

WESTWOOD PARK ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

Fall of 2012



Fireplace Tiles of Westwood Park: Historical Works of Art

by Kathleen Beitiks

IN 2008, a Los Angeles television station reported an unusual theft—vintage 1920s tiles were chipped away from the front of a fireplace after the owner left his home for the day. The hand-glazed tiles were of a Mayan design and valued at \$8,000–\$10,000.

Although it seems shocking that something like fireplace tiles could be so valuable, the number of collectors and historians who view vintage tiles as art is growing.

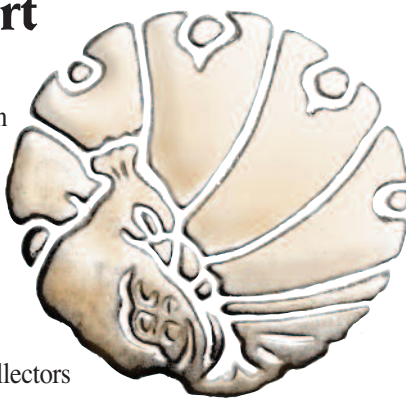
That appreciation is of special significance to Westwood Park residents, many of whom have tiled fireplaces reflecting the era of the Arts and Crafts movement and its emphasis on an organic, back-to-nature philosophy.

Westwood Park homes (with a few exceptions) are classic examples of “bungalows”—a popular home style from the early 20th century and an offshoot of the Arts and Crafts movement. Bungalows were compact and efficient, affording the burgeoning middle class an opportunity to live in an architect-designed home.

And at the center of a bungalow was the fireplace—a sign of “idealized domesticity,” according to author Paul Duchsherer, who has written many books about bungalows. Some fireplaces have red or sandstone brick, but many others were designed with decorative art tiles.

Most people buy a Westwood Park home and don’t give a second thought to the fireplace

See FIREPLACE TILES on page 4



Huge Changes on Ocean Avenue!

by Kate Favetti

IN THE YEAR since she became the first executive director of the Ocean Avenue Association—the nonprofit agency that manages the revitalization of our main street—Catherine Hickey set up an office, hired a cleaning company to keep the avenue well-scrubbed, and began the process for acquiring improved news racks. She also lent vision to the OAA board about what was needed for a credible and accountable organization.

In July, however, Hickey quit to take a job with the Bay Area Local Initiatives Support Corporation, which seeks to do for entire communities what Hickey began to do for Ocean Avenue.

Before she left, Hickey said she was pleased with the progress on Ocean Avenue, but acknowledged there was much left to do, including setting up a website for the

See ALONG OCEAN AVENUE on page 3

King’s Coffee on Ocean Avenue Destroyed by Fire

On August 7, a four-alarm fire broke out at **King’s Coffee** between Capitol and Miramar, destroying the shop. Neighboring businesses seriously affected were **Lili Knit**, **Happy Bakery**, **Golden China Restaurant**, **Continental Appliances**, **Diamond Hair Studio** and **Renaissance Restoration**. Some Westwood Park homes also sustained external damage.

The Westwood Park Association would like to extend condolences to all the businesses and residents impacted, and its appreciation to the firefighters who risked their lives fighting this dangerous blaze.

Inside This Issue:

News About Ocean Avenue

Annual Meeting and Picnic . . . 2

Trees of Westwood Park 2

Candidate Statements 3

More . . . Fireplace Tiles 4



WESTWOOD PARK ASSOCIATION
BOARD MEMBERS

Kate Favetti, President
Term expires 2012

Anita Theoharis, Vice President
Term expires 2012

Greg Clinton, Co-treasurer
Term expires 2014

Julie Hagelshaw, Co-treasurer
Term expires 2013

Kathleen Beitiks, Secretary
Term expires 2013

Nanette Asimov, Member-at-Large
Term expires 2013

Anne Chen, Member-at-Large
Term expires 2012

CONTACT THE BOARD

email: board@westwoodpark.com

phone: 415-333-1125

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San Francisco, CA 94127

Thanks, Anne Nelson
Welcome, Susan Sheldrake

OUR TALENTED newsletter producer, Anne Nelson, is stepping down.

The volunteer job is all behind the scenes. But three times a year since 2010, Anne has made our newsletter possible, laying it out perfectly into six pages. So as Anne moves on to other pursuits, we thank her for all her hard work.

Stepping into the role—again—is Susan Sheldrake, who produced the newsletter during the 1990s. Susan runs ShelDragon Graphic Design in Sacramento. Although Susan no longer lives in Westwood Park, she has generously agreed to help us out, long distance.

Welcome back, Susan!

—Nanette Asimov, newsletter editor



Westwood Park's Annual Meeting and Neighborhood Picnic

Saturday, September 22, 2012 :: Upper Faxon Green, 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

by Anita Theoharis

COME JOIN US on Saturday, September 22, for the Westwood Park Association Annual meeting, where everyone can attend and share lunch and good times with your neighbors in the Westwood Park Community.

During the meeting, you will be updated about issues affecting the Park and its current budget and financial condition. Ask questions of the board members, make suggestions, and discuss issues important to you and your neighbors.

ENJOY A FANTASTIC PICNIC!

This year, we've decided to try something new, yet traditional and delicious. We're piling up the neighborhood picnic table high with hearty sandwiches, chips, soft drinks and cookies!

Several chairs and tables will be available for those who want them. (And for the first time this year, yes, a port-o-potty.) All you need are sunscreen, hats and a picnic blanket if you prefer.

Resident Christine Boles has graciously volunteered to provide face painting for the children—or anyone! Christine has done this for the last two years, and the kids have loved it.

The City's fabulous firefighters will be there, and will invite anyone who wants to climb aboard their fire engine, and even sound the siren. For horse lovers, the Police Mounted Unit will also join us. Although beloved Riddler retired to a Sonoma County farm in July, you can get to know the other horses following in his hoof steps.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting and picnic. It will be a wonderful, informative and fun day. ♦

Saturday, September 22, 2012 MEETING AGENDA

1. Welcome Message
Kate Favetti
2. Account Balances
Greg Clinton
3. Dues & Lien Collections
Julie Hagelshaw
4. Planning & Zone Report
Anita Theoharis
5. Board of Directors Election Results
Margaret Reed, Inspector of Ballots
6. Speakers
7. Open Questions from Residents
8. Adjournment

Please join us for our neighborhood picnic!
This year we'll have hot dogs—meat or vegetarian—from "Julio's Hot Dogs on the Go."

Westwood Park at a Glance :: Street Trees vs. Beef

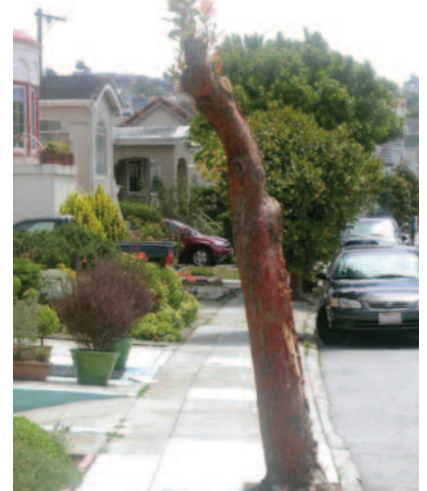
by Anne Chen

ALTHOUGH NOT EVERYONE may realize it, there is a difference between street trees and beef: It is against the law to butcher a street tree.

And yet, a walk around the neighborhood reveals that several of the street trees that beautify Westwood Park have been hacked apart, their limbs sliced off like chunks of meat.

Not only does the act of butchering a tree violate Article 16 of the Urban Forestry Ordinance of San Francisco's Public Works Code, it awakens a moral outrage in all who appreciate the living plants that grace our neighborhood,

See *STREET TREES VS BEEF* on page 6



Along Ocean Avenue (from page 1)

OAA. This is especially needed to keep everyone up to date on how the board is spending the tax that merchants began assessing on themselves last year when they transformed Ocean Avenue into a “Community Benefit District.”

Hickey also identified the need for a long-term “road map” for Ocean Avenue, similar to strategic plans developed by other Community Benefit Districts. The Ocean Avenue Association is seeking to replace Hickey by October, and has appointed Dan Weaver, a long-time Ocean Avenue advocate, as interim director.

OTHER NEWS ON OCEAN

The store vacancy rate is 4%—the lowest it’s been in years! *Chase Bank* has opened at the corner of Faxon and Ocean, *Whole Foods Market* opened August 29 between Plymouth and Phelan, and *Yogurtland* is planning a 2013 opening next door.

A new *Hawaiian Sandwich Shop* opened recently at 1330 Ocean Avenue, and *Elevate Group Fitness* also opened this year at

1720 Ocean Avenue. *Fresh and Easy Neighborhood Market* is planning to open a store at the old *Rite Aid* site.

Many store fronts and building facades have also been upgraded, including the *OMI Family Center*, *Clean Xpress* and *Mahogany Beauty Salon*. The city’s News Rack Committee approved the first of several permits needed to install improved news racks on Ocean Avenue.

And last but not least, *Caffe D’Melanio* and *Foglifter Café* have local talent performing regularly—including Johnny Escobedo, the Jon Franks Trio, and our own, beloved Westwood Jamberries. Check it out!

ARTS & CULTURE ON OCEAN, SEPTEMBER 15

Save the date! The first annual *Ocean Avenue Arts and Culture Festival*, on September 15 from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM between Plymouth Ave. and Ashton St., will feature local artists, sidewalk vendors, face painting, a play area and a music stage. Join us! ♦

Candidate Statements :: *Westwood Park Association Board Elections*

Anne Chen

As a longtime resident, I’ve had the honor of serving on the Westwood Park Board for the past nine years. The experience of working with residents and fellow board members has been very satisfying. I would like the privilege of continuing to work on preserving the special quality of the Westwood Park.

25 years and continue to want to serve my beloved neighborhood.

I am currently Vice President and Chair of Planning and Zoning. Participating in the care of the Park is a very rewarding experience because the board and so many residents volunteer their time and have shown intense interest in keeping the Park a beautiful place to live, as well

as preserving its historical value and unique architectural character.

For me it’s a pleasure and an honor to volunteer to continue to serve and help preserve and improve the quality of life for all residents in our very special neighborhood. I would appreciate the opportunity to continue to work together with this wonderful group of residents.

Kate Favetti

Serving on the Westwood Park Association for the past three years as Secretary and currently as President has been an honor. During my tenure I have met so many wonderful, caring neighbors. And I appreciate my fellow board members who work on a volunteer basis on behalf of this wonderful and unique San Francisco neighborhood.

I have continued to be involved in our community and serve on committees focused on improving our Ocean Avenue streetscapes, bringing the arts to the neighborhood through the Ocean Avenue Film Festival, the Ocean Avenue Festival and other local venues.

I would be honored to continue serving on the Westwood Park Board and would appreciate your vote. Thank you.

Anita Theoharis

I have enjoyed the opportunity to serve as a board member, off and on, for over

Westwood Park Association :: OFFICIAL BALLOT

• **HOMEOWNERS:** Please use the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope to mail this ballot to the Westwood Park Association. Please mail promptly so that your vote can be counted at the picnic on September 22. Or you may bring your ballot to the picnic, where election results will be announced during the meeting portion.

• **RENTERS:** We are all neighbors and part of the Westwood Park community, yet only homeowners possess voting rights in the board election. But we look forward to seeing you at the annual community meeting and picnic, where all residents—renters and homeowners alike—are welcome!

• Vote for three:

- Anne Chen (incumbent)
- Kate Favetti (incumbent)
- Anita Theoharis (incumbent)
- Write-in _____

Fireplace Tiles

design, says Joe Koman, a local Realtor and Park resident. “Mostly they are interested in the damper,” says Koman, “and if it’s clean and functional.” (For the record, Koman adds that most fireplaces in the Park were not built with dampers. Any dampers were most likely installed at a later date—usually as an energy-saving move to keep out



Viking ship relief tile



Floral relief



Bird relief tile



Large floral and butterfly relief tile

the cold, foggy San Francisco air.)

It’s only after new owners have been in their home awhile that they start to wonder about the tiles. Although most of the tiles on Westwood Park fireplaces were mass produced, some have more value than others. If you look on the Internet, some rare tiles from the 1920s tiles can be valuable, says Koman—“I’ve seen some on eBay for \$800!”

When Wayne Webb and Billy Fite bought their Westwood Park home nearly 30 years ago, they were taken with the beauty of the house and loved all the details. The fireplace tiles are very subtle, says Webb, and not overpowering. “Without realizing it, the beauty of the tiles does hit you,” he says. “They are part of the overall ambiance of the house.”

Tiles were popular when Westwood Park was incorporated in 1917. Some of the major manufacturers in California during this period were Batchelder Tile (Pasadena), Cal Art Tile (Richmond) and Claycraft Potteries (Los Angeles).

Ernest Batchelder was big promoter of California handicrafts, and his tiles can be found all around the nation. Early tiles from his company (circa 1910) were popular with home builders. Indeed, many other companies produced variations of his designs, making it often difficult today to determine the origin.

Batchelder tiles often had themes of nature, such as trees and flowers. But old catalogues also show Viking ships, medieval castles, musicians and birds. His early tiles are generally of a matte finish, in the muted earth colors of the Arts and Crafts era.

Cal Art Tile was established in 1922 in Richmond by James Hislop, who had extensive experience in the art of clay

crafting. Cal Art tiles also have a matte finish, with subdued earth tones. Generally, they have Spanish, Mexican and Western themes, along with other subjects, such as birds, ships and plants.

Claycraft Potteries was one of the most prolific decorative tile makers in California, established in Los Angeles in 1921. Its tiles are notable for their idealized portrayal of life in California, with themes of the seashore, desert, ranchos, trees and flowers. Although some of the tiles in later years were brightly colored, early tiles followed the fashion of a handmade look with muted tones.

Fireplaces have been the center of homes since the beginning of time and



Tall tree relief series



Floral, pomegranate relief tile series

Spare the Air

Fireplaces may be cozy and warm on a cold night, but burning wood also pollutes the air. To reduce harmful particulates, it is illegal to burn wood or other fuels when the Bay Area Air District issues a “Winter Spare the Air Alert” from November through February. For alerts by email or phone, visit sparetheair.org.

Fireplace Tiles 🐦

were traditionally the main source for cooking and heating. Although original permits for some early Westwood Park homes show the fireplace listed as the only source of heat, central heating was the standard in most of the Park’s 1920s-era homes. Today, most fireplaces are used only occasionally, serving primarily as the central decorative element in the living room.

How can you tell who made your fireplace tiles? There are many websites with photos of tiles whose manufacturers have been identified. The sites also explain how to clean vintage tiles and restore a tiled fireplace that has been victimized by the ultimate insult—paint.

But the primary source of any information about tiles is the Tile Heritage Foundation in Healdsburg. The THF is “dedicated to promoting an awareness and appreciation of ceramic surfaces in the United States.” (tileheritage.org) The THF has many reproductions of old tile catalogues for sale on its website.

Westwood Park fireplaces tell a story of the impact of the Arts and Crafts movement on the average homeowner and the explosion of the 1920s tile industry in California. It is a tribute to their classic design and appeal that so many fireplaces remain intact after nearly 100 years.

Thanks to these residents for sharing pictures of their fireplace tiles: C. Campbell, F. Kalmar, D. Vogel, S. Percal, N. Asimov, R. Krishnaswamy, J. Fabre and W. Webb. ❖



Peacock relief tile



Viking ship relief tile



Glazed field tiles combined with sandstone brick —after paint removed

What does your fireplace look like?

WESTWOOD PARK CELEBRATES its 100th anniversary in 2017!

In an effort to document all the architectural details that make our homes so special, we would like to begin by collecting photos of different styles of original fireplaces. Whether your fireplace is tiled or made of red brick or sandstone—or a combination—please send us a photo of your fireplace.

Send an overall picture and a few close-up shots of any interesting design details. Photos can be emailed to kobeditiks@gmail.com or mailed to: The Westwood Park Association, P.O. Box 27901, #770, San Francisco, CA 94127.

Westwood Park at a Glance :: Street Trees vs. Beef

whether a chocolately red-barked Strawberry Arbutus or a purple-leaf Flowering Plum.

Article 16 regulates the planting and removal of street trees, and requires a permit for removing trees—even those that are dead or diseased.

As for butchering a tree, Section 808 of Article 16 says, “*It shall be unlawful for any person to intentionally, maliciously or through gross negligence injure or destroy a street tree.*” “Injure” is defined as “cutting, carving, painting, transplanting or knocking over,” as well as nailing the tree.

And yes, you can go to jail.

The criminal penalties for butchering a tree range from \$200 for a first infraction, to \$1,000 for a misdemeanor injury “and/or imprisonment in the County Jail for a period not to exceed six months, for each offense.”

If the injury is found to be a civil violation, the tree butcher may be required to pay a \$500 penalty per day, although the law doesn’t specify for how long.

But there’s more. In addition to a fine, people who butcher their trees may be required to “pay a sum of money equal to the

tree’s replacement value.”

If you feel the need to remove a tree, call the city’s “311” hotline to learn whether you can qualify for a permit to do so. Many people don’t realize that maintaining street trees is the responsibility of property owners, not the Westwood Park Association.

“Street trees” are the ones on the sidewalk in front of your house. The Association

Before . . .



maintains only “public trees,” which are on the islands and medians.

If anyone sees someone butchering any tree, or notices that a tree has been hacked or injured, please call 311 to report it.

We need to safeguard the legacy of the insightful developers of our planned community and the hard work of so many dedicated residents, past and present. ❖

After . . .



WESTWOOD PARK ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 27901, No. 770
San Francisco, CA 94127

◆ NOTICE ◆

**Westwood Park's
Annual Community Meeting
and Picnic Notice
with Ballot to elect the
Association's Board of
Directors are enclosed**

SAVE THIS DATE

Saturday, September 22, 2012