

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
DIVISION OF LANDSCAPE DESIGN
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA
October 25, 1927

Kindly return
Report

Mrs. Helen B. Latimer,
642 Monterey Street,
San Luis Obispo, California.

My dear Mrs. Latimer:

Your kind favor of October 20th relative to the progress in the park project of San Luis Obispo is at hand. I am pleased to know that the Committee of the Monday Club is still hammering out the ways and means by which a park will ultimately be provided. Your cause is worthy, your desire is strong, and there is no reason why your dreams should not eventually be realized. I shall be pleased to do whatever I can to forward the work.

Permit me to quote some statements which may be incorporated in your resolutions. "If only the problem of bringing beauty to the city arose more often at the beginning of the city, the question of park location would be simplified. The great obstacle of expense would lose almost all of its effectiveness when land is cheap; and as for the park results, a consideration of the system in the first study of the ground plan would ensure the choosing of good sites."

You may readily assume in this statement that San Luis Obispo will eventually need more areas than the one small block that the Monday Club has considered, and rightly considered for park purposes. The proposed park may be considered a combination passing through and recreational center.

Every town in California is looking forward to the time when land reservations for park purposes is possible. Recently the small community of Davis of about 750 population expended \$1500.00 for a comprehensive community plan. The plan also included provision for zoning by which the use of property might be definitely fixed or at least somewhat controlled. Although the zoning program has been in effect but a short time, the people of the community are very much impressed with the satisfactory results.

"In the growth of taste", stated another writer, "no educator of the people has been more valuable than the parks. Their attractiveness is undoubtedly one of the causes of that everywhere increasing desire for more attractive home surroundings. A beautiful park may awaken the desire for an attractive home garden, and the wish for a beautiful home grows into the wish for a beautiful street." "Parks, playgrounds, and institutional construction present, perhaps, the most obviously aesthetic phase among the achievements of urban philanthropy. They are large accomplishments, and have a striking effect on the aspect of the town." Those desiring a beautiful community must make a beginning at some point, and usually a park designed with a definite purpose in mind makes for a realizable project.

*From Mrs. Barnesburg
Now glad to learn
that you are making
such good progress
H. B. Latimer*

It is the experience of larger communities and cities that the citizenry were unwise in putting off the reservation of areas to be utilized for park purposes until a time when increased valuation and definite private use prevented the acquisition of such areas. At the present time in California there is a growing interest in landscape development. From an advertising standpoint as well as a recreational and aesthetic standpoint these areas need no longer to be justified or their use need not be promoted, but they are found to be actually demanded by groups of citizens throughout our commonwealth. Citizens living on a common street today are petitioning for uniform planting of street trees.. People residing in a certain residential district are cooperating in extending the program of planting for their parkways. Subdividers and many real estate realtors are realizing the public demand for landscape development. Garden cities are everywhere becoming more and more established with both economic and satisfactory results. When a definite project has been submitted which is available and a practical program approved, the only thing which should stand in the way of its accomplishment may usually be publicity.

Personally I believe you should have a definitely drawn up plan outlining the program in as much detail as possible. A water color rendering framed and placed in some conspicuous place in the down-town district with a statement below might arouse some interest. This was the general method of getting the project started at Davis. For a year and a half the plan remained in the down-town bank. I do not approve of such an extension of time, however, because a plan becomes common-place during such a period of time.

You might excite the interest of school children, both in the elementary and high school, by offering a prize for the best name for such a proposed area. I believe I made this suggestion before. A program for the dedication of the area should be anticipated. A picture of the possible treatment of the band stand might be enlarged and placed on exhibit.

Unless you have something for people to look at, or something to suggest for the treatment of the area, I do not believe you will get very far with resolutions. Of course, the time that you expect to take in putting over the program is not known to me. I think I know your mental decision sufficiently to realize that you will not stop short of success. It is very difficult for me to suggest statements. I can only give you some vague suggestions, and call your attention to some things that have been accomplished in other communities.

Small and large communities alike in California are making progress along park and recreational lines. As you know recently a new park was dedicated in San Francisco, the John McLaren Park. Sacramento has large park areas some of which have not been developed to date. Turlock, Modesto, Merced, and several of the small interior valley towns have park and recreational areas. Lodi, a smaller city than San Luis Obispo, is now interested in the development of a park area. A little community in the northern part of the state, and supposed to be non-progressive, has recently considered a community plan for the purpose of directing the various city activities, namely Fort Bragg. Surely if towns like Davis and Fort Bragg, small rural

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For lumbering towns can foster an entire community project, the Monday Club of San Luis Obispo with the aid of other civic organizations may successfully foster the project of a community park square.

Here's wishing you success!

Very truly yours,

H. W. Shepherd

H. W. Shepherd,
Assistant Professor of Landscape Design.

HWS:FK