

TREE VARIETY & SHADE CANOPY

CDF CURRENT CONDITION:

- A variety of trees were planted in the park between 1869 and 1887 (some transplanted to other city open spaces in late 1880s due to extreme density).
- The current canopy is sparse relative to the level of shade coverage provided to park patrons during the period of significance.

DESIGN RECOMMENDATION:

- Incorporate denser and varied planting at relative programmed areas throughout the park to provide shade for park users to stroll along paths.
- Incorporate appropriate tree types and groupings as a tool to frame views and features.

OPEN SPACES OF WESTERN SIDE

CDF CURRENT CONDITION:

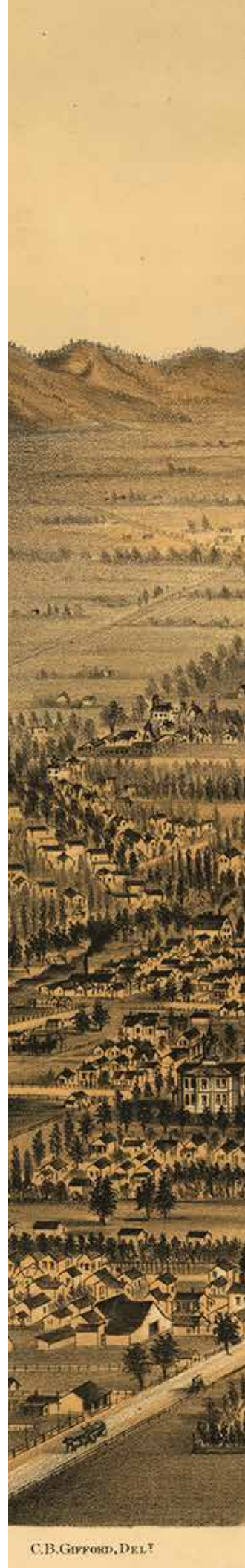
- The western side of the park has expansive turf and no buildings occupied this half of the park since its initial design in 1868.
- Although open space of the western side of the park was identified as a CDF in 2001, the park was more densely planted during its period of significance. Tree canopy shade enabled park users to stroll along paths while wandering through patches of greenspace beneath the canopy. The single-sided openness is not reflective of the park's historic plan which incorporated a larger number of plantings throughout the park while limiting structures within the park to memorials and, for a short period, restrooms.

DESIGN RECOMMENDATION:

- Incorporate a balance of both open and planted space on the east and west sides of the park, using historically-appropriate landscaping along the park edges. This approach creates a smooth transition between Square and Park.



In the early 1890s, St. James Park emerged from its redesign as the premier civic green space in San Jose. The park's lush landscape and undulating paths brought users to the park's noteworthy central fountain. Source: History San Jose via The San Jose Blog, 24 June, 2014. <http://www.thesanjoseblog.com/2014/06/san-jose-historic-photos.html>



HISTORIC NARRATIVE

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St. James Park emerged in the late 1860s as San Jose’s primary public space and by the turn-of-the 20th Century, reached its zenith as a park where citizens could seek recreation and social interaction, through engagement with the park’s landscape and surrounding urban environs. Through several transitional eras between the late 1840s and the present, the park adapted to its position within the heart of San Jose, while encountering challenges inherent in a city proven capable of rapid growth and transformation. From Spanish pueblo to the Capital of Silicon Valley, St. James Park has adapted in varying ways as San Jose has transformed over the past 150-plus years. The complexity of the park’s history is more effectively understood as a series of eras related to its design and the transformative context that carries the park through time.

SPANISH & MEXICAN GOVERNANCE ERA: 1777-1848

In 1777, Lt. Jose Joaquin Moraga established and settled the Pueblo de San Jose de Guadalupe with fourteen families totaling sixty people. The pueblo along with many others, were developed to support crops grown at California’s mission and to support the operation of garrisons located at Monterey and San Francisco.¹ Moraga allocated ground for housing and cultivation and later established the pueblo’s main plaza along present-day Market Street between St. John and San Carlos streets in the 1790s; approximately 1-2 blocks south of land that would later be set aside for St. James Park after Spanish governance ended. In 1822, Mexico gained independence from Spain, which resulted in increased foreign trade and the growth of an agricultural economy with its core in San Jose. Between 1822 and 1848, over thirty land grants were provided to new settlers, opening previously unsettled territory in what is now Santa Clara County.²

In 1846, the United States declared war on Mexico, as gradual encroachment by settlers and soon, the prospect of gold led to demand for new territory. During this time of transition, San Jose was surveyed due to increased demand for settlement, in part by American settlers who had increasingly settled in the Santa Clara Valley and the pueblo of San Jose itself. In 1847, surveyor Chester Lyman resurveyed previously erroneously surveyed land around the Santa Clara Valley, as well as land within the pueblo of San Jose. The survey was largely brought on due to increased demand for additional settlement, largely from increasing numbers of American settlers in and around the pueblo.³ Lyman set aside land for three squares: St. James Square, Market Square, and Washington Square. These squares created potential nodes for trade, commerce, public gatherings, and new development in the nascent City of San Jose throughout the 1850s and 1860s.

By 1871, Washington Square transformed into the campus of the California State Normal School (present location of San Jose State University), shifting its use from a public green space to an institutional campus.⁴ Additionally, Market Square, the square with the most direct connection to the San Jose’s Spanish-established plaza, was reduced in size over the next several decades, losing its prominence as an open green space, despite the placement of San Jose’s City Hall. Accordingly, St. James Square, with its relatively untouched open green space, emerged a victor in terms of prominence as a public green space by the 1880s which enabled St. James Park to become downtown San Jose’s central civic space.

LYMAN ERA: 1848-1866

St. James Square remained largely undeveloped in the decades following Charles Lyman’s 1847 survey. As other squares gained new identities as campuses for institutions and key public buildings, development became to stir around St. James Park as the City of San Jose vied regain its position as capitol as is was in Alta California. In 1863, Trinity Cathedral, the oldest standing religious structure in San Jose, was erected to the immediate southwest of the park along E. St. John Street. In 1866, the Santa Clara County Courthouse was constructed along N. 1st Street just west of the park, officially signaling San Jose’s earnest for prominence. 1866 also marked the initiation of competition between St. James Square and Washington Square for the placement of the California State Normal School. Washington Square won the competition in 1870, in part due its size at 26 acres.⁵ San Jose in general won the State Normal School’s placement due to its then smaller size, “healthful surroundings” and provision of enough accommodation for students without providing excessive “urban temptations”.⁶

O'DONNELL ERA: 1867-1886

With emergent fabric beginning to embrace St. James Park, a plan for its internal landscape finally came to fruition in 1867 when local landscape designer William O'Donnell provide a plan incorporating symmetry and various tree plantings around a central node. During the O'Donnell Era, the park's planting and layout enabled the square's transformation from an undeveloped open area with patchwork development, to a civic center defined by St. James Park and surrounding buildings. Gray & Gifford's *Bird's Eye View of the City of San Jose Cal.* shows St. James Square during the infancy of its civic development in 1869. The Santa Clara County Court with its notable dome, Trinity Cathedral, and trees surrounding the entire perimeter of the St. James Park represent fabric and landscape features present at the time. A series of irregular diagonal paths and a small schoolhouse that once stood within the northeast quadrant of St. James Park are also depicted.⁷

In 1870, O'Donnell was officially awarded a contract by the City to fully develop St. James Park including a botanical layout of 250 trees, lawn, and pathways. O'Donnell's plan represented the first iteration of Saint James Park as a designed landscape within the square. By 1872, the city introduced informal groupings of plantings with open areas of lawn. According to accounts in George Hare's *Guide to San Jose and Vicinity, for Tourists and New Settlers*, "St. James Square [was] being finely ornamented for the enjoyment of future generations," four years after O'Donnell's design for the park was presented.⁸ The extended title of Hare's guide connected with San Jose's growth during this time as settlement increased, especially around places such as St. James Square and its recently-planted park. W.C. Gifford's, *City of San Jose, Cal., 1875* shows San Jose's development around its squares. St. James Park appears with perimeter trees in the midst of an expanding urban context: To the west, the Santa Clara County Courthouse; to the south Trinity Cathedral; to the north and east, residential development proximal to the square.⁹ Just one year after Gifford's map showed St. James Park emerging from its initial design, garden and landscape designer, Rudolf Ulrich, witnessed his design for the California State Normal School's campus at Washington Square come to completion. Ulrich was by the time a well-known designer in Santa Clara County. His work at Washington Square, and additional commissions such as the Hotel Del Monte, surely factored into his subsequent commission for the redesign of St. James Park in 1887.¹⁰

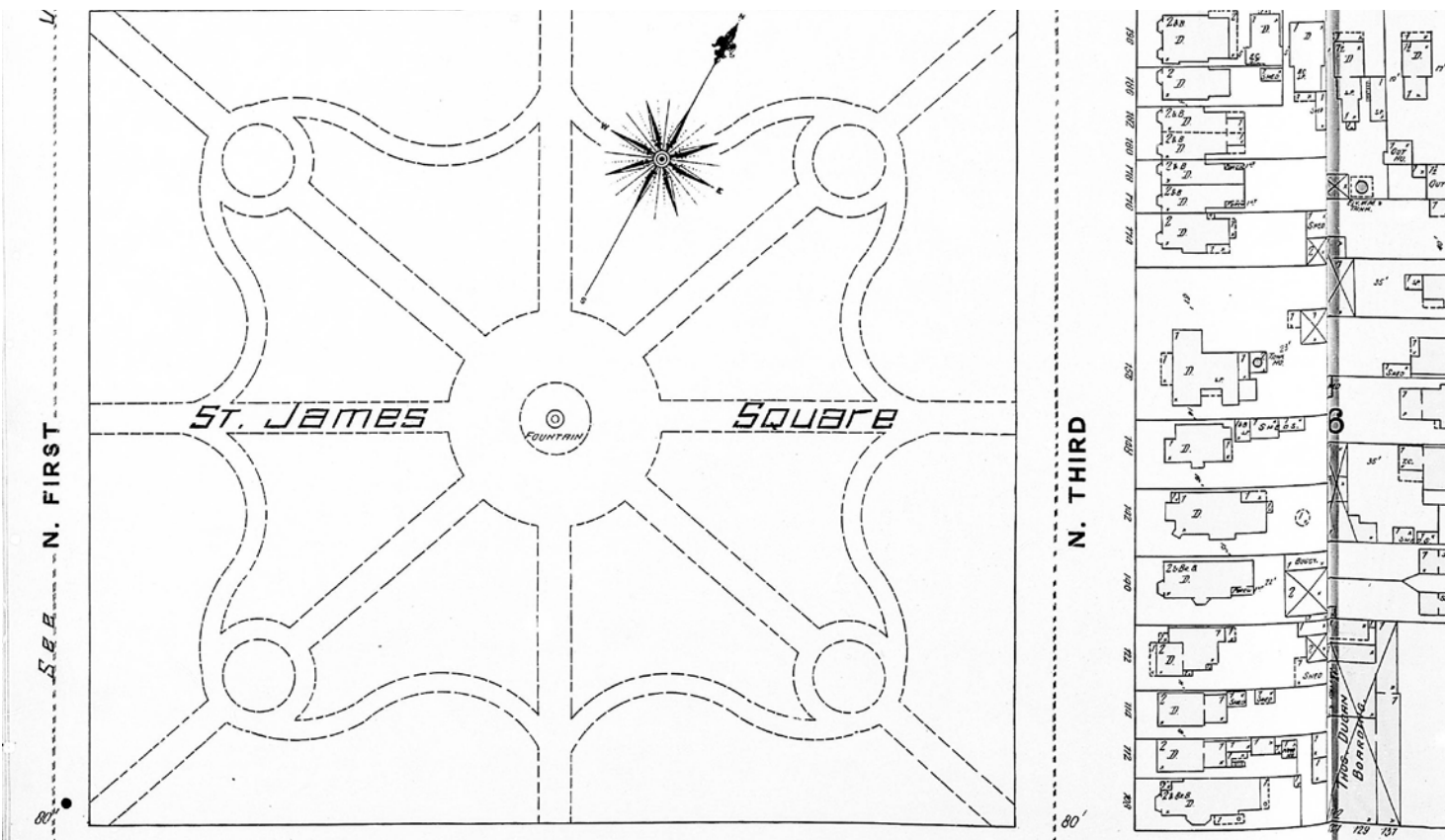


Gray & Gifford's, *Bird's Eye View of the City of San Jose, Cal., 1869*. Library of Congress. San Jose's emergence around its main squares is depicted at the dawn of the O'Donnell Era which also saw the extension of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869.

The O'Donnell Era reached its twilight in 1885 with the installation of St. James Park's original fountain. The fountain remained in the park for approximately fifty years until its removal in the 1950s. By the time of the fountain's installation San Jose had become an electrified city (1881) and O'Donnell's plantings within St. James Park had become so robust that periodic transfers of plantings to other public green spaces was necessary to thin out extremely dense areas.¹¹ According to contemporary newspaper reports, among the park's diverse inventory of plantings was at least one "young sequoia from the Mariposa Grove."¹²

ULRICH ERA: 1887-1954

In 1887, renowned garden designer and landscape architect, Rudolph Ulrich, was commissioned to redesign the landscape of St. James Park. Ulrich’s design followed the first failed attempt to extend N. 2nd Street through St. James Park and signaled a major shift in the park’s position within the greater city. Ulrich incorporated a variety of tree species and other plantings within the park including eucalyptus, pepper, sycamore, maple, palm, and elm trees among several other species, resulting in an extremely dense landscape with a generous shade canopy.¹³ The footprint of Ulrich’s design is partially shown on the Sanborn-Perris Map Company’s 1891 fire insurance survey of San Jose.¹⁴ Additionally, aerial photographs and lithographs dating from the turn of the century show St. James Park’s abundance of mature trees.¹⁵ The park by this time was a fully manifested public space providing a central location for the social, institutional, and religious activity. The park’s significance to not only local, but regional and national historic contexts was brought to bear in 1901 when President William McKinley was welcomed to San Jose with a grand parade prior to giving a speech in St. James Park on May 12, 1901.



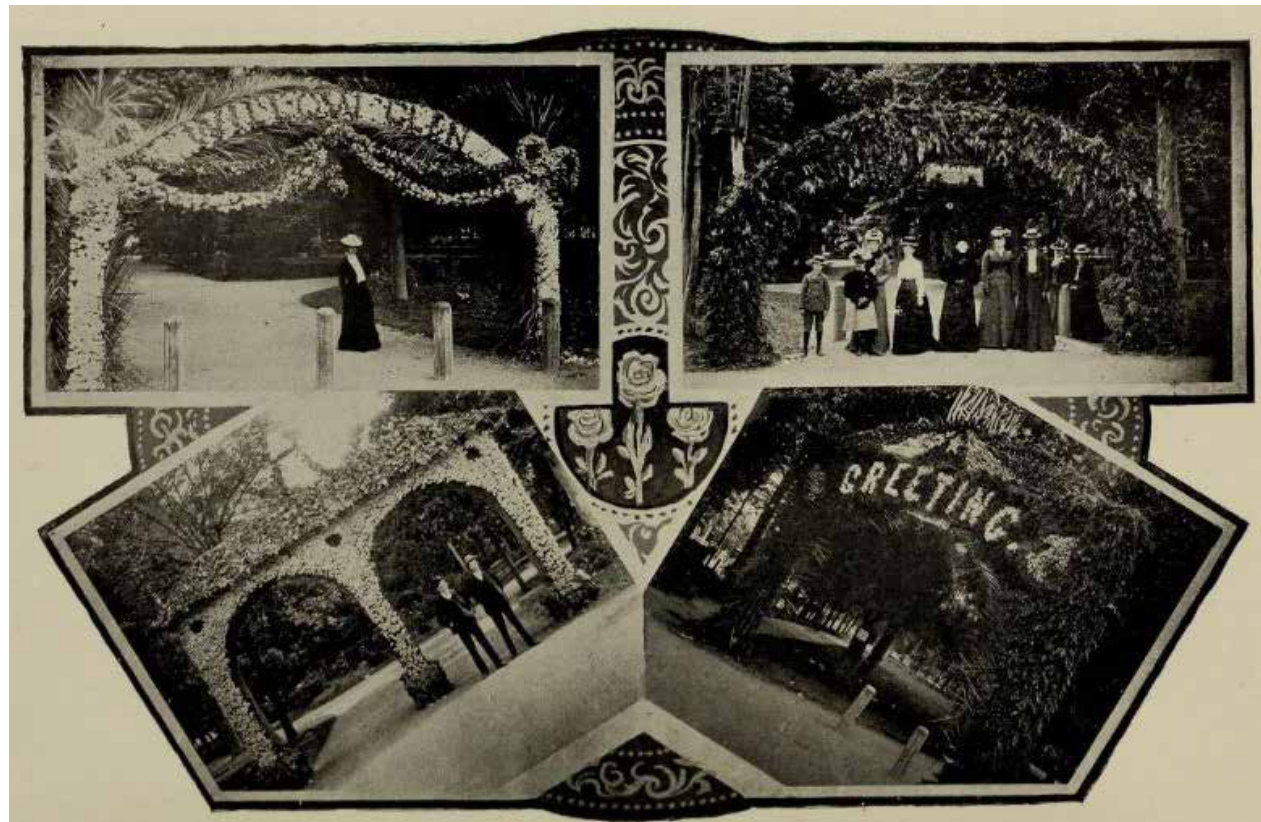
The Sanborn-Perris Map Company’s 1891 fire insurance survey of St. James Square show’s the square in its earliest iteration after Rudolf Ulrich’s 1887/8 redesign. Note residential fabric to the east of the square that was soon replaced by the civic and institutional buildings that came to define St. James Square. University of California-Santa Cruz Digital Collections.

McKinley’s speech was witnessed by thousands who had welcomed the President to San Jose with a bouquet of locally-grown flowers, ferns, and leaves from Santa Clara County. The bouquet was 75 feet in diameter by 25 feet high. The park’s fountain was temporarily removed and covered with a wire framework to support the massive bouquet.¹⁶ In addition to the bouquet, an arch made of 12 tons of the “largest size prunes” was erected along 1st Street adjacent to St. James Park creating a welcoming gateway.¹⁷ According to one spectator St. James Park represented the best qualities of San Jose, and was undoubtedly the center of day-to-day activity in the city by 1901. The spectator recalled:

“When seen from a bird’s eye point of view, the City spreads out in a rectangle of plane surface...it has the appearance of being intersection into four portions by an immense cross that is formed by [Santa Clara and 1st Streets]. The best portion of town is at the very center of the cross, and near this pint the finest buildings in the city have been erected. St. James Park is situated in this direction...it is kept in perfect condition...it is a lovely spot, charming in its beauty and rusticity, and while reposing beneath the shade of spreading branches, one might imagine that the trees had grown there by chance; the product of a most luxuriant nature. There is quite a handsome fountain in the center of the park, with sparkling sprays of water dripping into the stone basin at its foot; and here and there under the shelter of the boughs of pepper, eucalyptus, cypress, orange, sycamore, and many other trees, benches have been placed for the accommodation of visitors and children. A number of fine buildings grace the neighborhood of the park...from the midst of a handsome park covered with verdure, flowers, and majestic trees.”¹⁸

When St. James Park was not welcoming political luminaries and throngs of visitors, its robust landscape of mature plantings and well-cared for pathways placed around its feature fountain, served as the connective thread connecting notable buildings adjacent to its tree-lined perimeter. The Santa Clara County Courthouse and Hall of Records, Hotel St. James, Trinity Cathedral, The Ste. Claire Club, First Unitarian Church, The Eagles Lodge, and First Church of Christ Scientist embraced the park throughout is period of significance. Whether commuting to work, overnighting at Hotel St. James, socializing among the who’s-who at the Ste. Claire Club, or promenading along the park’s undulating network of pathways, St. James Park was a premier destination for all those seeking to see or be seen.

On September 11th, 1902, ground was broken for the placement of the McKinley Memorial, designed by sculptor Rupert Schmid as a life size representation of the President who was assassinated only months after giving his speech in St. James Park in May 1901. The memorial, which remains in its original location-that of McKinley’s speech-was paid for by popular subscription totaling a public investment of \$13,000.¹⁹ Over the course of the next decade, St. James Park continued to welcome masses of people in both tragic and celebratory circumstances. In 1906, residents seeking refuge from the catastrophic aftermath of the now infamous earthquake encamped in tents within the park. After recovery from the disaster, the park served as setting for holiday celebration, including a major 4th of July concert held in 1909 that entertained thousands with a choir of 3,000 local children accompanied by a 75-piece orchestra.²⁰ Throughout the Ulrich Era, the park retained a staff of gardeners in order to maintain



its lush landscape and interior infrastructure which included cement paths lit by “electroliers”, benches, and the park’s central fountain.²¹ Children in particular found the park’s fountain stocked with carp to be an alluring attraction.²²

In 1915 the park accepted the placement of a monument to Gen. Henry Naglee, a veteran of the Mexican-American War and major land owner in San Jose. The monument was the second of what became a collection of several monuments and memorials, signaling the park’s importance as a place of for memorialization and an expression of collective memory of the City. By 1920 and 1955 the park began a gradual transition as it was subject to the pressures of a city challenged to change around the emergent dominance of the automobile while combatting the harsh economic times of the Great Depression. By 1930, San Jose “had the highest weekday auto count in California...and was the only city in the state whose weekday traffic count exceeded traffic counts on holidays.”²³

In 1920, the City of San Jose released a plan to formalize the park’s circulation, reflecting a stronger Beaux Arts influence. As a result, the partially implemented plan led to the addition of perpendicular paths at the parks four corners. As the automobile began to eliminate the dependence upon inner-urban rail systems for commutation, a second attempt to bisect the park’s twin-rectangular plan was quelled in 1929, largely due to local advocacy for the park as an asset for outdoor recreation. During the Great Depression and immediately following, fabric within and around the park was altered, signaling an increased trajectory toward a major shifts in the parks appearance and role in urban life. In 1931 the effects of a downward spiraling economy were emphasized when striking cannery workers, up until this time a vital part of San Jose’s agriculturally driven economy, held two major labor rallies in the park.²⁴ The park also gained notoriety in 1933 as the site of the last public lynching in California.²⁵ The elm trees associated with this event have been removed from the park. Works Progress Administration projects prior to the Second World War impacted the park in the form of added structures to provide restrooms within the park. These structures were removed only two decades later. 1933 also saw the addition of a new Post Office and Court House building constructed adjacent to the park’s western edge, as well as restrooms installed within the park.

Projects of the Works Progress Administration were the first incorporation of built fabric in the park’s interior since 1868, when a then present school house was removed prior to the implementation of O’Donnell’s plan. WPA restrooms were removed only two decades later, along with the park’s original fountain during the most impactful alteration to the park in 1955. Despite these events that placed the park within the turmoil of the early 20th century, St. James Park remained a thriving public space through the 1940s.²⁶ In 1946, the First Church of Christ Scientist left its home of over 40 years along St. James Street, an early sign that the age of the Victorian promenade had waned. St. James Park remained a place for passive social interaction through the final years of the Ulrich Era.



A pair of images from Amaury Mars’, *Reminiscences of Santa Clara Valley and San Jose*, with the *Souvenir of the Carnival of Roses Held in Honor of the Visit of President McKinley, Santa Clara County, CA, May 13-14-15, 1901*, show St. James Park during one of the most important, and certainly the grandest event in its history.



N. 2ND STREET ERA: 1955-1974

In 1955, after two previous failed attempts in 1887 and 1929, N. 2nd Street was extended, amid controversy, through St. James Park, heavily altering the park's established circulation and landscape plan that had been in place throughout the Ulrich Era. Further, N. 2nd Street's extension signaled the City of San Jose's transformation over a century from a dawning town to a burgeoning metropolis. In the years after the Second World War, Santa Clara County shifted away from its historic associations with agriculturally-driven commerce to an emergent, technology-focused economy. The growth of "Silicon Valley" and San Jose's extensive annexation of many unincorporated areas, defined a major change in the City's focus from looking inward to its civic core to seeking extension beyond its historic boundary.²⁷ Between 1950 and 1975, the city's population grew five-fold from 95,000 to over 500,000 as the city's total square mileage increased from 17 square miles to over 120 square miles.²⁸

During the 1960s and 1970s, the City of San Jose expanded outward rapidly as it annexed several outlying unincorporated areas. The expansion of highways and increased utilization of automobiles enabled this rapid expansion. 1968 marked another pivotal year in the park's history, as several buildings were constructed in the park's northwest quadrant for the St. James Park Senior Center. These structures resulted in the loss of open green space within the park's eastern-half that had been present since the park's creation. The complex was removed in 2010 as senior programming was relocated to the Roosevelt Park Community Center in downtown San Jose.²⁹ Also in 1968, the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Podium was placed in St. James Park after Kennedy's assassination in Los Angeles which followed several months after his speech in St. James Park; continuing the park's tradition of memorialization.

PRESERVATION ERA: 1976-1984

The 1976 U.S. Bicentennial invigorated the historic preservation movement in the United States. In years leading up to 1976, St. James Park had been bisected by N. 2nd Street, while buildings for a Senior Center had been erected in the park in the late 1960s.

At this time, efforts began to focus on the historic value of St. James Square, its park, and the surrounding district associated with each. In 1979, St. James Square Historic District was designated to the National Register of Historic Places. Just six years later, the City of San Jose designated St. James Square as a City Landmark Historic District. The park's significance to the downtown and the square was noted as follows:

- "[St. James Square] is considered the best remaining example in the city of late nineteenth and early twentieth century structures gathered around an identifiable core. St. James Park, the square's core feature and public space connects surrounding fabric sharing historic significance relating to exploration and settlement of San Jose, community planning, and landscape architecture."³⁰
- The nomination noted that the diagonal path system and curvilinear shapes were among the most interesting remaining features of the late 19th century landscape. Buildings representative of a building boom in the 1890s supplement the park's landscape, forming "the only remaining public square in the City of San Jose with good to excellent examples of nineteenth and twentieth century architecture."

St. James Park’s historic value was emphasized in the years following the groundswell of advocacy associated with recapturing the park’s vitality during its prime. Subsequent master planning showed awareness of the park’s historic, aesthetic, and civic values that influenced its planning through the present.

MASTER PLANNING ERA: 1985-PRESENT

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, St. James Park and buildings surrounding it within the St. James Square Historic District were the subject of major master planning efforts. Master plans in 1985 and 2002 sought to balance the presence of historic fabric with the demands of a modern civic center. These plans, however, did not enable the park to adapt to changes in the urban environment as effectively as it had during its infancy and through the Ulrich Era. The St. James Park Master Plan was developed in 1985 and sought to reinvigorate the park as a place for recreation and enjoyment, while recapturing the spirit of previous features such as the park’s long-removed historic fountain. In 1988 a new fountain recalling, but not exactly replicating, the previous fountain was installed in the park, but was not able to be placed at the parks direct center as N. 2nd Street remained, as it exists today, bisecting the park.³¹ Light rail was extended through the park as well along north 2nd Street that same year. The partially-realized Master Plan was followed in 1989 by design guidelines for the St. James Square Historic District. The guidelines aimed to preserve the relationship between the park and buildings surrounding it. Throughout the 1990s, the park and square were stable in terms of their design and usage. In 2001, Royston, Hanomoto, Alley & Abey completed a historical analysis that identified seven character-defining features of St. James Park. Following the study, a second master plan for St. James Park attempted to ensure park’s continued adaption and survival concerning development pressure in the areas surrounding the St. James Square.³² The park’s character defining features relating to its landscape, tradition of memorialization, and atmosphere remain key as efforts to usher the park in to the 21st and 22nd Centuries.

(ENDNOTES)

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5Historical Sketch of the State Normal School at San Jose, California, 38.

6Historical Sketch of the State Normal School at San Jose, California, 38.

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16“Big Bouquet for McKinley,” SF Call 87,112, 22 March 1901.

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20“Thousands Attend San Jose Celebration,” SF Call 106, 35, 5 July 1909.

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24Charlene Duvall, “Sourisseau Academy Smith Layton Archive presents: St. James Square,” (San Jose: Les Amis (the Friends), June 2015). Accessed August 8, 2016, <http://www.stjamesparksj.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Pictorial-History-of-St.-James-Park.pdf>, 16.

26See photographs by Russell Lee depicting passive use along the historic edge accessible at the Library of Congress. Russell Lee, “Street and Park. San Jose, California,” <https://www.loc.gov/item/owi2001006874/PP/>; and (Russell Lee, 1942); Russell Lee,“Shady Street and Park,”(Russell Lee, 1942.), <https://www.loc.gov/item/owi2001006871/PP/>. Photos from Library of Congress Digital Collection Online.

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