

RESOLUTION NO. 90-192

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA DESIGNATING THE PLAZA DEL MAR BAND SHELL, INCLUDING THAT PORTION OF PARK LAND EXTENDING A DISTANCE OF TWENTY (20) FEET FROM ALL SIDES OF THE BAND SHELL, AS A CITY LANDMARK.

WHEREAS, on March 26, 1986 and confirmed on May 27, 1987, the Landmarks Committee adopted a resolution of intention to consider the designation of the Plaza del Mar band shell as a landmark; and

WHEREAS, on August 12, 1987 a categorical exemption with respect to the proposed designation was issued by the Environmental Analyst; and

WHEREAS, the Landmarks Committee held a public hearing on September 16, 1987 during which comments on the proposed designation were solicited and none were received; and

WHEREAS, a written report on the site was received from the Committee's staff; and

WHEREAS, on September 16, 1987 the Landmarks Committee adopted Resolution No. 4-87 recommending to the City Council the designation of the band shell at Plaza del Mar, including a portion of the land around it, as a city landmark;

WHEREAS, on November 6, 1990 the City Council received a recommendation from the Landmarks Committee to designate this historic resource as a city landmark; and

WHEREAS, Section 22.22.050 of the Santa Barbara Municipal Code states that the City Council may designate any property a landmark by adopting a resolution of designation within ninety (90) days following receipt of a recommendation from the Landmarks Committee;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Santa Barbara that:

1. The band shell at Plaza del Mar, including that portion of park land extending a distance of twenty feet from all sides of the band shell, located at the northwest corner of Castillo Street and West Cabrillo Boulevard, on Assessor's Parcel No. 33-120-24, is designated a city landmark.
2. Pursuant to Section 22.22.040 of the Santa Barbara Municipal Code, the City Council finds that:
  - a. The character, interest and value of this site is a significant part of the heritage of the city;

b. This site is identified with persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city;

c. This site exemplifies a particular architectural style and way of life important to the city;

d. This site exemplifies the best remaining architectural type in a neighborhood;

e. This site embodies elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials and craftsmanship;

f. This site has a unique location and singular physical characteristic representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood.

3. The City Clerk shall cause this resolution, upon adoption, to be recorded in the Office of the Recorder of the County of Santa Barbara pursuant to Santa Barbara Municipal Code Section 22.22.050(g).

Adopted November 20, 1990

LANDMARKS COMMITTEE

City of Santa Barbara

STAFF REPORT

DATE: September 16, 1987  
TO: Landmarks Committee  
FROM: Planning Division PS/MLD  
SUBJECT: Designation as a City Landmark of the bandshell  
in Plaza del Mar, Castillo Street and West  
Cabrillo Boulevard/Shoreline Drive, City Parcel  
33-120-24.

RESOLUTION OF INTENTION ADOPTED: March 26, 1986, confirmed May 27, 1987

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: Exemption issued August 12, 1987

RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Staff recommends to the Landmarks Committee that it recommend to City Council designation of the Plaza del Mar bandshell, plus a piece of parkland extending a distance of twenty (20) feet from all sides of the bandshell, as a City Landmark.

Staff's evaluation suggests the following criteria be considered by the Committee as the necessary findings in recommending this designation to City Council:

- 1) Its character, interest and value as a significant part of the heritage of the City;
- 2) Its identification with persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the City;
- 3) Its exemplification of a particular architectural style and way of life important to the City;
- 4) Its exemplification of the best remaining architectural type in a neighborhood;
- 5) Its embodiment of elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials and craftsmanship;
- 6) Its unique location and singular physical characteristic representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood.

Attachments:

1. Historical Background, Description, and Sources
2. Excerpt of Park and Recreation Commissions minutes Sept. 25, 1985

MLD

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

Plaza del Mar public park dates from the end of the nineteenth century. The original portion, now not used for park purposes, was acquired by the City as a result of the 1891 ocean boulevard bond election. Additional land was purchased by the Chamber of Commerce in 1899 and the City deeded a piece of land to the Chamber in 1900. The plaza was the terminus for a streetcar line; bath houses were constructed at what is now the beginning of Shoreline Drive. It was a favorite location for strolling and visiting. Band concerts were frequently held in the area.

By 1919 a need was seen for a formal structure in which to hold band concerts. The Chamber of Commerce minutes of April 18, 1919, reported that the chairman of the band committee had said that the "band matter was progressing rapidly." The matter of a shell for the musicians, however, was undecided. Members had discussed it with the Park Commission and with the city manager. The chairman, Mr. Becker, suggested a concrete or brick structure. Mr. Becker was told to go ahead with his plans.

On the same day the Morning Press headlined "Plaza will have New Shell when City Band Plays." The article reported that architect Winsor Soule was drawing plans for a shell to be erected in Plaza del Mar. Immediate construction was expected, at a cost of between \$1,500 and \$2,000. On April 24, 1919, a Press headline read "Work Starts on Shell for City's New Brass Band." Work had begun the day before on the bandstand, to be completed in time for the band's first public concert on Saturday afternoon, May 3, 1919.

According to Chamber of Commerce minutes the builder of the bandstand was A. H. Avery, a prominent Santa Barbara building contractor. During this same period there were a number of news stories about the new municipal band, a 22-piece group directed by Rocco Plantamura. Apparently the shell construction caused a one-day delay in the opening concert. A May 3, 1919, Press story stated that "work on the shell is progressing rapidly. The opening concert Sunday afternoon will be given in the shell, even if it is not quite finished." Huge headlines on May 4 proclaimed the first municipal band concert. A May 6, 1919, story in the Press reported that 5,000 people had applauded the music and "a great throng had packed about the shell near the sea." In the same story Winsor Soule was listed as a contributor to the band and publicity fund.

One of Santa Barbara's most renowned landscape architects was also connected with the bandshell. The May 8, 1919 Press stated that "Under the supervision of superintendent Ralph T. Stevens of the Park Commission, the contours of Plaza del Mar are being re-arranged to accommodate themselves to the new bandstand in the northwesterly section of the grounds."

All was not harmonious, however; the May 15, 1919, Morning Press announced that the president of the board of Park Commissioners, E. A. Gilbert, and another member, William Wyles, had submitted their resignations from the commission because the City Council and Chamber of Commerce had overruled the "wishes of the park board with reference to the location and architecture of the bandstand structure at Plaza del Mar."

On April 24, 1919, City Council had given permission to the Chamber of Commerce Band Committee to erect a "band stand of the shell type, the location, design and construction therefor to be under the supervision of the Park Commissioners." The Park Commission, on April 15 of that year, had turned the matter of plans for the bandstand over to Winsor Soule, who was a member of the commission. The minutes referred to some plans on file which had been held up for a year or two for lack of funds, and questioned whether those plans were of a facility large enough to house the band. It is not clear whether the earlier plans had been prepared by Architect Soule or by someone else. A November 2, 1915, meeting had President Gilbert urging "the importance of getting the band-stand and fountain matters finished and taken before the Council." A fountain was approved during this period, designed by J. Corbley Pool, also a Park Commissioner.

The problem meeting took place on April 19, 1919, with Park Commissioners and Chamber of Commerce Band Committee members conferring several times during the day. The Commission accepted the bandstand and location suggested by the committee, with details of building and grounds left with Dr. Doremus, former superintendent, and Mr. Soule. Then some Commissioners decided that the plans from two years previously would be "less obtrusive to the aesthetic taste of the public." That afternoon they met again with the Chamber representatives, but Mr. Becker insisted that the "shell form was most desirable." Park Commissioners wanted the original plans, saying they would cost less and be better artistically. Another get-together that day found all present except Mr. Soule, and the meeting was adjourned without the Commission and the committee being satisfied.

City Council accepted the resignations of Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Wyles on May 16, 1919. Their replacements were appointed October 16 of that year. The Park Commission authorized a letter of regret to the two former members, who had served for a number of years, on June 2, 1919.

At a special meeting on November 5, 1919, the Chamber of Commerce board authorized its president and secretary to transfer to the City of Santa Barbara "the band shell, with all encumbrances at that time." On the same day City Council accepted the offer "and the accounts now outstanding against the band stand, amounting to \$1,871.59 be paid" as soon as funds were available. The outstanding bills were from A.H. Avery and Nielson-Smith Electric.

#### DESCRIPTION

The bandshell has elements of the Mission Revival style. It has two sets of stuccoed pilasters, one on either side of the great arched proscenium. The molding around the opening, the cornice moldings, and the molding of the parapet are of wood. Light sockets line the surface of the arch, to illuminate the front of the wood stage. The bandshell is of stuccoed wood frame construction, according to the Sanborn map. A concrete walk and concrete

steps connect the bandshell with the lawn at Plaza del Mar. The structure is set among a variety of large trees, not far from Punta del Castillo - Leadbetter Hill.

The community has used the Plaza del Mar bandshell for concerts dramatic performances, recitals and speeches. It is the only remnant of the popular entertainment structures which once graced historic Plaza del Mar.

Sources:

Minutes of the Board of Park Commissioners

Minute Book P, Santa Barbara City Council

Minutes of the Santa Barbara Chamber of Commerce, Special Collections Department, U.C.S.B. Library

The Santa Barbara Morning Press, 1919, Gledhill Library, Santa Barbara Historical Society

Days, Mary Louise, Histories of Individual Parks, City of Santa Barbara, City Planning Division, 1977

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1930-63

By Mary Louise Days