

# WESTWOOD PARK ASSOCIATION



*Newsletter*

*Spring of 2013*

## Westwood Park's Marvelous Ida McCain: Early Architect Built Many Area Homes

*by Kathleen Beitiks*

*photos of Westwood Park homes by Hugh D. Byrne*

MOST Californians are familiar with Hearst Castle and maybe even recognize the name of its architect, Julia Morgan. But hardly anyone recognizes the name of another female architect in the early 1900s who was a contemporary of Morgan's: Ida McCain.

In an era when female home designers were a rarity, McCain has a special significance for Westwood Park; it is estimated she was the architect of nearly 100 homes in the neighborhood.

McCain designed several residences in San Francisco, but the bulk of her work was in Westwood Park. She worked with the real estate development firm of Baldwin & Howell, where most of the 1920s bungalows in the park were designed by architect Charles Strothoff.

McCain designed homes in a few other San Francisco neighborhoods such as Lincoln Manor, Parkside and St. Francis Wood. She also designed homes on the Peninsula,

especially in San Mateo.

Inge Horton, a former San Francisco city planner and author of "Early Women Architects of the San Francisco Bay Area," lauds McCain as a respected architect of her era who was more prolific than Hearst Castle's Morgan.

Horton writes that McCain was born in 1884 in Fort Collins, CO and attended Colorado State Agricultural College, where she was the first woman to take an architecture course. When her family moved to Los Angeles, she gained experience working as a draftsman for an architectural firm.

In 1910 she moved to Oregon, then back again to Los Angeles in 1915 before moving to San Francisco.

"Ida McCain quickly became known as an architect of great homes and especially

*See IDA McCAIN on page 4*



*701 Miramar*



*682 Miramar*

### NEW BUS TURNAROUND, HOUSING AND PLAZA HEADED FOR OCEAN AVENUE

*By Kate Favetti*

#### YOU MAY GET TO NAME THE NEW PLAZA!

The phenomenal transformation of Ocean Avenue continues, with the completion of a new bus turnaround expected by summer to make way for a housing and retail complex in the Phelan Loop next to Whole Foods.

Groundbreaking on the bus turnaround began in February, and will change it from an oval to an "L" shape, in which buses enter from Ocean and exit on Phelan Avenue.

When that's done, workers will begin a project called "1100 Ocean Family

*See PHELAN LOOP on page 3*

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**CONTACT THE BOARD**

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*phone:* 415-333-1125

*mail:* P.O. Box 27901 #770  
San Francisco, CA 94127



**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

Westwood Park is a wonderful community with lots of needs. If you would like to volunteer in the Westwood Park community please let us know:

- ◆ Watering patrol
- ◆ Green area maintenance
- ◆ Parking and traffic
- ◆ Dead car patrol
- ◆ Neighborhood nuisances
- ◆ Newsletter
- ◆ Special events
- ◆ Planning and zoning committee
- ◆ NERT (Neighborhood Emergency Response Team)
- ◆ FUF (Friends of the Urban Forest)
- ◆ Website content



**Ocean Avenue's Spending Plan:  
And What's with the Website?**

*by Nanette Asimov*

MANY Westwood Park residents and others who live near Ocean Avenue are thrilled with recent changes along Ocean Avenue: new businesses, new neighbors and a cleaner look to the street.

Many of the changes come as a result of an agreement in 2010 to create a public "Community Benefit District," in which properties along Ocean between I-280 and Manor pay into an improvement fund.

"Managed by a nonprofit organization called Ocean Avenue Association, this district will focus on cleaning and maintenance; safety; marketing; and streetscape improvements for 15 years," according to the city's Office of Economic and Workforce Development.

The Ocean Avenue Association has an interim website at [www.oceanavenueassociation.org](http://www.oceanavenueassociation.org) that still lacks key features, including information about its budget and management board, and meetings.

"We are working on completing the site," said Dan Weaver, a longtime Ocean Avenue activist who became executive director of the OAA last fall.

Mr. Weaver provided a budget, which shows that the OAA expects to collect nearly \$240,000 in assessments from properties this fiscal year, which runs from July 1, 2012, through June 30, 2013.

In the prior fiscal year, the Ocean Avenue Association hoped to collect \$153,620, but received \$33,736, or 22%.

The OAA's budget allocates money for maintaining street trees and for two full-time and one part-time workers who clean sidewalks and gutters, remove graffiti, weed tree basins, and more.



**OCEAN AVENUE  
ASSOCIATION BOARD**

**CHAIR:** Howard Chung  
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650-273-6223

[info.oacbd@gmail.com](mailto:info.oacbd@gmail.com)

"I trust that you and your good neighbors have noticed a difference on Ocean Avenue since OAA started providing services in July of 2011," Mr. Weaver said.

The budget shows that from all fees, grants and reserve funds, the OAA has \$411,399 in the bank, but expects a total of \$612,693.

*See OCEAN AVENUE on page 6*

## Phelan Loop . . .

Housing,” featuring commercial retail space on the ground floor, a community room for public meetings, a car-share spot in the building’s garage, and a public plaza to be built in late 2014.

The 1100 Ocean Family Housing will include 70 units of affordable housing for families and for “transitional-aged” youth. (This refers to foster youth who become too old for foster care. The maximum age in California was 18 until Jan. 1, 2012, when a new state law let youth remain in care for two more years.)

The building offers studio apartments, as well as one- two- and three-bedroom units for residents who earn no more than 50% of the area median income.

Planning for the affordable housing

## IF YOU’D LIKE TO HELP NAME THE NEW PLAZA, YOU’LL HAVE A CHANCE!

**San Francisco is creating a public process for accepting recommendations on a name, which will be approved by the city’s Municipal Transportation Agency. The winning name will be posted at the plaza and will appear on maps and other references.**

at Phelan Loop began in 2000 as part of the Balboa Park Station Area Plan. The project is a partnership between

Mercy Housing and the Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center.

By the end of 2014, workers are expected to break ground on the plaza: a pleasant, open area that might host a farmer’s market, community gatherings, and serve as a place for kids to play.

Although plans have yet to be finalized, ideas being discussed include a play structure, public art, benches, tables and trees. Entry would be from Ocean Avenue and from Phelan Avenue. The western edge may have stores, perhaps a café, and an entrance to the apartments above.

The plaza’s eastern edge would separate the plaza from the new bus loop and boarding station. The northern side will feature a path to City College.

For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/aq57wf8> ❖

## SEEKING A NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Dear Neighbors,

I’m planning to step down as editor next fall after eight enjoyable years, and I’d like to put out the call for a new editor to take over.

We are fortunate to have a newsletter producer, Susan Sheldrake, who takes care of all the technical work of putting out a newsletter, such as the layout and appearance. We also have a printer and a mailer.

But if you like to write, and if you care about what’s going on in the neighborhood, then the editor’s job might be perfect for you.

So if you’re out there, please contact the Westwood Park Association at 333-1125, or at [board@westwoodpark.com](mailto:board@westwoodpark.com), and I’ll tell you all about this fun way to help keep our neighborhood such a special place.

Sincerely,

Nanette Asimov

Newsletter Editor



## Perks of the Park: Sign Up for a CCSF Gym Pass!

EACH semester, the Westwood Park Association receives 30 free passes to the City College Wellness Center—its gym and pool—and distributes them to neighbors 18 or older on a first-come, first-served basis.

Passes are limited to two per household, and are valid for one semester.

Westwood Park neighbor Steve Miller is our volunteer coordinator of the passes and maintains the waiting list.

To sign up for a pass, email Steve at [wellnesspass@westwood-park.com](mailto:wellnesspass@westwood-park.com). Please indicate whether you want one pass or two, and tell him your name and the best way to reach you.

Neighbors without email can call the Association at 333-1125.

For reviews of the City College Wellness Center, visit <http://tinyurl.com/4sg2x3f> ❖

# Ida McCain . . .

as a designer of bungalows in the western part of the city,” writes Horton.

In several newspaper ads for Westwood Park, McCain’s work as an architect is highlighted as providing “a woman’s touch” for the neighborhood’s new bungalows.

She had a reputation for high standards. During a speech to a community group, she told about visiting a job site where she noticed that the sheathing and roof boarding of a home were of inferior quality. She ordered the contractor to replace it with a better quality lumber. But when she returned to check the next day, the inferior wood was covered with building paper.

McCain promptly went on the roof and used her shoe to stomp through the knots— forcing the contractor to replace the wood. Unfortunately, her heel broke off. “The carpenter very kindly brought me a hatchet, which was more efficient, and in true ‘Carrie Nation’ style, we knocked the knots out and the holes in, so there was no question about new lumber replacing the defective boarding,” she related.

Using the popular bungalow as the foundation for her designs, McCain’s homes reflect an era of “period revival” styles of the early 1900s. Westwood Park bungalows are representative of a time when the middle class had an opportunity to own an architect-designed home—something only the wealthy could usually afford.

Throughout the neighborhood, many revival styles are visible, including Craftsman, Tudor, Mission, English Cottage, Colonial, Dutch Colonial, Japanese, Swiss Chalet, as well as a combination of styles.



*1399 Plymouth*

## WHO DESIGNED MY HOME?

**Curious about the name of the architect or builder of your home?**

To obtain a copy of your home’s original permit, visit the Department of Building Inspection, 1660 Mission St., 4th Floor, and fill out a Records Request Form.

Or go online to:

<http://tinyurl.com/asg5nh4>

Hard copies of original permits are about \$3 a page (typically, original permits are two pages).

Also, the San Francisco Public Library has excellent online research information about buildings in the city. Go to: <http://tinyurl.com/bdebq6m>

McCain’s homes followed the architectural trend of the early 1900s. For instance:

**1238 Plymouth:** One of the early homes

in Westwood Park, it was built in 1918 in the classic, shingled craftsman style. On the original permit, the owner is listed as Sikvio Rovere, 892 Noe St., with an estimated cost of \$2,740 to build. Its next-door sister, 1242 Plymouth, is of the same style. Both are listed on the original permit.

**676 Miramar:** Another classic craftsman, with its exposed eaves and hipped roof, it was built in 1917. The addition of stucco to the basic shingled design was common in California bungalows. It was a one of several homes that list McCain as the owner on the original permit, built for resale. The permit also indicates the fireplace as the source of heating.

**682 Miramar:** Built in 1918 and next door to 676, it is a completely different McCain design. The aviation industry was in its infancy during this period and the small second-story room reminded people of the cockpit of early airplanes—thus, referred to as an “airplane bungalow.” The presence of multiple windows also reflected the



*676 Miramar*



*800 Miramar*



*1238 Plymouth*

growing preference for light and air in an era when good hygiene was emphasized as a way to fight illness and disease.

**1399 Plymouth:** Built in 1918 for about \$5,000, this design reflects the era's interest in Asian culture. McCain may have been influenced by the Greene & Greene brothers of Pasadena, who made an impact on the world of bungalow design with their 1908 Gamble House in Pasadena, incorporating modified Asian design throughout. Later, McCain spent six months traveling in Asia. This is one of many homes built by Hans Nelson in the neighborhood.

**701 Miramar:** With an original estimated cost of \$6,000, this 1919 McCain home has a modified English cottage roofline, another bungalow "revival" style. It is also a good example of incorporating "klinker bricks" in the design. Popularized as an architectural element by Pasadena's Greene

## WESTWOOD PARK CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

**Westwood Park will celebrate its 100th birthday in 2017—and it deserves a party!**

On March 22, 1917, the Westwood Park Association was incorporated to serve our community of about 650 homes.

If you would like to help plan festivities for Westwood Park's 100-year anniversary, consider joining the newly formed **Westwood Park Centennial Committee.**

*Please contact Kathleen Beitiks: [kobeitiks@gmail.com](mailto:kobeitiks@gmail.com) or the WPA Board at 415-333-1125 or [board@westwoodpark.com](mailto:board@westwoodpark.com)*

# Why I chose Westwood Park for my Bungalows

*A word about "Westwood" by Miss Ida McCain, Expert Bungalow Designer*

**"B**ECAUSE I know it's the best place; best for me and most decidedly best for the home buyer.

"I can buy a fine big lot at from \$750 to \$1500 less than in any other equally desirable tract. 'Westwood' is more active; people like it and my bungalows sell much faster—I turn my money over quicker.

"And I am in good company. Fourteen of the best bungalow 'specialists' I know of are trying to outdo each other in artistic design, ideal arrangement and substantial construction. That keeps me keyed up to do my best and accounts for nearly 250 attractive homes already completed."

Take any bungalow in "Westwood" on same size lot and you cannot duplicate it at anything like the price for which you can buy at "Westwood Park." COMPARE—and you will buy at "Westwood."



I'll design a bungalow specially for YOU



Municipal "K" Car (Inglewood)

Direct to WESTWOOD

**BALDWIN & HOWELL**

318-324 KEARNY ST

Phone: Kearny 3810. Tract Office, Randolph 1454

We're glad to say that "Westwood Park" owes much to Miss McCain's skill and tireless energy. For, as our pictures show, she has designed and constructed some of the most notable bungalows in San Francisco.



600 Miramar

## Ida McCain . . .

Brothers, klinker bricks are the burnt, misshapen bricks resulting from close proximity to the fire in a kiln.



According to author Horton, McCain resided in San Francisco until the mid-1930s, after which her whereabouts are unknown. However, she says, “her legacy consists of many highly desirable houses and bungalows as sought-after housing stock in the 21st century.” ♦



## WESTWOOD PARK.com

Visit the Westwood Park website for articles about the history of the Park and its charming bungalows. Click on **“The Neighborhood”** and explore links to additional resources.

There are also links for past newsletters and Residential Design Guidelines (PDF format). You can also view a clip from **“The Building of Westwood Park”** DVD with footage from 1916–1917.



## Ocean Avenue . . .

Here is how the OAA has allocated its cash this year:

- ◆ Street cleaning, maintenance and safety: 22% (\$132,000).
- ◆ Management/Operations: 11% (\$68,100).
- ◆ Half-time executive director’s salary: \$70,000 (\$43,000 from management/operations, and \$27,000 in grant money from the city’s Office of Economic and Workforce Development).
- ◆ Marketing and beautification: 9% (\$58,004), including \$4,000 for website design and \$1,000 for webhosting. ❖

*Editor’s Note: Just as this newsletter went to press, word came that the OAA board has listened to the community and begun improving the website with meeting minutes and agendas, the annual report, and current contact information. We look forward to the inclusion of the budget, details about action items, and having the site available through a Google search in the near future.*

## WESTWOOD PARK ASSOCIATION

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

### ◆ SAVE THE DATE ◆

**The annual community meeting and picnic will be**

**Saturday, September 21, 2013**

**on the upper Faxon green.  
We hope to see you there!**

Spring ♦ 2013