John Nolen

and

The Future of the San Diego Waterfront

by

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While the purpose of this paper is to describe developments along Harbor Drive from it's southern beginning at the conflux of Interstate 5 and Civic Center Drive in National City as they are now and as they were when city planner John Nolen conceived his plans for San Diego in 1908 and 1926, it should be noted that San Diego Bay extends south to the salt flats adjoining Chula Vista and Imperial Beach and from thence north on the west side of the bay, by way of the Silver Strand, to Coronado and North Island (no longer an island but since 1917 a U.S. Naval Base next to the town of Coronado). This greater area contains tourist attractions, high-end, middle-end, and low-end residences, hotels, restaurants, industrial plants, the South Bay Power Plant, marinas, boat yards, freight docks, salt works, and natural estuaries and reserves that serve neighboring communities as well as the greater San Diego region.

The South Bay Power Plant on 990 Bay Boulevard and the 160 acres surrounding it, are currently owned by the Unified Port District of San Diego and leased to LS Power. In addition to being unsightly and inefficient, this aging plant, originally built in 1958, is a source of toxic pollutants to the land on which it sits, to the sea water it uses for generating steam and for cooling purposes, and to the air quality on land that is downwind from its smokestacks. Mark Fabiani, general counsel for the San Diego Chargers, is presently (2008) negotiating for use of the power plant site for a new Chargers' Football Stadium if financial and other problems can be worked out with the Unified Port District, the California Independent Systems Operator, the California Coastal Commission, and the City of Chula Vista.

In a manner similar to that taken by the San Diego Chargers, Gaylord Entertainment, a Nashville, Tennessee-based development company and owner of Opryland, has been negotiating with the City of Chula Vista for a 232-acre parcel located on and near the south campus of the former Rohr Industries aerospace plant on which to build and operate a hotel/convention center. The cost to Gaylord would be more than $716 million; the cost to the City of Chula Vista for infrastructure and a portion of the convention center would be $308 million (March 2007 prices). Goodrich Aerostructures Group purchased the north campus consisting of about 142 acres from Rohr in 1997. As part of the Goodrich negotiation with Rohr, the Port of San Diego acquired the 83-acre south campus. Both north and south campuses are located south of the Chula Vista Nature Center and within the H Street corridor. The South Bay Power Plant which Fabiani is considering as a site for a Chula Vista Chargers football stadium is located farther south near the L Street exit from Highway 5.

The construction of a Gaylord hotel/convention/restaurant/shops/park complex hinges on several factors, any one of which may prove insurmountable. These are labor union demands, the willingness of the Chula Vista Council to issue bonds to get the project going, the concurrence of the neighboring Goodrich Aerostructures Group; the practicability of the project in view of a lagging economy, the effects of competition from hotels and the San Diego Convention Center that are situated in more approachable and attractive localities, and the consent of the San Diego Unified Port District which has penultimate authority to approve or disapprove commercial, industrial and recreational developments along South Bay. Whatever happens to Chargers or Gaylord Entertainment projects, they both adhere to recommendations in the Chula Vista Bayfront Project Master Plan and they both are harbingers of hotels and sports facilities that are sure to come.

As a regionalist John Nolen was aware of the contribution of peripheral areas to the City of San Diego's demographics, economy and geography, but because he did not have a crystal ball he could not foresee changes in the bay and shore that would reinforce or weaken his recommendations. Among other contingencies, Nolen did not anticipate that the voters of four cities along the Bay (San Diego, National City, Chula Vista and Imperial Beach) would on November 5, 1962 approve the formation of a Unified Port District to guide the development of coastal development along the Bay, subject to the approval of the California Coastal Commission. (Coronado joined the District later.) The existence of the Unified District was, however, in keeping with Nolen's promotion of regional planning as witness his participation in the 1921 Regional Plan for New York City and Its Environs. Along with far-seeing San Diegans Nolen advocated filling in land along the Silver Strand sand spit to provide for public recreational areas and for the cutting of a channel through to the ocean to enable tides to keep the bay clean. This latter prospect was never implemented because it was thought that a second entrance to San Diego Bay would so decrease tidal currents at the bay's main entrance that silting would become a hindrance to navigation.

As Harbor Drive continued northward from National City, it encountered the greatest land area near the Bay devoted to one use. This was the 1029 land acre San Diego Naval Station which as a government entity was independent of the Unified Port District. It began at the mouth end of Chollas Creek or 8th Street in National City and extended north to 28th Street in San Diego. A "dry" area containing the Fleet Training Center and auxiliary buildings, bounded by Main Street to the east and Harbor Drive to the west, infringed on the Barrio Logan community. The "wet" area next to the bay contained some 14 piers that accommodated ships of the Pacific Fleet homeported in San Diego. Because the main entrance is at 32nd Street, the station is often called "32nd St. Naval Station."

Maritime freight exporting and importing facilities, shipbuilding and ship repair yards, railroad tracks and sidings, and a kelp reduction plant occupy bayside lands north of the Naval Station that are roughly bounded by 10th Avenue on the north and Samson

Street on the south. Even the most acrimonious critics must concede that these compact working port establishments are clean and the workers orderly on break and lunch times when many of them move north and east to patronize fast food franchises on Main Street.

Among these thriving businesses are a 96-land acre 10th Avenue Marine Terminal for the import and export of agricultural produce (a counterpart of the 125 land acre National City Marine Terminal for the import and export of automobiles); an 84 land acre General Dynamics NASSCO ship building plant; a 23 land acre BAE San Diego Ship Repair Plant (formerly known as Southwest Marine, Inc.); a 14-acre Northrop Grumman Newport News Continental Maritime, (on the former site of the Bumble Bee Tuna Factory); a San Diego Gas & Electric Company 69/12 KV Substation, and a Metropolitan Transit System yards. Junkyards and auto repair shops that at one time fouled the air and life north and east of Samson Street have moved elsewhere to the joy of residents of Barrio Logan.

The future use of the 10th Avenue Marine Terminal is the subject of an initiate being circulated by developer Richard Chase for inclusion in the November 2008 ballot. This initiative would expand the commercial trade terminal to include a cruise ship terminal, a marina, a football stadium, a convention center, hotels, restaurants and parks should backing for these developments arise. The Unified Port District is opposed to this initiative which would transform the use of its facilities, as has already been done on at the former Campbell Shipyards. The Dole Food Company, which owns a cold storage facility at the 10th Avenue Terminal, has said it would leave if such an initiative passes, thus reducing profits and employment that the 10th Avenue terminal now generates.

From a circulatory and scenic point of view the most noteworthy feature in this booming area is the 3.4 mile, pre-stressed concrete/steel girder Coronado Bridge that spans the Bay and connects San Diego to Coronado. It superseded the San Diego-Coronado Bay Ferries that had operated from about 1886 to 1969.

Perhaps not as stupendous an achievement as the bridge, but its equal as an aesthetic object is Chicano Park, at one time a State of California-owned plot under and around the ramps of the Coronado Bridge that cleaves through Barrio Logan. On April 22, 1970 young Mexican-Americans living in the area began their occupancy of land under the bridge to prevent its use by the California Highway Patrol. Finally, on November 11, 1971, the City of San Diego exchanged land with the State in order to give residents a park they had already seized.

Chicano Park is famous not only for its appropriation by young Mexican-Americans but because of some 67 murals depicting aspects of Mexican-American culture that have been painted on and around the pillars of the bridge. In 1987, the San Diego Unified Port District converted an industrial area on the Bay at the foot of Cesar Chavez Parkway (former Crosby Street), within walking distance of Chicano Park, into a park that residents named Cesar Chavez Memorial Park in honor of the Mexican-American labor leader. The land had been used by the community as a beach, soccer field, and fishing

pier prior to 1940 when the U.S. Navy and defense industries took it over so its return to its original users represents a return to happier times.

The Redevelopment Agency of San Diego owns a 6.8 site along Cesar Chavez Parkway midway between Chicano Park and Cesar Chavez Park. The site is adjacent to the Mercado Apartments Redevelopment Project, completed in 1995, for low-income residents of Barrio Logan. Because the City of San Diego designated Barrio Logan a redevelopment zone in 1991, residents have been anxious to develop this site not only for their use but in order to get tax increment monies to combat blight in their larger neighborhood. In 2008 the Redevelopment Agency narrowed down the choice of developers to the McCormack Baron Salazar and Shea Properties. While the schemes of both firms have not been finalized, McCormack Baron Salazar appears to be leaning toward a regional center while Shea Properties favors a more local context. Low-income residents fear that the gentrification, which they see in McCormack Baron Salazar's proposal, will force them out of their neighborhood. As with so many plans for San Diego Bay improvement, the issue seems to center on who gets the prize: tourists or manufacturing, the region or the neighborhood, the rich or the poor. Meanwhile a crop of weeds grows on unproductive land.

The former 12.8 acre Campbell Shipyards, the next major industrial development along Harbor Drive after the 10th Avenue/Samson Street plants, was located at the foot of 8th Avenue on a broad swath of land that included, beside the shipyards, a petroleum tank farm, a municipal refuse incinerator, and a manufactured gas plant. With the expansion of the San Diego Convention Center in 2001, 8th Avenue became the dividing line between commercial and tourist waterfront uses.

To comply with requirements of the California Coastal Commission, the Unified Port District had decided that "recreation" was part of "commerce." Thus the 2007 demolition of Campbell Shipyards has heralded the extension of tourist and recreational developments south, as well as north, along Harbor Drive, in a process that, it is hoped, will accelerate the elimination of pollutants in San Diego Bay, the preservation or gentrification of Barrio Logan, and improvements in the quality of life for members of San Diego's high, moderate and low income ethnic communities. On the negative side, the development poses a threat to existing residents and to marine and industrial developments, under the jurisdiction of the Unified Port District, along the bay in South San Diego, National City and Chula Vista. Naval installations are immune to such encroachments.

The first section of the San Diego Convention Center, built in 1989, runs from the foot of 1st to the foot of 4th Avenue. The 2001 addition to the Convention Center runs from the foot of 4th Avenue to 6th Avenue. The addition took curving elements from the first section, and extended them in a long horizontal line. The line is broken into three levels—the first a glass-enclosed entrance level to the main exhibit halls, to maintenance, storage and office areas on the mezzanine level and to a 40,000 square foot ballroom with meeting rooms that encompass both mezzanine and top levels.

From the outside, elongated arcs look like open-ended green tubes or pipes made up of glass. Vertical supports on first and second levels of the east section join the ground entrance and second level. What appear to be small arcs that slope inward on the top level extend the full length of the east section.

The difference in radius of the layered and punctuated open-ended tubes is an illusion caused by the angle in which they are viewed. This illusion is dispelled when the viewer perceives the equality of circumference and diameter of the tubes at their east or terminal end.

A steep stair-well that climbs up and down both sides of the Convention Center, a sloping elevator and an enclosed wing in the middle join north and south sections.

Hollow 360 degree circles inside second and third levels of both old and new sections interface with hollow quarter and half-circles. Translucent green glass panels face north toward the Harbor Drive side and south toward the Bay in both sections. The effect inside is of extended tall lobbies framed by shifting circular vistas. A crossover sharply pitched concourse at the top level that opens to the mid-section crosswalk between challenging front and back stairs connects entrance lobbies to the terraced harbor side. The acutely angled ceiling contrasts with the repetitious circles so much in evidence on the long east-west axes. Firemen from close-by appear to have found the steep stairs to be great for jogging and strengthening exercises.

The original 900 linear feet section built in 1989 is more stimulating outside than the 1000 linear feet 2001 section because diagonal supports impart a soaring motion to the exterior. Pursuant to the original design, trees and hanging plants adorn inclines and terraces on this section. To this observer the 90 degree trees look like overgrown weeds that spoil the stark architectonic effect. Sleek lines on the 2001 addition have a streamlined look. Winds blowing over these surfaces would no encounter obstacles. Planting is more moderate in the east section though trees of a forlorn nature in large movable pots have been placed on the east terrace Unattached angular sculptures in line with inverted L-shaped buttresses on the east side of the new addition relieve the monotony of the horizontal lines. Niki de Saint Phalle's two-sided male/female face in this area provides a dash of color for people who are looking for the hard-to-find South Embarcadero Marina Park. The title "Coming Together" is enigmatic. Is she advocating androgyny or is their some deeper social or spiritual (possibly Hindu) meaning?

Tent-like canopies on the older section shelter large exhibits and parties. They are not sails in a functional sense. The tents have been covered by glass panels to temper breezes that waft in from the bay. While somewhat quizzical in appearance, they too enclose a broad space and provide a welcome contrast to more right angle halls and walls.

Architects of the old (west) section were Arthur Erickson Associates and Deems Lewis Partners. Architects for the new (east) section Center were Don Grinberg of HNTB Companies and Hal Sadler and Art Castro of Tucker, Sadler & Associates.

The San Diego Unified Port District paid $165 million for the construction of the original building. In 1998 San Diego voters approved the issuance of $216 million in bonds to be paid by hotel room taxes to cover costs of constructing the second building. The Unified Port District and the San Diego Convention Center helped pay unanticipated costs.

There is a large Hilton Hotel (1190 rooms) and parking structure (2000 spaces with 800 of these reserved for hotel guests) now on or being built south of the convention center on the site of the former Campbell Shipyards. Marriott Hotel (1362 rooms) and Marina (446 slips) and Manchester Grand Hyatt Hotel (1625 rooms) nestle on north and back sides of the center. They provide access to both back and front sides as well as parking spaces and rooms for smaller conventions of their own. In a back strip adjoining the newest section and facing the harbor, Campbell Shipyard buildings have been torn down to get ready for what may be a Convention Center expansion. Even now the center is too small for big-scale conventions. A projected expansion of the San Diego Convention Center to meet the demands of clients for larger spaces would spread toward the Bay from the east section and require pushing the road to the South Embarcadero Marina Park closer to the Bay.

Blank rear sides of the center in the lower loading dock areas—old and new—are interspersed with outside stairs, to accommodate people emerging from below surface garages (1950 spaces) or nearby hotels. Stairs on the west building function as an amphitheater with the marina in front functioning as a stage. A twenty-feet high abstract "Flame of Friendship at the top of the stairs by Leonardo Nierman provides a suitable crest and subject for commentary, pro and con.

Marriott Hotel is (2008) contemplating building a 1929-room convention hotel at Ballpark Village within walking distance of the Convention Center, which would be even more so when a 460-foot self-anchored suspension bridge for pedestrians is completed. The City of San Diego is obligated to the California Public Utilities Commission to pay for construction of this bridge in return for its changes to the alignment of Park Boulevard near Harbor Drive to accommodate construction of Petco Park (2004) and other Centre City Development Corporation projects.

When the San Diego Convention Center is lit up at night it creates a dazzling spectacle. To save energy costs this is done only when both sections of the Center are occupied. Price-wise, the Center, run by the San Diego Convention Corporation on behalf of the Port District of San Diego and the City of San Diego, and its satellite hotels and restaurants have been a financial bonanza for the City. They not only supply employment for countless workers and swell cash pouring into city coffers; they have done more than any other local enterprise—except the U.S. Navy and the San Diego Zoo—to put San Diego on the map.

Located at the foot of Kettner Boulevard between the Marriott Hotel and Marina and Tuna Harbor, 14-acre Seaport Village caused a stir when it opened in 1980 as it was the first pedestrian-oriented environment to be created in San Diego since the Panama-

California Exposition of 1915 built the Prado walkway and vehicle-free Plaza de Panama. The Village was divided architecturally into three sections that were labeled Old Monterey, Spanish, and Victorian. Ray Wallace, a designer and not an architect, who worked for Disney theme parks, executed the drawings which were transformed into building plans by architects working for Hope Construction of San Diego. "Old Monterey" looked suspiciously like New England Cape Cod, the Spanish to Southern California adaptations, and the Victorian to stage-sets with minimal touches of gingerbread Victorian. However flimsy the copies may have been, the sections were grouped around plazas that flowed into one another. The complex consisted of about 75 shops, galleries, restaurants and sidewalk cafes. Among the features was an abbreviated replica of the Mukilteo Lighthouse at Everett, Washington and a Broadway Flying Horse Carousel that was intended to be a draw for parents with children. As an indicator that things were not going well, the GMS Realty operators of Seaport Village sold the carousel in 2004.

While Seaport Village is still visited by San Diegans, principally those who work or live in the downtown area, its chief draw is for tourists and conventioneers staying at nearby hotels. To those familiar with similar re-created resort centers on the Atlantic and Pacific seaboards, the shopping-center attributes at the Village are not original. Still there are many tourists who like to browse and sometimes buy so the numerous trinket and specialty shops at the Village exude a whimsical appeal. While its theatrical architecture is of the Disneyland variety and is scorned by local professional architects, the layout of the Village is an example in a small way of successful city planning as postulated by John Nolen. People go there because they like its human scale, its plaza entertainments, its greenery, and its views close-at-hand or through vistas created by carefully placed buildings, of San Diego's gleaming bay.

To most San Diegans the main attraction of the Village is the direct access it provides to North Embarcadero Marina Park, the counterpart to the hard to find south Embarcadero Marina Park. Both parks are shaped like protective arms that enclose the marina on the bayside of the Marriott Hotel. A bayside walk from the village permits pedestrians to visit both. Landscaping on both parks is similar with an assembly of California Sycamore trees made interesting by their picturesquely contorted branches. The south arm contains a fishing pier that is used by residents who are less affluent than visitors to the Village, hotels and conventions.

At the entrance to the north marina park a statue of a muscular youth called "Morning" by San Diego's sculptor Donal Hord, demands attention, even though the symbolism of its location near the water may appear mysterious. "Morning" is stretching his biceps because he is supposedly waking up. Both embarcadero marina parks are compensations for shops that hide them from public view.

After conducting a workshop on August 15, 2000, the Project for Public Spaces was upset with this area because the hotels did not cater to passers-by, because the private restrooms at the marina were not open to the public, because there were not enough people in the parks, because no one was touching the water, and because derelicts were

lying on the grass. As the Port Commission of San Diego controls the fate of the small-scale Seaport Village, its existence after the GMS lease expires in 2018 is uncertain.

A partial answer to what may happen to Seaport Village after 2018 occurred on January 11, 2006, when the Port of San Diego signed an option agreement with Terramar Retail Centers (formerly GMS Realty) to renovate the Old Police Headquarters complex, consisting of several linked buildings around a large, open-air courtyard on 21.3 acres, north of Seaport Village and at the south end of Harbor Drive before it bends to become North Harbor Drive.

This was the complex that occasioned so many disputes before it was built as a WPA project in 1938-39 on fill dredged from the bay in 1936. Because it stood alone on Harbor Drive between Kettner Boulevard and Pacific Highway, it was thought to violate John Nolen's plan for a grouping of public buildings around a County/City civic center. When consulted by San Diegans, Nolen gave a yes and no answer. Although the complex was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998 because of its architectural and historic merit, its original architects Quayle Brothers and A. O. Treganza were not known locally or nationally as experts in the Spanish-Colonial style that characterized the 1939 buildings and characterizes what remains of them today.

The plan for the Old Police Headquarters conversion to an entertainment, restaurant and retail venue covers a much greater area than the plot on which the Police Headquarters is located as it extends west to engulf a Harbor Seaford Mart and south to "reconfigure" the Seaport Village parking lot. Here is where things get complicated, as a 2004 Sasaki/Quigley plan called for the remodeling of Seaport Village after 2018. Whatever Terramar Retail Centers may think of plans that may involve the demolition of their present holdings, the discrepancy between the proposed schemes has been set temporarily aside as both plans are at present being scrutinized for their economic, environmental, historic, legal and practical viability on a property so close to some of San Diego's and the Port of San Diego's greatest pecuniary assets.

The super-size *USS Midway* aircraft carrier alongside Navy Pier, around the bend from the Old Police Headquarters, is a stirring reminder of this country's engineering capability as well as its military might. Unlike other World War II posthumous memorials in the area, the *USS Midway* was commissioned on March 20, 1945 shortly after the end of World War II. It saw action during the Vietnamese War (1965-1975) and Operation Desert Storm (1990-1991). The carrier's ties to San Diego are sketchy as San Diego was never its homeport; however, on April 11, 1992, it was decommissioned in San Diego. After exertions on the part of the San Diego Aircraft Carrier Museum the Midway began its journey from the Navy Inactive Ship Maintenance Facility, Bremerton, Washington, to San Diego on September 30, 2003. It is now docked on the south side of Navy Pier near Harbor Drive. Since its opening on June 7, 2005, it has become one of the waterfront's most outstanding attractions, "outstanding" in the literal sense of the word.

Visually the 1,001 ft. 6 inch long, 222 ft. 3 inch high, 258 ft. wide *USS Midway*, the 2.6 million square foot, nearly half a mile San Diego Convention Center, its adjoining Marriott and Manchester Grand Hotels, and the 1,050 room Sheraton Hotel on Harbor Island are the largest man-made objects that obtrude upon a visitor's view of San Diego's Bay.

More derivative of local history then the *USS Midway* is an artwork designed by sculptors Eugene Daub and Louis Quaintance at the entrance to the G Street Mole within sight of the giant aircraft carrier. The composite sculpture, consisting of three granite panels and a panel of composite terra cotta, flank a 28-foot tall central element suggestive of a ship's bow. It tells the story of the cruiser *USS San Diego* and its crew who served in the Pacific Theater of Operations during World War II. The *USS San Diego*, namesake of the City, was the only one of four light cruisers of her class that survived the war unscathed. A floor in front of the embracing panels contains a large, colored terrazzo map of the Pacific Ocean Brass stars mark the locations and names of 18 battles in which the ship was engaged. A brass strip, illustrating the ship's wartime track, connects the stars. Inscriptions on the panels list the cruiser's accomplishments. Two granite panels on the left, facing the bay, carry the names of those who served on the ship between 1942 and 1945. A life-size bronze statue of a sailor on a right terra cotta panel represents members of the crew and, by extension, all U. S. sailors who served their country during the war. A bas-relief on the south-facing terra cotta wall, showing the *USS San Diego* in action, provides an introduction or climax to the inner panels, depending on which side they are approached.

Less than a diagonal block from the *USS San Diego* memorial and near the port side of the *USS Midway*, stands a smaller bronze and granite tribute to Rear Admiral Clifton A. F. Sprague, USN, commander of Task Unit 77.4.3 (also known as Taffy 3) during the Battle of Leyte Gulf that took place from October 23 to October 26, 1944. Thirteen blocks of granite, one for each ship under Sprague's command, form a half circle around a bust of Admiral Sprague. The Battle of Leyte Gulf has gone down in history as the greatest naval engagement of all times. American victory in this encounter assured the defeat of Japanese forces in the Philippines and, with other successes, culminated in the surrender of Japan to Allied Forces on September 2, 1945. Rear Admiral Sprague was commander of the 11th Naval District in San Diego in 1950. Moon Kim of Escondido, California created the design for this memorial to Sprague's ability to outwit a larger (but not superior) enemy force. Fittingly, this skimpy monument and the monument to the *USS San Diego* are also tributes to the men whose tenacity and courage made Victory in the Pacific possible.

While it is impossible to extrapolate from his recommendations to conditions today, it is conceivable that Nolen would be pleased with what San Diego has done to its waterfront though he might well have grimaced at some of the sculpture and refrigerator-like buildings and deplored a dearth of playgrounds and sports fields. Like a phoenix the waterfront from Park Boulevard to La Playa has renewed itself. There were tradeoffs, primarily with the view of the Bay from anywhere except its littoral edges, but there has also been a renaissance of parks, landscaped boulevards, and maritime amenities. Who

can deny the exhilarating effect of the three-mast, iron-hull *Star of India,* at the foot of Ash Street, with and without sails? One of the few windjammers in existence, the ship calls to mind the hale and hardy nineteenth century when men pitted their strength and sweat against an unpredictable sea.

Hotels, restaurants, convention centers, museums and sculpture have brought prosperity to the waterfront. San Diego citizens and tourists, alike, enjoy their benefits. A few of the older buildings are eyesores, but almost all the new buildings are pleasing to the eye, even if they do not succeed in becoming icons of their place and time. There is much to complain about, in the dreary corridors, north of Martin Luther King Parkway, that, like medieval moats, surround many of the high-rise hotel, office and condominium complexes. Downtown corridors have a gloomy air.

Much of the sculpture along the waterfront is amateurish, and out of scale with its surroundings. Compensations become more conspicuous the nearer one approaches life-giving waters. For these San Diegans should be grateful. If visitors will sense the poetry that is hidden in things, they can see the contented middle class people of Renoir's *"Luncheon of the Boating Party"* basking in the conviviality and comforts of San Diego's in part hospitable waterfront.

In 1908 John Nolen was vague about what should be done to the waterfront at the foot of D Street (Broadway since 1913), the next imposing development north of the *USS Midway*. A sketch accompanying Nolen's plan put a public plaza and a "transportation" pier extending far out into the bay at the foot of D Street. Merchant George W. Marston, who was Nolen's' chief sponsor and defender, filled in details when, in a letter to Nolen, May 18, 1920, he wrote that "commercial interests of the city demanded the building of a municipal wharf for business at the very point where you recommended a pier for passenger ships and pleasure boats. In a strenuous, bitter contest the supporters of a rational treatment of the waterfront were defeated." The result was the building of a municipal pier at the foot of Broadway in 1913 that has been a fixture of the waterfront ever since. The pier has undergone various facial uplifts since its construction in answer to changing mooring and shipping needs of battleships, floating dry docks, tuna boats and freighters.

Beginning in the 1980s, City Councilman Bill Cleator promoted the use of the Broadway and B-Street Piers by cruise ships. From a commercial standpoint the Broadway Pier represented a logical loading and unloading point as Broadway, though having lost some business to the suburbs, was still a main business street. Aside from stores and restaurants, its attractions may have been of the penny arcade variety, but they were attractions nonetheless. Of the 190 cruise ships that visit San Diego throughout the year, the Holland American Lines and Celebrity Cruises are homeported in San Diego.

The North Embarcadero Visionary Plan, a joint venture of the Unified Port District, the Centre City Development Corporation and the City of San Diego that was created in 1997, calls for greater public uses of the "transportation" terminal at the west end of the Broadway axis, but the Visionary Plan does not define changes to the

pedestrian-oriented terminal. The continued growth of the cruise ships industry, however, has made the expansion of the B Street Pier necessary. While such enlargement is going on, the Broadway Pier is to be used as a temporary replacement for embarking and disembarking cruise ships. "Temporary" in this sense is a misnomer as plans call for the building of a massive cruise ship terminal on the now mostly unencumbered Broadway Pier.

Taking into account Nolen's desires to give the public more open spaces in which they could relax, play and simply look, the transformation of the Broadway Pier has incurred as much criticism as the building directly to the east of both the Doug Manchester and the Lane Field Development hotels. Indeed, its walling-in effects have been compared to those already wrought by the mooring of the gigantic *USS Midway* on Navy Pier. In the case of the Broadway Pier loading and unloading activities in an already crowded area, are even more offensive than suggested docks and wharves behind the County Administrator Center (CAC). Rather than the bayside frontage at CAC, the Broadway Pier is the ceremonial entrance to San Diego where the City should display it best face to visitors while, at the same time, providing citizens with a symbol that they can keep as a reminder of all they love in a City that nature has blessed with so many advantages.

Oddly, since conventions had been held in big American cities since the middle of the nineteenth century, Nolen did not allow for a convention center in San Diego in his 1908 and 1926 plans. The same was true of all his plans for small towns. Civic Centers are indispensable focal features, and it could be assumed that Nolen expected convention centers to be part of a Civic Center mix, but he did not say so.

Plans by the Manchester Financial Group (MFG) for a 40-story "condo" hotel, a 24-story office tower, a second 19-story office tower for the use of the U.S. Navy, and 6 undeveloped acres for conversion into "open space or park" (Doug Manchester's words) on a 14.7 acre parcel owned by the U.S. Navy on the south side of Broadway at its intersection with Harbor Drive violate principles of city planning that Nolen stressed: namely, the enlargement of open space to enhance views and to increase public enjoyment and the decrease in heights of buildings as they descend toward the water.

Similar plans for the north side of Broadway by Lane Field San Diego Developers (LFSDD) at the same intersection call for two hotels on the north and south sides of a 5.7 acre parcel formerly known as Lane Field, owned by the Port District of San Diego. The southernmost hotel would be 23-stories; the northernmost would be 17 stories. These hotels will be perpendicular rather than parallel to the water, thus opening up views from the downtown business district that otherwise would be precluded. Also an expanse of open space would exist between hotels, restaurants and shops, and free-sitting areas would be provided for the public as well as guests at the hotels.

In his 1926 plan John Nolen was not precise as to what should be done in areas at the foot of Broadway soon to be occupied by MFG and LFSDD. He simply said "commerce" should be confined to areas south of Pier No. 1, which meant south of B

Street. Aware how easily his plans could be changed, Nolen declared: "that hotels [should] be encouraged to select sites along Atlantic Avenue [today Pacific Highway] facing the waterfront and that the architecture of these buildings [should] be restricted by height, setback and other legal arrangements so that unity may result. This zone of the waterfront [referring to an area between Cedar and Laurel Streets] should be looked upon as an attraction for tourists, and if properly handled could be made a most delightful asset to San Diego." This proposal can be construed as applicable to the combined 20.4 acres north and south of Broadway at Harbor Drive with the caveats that hotels should be "properly handled" and made "delightful assets" for **ALL** San Diegans, including those who are not guests at the hotels or patrons of its enterprises. At present concept plans by LFSDD appear to be in conformance with Nolen's recommendations.

In 1978 City Planning Director Glenn Rick noted that the introduction of "hotels, restaurants, yacht clubs and associated uses" along the waterfront reduced the amount of "desirable waterfront land." To architect Sam Hamill, in 1960, it was "intrusions by the Navy and industry" that spoiled the effect of "a grand [waterfront] entrance" to San Diego. These criticisms applied to developments north of B Street leading to La Playa and Point Loma, though the criticisms were also applicable to unseemly developments south of B Street. (It is worth noting that the E Street terminus for commercial development that John Nolen had recommended in his 1908 comprehensive plan for San Diego had shifted to B Street in his 1926 comprehensive plan. Business and political interests, acting in behalf of themselves and the U.S. Navy, had maneuvered the change.)

Developments on North Harbor Drive, such as those cited by Rick and Hamill, departed from Nolen's recommendations in both 1908 and 1926. Even the location of the Civic Center, with its back to San Diego Bay that now runs from Ash Street to Grape Street, was a third choice after more attractive and functional sites nearer San Diego's downtown were eliminated for economic reasons. Ironically, Nolen's choice, as stated in his 1926 plan, was to put the Civic Center between B and Cedar Streets with the understanding that an archway would be built over an elevated street, above railroad tracks further inland. A Street running through the archway would link the Civic Center to San Diego's downtown retail section. Nolen also wanted a second recreation pier established, at the foot of Cedar Street, to balance Pier No. 1, at the foot of B Street. Suffice it to say that the recreation pier, the elevated street, the "portal" archway and the location, of the Civic Center, further north than Nolen had specified, were not developed according to his plans.

Not to be confused with commercial cruise ships that take passengers on ocean cruises far away from San Diego, Hornblower cruise lines consists of a fleet of seven charter yachts that take guests on short on San Diego Bay. Decks on the largest of these ships provide spaces for conferences, dances and celebrations. Smaller ships specialize in harbor tours and whale and dolphin watching cruises, in conjunction with the San Diego Natural History Museum in Balboa Park. Since all seven ships cannot be in the same place at the same time, they are moored at wharves and docks on and near the Broadway and B-Street piers, in the Shelter Island commercial basin, and on docks, piers and wharves between the B Street Pier and Laurel Street/. The largest of the ships, the

Inspiration with a capacity of 1000 passengers and the *Lord Hornblower* with a capacity of 800 are berthed behind the San Diego County Administrative Center. Profitable though they may be to themselves and to the San Diego economy they contravene John Nolen's plans for a open-space park and amphitheater on the bayside of CAC. It was incursions such as these that inspired the ire of planner Rick and architect Hamill.

Prodded by a Harbor Commission in 1962 ruling that tidelands could only be used for commerce, navigation and fishing, the City of San Diego recognized the isolation and inappropriateness of the waterfront site for a Civic Center in 1964 when it transferred its portion of the Center to C-Street between Front and Third Streets and introduced into it a, terrazzo-paved plaza with a sculptural centerpiece that superseded seedy, run-down and cramped historic Horton Plaza. (Incidentally, the Harbor Commission's ruling, if scrupulously applied, would have made the greater part of Nolen's landscape and recreational improvements to Harbor Drive superfluous.)

After much debate San Diego County, in 1962, abandoned Nolen's suggestion for grouping public buildings together on the same site when it put a new courthouse on the Broadway site of its old courthouse rather than on the north side of its waterfront administration building as Nolen presumably had proposed, "presumably" because Nolen was sometimes vague about filling in blanks in his planning schemes. Consider the brouhaha in 1938 over the location of a jail which, after many recriminations, wound up at the foot of Market Street.

The privatization of Harbor Drive north of E Street and the location there of cumbersome buildings with the concurrence or connivance of the Harbor Commission and Port District have left a distressing residue. The behemoth Headquarters Building of the 11th and 13th Naval Districts, between Broadway and Market Streets, the Solar Turbine Company buildings, the vacant TDY Industries buildings—under court order to be demolished, car rental storage areas, a pump station, aircraft maintenance facilities, U.S. Coast Guard Air Station, and U.S. Naval Mine and Anti-Submarine Warfare Complex, and miscellaneous businesses, motels, restaurants and apartments, all bordering or adjacent to Harbor Drive, mar the San Diego Bay crescent that Nolen had compared to the harbor at Naples, Italy, and the bay at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Nolen intended that Harbor Drive would follow a scenic 200 ft. wide path around the bay, beginning at National City and ending at the tip of Point Loma. An accessory "parkway" would connect National City to Coronado by way of the Silver Strand. He anticipated that from B Street to the U.S. Naval Training Station, the Drive would "be intensively used for general north and south bound city traffic." He did not see a discrepancy between a pleasure drive and a traffic artery, a discrepancy that currently plagues Harbor Drive approaches to the San Diego International Airport, also known as Lindbergh Field. "Aside from the value of Harbor Drive as a traffic artery," Nolen predicted, "it will be the feature of the San Diego Parkway System giving approximately ten miles of waterfront along San Diego Bay."

To fill the need for a through Harbor Drive (it was never joined directly to the tip of Point Loma) Nolen relied on dredge that broadened the uneven shoreline as it crossed smelly Dutch Flats on which the Naval and Marine stations were sprouting. Acting on Nolen's suggestions, traffic engineers placed the Drive on top of a bulkhead near the Bay and as far away from the stations as was possible. Fortunately for the Drive, San Diego's Bay was famous for its unruffled waters.

In accord with the wishes of the Chamber of Commerce, Nolen in 1926 recommended the building of a municipal airport on Dutch Flats extending from the foot of Laurel Street north to the U.S. Naval Training Station. The Unified Port District took over control of the air station in 1962. Problems with the location, size and safety of the airport compelled the California State Legislature on January 1, 2003 to transfer ownership and management of the San Diego International Airport to the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority. Complaints about the airport's downtown location and the noise it generates as well as proposals to find another location that would meet the San Diego region's growing needs are endless and, so far (2008), fruitless. While developers are eager to convert abandoned airport land into sites for condominiums, its use, unlike that at nearby Liberty Station, is subject to restrictions established by the California State Legislature.

When Nolen submitted his 1926 plan for Harbor Drive, he was [seemingly] not aware that the U.S. government owned about two miles of tidelands that bordered the U.S. Marine Base and U.S. Naval Training Center. Accordingly in 1938 the City of San Diego rectified the anomaly by obtaining a right-of-way from the government for then partially submerged lands. Military commanders did not relish the disruption of training, parade and athletic activities in their areas, so the Drive had to be laid out on the outskirts rather than within their bases.

The Unified Port of San Diego, established by the State Legislature in 1962, was more flexible in its interpretations of use than the Harbor Commission. Port authorities wanted to make money, but they realized, as Nolen had before them, that money could be made by providing tourists with handsome surroundings. There followed a rash of improvements, including the creation of man-made Spanish landing, across from the U.S. Marine Base, set aside in 1976, that is a boon to the Bay and to children, pedestrians, picnickers and transients and the construction of Shelter and Harbor Islands that are boons to pedestrians, bicyclists, sailors, fishermen, boaters and tourists. Though lined on one side by hotels and restaurants, spacious walkways and terraced restaurants on both islands provide visitors with views of constantly-changing San Diego Bay. Both Shelter Island (1934) and Harbor Island (1962) were man-made creations that owed their existence to suggestions from boat owners and entrepreneurs long after Nolen had departed the city.

In 1993 the U.S. Navy donated the 435-acre U.S. Naval Training Center to the City of San Diego. The San Diego City Council, in 2000, granted Corky McMillin Companies development rights to 235 acres. Since that date the Companies have converted the greater part of their parcel to detached housing, row homes, condominium complexes,

office buildings, schools and shops with a wide 160,000 square foot marketplace occupying former "historic" U.S. Navy buildings. In 2002, the Companies named the entire area Liberty Station. As the Companies have not shared profits from site sales or lease revenue with the City or assumed responsibility for enhancing property outside its boundaries, the City's business transactions with McMillan have become disasters. On March 3, 2007, the *San Diego Union-Tribune* summed up the lopsided situation with the headline "Boom for McMillan, bust for city." The U.S. Navy and the City of San Diego retain ownership of 315 acres. Unlike the case with the Navy, the Department of Defense has thus far kept the contiguous San Diego Marine Corps Recruit Depot off its list of surplus properties.

Of the three hotels planned for Liberty Station, Hilton Homeward Suites and Marriott Courtyard opened in 2006 and 2007. These are upscale hotels designed to accommodate guests who will arrive from nearby Lindbergh Field for, it is hoped, long-term stays. Ground-level parking for both hotels is 300 spaces. A third planned hotel has been beset by aesthetic, environmental, economic and geographical constraints that may delay or make eventual construction impossible. It is to occupy a choice site adjacent to Harbor Drive on the east side of a channel that runs through almost the entire length of Liberty Station. McMillan Companies is currently using the site as a parking lot.

While close to the west end of the Lindbergh Field runway, the projected development does not interfere with flight takeoffs or landings. Miller Global Properties of Denver, Colorado, is to build and own a seven-story, 80-foot high, 650-unit hotel, designed by the Gensler architectural firm that will occupy 15-1/4 acres next to the channel. Parking for 1200 cars under reclaimed tidal lands may or may not need water pumps to keep water out. Partners in the enterprise are Marriott International who will manage the operation and Nickelodeon Cable TV Network who will promote the theme of a family-oriented, water-sports hotel for patrons who are familiar with Nickelodeon's television characters, games and shows. Activities will resemble those of a joint Miller Global and Nickelodeon resort in Orlando, Florida.

Marriott managers have stressed that this will be a private business. As such its attractions will be off-limits to the non-paying public. This prohibition appears to extend to whatever park-like walkways could be built on the east side of the channel to balance those now under construction for free public use on the west. Due to San Diego's breezy climate most of the water activities will be enclosed, which is a further means to safeguard their privacy. This is the place for executives to conduct business while their children play if they can be lured here from Disneyland. Close-by LEGOLAND, Sea World, and the San Diego Zoo offer additional inducements to tarry. Based on preliminary sketches the exterior design takes the shape of a sprawling, undulating L-shaped multi-tiered slab that wraps around a 100,000 square foot water park and activity deck that will be equipped with private cabanas for those who like to avoid their kind.

Critics claim screams of children will be louder than jets at Lindbergh Field. Whatever else the architectural style of this many-room, stripped-down, grandiose 80-foot high complex may be, it differs from the Spanish Colonial, Spanish-Renaissance,

and Mission Classic pile-ups that characterize others parts of Liberty Station. Whether or not the Marriott and Nickelodeon promotion can surmount review by the Federal Aviation Authority and complaints about noise and traffic that will be by-products of their development, the San Diego Convention and Tourist Bureau is already hailing the proposed amusement/resort center as a source of tax dollars, income and jobs.

When the north end of Harbor Drive dissolves into a snarl of streets that lead indirectly to Shelter Island and directly to La Playa, a juxtaposition of contrasting elements exists as, for example, the revelation of light after dark, of openness after closure, and of beauty after ugliness. Grand though individual residences on the Scott Street extension of Harbor Drive may be, they exist in defiance, of one another. A straggly path along the La Playa shoreline is so thin and the parking lots at its entrance so small and so restricted by time limits that sauntering on the path is impossible.

While located about two miles north, at the tip of Shelter Island, a "Pearl of the Pacific" sculpture made of concrete, provides a peaceful counterpoint to the *USS San Diego* and the Battle of Leyte Gulf Memorials on or near the G Street Mole. It consists of a fountain in the shape of a pearl, surrounded by a mosaic design depicting the cardinal points of the compass with nearby abutments shaped like Chinese fans with an archway in the center topped with ironwork in an arabesque design. Working under the direction of San Diego sculptor James Hubbell, architectural students from Vladivostok, Russia, Tijuana, Mexico and Yantai, China, assembled the sculpture. It is the third in a necklace of Pacific Rim constructions Hubbell planned to celebrate San Diego's ties of economy, culture and friendship with its neighbors on the west and east rims of the Pacific Ocean.

The San Diego-Yokohama Friendship Bell at the traffic circle southwestern end of Shelter Island is only a few feet from the construction that Hubbell and his group of students put together, yet it continues the theme of friendship in a more traditional and historic way. If war is a temporary insanity, then the two-and-a-half ton bronze Friendship Bell stands for the sanity that should prevail between nations and people when they have recovered their senses. The bell sits stately and quiet for most of the year, but on December 31, along with similar bells in Buddhist temples in Japan and elsewhere, it is (supposedly) rung 108 times to ward off man's worldly desires.

Many marinas and yacht clubs dot the shores of San Diego Bay ranging Coronado on the west and Chula Vista on the south to La Playa on the north. Some of these marinas and yacht clubs are attached to hotels and restaurants: Bay Club, Kona Kai, Half Moon, Island Palms (Shelter Island), Sheraton (Harbor Island), Marriott (South Embarcadero); others are independent enterprises: Gold Coast (Shelter Island), Driscoll's Wharf, Sun Harbor (North Harbor Drive), Cabrillo Isle, West Harbor Marina (Harbor Island), etc. The San Diego Unified Port District maintains docking facilities on the southern end of Shelter Island, a weekend docking facility at La Playa Cove, a boat anchorage at Glorietta Bay, Coronado, and a non-resident of San Diego County cruiser anchorage at the east tip of Harbor Island.

The most prominent yacht clubs in San Diego (exclusive of those in Chula Vista and Coronado) are located on the cove side of Shelter Island. These are the Southeastern Yacht Club at La Playa, the San Diego Yacht Club near the shore-side entrance to Shelter Island, and the Silver Gate Yacht Club on the yacht basin side of Shelter Island. The North Embarcadero Visionary Plan would supplement docks or piers alongside Harbor Drive from the foot of Grape Street north to the foot of Laurel Street. Nolen in 1926 approved the existence of the La Playa yacht basin which may have been the recognition of an existing reality. In general guests staying at hotels along waterfronts prefer views of the ocean with ships actually in sail to views of ships moored in marinas or in free anchorages in the harbor with a gallimaufry of swaying masts blemishing the sky.

In *Temporary Paradise?* (1974) city planners Kevin Lynch and Donald Appleyard established a strict goal for building along San Diego's waterfront. This goal was for the entire waterfront and not just for zones within which John Nolen had specified special uses. Lynch and Appleyard's comment was as follows:

> "Control the height and bulk of waterfront development and encourage housing of mixed prices and types in existing coastal communities. In the long term, remove all uses from the shore that are not residential, recreational or water-related."

Lynch and Appleyard were not asking for a wholesale erasure of what had been put along the waterfront in the past. They were asking San Diegans to be careful what they put along the waterfront in the future. There is little chance that the Port of San Diego or the San Diego Centre City Corporation will heed this blanket advice. Yet it is possible that these agencies will accelerate recreational and water-related uses along the waterfront whenever and however they can. The proposal for increased open space at the foot of Broadway and the proposal for a North Embarcadero Visionary Plan joint powers agreement between the Centre City Development Corporation, the City of San Diego, and the Port of San Diego are steps toward the fulfillment of this goal.

The North Embarcadero Visionary Plan that covers the waterfront area between Market Street on the south and Laurel Street on the north is not without problems. A review of the plan and its appendices has failed to yield any reference to Nolen. Perhaps this is an indication of how little Nolen's waterfront recommendations count in today's San Diego.

The Visionary Plan describes an extension of "commercial fishing" and "commercial recreational" uses in its area of study. To a degree this is not a projection, but a recognition of existing realities, vis-à-vis the berth for Hornblower cruise yachts at the harbor gateway to the County Administration Center and the plethora of yachts and ships enjoying free anchorage in San Diego's Central Bay.

The plan recommends a narrowing Harbor Drive from four to three lanes with a maximum width of 74 feet, increasing berthing uses (and users) on Broadway and B Street piers, building a new pier at the foot of Grape Street, a dock between Grape and Hawthorn Streets and four new piers at the foot of Laurel and Hawthorn Streets with

concomitant hotels, restaurants, terminals, kiosks, and berthing facilities located on or adjacent to the piers and docks.

A parking structure on Navy Pier would replace some of the present lots that are to be converted to "shared" pedestrian and bicycle walkways, 25 feet in width except when they are interspersed with an oval plaza in front of the Broadway Pier; formal groves of trees on both sides of the Broadway Pier; a "market square'—covered with a "sail-like" canopy in front of the B Street Pier; "a tavern on the bay"—that will be an addition to Anthony's seafood restaurant at the foot of Ash and A Streets; a north and south lawn at both ends of the tavern; and a wharf that will span Harbor Drive and run parallel to the west facade and grounds of the County Administration Center. One of the wharf's stated uses, as a setting "for civic events," is at odds with a claim that it will be used as a mooring place for yachts and sailboats whose stays will be limited to approximately 2 to 3 hours.

The Port Commission of San Diego does not have authority over San Diego County property; however, a December 1999 Draft Master Environmental Impact Report to the Visionary Plan states that the east and west parking lots adjacent to the County Administration Center can be transformed into "commercial structures up to 85 feet in height . This would add building volume along the waterfront by adding buildings to areas that are currently open." (*North Embarcadero Alliance Visionary Plan, Draft MEIR, December 1999, 4.3-41*) It would be interesting to hear what the Federal Aviation Association and the California Coastal Commission have to say about that 85 feet height specification.

Possible uses of the walkways by skateboarders, rollerbladers, and sitters are not defined in the Visionary Plan. (Providing "free" public sitting is a sore subject in San Diego!)

The North Embarcadero Visionary Plan coordinates a mix of private and public and commercial and non-commercial facilities in a way that this country's seminal planner John Nolen) did not envision. What alarms most is the prospect that the developers and planners involved in this project are going to "kill the goose that laid the golden egg." This is the grandeur, openness and animated excitements of the bay. Indeed dry rot has proceeded so fast that remedial action is now impossible. Architect Hamill was right when he called this section of the bay San Diego's "grand entrance." The imposing County Administration Center at the foot of Cedar Street, the Donal Hord sculpture of "The Guardian of the Waters" at its bay entrance, and the green park that was, at one time, in the works for both sides of the Center have the hallmarks of becoming an emblem of all this is attractive along San Diego's Bay.

Futures in San Diego existed after 1908 and after 1926. Futures will exist after 2008. The San Diego waterfront will continue to delight people. That is if developers, such as Doug Manchester and the head of MFG, do not succeed in extracting a maximum of profit from open-space devouring building on the site of the present U.S. Navy Southwest

Regional Command headquarters with a minimum of concessions for public appreciation and convenience.

Like a moving panorama, actions on the water complement those in the air. Industrial, commercial, military and recreational movements on the waters of San Diego Bay counterpoint the risings of birds and planes, the passage of clouds, and the dome of blue that complements the blue of waters below.

The North Embarcadero Visionary Plan is heading in the direction of San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf with its helter-skelter mélange of hotels, restaurants, museums and boats that one recent visitor said was "so much more fun than a night in jail, but you might enjoy a good nap more."

Clearly the San Diego waterfront has become a money-maker and a scenic wonder. The question is which of the two will swallow the other? It is a long way from the unity, beauty and people pleasing attractions that Nolen in 1926 hoped would extend all the way from National City to the tip Point Loma.