

"North Park Magical History Tour"

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North Park Sign

**Sponsored by Walk SanDiego and North Park
Main Street**



Introduction

The North Park neighborhood of San Diego has a rich and varied history. Before the turn of the century most of North Park was covered with orange and lemon groves. This land was subdivided into residential tracts to capitalize on the real estate boom taking place all over Southern California at the time. This resulted in the transformation of North Park into a first-ring suburban community of central San Diego. Once streetcars were constructed to promote additional residential construction and attract would-be homebuyers, the area was to experience a full fledged commercial growth spurt. The commercial activity was primarily located along University Avenue and 30th Street. Commercial architectural styles seen during this time primarily consist of California Craftsman, along with Egyptian Revival.

By the 1920's and 1930's, North Park experienced another commercial and residential boom. However, this boom was supported by the rise in popularity of the automobile and its resultant land uses. Commercial activity now shifted north to El Cajon Boulevard. Commercial architecture seen from this time period includes Art Deco, Mission Revival, Mediterranean, and Spanish Colonial.

Construction continued through the 1940's and 1950's, as seen in the addition of new housing units and a gradual transformation of the commercial district along University Avenue. Businesses constructed during this period consisted of Streamline and Moderne architectural styles.

By the 1960's, North Park had seen a steady decline in its importance as a commercial destination within the city of San Diego. This can be attributed to suburban sprawl, freeway construction, and the creation of regional malls. These factors all contributed in the dispersion of retail activity to more "auto-friendly" locations. A change has taken place in the last few years, with the "rediscovery" of historic commercial district and traditional main streets. Two organizations which can take credit for the renaissance in commercial and pedestrian activity in North Park are Walk SanDiego and North Park Main Street. Join us as we embark on an exciting journey to discover the rich and exciting past in which the North Park commercial district has to offer.

North Park Commercial District Historically Significant and Contributing Buildings



See also:
 54HV.15 (2007)
 675.1 (2007)



(1) United Stores/1928

3002 University Avenue

Mission/craftsman architectural style. Good urban design, very clean, low lines.



(2) Electric Transformer Building/1924

3964 30th Street

Mission Mediterranean architectural style. glimpse of Egyptian Revival architectural style.



(3) Dixie Lumber Company/1926

3925 Ohio Street





(4) National Dollars Store/1946

3038 University Avenue

Modern streamline architectural style. Note relief between windows.

(5) Nordberg Building/1926

3049 University Avenue

Italianate detailing, massively structured. Held first, original North Park library.



(6) Woolworth Building/1946

3067 University Avenue

Streamline architectural style, terrazzo, awning windows.



(7) First North Park Post Office/1928

3830 Ray Street

When completed in 1928, this building became the North Park Post Office. Offered a great improvement in postal service as, prior to 1927, postal service was limited to over-the-counter purchases of stamps at local drug stores.



(8) Howell's Plumbing/ 3rd Branch Library/1937

3825-3827 Ray Street

Prior to the library's home on Ray Street, the library had for a few years occupied a single room in the Plymouth Center, followed by a larger space in the Nordberg building. Frame and stucco store.



(9) Sierra Club/Art Gallery/Healing Arts/1938

3820-3824 Ray Street

George Wittman had this building constructed as a multi commercial and residential unit. Wittman's own home was flanked by this building on one side and his grocery store on the other at 3804.





(10) Mixed-Use Building/1937

3809-3815 Ray Street

Concrete/stucco store. Lower floor of this building was constructed in 1937 in a late Art Deco style for the owner Ovid E. mark. Mr. Mark's offices were in this building. The apartments were added on a second floor two years later.

(11) Wig Wag Grocery/1926

3800-3804 Ray Street

Charles Williams opened the grocery store in 1927; his family's home was next door and was in place when the Sanford Fire Insurance Map was updated in 1951.



(12) Piggly Wiggly/1939

3015 North Park Way

Streamline market opened by Dudley D. Williams – one of the fathers of the new type of grocery store in 1916. This building was built for the grocery store on North Park Way (formerly Wightman Street) in the Spring of 1939.



(13) North Park Theatre/1928

2893 University Avenue

First theatre outside Downtown San Diego that offered modern sound equipment for "talkies" and a legitimate stage for vaudeville performers. Façade is registered as a local and state historic landmark.

(14) Pekin Café/1931

2877 University Avenue

Chinese commercial architectural style.



(15) Granada Building/1923

2867 University Avenue

Mixed-use commercial building. Constructed during the heart of the Craftsman architectural period.



(16) Stern's Gym/1921
3831 Granada Street

Craftsman architectural style. Built of masonry, brick and clock construction. Oldest "Chinese Laundry" in the city.



(17) Masonic Temple/1931
3795 Utah Street

Art-deco architectural style. Mixed materials, cast, concrete. Organizational buildings such as this often exposed new architectural styles to the public.



(18) Glenn's Market/1937
2825 University Avenue

North Park's oldest continuously operating grocery. Streamline architectural style.



**(19) Jack Carter
Building/1927**

2573-2579 University Avenue

This small three-part commercial building, in the romantic Mediterranean Revival style of the 1920's, was built by T.F. Carter, who was the builder of North Park's first major commercial building, the Stevens and Hartley building.



(20) Cadillac Apts/1925

2525-2539 University Avenue

Influenced by Craftsman, Mission, and Queen Anne architectural styles. Class C brick building, brick store and flats, tiled entry, arched windows, multi-use building



**(21) San Diego
Collision/1922**

2505 University Avenue

First drive through gas station in North Park. John Wolfe was one of North Park's earliest gas station operators and this facility is the only remaining building for such functions





(22) Nahaokinawa Beer and Wine/1926

2516 University Avenue

The market to which this building is an addition was an early California innovation in shopping. Shops with sales counters opened directly upon the pedestrian path and featured curbside parking for the newly popular automobile.

(23) Edwards Burns Building/1923

2540-2548 University Avenue

Good example of standard multi-use commercial building of Craftsman period in architecture. Edward F. Burns was one of North Park's earliest and most prolific home builders.



(24) Odd Fellows Building/1929

2906 University Avenue

Built in Mission Revival - Mediterranean architectural style and previously slip-covered.



**(25) Stevens Hartley
Building/1912**

2934-2936 University Avenue

First occupancy-drug store, opened on ground floor. Placed to take advantage of 1911 University Avenue streetcar line.



