At the turn of the twentieth century, San Diego had little resemblance to the large, overcrowded, polluted metropolitan centers that pockmarked the country. The area had been long inhabited, but the city itself had existed for little more than half a century. Moreover, the city’s population and development had been subject to constant fluctuation as it struggled to develop. Still, after 1900, building permit issuance had begun a steady rise and, more importantly, the city was gaining a solid circle of businessmen and investors. As entrepreneurs achieved authority in the city, they began a movement to transform San Diego into a legitimate cosmopolitan venue. The City of San Diego established the Civic Improvement Committee as part of that movement. In 1907, the committee hired landscape architect John Nolen to complete a comprehensive plan for San Diego’s development. Though the plan was never fully utilized, it had a significant effect on the development of San Diego’s planning policies and, very likely, influenced the layout of the Mission Hills Subdivision. The success of Nolen’s ideas is illustrated today by the continuing sustainability of the Mission Hills residential area.

In order to understand San Diego’s early city planning, it is important to conceptualize the city planning movement on a higher level. City planning, like many fields, was born from necessity. The Industrial Revolution brought floods of workers into cities all over the world. The nineteenth-century photographs of Jacob Riis in New York and Eugène Atget in Paris resonated with politicians and city dwellers alike. The photographs showed dirty children sleeping in alleys, crowded streets, and dilapidated dwellings overflowing with poverty. Religious and governmental organizations attempting to deal with the poorly housed masses emerged, but their treatments were only temporary and the problem had become permanent. Large cities had become the status quo.

Landscape architect John Nolen was one of the men who sought to treat the effects of the United States’ mounting urbanization. His work ranged from comprehensive city plans to private grounds, but his urban projects were all heavily influenced by those already attempting to address the dilemmas of the city. In the United States, Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted had produced dozens of designed landscapes, including Central Park and several city plans such as Berkeley, California, and Riverside, Illinois. Similarly, Daniel Burnham

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had assembled the team that designed and implemented the White City for the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Parallel movements occurred all over the world. Nolen drew from all of these precedents in an attempt to solve the physical, psychological, and moral ills of urban life.

He also had his own influences that differentiated him from his predecessors. First, Nolen was born to a middle class family and, therefore, was not tied to traditional, conservative, upper-class ideals. In addition, he spent years in administrative positions before beginning his degree in landscape architecture. That work experience honed his concern for practicality, an element that appears throughout his work. Finally, and possibly most significant, Nolen worked in a time and place hugely influenced by progressive thinkers. His constant references to clean air, the needs of children, and access to things beautiful for all, though completely understood in current times, were new concepts brought forth in the age of progressivism.

In 1907, San Diego’s Civic Improvement Committee, created under the auspices of the city’s Chamber of Commerce and Art Association, began its search for a consultant to initiate a plan of development for the growing city. The improvement committee was chaired by Julius Wangenheim and originally consisted of George Cooke, Edward Grove, A. Haines, Melville Klauber, George W. Marston, E. E. White, and Leroy A. Wright. To some extent, these men all had a stake in the success of San Diego. Their task was to turn San Diego into a nationally
competitive city on both an economic and cultural level. On May 28, 1907, George Marston sent a letter of inquiry on behalf of the committee to several of the country’s most eminent landscape designers and architects. The list included George E. Kessler and Company of Missouri, Warren H. Manning of Boston, the Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, and John Nolen of Cambridge. All of the men had worked on the design of nationally significant parks, estates, and municipal properties. In 1907, the committee chose John Nolen to assist them in creating a plan for San Diego. Nolen completed and published *San Diego: A Comprehensive Plan for its Improvement* in early 1908.

Nolen, like many early residents, traveled to San Diego from the East Coast. Upon his arrival, he remarked, “to an eastern man accustomed to hard, cold winters and the severe industrial conditions of New England, Southern California seems like a land of promise.” The statement revealed more than just observations on the climate; it revealed the extent to which San Diego was still comparatively undeveloped. Nolen had lived and worked outside Boston, a region blighted by high density and fast-paced polluted cities. The City of San Diego, on the other hand, was enormous in acreage, but still dusty from unpaved streets. There were miles of oceanfront, but no beaches south of Point Loma. Nolen’s “promise” referred to the possibilities of what San Diego could be, not what it was.

In his *San Diego: A Comprehensive Plan for its Improvement*, Nolen projected that San Diego would develop into a sizeable city. This showed considerable foresight because, at the turn-of-the-century, San Diego bore little resemblance to any of the country’s other major cities. San Diego had seen a tremendous boom and bust in the late 1880s due to the introduction of the railway, but the city’s population grew less than one percent in the decade following the bust. By 1907, San Diego’s population had failed to reach the 40,000 it had seen in 1886. Although San Diego was connected to Los Angeles by train and to San Francisco by ferry, it was still difficult to reach.

Nolen organized his plan into eight chapters. In the first two chapters, he addressed the unique possibilities for development that existed in San Diego and the mistakes that had already occurred in the city’s development. The following five chapters outlined the major issues that demanded attention. Nolen believed that addressing these main points would rectify past mistakes and enable San Diego to meet its full potential. Finally, he concluded with a chapter summarizing his recommendations. In this chapter, he also discussed the practical and financial nature of implementing his recommendations.

Nolen warned that his general plan was not meant to be binding. Instead, it was an attempt to illuminate issues affecting the city with as much foresight as possible. He explained this most clearly when he wrote:

> The gravest neglect is right here—the failure to replan and replan, to readjust and readjust, to constantly use art and skill and foresight to remodel existing conditions and to mould and fit for use the new territory about to be invaded.

Nolen knew that cities were not static; they must be allowed to grow and expand. Therefore, city planners should use guidelines and keep key goals in mind. Only then would the city develop in synchronization with its population.
growth instead of developing before its time or, even worse, after the chance for planning had passed.

In his initial chapters, Nolen discussed the significance of San Diego’s environs. “Even in Southern California,” Nolen contended, San Diego’s “situation, climate, and scenery make it stand out in permanent attractiveness beyond all other communities.” He went on to explain that “every type of scenery, beach and promontory, mesa and canyon, unite in never-ending variety to form a city that is strikingly individual in character and of great beauty.” He believed that these features and the consequential uniqueness of San Diego should be both embraced and preserved. Unfortunately, he argued, San Diego’s “city plan is not thoughtful, but on the contrary, ignorant and wasteful.” He pointed out, however, that the formation of the Civic Improvement Committee proved residents had the foresight and energy to act.

Nolen also criticized the destruction of San Diego’s natural topography. He characterized the massive grading that went on in an attempt to create straight streets as a “much uncalled-for expense and destruction of a rare opportunity to secure significant beauty.” The leveling of hills and mesas removed some of the city’s most unique attributes, thereby assuring that it would never stand out as a great metropolis. In practical terms, the grading of hillsides created delays in construction, continual erosion issues, and an impassable road in inclement weather. Nolen argued that the expense would exceed the gain.
Nolen regarded the creation of impressive public spaces, such as courthouses and plazas, as an essential element in San Diego’s development, so he chose to discuss that recommendation first. The redesigning of roads would come later, after the proper amount of land had been designated for other purposes and areas had become more developed. These priorities illustrated Nolen’s conviction that public and municipal spaces had to be set aside while the land was still undeveloped. This prioritization also proved practical to his readers, many of whom would not be able to envision the need for better traffic patterns in a city populated by fewer than 40,000 inhabitants. Nolen believed that if his plans for the public plaza, civic center, and bay front were implemented, then population and traffic would surely increase. He knew that San Diego would develop differently than cities in the East. San Diego was not purely agricultural, nor was it purely industrial or commercial. Moreover, he noted, “the downtown traffic [in San Diego] was already congested and the popular ownership of automobiles [has] just begun.” He believed that the city could design its own future, rather than letting its future be designed for it.

Nolen’s first specific recommendation centered on the need for a separate public plaza and civic space. He compared San Diego’s small plaza between Third and Fourth Avenues south of D Street unfavorably to the large plazas of European cities. He argued that a noteworthy plaza was essential for both aesthetic reasons and as a space for official and leisurely gatherings. “It provides adequately for the convenient despatch [sic] of public business,” he wrote, “and at the same time contributes to the appearance of the city that dignity, impressiveness, and beauty which should be considered indispensable.” The acquisition of land for this purpose should be made a priority, he argued. He suggested that the city acquire the property, determine a construction plan, and then sell off the unnecessary space in a controlled manner in order to subsidize the construction. This process

In 1905, San Diego had a small plaza between Third and Fourth Avenues, south of Horton House (now the U. S. Grant Hotel). Nolen said that the city needed a larger plaza comparable to those in European cities. ©SDHS #989.
would take time, but it would also allow the city to regulate what type of development went on around the city’s most important buildings. The combination of quality control and slow growth would produce a more cohesive and efficient city with greater sustainability than San Diego exhibited at the time. He went into extensive detail on how and where the plaza should be erected, but few of his suggestions were ever implemented.

Nolen also called for the construction of a Great Bay Front that would fulfill both the commercial and leisure needs of the city. He pointed out that this concept had been implemented in Europe and England but neglected in the United States. The development of a multiuse waterfront, he explained, would give residents an aesthetically pleasing open space. It would also pay for itself in improved commercial trade. However, his plan was not implemented. Bay front redevelopment would be initiated in the 1920s without regard to commerce or recreation. Instead, the United States Navy began construction on its largest western port in the country.

Nolen was particularly concerned to improve the health of the city’s inhabitants. He implored the Civic Improvement Committee to address the lack of small open spaces that might be used for recreation. “Each school, each ward, each residence district in San Diego, by nature a play city, should have its own playground,” Nolen argued. He even made reference to statistics compiled by the newly formed “Playground Association.” His concern for open space and playgrounds was at least partly fueled by a general trend of the time to place weight on health and recreation. In his chapter on street planning, he opened the chapter with an quote attributed to the secretary of the Federal Special Street Railway Commission:

The body’s health glow comes from good circulation. So it is with the big city. A good circulatory apparatus is necessary to its general vitality and to its beauty. The traffic problem is to-day [sic] a surprise to people in all important centers. They cannot understand why it should be ever looming [and] the ampest provision [should be] made for it.
The existence of a Special Street Railway Commission reveals a national concern with traffic and congestion. Nolen’s response to the issue, of course, was to emphasize the importance of planning.

Nolen also addressed the problem of rectilinear subdivision platting. He wrote that San Diego developers had made multiple mistakes in street plan, but “the most glaring and serious, of course, is the attempt to implant a rectangular system, almost unrelieved by diagonals, on so irregular a topography.” Middletown and Horton’s Addition Subdivisions, filed in 1869 and 1871, respectively, were two of the most notable examples of the rectilinear land plan. They used the Jeffersonian gridiron pattern, even where the curve of the bay made it impossible to lay a straight coastal road. Nolen pointed out that this resulted in awkward intersections, steep roads, and oddly shaped blocks. In the case of Middletown, the gridiron pattern led to extensive litigation over the sale of lots that existed only at low tide.

Nolen paid particular attention to the existence of “paper streets,” roadways that existed on maps but could not be built because of the topography. In Middletown, for example, the subdivision's developers drew Arctic Street to run directly north and south along the coast. However, because of the dramatic curve of the bay, Arctic Street would have been below the tide line in several areas if it had been constructed as originally drawn. As a result, the street was built in small sections that ended abruptly, forcing the traveler to turn inland and utilize another
route. Other subdivisions like University Heights also created paper streets in and around canyon areas. Streets were drawn straight through the canyons even though contemporary construction techniques did not allow such areas to be developed. Nolen suggested that such paper streets were an inefficient use of the land that stunted traffic flow.

Nolen solved the problem of paper streets and gridiron plans by proposing a curvilinear street pattern. Residents would be allowed to embrace the topography, not just to tolerate it. He explained “local conditions call for ever-varying local modifications, if the designer is to do his work well.” Still, he was careful to recognize the practicality of such a proposal. The earlier grid subdivisions were based, in part, on residents’ need to be within comfortable walking distance of public transportation. People would not settle in an area where they would have to walk long distances to stores or streetcar stops. Population density would need to be maintained to keep an area efficient and manageable. Nolen understood these concerns and knew that a large sprawling city plan was not the answer. “As a matter of fact,” he stated, “the proposed arrangement would occupy but little more ground than the present: it would simply be distributed with more discrimination.” He tried to ease the minds of both developers seeking to maximize their profits and residents seeking a navigable space.

The curvilinear street plan called for the development of a hierarchy of streets that served different functions. For example, Nolen suggested that a residential street should not be plotted at the same width as a business street. The residential street did not support the large delivery vehicles, nor did it contend with the intensive vehicle traffic. Nolen argued, “different streets have as different functions as different buildings. Unless they are carefully located and designed to fulfil [sic] these various functions, there must inevitably be incalculable loss and waste.” Efficiency was achieved not through the creation of uniform, grid-like streets, but through the discriminating and purposeful design of a tiered set of street widths.

Nolen’s plan included five street types that both responded to practical needs and appeased the aesthetic “need and desirability of differentiation.” He used ideas promoted by the City Beautiful Movement, including the proposition that the city had to be aesthetically pleasing and comfortable to be truly desirable and healthy. Sunlight and fresh air were essential, but physical health was also influenced by mental health. The city, therefore, should provide for both. Nolen included the following street types in his plan:

The Normal Residential Street, which is now usually 80 feet wide;
A Wide Residence Street, 100 feet wide;
An Important Business Street (D Street west of Third Street is in mind);
A Boulevard, 200 feet wide;
A Thoroughfare with Cars, 150 feet wide;

Nolen also provided a cross-section sketch for each of the streets. He meant these renderings to be conceptual guidelines, not true planning drawings, explaining, “I submit for the consideration of the committee five types of street treatment, not as fixed forms for street improvement, but as illustrations of what seem to me after careful study would be appropriate general types for San Diego.” Nolen reiterated his belief that cities should not be built according
to preordained guidelines but should be designed after consideration of the particular physical circumstances and social needs. He repeated this sentiment throughout the plan in an attempt to keep San Diego from replacing the insensitive grid system with an equally insensitive curvilinear pattern.

Nolen designed specific treescapes for residential and business streets, boulevards and thoroughfares. The type of tree and its placement, he suggested, would aid in deciphering the use of the street and ultimately improve traffic flow. This was a novel idea. Subdivision plans made prior to the turn of the century were designed to produce the most sellable space. The one exception was University Heights where the original subdivision map had included a university campus, parks, pedestrian trails, and a man-made lake. There, however, a more rectangular layout for the subdivision, leaving space for a school but lacking the landscaping features, was actually realized. The changed plans for University Heights illustrates the hesitancy of San Diego developers to partake in planned landscapes. Nolen knew that if landscaping was to take place, the city had to act as either the financial or administrative backer for such an endeavor. Nolen’s final recommendation was for a System of Parks dedicated to the preservation of natural features. He gave San Diegans credit for “setting aside, close to the centre of town, 1,400 acres of natural canyon and mesa as a City Park,” but he pointed out that that did not “excuse the city from recognizing other areas.” He suggested that the city should closely consider the burden of maintaining such a large park, when multiple smaller spaces would be more effectual. San Diego had relied heavily on City Park (now Balboa Park) as its singular preserved open space. However,
This compiled tract map (1929) juxtaposes the curvilinear streets of the Mission Hills Subdivision with the gridiron pattern used in the earlier subdivisions of Middletown Addition, North Florence Heights, and Arnold and Choates Addition. ©SDHS, San Diego M2694 SUB-TF-2.
the city had made little progress in utilizing the park. Nolen warned that the city should assess its existing holdings and take steps to distribute those resources properly.

At the end of his report, Nolen was careful to point out that he understood the city’s hesitation in pursuing such a drastic plan. He also gave an explanation of the tremendous time required to initiate such endeavors, writing that “it will take months to work it out even on paper, and years to execute it.” For Nolen, the success of his plans depended on their potential for practical application. He explained that “after careful consideration and a comparison with the programs and achievements of other cities, I believe the proposed undertakings are all of a reasonable nature.”

Nolen also understood that the plan could not be implemented without public support. The city was still years away from enacting any planning regulations. Any attempt to follow Nolen’s advice had to be voluntary. For this reason, investors, developers, builders, and contractors had to be educated about the plan and convinced that it would not cost them precious profits.

The members of the Civic Improvement Committee worked with Nolen to establish a public relations campaign. George Marston allowed portions of Nolen’s acceptance letter to be published in the San Diego Union. Nolen’s arrival in San Diego on November 16, 1907, was then announced in a front page article that described how he had toured the city with committee members, including Julius Wangenheim and Marston. It also included Nolen’s initial comments regarding San Diego. Weekly updates on his activities as well as portions of his report draft appeared in the newspaper for the duration of Nolen’s month-long stay. His final lecture was given at the San Diego Clubhouse and was transcribed for release in the following day’s paper. In this way, Nolen was able to address various socio-economic groups, from the most influential investor to the small-time builder. His attempts to educate the public did little to influence the broad implementation of his plan but they seem to have had a significant effect on the city’s residential development.

Nolen was not directly responsible for designing the Mission Hills Subdivision, but

Charles S. Hamilton (1847-1933) joined his brother Thomas and George Marston in filing the Mission Hills Subdivision in January 1908. He owned Hamilton’s Ltd., a hardware and grocery business in downtown San Diego. He was married to Marston’s sister-in-law, Elizabeth Le Breton Gunn. ©SDHS #OP:14230.
the development became the microcosmic realization of Nolen’s plans. It was a comparatively small residential development, supporting only one streetcar line and one corresponding commercial node. However, the subdivision’s curvilinear streets laid out in a strict hierarchy and punctuated by heavily landscaped parkways derive straight from Nolen’s diagrams. The street plan of Mission Hills stands in stark contrast to the gridiron pattern implemented in the neighboring North Florence Heights and Arnold and Choate’s Addition Subdivisions.

San Diego’s best-known progressive entrepreneurs backed the development of the Mission Hills Subdivision. Department store owner and local philanthropist, George Marston, along with his brothers-in-law and business partners Thomas and Charles S. Hamilton, joined Elisha S. Babcock, Jr., in filing the Mission Hills Subdivision in January 1908. Marston and the Hamiltons were successful local businessmen while Babcock had gained international recognition as the builder and proprietor of the Hotel del Coronado. All four men had a great deal to gain by developing San Diego. They were businessmen and Progressives who supported Nolen’s plan as both practical and forward-looking.

While the design of the Mission Hills Subdivision cannot be directly attributed to Nolen, evidence suggests that his work, San Diego: A Comprehensive Plan for its Improvement, influenced the subdivision’s design. Marston, a member of the Civic Improvement Committee, regularly corresponded with Nolen while the latter formulated his report. He sought updates on the progress of the 1908 plan and reviewed drafts while the work was in progress. In the summer of 1907, fewer than six months before the Mission Hills Subdivision map was filed, Nolen sent Marston a copy of his recently completed plan for Roanoke, Virginia, with the inscription “To George W. Marston with the friendship of John Nolen.” A comparison of Nolen’s 1908 plan for San Diego and the design of the Mission Hills Subdivision supports the idea that the former influenced the latter.

The name “Mission Hills” reflected Nolen’s suggestion that San Diego embrace its “romantic history…and give happy recognition to the topographical situation.” The subdivision was located close to the original site of the San Diego Presidio and the Mission San Diego de Alcalá. The name, Mission Hills, reflected both the history of the land and its location. It also set it apart from subdivisions named after earlier neighborhoods or after their developers.
Street names also reflected San Diego’s early history. Fort Stockton Drive refers to the army fort built by the United States on Presidio Hill during the U.S.-Mexican War. Portola Place pays homage to the Spanish explorer, Gaspar de Portolá. The names of Sierra Vista Street, Valle Vista Street, Hermosa Way, and Montecito Way reflected Nolen’s contention that topographical descriptions should “express themselves in the soft words of the Spanish language.” Other topographical references included Park Lane, which skirted Mission Hills Park, and Sunset Boulevard, which called attention to its east-west orientation and subsequent view of sunsets on the bay.

Streets in Mission Hills were constructed in a hierarchical system similar to the one outlined in Nolen’s 1908 plan. They respond to the contours of the canyons and the cliffs, creating a collection of curvilinear roadways. The original subdivision map shows the diversity of street widths in one section of Mission Hills. Sunset Boulevard had a width of ninety feet as it contained both businesses and residences. Other streets were considerably narrower. In fact, there were even sixteen-foot-wide alleys which supported little traffic and required no landscaping. The hierarchy, of course, also affected names. “Boulevard” was reserved for the
This portion of the original Mission Hills Subdivision map shows the diversity of street widths in the subdivision, which reflects a central idea in Nolen’s plan. ©SDHS Mission Hills Subdivision Map, M784 SUB-DT/2-MIH.
largest thoroughfares while “Court” and “Lane” denoted smaller residential passages. This practice allowed the traveler to quickly recognize which roads were major thruways and which were more modest residential streets.

The Mission Hills subdivision plan also included landscaping. Residences were set back by landscaped parkways while the central road, Sunset Boulevard, was flanked by uniformly placed Queen Palm trees, or *Cocos plumosa*. Nolen had called for palm trees in his plan for San Diego, explaining that the plantings “aim to dress the street and relieve its barrenness, but avoid shading the houses.” He believed that the non-native trees would add to the atmosphere of the city by underscoring its most natural element—the temperate climate.

While the planners of Mission Hills succeeded in using many of Nolen’s ideas, they neglected to make provisions for the small open spaces and park land that Nolen called for in his plan. This was partially mitigated in 1929 when Marston landscaped and dedicated the former San Diego Presidio site, Presidio Community Park. Later, in 1970, Calvary Cemetery, the Catholic burial ground of many early San Diegans, was redesigned as Calvary Pioneer Memorial Park.

Mission Hills provided the impetus for future Nolen-influenced development in San Diego, in particular, the adjacent Johnston Heights (later Inspiration Heights). The Johnston Heights tract map, filed during the boom of the 1880s, showed the original subdivision bound by Witherby Street on the west, Howard Street (now Saint James Place) on the east, the Middletown Subdivision to the south,
and undeveloped land on the north. The lots were drawn at fifty-feet wide by one-hundred and twenty-five feet long. The uniform lot sizes created nearly a dozen parcel remnants of land too small to build on. The subdivision remained undeveloped until 1909, a year after the completion of Mission Hills.
In 1909, Johnston Heights was re-subdivided and named Inspiration Heights. The earlier gridiron pattern planned for Johnston Heights was redrawn with more curvilinear streets that respected the hierarchy proposed by Nolen. Several of the planned street names which had reflected the original developers’ names—Johnston Avenue, Dunkirk Avenue, Jerome Avenue, William Street, and Leverett Street—were not included in the new plan. Instead, the newly drawn streets were named Orizaba Avenue, Bandini Street, Bay View Avenue, Alameda Drive, and Loma Pass, following Nolen’s suggestion that planners recall the city’s history and utilize the Spanish language. Alameda Drive and Orizaba Avenue, both main corridors, were drawn at eighty-feet wide, while the remaining streets were only fifty-feet wide. Miller Street and Bay View Avenue (Couts Street north of Orizaba Avenue) widen as they approach Sunset Boulevard, one of the area’s main thoroughfares.

Developers planted grassy parkways with the same Queen Palms seen in Mission Hills. The non-native palms had already become popular as a symbol of the city’s temperate climate but, prior to their introduction in Mission Hills, they mostly had been relegated to public spaces. By the fall of 1907, Queen Palms had been planted along Park Boulevard in Balboa Park. The trees created the continuity that Nolen had advocated in his plans. The sidewalks and uniform setbacks added to the visual narrative, creating a more efficient and aesthetically pleasing landscape than could be found in earlier subdivisions.

At first, Inspiration Heights lacked alleys, unlike the neighboring Mission Hills. The planners created no alleys when they drew the 1909 subdivision. In 1910, however, blocks one through six were again re-subdivided to create alleys in blocks two and six. This third major re-subdivision of the Inspiration Heights made it almost indistinguishable from the Mission Hills subdivision. Both
communities reflected Nolen’s recommendations.

San Diego’s Mission Hills remains one of the most tangible results of early city planning theories. The subdivision proved to be both an efficient, livable space and a trend-setting prototype. The slow growth and quality control advocated by Nolen and utilized in Mission Hills succeeded in creating a sustainable model for both residential housing and, more importantly, for comprehensive planning in San Diego. Mission Hills continues to convey Nolen’s hopes for San Diego and remains an important resource for the history of urban planning.

NOTES

2. Jacob Riis' *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1890) was illustrated with the author's photographs. Although often staged, the pictures drew attention to the poor conditions in which New York City's working class lived. In 1902, Riis published *The Battle with the Slum* (New York: The McMillan Company, 1902) that illustrated how little progress had been made in addressing the living conditions of the poor. Eugène Atget's widely published photographs showed the dusty, narrow streets and crowded conditions that turn-of-the-century Parisian workers were subjected to.

3. Many of the early city planners, including the Olmsteds, Calvert Vaux, Warren Manning, and Daniel Burnham, were trained designers, architects or landscape architects. For a general discussion of the rise of American city planning, see Mellier Scott, *American City Planning Since 1890* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969) and Jon A. Peterson, *The Birth of City Planning in the United States, 1840-1917* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003). For more specific biographical information, see *Pioneers of American Landscape Design.*


7. Nolen to Marston, August 24, 1907. San Diego Historical Society Archives, Collection 35, Box No. 1 of 6, George White Marston Papers. The committee's decision was made by August 16, 1907.

8. John Nolen, *San Diego: A Comprehensive Plan for its Improvement* (Boston: George Ellis Co., 1908). The fact that San Diego's Comprehensive Plan of 1908 was not implemented precisely as Nolen had envisioned makes it difficult to discern how much his plan has influenced planning in the city. The influences of these visionaries should not be lost, however, because to understand the origins of a city, is to understand the city itself.


10. United States Geological Survey Quadrangle Map 1902. The USGS Maps from the first decade of the twentieth century show only a minute fraction of San Diego’s coast as beach space. La Jolla, the northernmost coastal area in the City of San Diego, had several small beach areas, but south of that only small portions of Ocean Beach and Mission Beach provided beach access.


23. University Heights 1888, Subdivision Map No. 951.
25. Ibid., 71.
26. Ibid., 57.
27. Ibid., 58.
29. Ibid., 58.

30. Original design for the University Heights Subdivision Map 1887. As the “boom” of the 1880s waned, this plan was replaced by a less creative development scheme that no longer called for park space, plantings, and only laid aside a small piece of land for the installation of a higher education campus.

31. University Heights 1888, Subdivision Map No. 951.
33. Ibid., 90.
34. Ibid., 90.

38. Mission Hills 1908, Subdivision Map No. 1115.
39. The streetcar line information comes from route maps in Richard V. Dodge, *Rails of the Silver Gate: The Spreckels San Diego Empire* (San Marino: Pacific Railway Journal, 1960) and Mission Hills’ pricing lists between 1908 and 1910 which list the properties as being accessed by the Third Street Line. The commercial node information was disseminated from a survey of existing commercial structures in the area as well as a review of San Diego City Directories between 1907 and 1910.

40. North Florence Heights 1890, Subdivision Map No. 634; Arnold and Choate’s Addition 1872, Subdivision Map No. 334.
41. Mission Hills Subdivision Map.
42. San Diego Historical Society Archives, Collection 35, Box No. 1 of 6 George White Marston Papers.
43. Nolen, *Remodeling Roanoke*. This copy, dated August 28, 1907, includes the inscription as well as Marston’s personal bookplate. It is available at the library of the University of California, San Diego. The Mission Hills Subdivision Map was filed on January 20, 1908.
45. Ibid., 72.
46. Ibid., 65.

47. Johnston Heights 1887 Subdivision Map.
48. San Diego City Lot Books 1909-1911. Vol. 7. Early lot books for this subdivision show little increase in assessed values. Between 1909 and 1911, several lots showed significant increases in assessment value which likely means buildings were constructed on the lots.
49. Inspiration Heights May 28 (filed September 28), 1909, Subdivision Map No. 1212.
50. “176 Palm Trees on Park Drive,” *San Diego Union*, October 2, 1907, Section 2. The palm tree planting along Park Drive in City Park (Balboa Park) was spearheaded by the President of the Board of Parks Commissioners, George Marston.
51. Re-subdivision of Blocks 1-6 in Inspiration Heights August 29, 1910, Subdivision Map No. 1282.