

Celebrating and Preserving San Mateo Park

San Mateo Park Neighborhood Association Summer Newsletter



Welcome to our summer newsletter. Our major focus for this issue is the significant erosion of the protective, R1A zoning your neighborhood association was originally founded to achieve. State legislation now allows:

- ♦ lot splits
- ♦ multi-family housing
- ♦ ADUs.

San Mateo City Council not only took no action to limit the impact of the law, but actually made the protection for our neighborhood even looser than state law required.

Due to the potential impact of those changes in our neighborhood, we thought we would highlight some of the historic features of The Park. We have put together some interesting history of The Park.

In the face of these zoning challenges we continue our primary mission to protect San Mateo Park's distinctly beautiful neighborhood.

Your generous donations will continue to fund our substantial watering program for young street and island trees. Another tough drought year is expected. Your watering of street trees in front of your homes as you water your garden is a great help.

We would like to offer a special thank you to new owners on W. Poplar Ave. Betsy and Jim Yawn, for their 2022 gift of \$10,000 to the Tree Fund. Our Tree Fund has funded substantial acceleration of our island improvement program

For the good of the Park,
Your SMPNA Board of Directors

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OUR HISTORIC HOMES



Few architects sustain the popular affection Bernard Maybeck enjoys almost 70 years after his death. Arthur Brown, Jr., may have been more tasteful, Frank Lloyd Wright more revolutionary, but Maybeck's eccentric work and personality continue to inspire love. Locally, having "a Maybeck" is equivalent to living in a Monet. Trained at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris.



Julia Morgan broke all the rules to become a major California architect. Daughter of a prosperous Oakland mining engineer, Morgan was the first woman to graduate with a degree in engineering from the University of California at Berkeley, in 1894. With the encouragement of her teacher, Bernard Maybeck, she became the first woman to enter the revered Ecole des Beaux-Arts in 1897, receiving her diploma in 1901.

The Park's origin story:

What do we know and not know?

McLaren -- The Park's original arborist

In the beginning: John McLaren, Scotsman, was enticed to America by George Howard and charged with landscaping his 6,500 acre estate in San Mateo. From 1873 - 1887, when he was hired away to develop Golden Gate Park, McLaren planted thousands of trees there and on the nearby Ralston, Easton and Mills estates.

He also planted Eucalyptus flanking the County Road -- El Camino Real -- to provide shade and a wind-break. Seemed like a good idea at the time...

Amidst these large estates, the area that was to become The Park was part of the Clark estate. We have found no evidence that McLaren conducted work here, as he did for others of Howard's neighbors, before he decamped to Golden Gate Park. But regardless, he was sufficiently knowledgeable and engaged with the area that McLaren was both an obvious choice for The Park's developers and quite willing to consult on the layout and planting of the new residential area. Clark's legacy is marked by the central street that offers the main entrance to The Park -- its widest and the only Drive among our Avenues and Roads.

Genesis of The Park: With Clark's death in 1898, planning began for a subdivision of the Clark estate, creating large lots to be marketed as San Mateo Park. In preparation, 25,000 trees and shrubs were planted. From a piece promoting the May 10th 1902 auction of these lots:

"The plan does credit... to the inspiring suggestions of John McLaren, the capable Superintendent of Golden Gate Park, who attained his well-deserved reputation for landscape gardening... in the superb country home of the Howards... and whose interest in the adornment of that locality still exists to such an extent that the owners of San Mateo Park are deeply indebted to him for most valuable suggestions for its design and the selection of the trees bordering the Avenues and planted in the ovals and circles in the roadways, and the groups set out on all of the lots."

What's especially notable and, we're told, unusual, is that trees were planned and planted on the lots before any homes were built. If you have a heritage tree on your property, particularly an oak or tall species that McLaren favored, he may well have directed its planting.

Urban myth? It's been said McLaren planted each island uniquely with species representing either continents or countries around the world. While McLaren's palette certainly included non-native species, we don't (yet?) have solid backup for this story.

Spring Cleaning

A boring task, but don't things look better afterwards?

With your contributions, we're funding some maintenance tasks on our islands that the City does not provide. You may not notice the specifics, but -- as with spring cleaning -- you likely feel a general sense of well-being and order when it's done. (Cue chirping birds and Bambis?)

35 young trees on 22 islands have been pruned for good structure.

This is important for the health and attractive form of any tree (including those in our gardens) and generally should be done a few years after planting. The City plants our island trees, but does not have budget to follow up with this structural pruning.

Here's where our members step up and fill the gap. With your support, we aim to make this an ongoing commitment for all new trees planted on our islands.

Periodically we pay to have deadwood pruned from island trees (this too is a maintenance service the City does not provide.) Continuing the cycle we began two years ago, the City has our target list for 12 more islands. By the time this newsletter reaches you, we expect the City will have organized a bid process and selected a contractor. Then work will soon be underway.

If you'd like to see which islands have had this work funded by SMPNA, please go to our website www.sanmateopark.org home page for an annotated map.

With maintenance every two months, the spring weed explosion we manage in our gardens got a little out of hand on our islands. Crews will catch up with the weeds, but they are working without pesticides -- making the task more labor intensive. Fyi, we do bring the City's attention to things that appear to be overlooked. This includes the perennial problem of getting adequate, replenished chip mulch to suppress weeds and retain moisture for our island trees. That's an ongoing 'dialogue'... Stay tuned



Treasury Update

The Board would like to take this opportunity to thank Dave Pearson for his many years as Treasurer and building a solid financial program for SMPNA. Wonderful work Dave!

2021 year in review

It was a great year for SMPNA. Thank you for your generosity! A few highlights:

- 247 households donated this year.
- SMPNA administrative costs were 21%, at the very low end of the range between 20-35% for non-profits.
- With your donated funds, the Association continued to nurture our beautiful islands and trees, engaged our community in new ways that benefitted us all, and updated The Park on City Council meetings news and discussions.
- Please visit the website for the complete 2021 financial reports at: <https://www.sanmateopark.org/post/2021-financials-are-in>

What's new since January?

- The fiscal year is officially changed to calendar year Jan 1 - Dec 31. This reflects the intuitive nature of our work and aligns with our typical donor's tax year.
- We are now mailing receipts as donations are received. Please let us know if you do not receive your donation receipt in a timely fashion or if we have made any errors.
- PayPal qualified SMPNA as a charity and reduced their fees for donations made through their platform. That means SMPNA now receives more of your PayPal donations!

Let's increase participation!

In 2021, 247 households out of 785 in the San Mateo Park became contributing members. If we average donations across the neighborhood, it amounts to \$86 per household. Wow! Can we all find a way to contribute \$86 a year?

Let's increase the engagement of our neighborhood. We hear from about a third of our membership through their donations, but that leaves 2/3 we never hear from. While donations do indeed fund our operations, your comments via email or on our donation form are important even if you can't donate this time. Let us know what you think.

When submitting your contribution, please include your email and contact information so we can provide timely updates when important civic issues arise and as special projects in The Park develop. When we work together with more families participating and involved than before, imagine what we could do to help build a better San Mateo Park and a stronger City of San Mateo!

If you have any questions on the financial reports or if we can answer any questions about how donations are processed, please reach out to our treasurer, Alicia Woodfall-Jones awoodfalljones@sanmateopark.org at any time.

THE EARLIEST HOMES IN THE PARK



House #1



House #2



House # 3



House #4

SAN MATEO PARK HISTORY

Do you wonder what is the oldest house built in the Park?

Do you know the famous architects that designed and built homes in the Park?

How did the San Mateo Park get developed? What is its history?

San Mateo Park Neighborhood Association has the answers to these questions. We have had Directors in the past with the same curiosity and we have built a good amount of history.



NEIGHBORS MEETING NEIGHBORS

The SMPNA held a small coffee meetup and playdate in April 2022. We had Backhaus goodies and coffee, neighbors visited, and kids played at the Park School on the sunny Sunday morning. The event is the first of what the SMPNA hopes to more social programming over the next few years.

If you missed this event, we missed you too and keep an eye on the SMPNA website at <https://www.sanmateopark.org/> and on NextDoor for announcements of future events! Please reach out to Kathryn Collins at kcollins@sanmateopark.org if you would like to help in planning future events.

This land was originally a part of the Howard estate. Today, the Howard family's most enduring legacy is the lush landscaping for which the area is known. The stately Eucalyptus, Redwood, Monterey Pine and other mature trees one sees throughout Hillsborough and Burlingame were all planted under the direction of the Howard family and their Scottish gardener John McLaren. Another important Howard legacy is the founding of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, an important community asset—then and now.

Note: For nearly 15 years, from 1873 until 1887, the Howards employed John McLaren (later the park superintendent of Golden Gate Park) as their personal estate gardener. McLaren and his staff planted thousands of trees on the Howards' huge property, as well as on the Ralston, Easton, and Mills estates. In one year, he lined nine roads with over 25,000 trees, most of them gums. Enlisting the help of Chinese and Irish work crews, McLaren covered the Howards' Coyote Point with 70,000 trees (1,000 per acre).

Credit: <https://burlingamefoundingfamilies.wordpress.com>

House # 5 1900	House # 3 1899	House # 1 1897
House # 4 1900		
House # 2 1900		

Did you know...

San Mateo—the name itself is of Spanish origin and emblematic of the nation that laid the foundation of this state. Translated, it means, "St. Matthew".

McLaren Park

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If you donated and we missed
 your name—our apologies.
 Please email us to correct, at
 board @sanmateopark.org

Tree fund Donors 2021

Park Conservators

Vincent & Jean Anicetti	2,500
Joe Matt & Hillary Chen	2,500
Stephanie & D'Arcy Roche	2,500
Don & Linda Bogue	1,000
Laura Bryant	1,000
Steve & Patricia Carlson	2,000
Alexander & Heather Doll	1,000
Andrea & Steve Dover	1,000
Meg & Marc Galletti	1,000
Michael McCook & Vicki	
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Lane & Scott Poms	1,000
Dan & Zoe Scheinman	2,000
Martin & Susan Partlan	1,000
Yuchang John Wang	1,000
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Accessory Dwelling Unit update

Reflecting this neighborhood's long-term concern with privacy and overly dense development that would jeopardize the character of The Park, SMPNA requested, for our unique R1A zoning area, that the Council retain and not expand the State's allowances for ADU development. This is part of a statement made to that end:

"Separately adapting ADU development terms for The Park's R1A zoning code -- which applies to just one neighborhood with a cohesive character throughout -- should not be problematic. [Code for R1B and R1C areas similarly could be tailored to reflect those communities' interests.] Yes, under the new district election system, Councilors who do not represent The Park's district will have no direct electoral accountability to this neighborhood. Why should you care for our interests?"

"On the other hand, Council members who will represent other districts will be unaffected by this accommodation. Surely the principle that different areas of the City with different interests should have direct representation on Council was enacted to strengthen the voice of neighborhoods. This reconfiguration of Council should make it civic routine to accommodate a reasonable neighborhood request such as ours. It would have little to no import for others and is easily handled within existing zoning code. So the better question is, why not?"

Unfortunately, the San Mateo City Council did not take up SMPNA's request to consider R1A zoning. What the Council did provide is an opportunity for neighbor input and Planning Department review where development plans envision a maximum height ADU. We can hope that the value placed on neighborliness among The Park's residents carries the day as these developments play out. For complete ordinance regulation go to www.cityofsanmateo.org

Oldest house quiz match them if you can to when you think the house was built

1897	House #1
1899	House #2
1900	House #3
1900	House #4
1902	House #5

Correct answers on page 4

Example

House #5



SAN MATEO PARK 2022 DUES & CONTRIBUTIONS

Click the direct link at: www.sanmateopark.org/contribute for PayPal. Prefer a check? Please fill out the form below and mail check payable to SMPNA to: San Mateo Park Neighborhood Assn., P.O Box 1271, San Mateo, CA 94401

☐ My name and address on address label (reverse) are correct. Or, please indicate any changes below:

Name (s): _____

Street Address: _____ Phone: _____

Email (s): _____

First, please send us **annual membership dues**. Able to help more this year? Consider our **Tree Fund**.

ANNUAL DONATION LEVEL (check one)

☐ \$200 McLaren Patron ☐ \$100 McLaren ☐ \$50 Supporter

TREE FUND (check one)

☐ \$5,000 ☐ \$2,500 ☐ \$1,000 ☐ Other

All dues are voluntary and are not a condition of membership. Contributions, dues and Tree Fund, are tax deductible (Fed EIN 56-2631949) and are credited for recognition in the calendar year received. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

Comments/Suggestions - email us at board@sanmateopark.org or mail in your comments below:

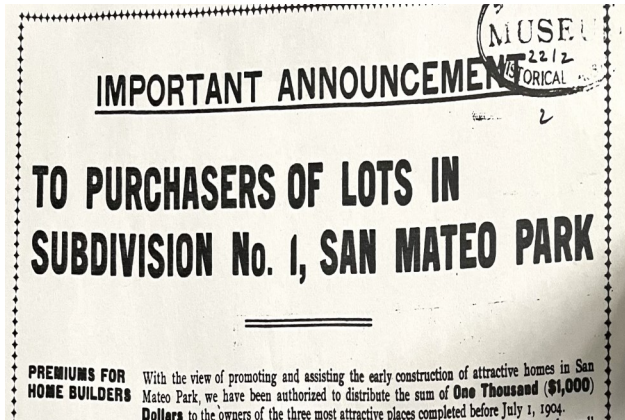
If your address label on reverse of this page is incorrect, please mail or email us a correction

What's next? Want to get involved?

San Mateo Park is a neighborhood with a unique and evocative history, with a colorful collection of confirmed and unconfirmed stories gathered over the years, and with an evolving community that is part of a diverse and growing San Mateo. Now that our neighborhood is no longer protected under the R1A zoning and may be subject to increased development through ADUs and lot splitting, what more can we do to preserve and celebrate San Mateo Park?

- Do you live in an historic home with a fascinating or important past? Would you be willing to share your home's history with others in the neighborhood?
- Do you have a passion for history? Would you enjoy researching Park history and people?
- What are your thoughts on exploring the possibility of designating San Mateo Park as a historic district? Would you be interested in

Do you have other ideas? We want to hear from you! Email at board@sanmateopark.org. We're listening!



Auction flyer 1902



P.O. Box 1271 San Mateo, Ca. 94401

