90 the property where the Tilden house stands today. They built their home here but in 1865 Henry LaBau died. Soon after, Susan married David Tilden, a leading Alviso merchant who operated his general merchandise store next door to the LaBau home and adjacent to the rail line.

Tilden later became the town's postmaster and justice of the peace. After Tilden died in 1875, Susan and her daughters, Marguerite LaBau and Minerva Tilden, successfully managed the store beginning in 1883, selling groceries, tobacco, drugs, liquor, shoes, boots, clothing and hardware. In 1887, Susan Tilden replaced her LaBau house with the home that stands here today—a home that was considered the finest residence in Alviso.

Who Were the Laines?

Susan Tilden's daughter Minerva married Thomas A. Laine in 1909. Thomas was the son of prominent Santa Clara County lawyer and onetime state senator, Thomas



The Tilden/Laine Store in 2010. (Photo: Gayle Frank)

H. Laine. After Susan Tilden passed in 1912, Minerva leased out the Tilden store.

The next few decades saw Alviso's slow decline with gambling, fighting, drinking, tong wars and even shootings. By the 1930s, rumors suggested that clandestine Chinese lotteries were based in the old store. For a while it had become a saloon and dance hall. But by 1940, Willis Laine, Minerva and Thomas Laine's son, reopened the "Laine's Groceries" store again, operating it until 1960. Other uses for the building included an antique store. After the 1983 floods, the store was abandoned, with water marks above the door to prove the height of the flood waters. Many decades of neglect and lack of use caused the picturesque store to slowly deteriorate, collapsing in 2017.

Willis Laine (1911-2000) lived in the Tilden house with his wife (Yolanda Marques) and two sons (Thomas A. and Willis A. Jr.) for a long time, maintaining the site well. Being an avid fisherman, Willis and son Willis Jr. opened the Laine Bait shop to the rear of the

(Cont'd p. 18)



Vintage photo of Tilden House, water tank and store

City Landmarks (Cont'd)



Laine's Grocery in 1981.

Tilden House property in the 1950s and then across the street by 1968, the same year Alviso was annexed to the City of San Jose. The Bait Shop also served as a popular community meeting place.

Willis Sr.'s son, Thomas A. Laine (1937-2018), a commercial fisherman for much of his life, operating bait shops in Martinez and Bay Point. He returned to Alviso and took over the Laine's Bait Shop in the 1990s. Thomas was Mayor of Alviso from 1961-1964. He lived in the Tilden house with his wife Beverly until he died in 2018. They had two sons, one daughter, nine grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. The Bait Shop still operates across the street from the Tilden House. ☿

— Gayle Frank



Laine's Bait Shop across the street from the Tilden House.

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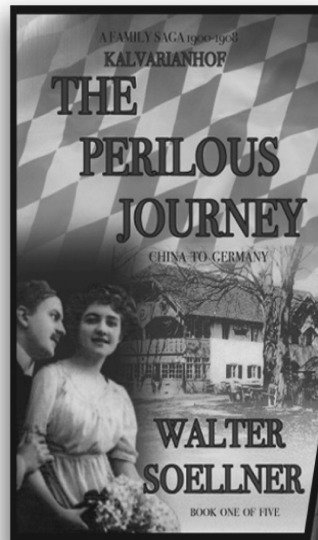
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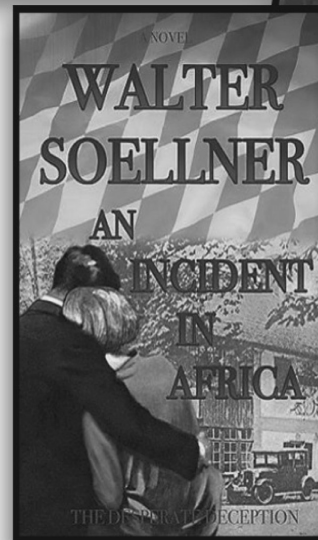
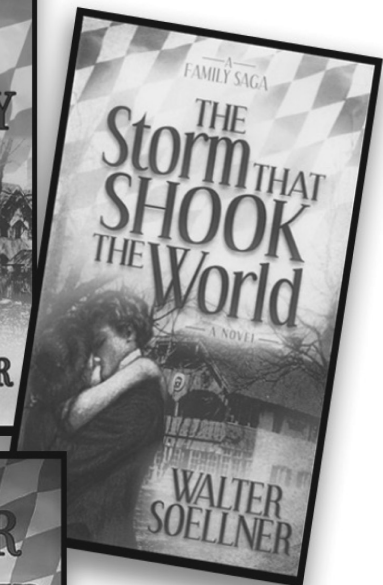
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WALTER SOELLNER

A San Jose Author



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PAC*SJ welcomes any donation you can make this year to further our advocacy, educational opportunities and event planning.

Please contact info@preservation.org for more information. PAC*SJ is a 501c3 non-profit organization. Our tax ID is 77-0254542. ☼





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We believe that **historic preservation is good for our quality of life, good for business, and good for the environment.** We aim to integrate a strong commitment to historic preservation into the land use and development decisions of the City of San Jose that affect historic resources, as well as into the private decisions of property owners and developers. We try to bring owners and developers together to create historically sensitive projects that make economic sense.

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