

Burrell Park Celebrates Centennial

The residents of the original Burrell Park Subdivision, officially recorded with Santa Clara County on March 5, 1924, decided to celebrate its 100-year anniversary on August 24th of 2024. The initial subdivision map was submitted to Santa Clara County and signed off by the County Supervisor, Assessor, Surveyor, auditor, engineer, property owners (Frank L. Burrell and wife Anne), and others. The subdivision included all lots on Burrell Court, the lots on the SW side of McKendrie Street, and both sides of Hedding Court between Park Avenue and what is now Dana Avenue. At that time, in the 1920s, West Hedding Street stopped at Park Avenue, so the short extension from Park Avenue to the west end of Burrell Park was simply called Hedding Court. Sometime between 1935 to 1940, Dana Avenue stretched across Hedding.

Before Frank Burrell acquired the orchard land pre-1922, an earlier map lists it belonging to Rebecca Smith. Prunes and apricot orchards covered this area. Frank and Anne Burrell's idea for a subdivision grew into a home development that would offer smaller and more affordable houses to the San Jose citizens. At that time, surrounding houses were larger and on bigger lots—especially the stately residences nearby on The Alameda.

Frank Burrell (1876-1951) was the grandson of Lyman J. Burrell (1801-1884), an adventurous and hardworking man who arrived with his family to live in the Santa Cruz mountains in 1852. There, Lyman established Burrell Village with a store, blacksmith, and later a school. He and Mountain Charley were the earliest non-indigenous settlers in those mountains. The Burrell School, built on donated land from Lyman Burrell, is a winery today.



*Mission Revival home on Burrell Ct. built in 1924
with a matching garage.*



1924 Mission Revival with dramatic entry on Burrell Ct.

Decades later, grandson Frank lived in San Jose, was VP at Anderson-Barngrover and helped found FMC (Food Machinery Corporation). He left an estate of about \$1.3 million. He and his family lived on the SW corner of Park Avenue and Hedding Street, but the large Spanish Revival house was demolished in 1990.

In the early decades of the 20th century, an increased population necessitated more housing. Greater numbers of people arrived in Santa Clara to work in the agricultural industry and the food packing/canning industries. Transportation became more convenient, especially with more automobiles. After WWI, soldiers returned from war. Downtown San Jose was becoming an important financial center. (The population of San Jose in 1910 was 28,946; in 1920 was 39,542; in 1930 was 57,651.)

Nationally, in the early 1920s, the Federal government was anxious to increase good-quality and affordable housing for middle-class citizens and promoted a serious campaign called Better Homes in America (BHA). (See page 16 for more on BHA.) Other subdivisions near Burrell Court were popping up in the 1920s, although there is no indication that San Jose participated in the BHA campaigns.

The real estate firm, Barnett & Phelps on N. First Street managed the Burrell Park Subdivision. One of the early newspaper ads in the

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Burrell Park (Cont'd)

San Jose Mercury Herald (1/28/1923) advertised Burrell Park homes from \$3750 to \$8750 with "terms to suit." The ad mentioned that ten homes were "soon to be completed and were ready for inspection and selection." The sewer, gas, water, electricity, cement walks and curbs were already in place.

On March 8, 1924, the Peninsula Times Tribune ran an article about increased building activity reported by contractors. C. M. Cook,¹ a builder and architect from San Francisco, was commissioned to build ten new homes at Burrell Park. That same year, Christopher Cook suddenly owned the Cook Lumber Company at 315 W. Julian Ave in San Jose. Local contractor Clay. V. Brown was hired to build four more homes in Burrell Park. The article continues, announcing that the southern portion of the subdivision "will be resurveyed soon and cut into 82 additional building lots."

The ad in the San Jose Mercury Herald on May 17, 1925, comments that, "San Jose is growing fast" and lists six subdivisions, selling homes from \$5000 and up. Burrell Park was one of the six.

According to the Mercury Herald, the Burrell Park area was annexed into the City of San Jose in October 1925, and a year later the city awarded a contract for paving its streets.

In June of 1930, ads for five-room homes with a garage in Burrell Park dropped the price to \$3000, a result of the depression. By 1930, the census lists a large number of residents renting their homes in Burrell Park.

By 1931, an arial survey of the area shows small homes built all along the south side of McKendrie and much of Burrell Court except the end of the southern side. On Hedding Court larger lots filled with homes appear on both sides. Hedding Court still remained a dead end.

A 1937 map published by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) depicts the Burrell Park neighborhood in the blue zone, defined as "still desirable" for obtaining home loans. The HOLC maps defined neighborhoods throughout the nation by their perceived risk of lending, often called "redlining."

The first houses built in Burrell Park included original 900 to 1200 square-foot homes, but at present, first or second floor additions toward the rear are common. The Spanish and Mission Revival styles prevail with unique parapets,



Mayor Mahan, Katherine Burrell, Elise Stassart - a Burrell Ct. resident/organizer, and Councilmember Dev Davis speak at the Centennial.

stucco exteriors, arches, and red tile roofs. Newer two-story homes intersperse both Burrell Court and McKendrie but are often designed with a compatible style, blending well in the neighborhood. Tudor Revival style homes stand on both streets in interesting variations.

An outstanding example of a Streamline Moderne style home (see below), built in 1947, stands on a corner lot.

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Burrell Park (Cont'd)

In 2000, the Streamline house received a Restoration Award from the City of San Jose for being, “lovingly restored with close attention to every detail.”

On the south side of Hedding, between Park and Dana Avenues, a few cute Spanish and Mission Revival homes from the early days remain. After widening Hedding Street around the 1960s, the north side of Hedding was rebuilt, leaving no original homes from the 1924 Burrell Park. Widening Hedding also required the removal of two of the early homes on both corners of Burrell Court and Hedding.

Some homes in the subdivision were replaced after WWII with traditional styles we commonly see in San Jose. These 1940s homes had simpler lines and less architectural decoration, often categorized as a Minimal Traditional style. With increased growth of San Jose after the war more housing was essential, so tax benefits for home ownership and generous home loans to war veterans after WWII stimulated home building. The population of San Jose in 1940 was 68,457; in 1950 was 95,280; in 1960 was 204,196).



Another Mission Revival (1926) on McKendrie Street.

Today the Burrell Park neighbors are proud of its heritage, an early 20th century subdivision of small homes with architectural styles popular in the 1920s. The centennial celebration was well attended and offered music by Saxophonist Mike Mendoza, and The Thelves, a food truck, displays of early maps and news articles, and walking tours and information table by PAC*SJ. San Jose Mayor Matt Mahon and Councilmember Dev Davis were on hand to praise the neighbors for their recognition of the neighborhood's



A 1924 McKendrie home with a Mission-like parapet.

history. Two relatives of Frank Burrell, granddaughter Katherine Burrell and her daughter, Victoria Johnson, were on hand to represent the Burrell family. The event was sponsored by Mayor Matt Mahan, Frank Burrell III, Doug Keefer and Safeway. Neighbors contributed their furniture, volunteered time, muscle, and artistic talents



*Jo Hogan, resident and organizer on Burrell Ct., reached out to PAC*SJ last year about their historic neighborhood.*

At the end of the event, members of the neighborhood association were invited to tour a few home interiors on Burrell Court: a beautiful Mission Revival design with authentic early features such as the kitchen, woodwork, windows, lovely tile fireplace, and all plaster walls. The owner was proud to say that no drywall was present in the house and therefore felt free from mold growth hazards.

We walked through a second house, the unique Streamline Moderne home, which was as exciting in the interior as the exterior, with curved walls, glass bricks, glass louvers, streamline metal stair rails, and Art Deco furniture, floors, lights, and art.

A third beautifully remodeled home in the craftsman style was also opened for a tour.

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PAC*SJ Volunteers at Remillard House

PAC*SJ member and volunteer extraordinaire, Russ Danielson, reported that work continues at the historic Ashworth-Remillard House on Story Road. Russ milled, sanded and stained new wooden slats of a picnic bench, table, and stand-alone bench.

He also disposed of the remains of a massive Palm frond and Pepper tree left from heavy winter storms. The refuse was hand carried to large green refuse cans each week until finished. Russ also cleaned out the brush and rubble surrounding the auxiliary house so trustee Sue Cucuzza and the facility associate could access the interior for clearing out. Thank you Russ for all your hard work! 🐾

Burrell Park (Cont'd)

Kudos to the Burrell Park residents, for their dedication to the neighborhood. They seemed a close-knit group, appreciating the varied styles of homes and respecting the subdivision's history. Congratulations to the Burrell Park Neighborhood Association Committee members for on a job well done spearheading this successful event. 🐾

—Gayle Frank

¹ Christopher Cook was a prolific and creative architect and builder who arrived in San Jose in 1924, advertising he was a "one-stop-shop." After two years he left San Jose, chased out by financial troubles.

SJ Fire Museum (Cont'd)

fire vehicles with firefighters putting out a fire. He also created the 15-foot bronze statue of a firefighter that stands in the rear yard. (See our group photo page 12)

The Fire Museum exists because of the generous donations from the Brandenburg Family and The Richardson Family Trust. Many others have joined the San Jose Fire Museum, a non-profit, and also contributed to the museum. Visit www.sjfiremuseum.org for more information.

The Members' Event was a great success and PAC*SJ thanks the staff of the Fire Museum for their tours. The Museum is a jewel in San Jose's Downtown, a wonderful place to visit, and a source of city pride. 🐾

—Gayle Frank

¹ During the 1906 earthquake, Franklin Fire Station #3 collapsed on this engine. The engine was dug out by the firemen and then used to fight the fires for two days. Photo of engine in last issue of Continuity.

Elections 2024 A Preservation Primer

On November 4th, 2024, local voters return to the polls in a runoff election to choose four City Council seats (Districts 2, 6, 8, and 10) and two County Supervisors (Districts 2 and 5). Those elected will have a significant influence on local land use decisions, planning initiatives, and funding priorities that directly affect historic preservation efforts city- and county-wide.

To better inform voters and candidates alike on major policy issues related to historic preservation, PAC*SJ distributed an 8-question survey prior to the March 5th primary election, which featured 30 candidates running for nine offices. The candidates who advanced to November's runoff are featured on our website at www.preservation.org/2024-candidates. (Those with an [*] have not responded to the survey).

As a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, PAC*SJ does not make candidate endorsements. However, we strongly encourage you to learn more about each candidate's position on these issues and to vote by November 4th. 🐾



Artist Bill Vujevich in front of his work in progress, a large mural on a rear wall of the Fire Museum.

(Photos: Gayle Frank)