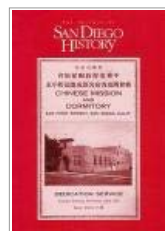


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RECLAMATION AND PRESERVATION

The San Diego Chinese Mission, 1927-1996

By [Leland Saito, Ph.D.](#)

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Marking the culmination of a decade of work by San Diego's Chinese American community, the Chinese Mission building, originally constructed in 1927, was officially dedicated on January 13, 1996, as a Chinese American museum and cultural center. Having been saved from its proposed demolition to make way for a high-rise luxury residential complex, the relocated Mission building would preserve a Chinese American physical and cultural presence in the core of the city's historic downtown area.

The history of the Mission and the contemporary effort to save it are a case study of the struggle over racial exclusion and inclusion in San Diego. A major theme is how individuals and groups organize to shape government policies to support their interests in the struggle to control urban space. One constant in United States history is that the local, state, and federal levels of government exert tremendous control over access to, and the usage of, urban territory.¹

The Mission account illustrates that although one of the major themes of race relations in the United States is one of exclusion, control, and containment, the story is more complex and contains movements aimed at both the segregation and integration of Asian immigrants and Asian Americans. Chinatowns, or the spatial clustering of commercial and residential usages by Chinese, are the result of racial ideology translated into institutional practices and physical place.² That is, Chinatowns reflect official and informal policies of segregation, Chinese understandings of local threats to their safety and the attempt to protect themselves against anti-Asian violence, and the development of services for the Chinese community.³ In terms of national boundaries, the federal government directly controls access to the United States through immigration policies and with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907, and the Immigration Act of 1924, greatly curtailed Asian immigration to the U.S. shortly before the Mission's construction. Within the United States, social, political, and geographical exclusion was enforced through federal policies which did not allow Asian immigrants to become naturalized citizens and local policies of residential segregation.⁴

Part of the Mission's story is the long history of Chinese efforts to contest policies of exclusion. Charles McClain's⁵ study of Chinese immigrants in the nineteenth century counters the traditional view of early Chinese immigrants and contemporary Chinese Americans as politically uninvolved, partly due to a lack of knowledge of the U.S. political and judicial systems. McClain's research demonstrates that Chinese actively resisted and contested policies of exclusion through the judicial system, demonstrating their knowledge of American institutions and active engagement in civil society. More broadly, the history of Asian immigrants and Asian Americans in general shows that they have actively contested discriminatory policies and negotiated the terms of their participation in American society on issues such as naturalization, residential segregation, employment discrimination, and immigration policy.⁶

Asian Americans in San Diego and the Chinese Mission Church

Historian Arthur McEvoy suggests that the small number of Chinese in San Diego and the lack of direct economic competition with whites muted somewhat the anti-Chinese activity in the city during the 1870s and 1880s, as compared to other parts of the West, where Chinese were beaten, driven out of towns, and killed.⁷ The early history of San Diego's Chinese and Japanese in fishing and agriculture indicates that Asians fared well when they entered occupations not yet claimed by whites; however, when whites began desiring such jobs, limitations or exclusion followed.

Early San Diego history suggests that Chinese, probably fishermen, lived by the Bay during the 1850s, similar to the development of Chinese fishing industries in San Francisco in the early 1850s and Monterey Bay in the early 1860s. Chinese developed commercial fishing in San Diego and exported dried fish to other parts of the state and to China. By 1870, they supplied all of the fresh fish in the city. Depending from Monterey in the north and to

part of the labor pool for railroad construction in San Diego and in the 1880s and 1890s, Chinese laborers were heavily recruited, bringing a new wave of migrants to the region. As their numbers grew, so did efforts by whites to control the employment of Chinese and in 1885 the Anti-Chinese Club was organized to "protest the hiring of Chinese as long as a white man was out of work." The group convinced the San Diego Water Company to replace its Chinese workers with whites.¹¹

The forces of segregation and business opportunities near the port led to the development of Chinatown within the downtown vice district, known as the Stingaree. In preparation for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition when the "eyes of the world would be on San Diego," San Diego officials followed the efforts of other California cities in the early 1900s and attempted to close bordellos.¹² The Health Department also removed 120 buildings that violated public health codes in the vice district and as the City Health Inspector, Walter Bellon, proclaimed, "The waterfront had been cleaned up, the Stingaree had been wiped out, Chinatown had almost disappeared."¹³

In terms of other early Asians and Pacific Islanders in San Diego, Richard Henry Dana, Jr., in his account of his sea journey in the 1830s, noted "quite a colony" of Hawaiians in the town, working as crewmen on the sailing vessels.¹⁴ Japanese came to San Diego in the mid-1880s as laborers, established farms in the early 1900s, and made Chula Vista, a city south of San Diego, into the "Celery Capital of the World." In the 1930s, however, Chula Vista was considered by Japanese around the state as the "heart of the anti-Japanese movement" because a number of Japanese were arrested "for violations of the California's Alien Land Laws."¹⁵ Conflict slowly decreased after Japanese and white farmers formed the San Diego Celery Growers Association.¹⁶ Japanese men were an important part of the tuna fishing industry, working as boat crew members and introducing the bamboo pole, refrigerated boats, and Japanese lures while Japanese women worked in the fish canneries.¹⁷ In a 1935 court case, Japanese won the right to obtain fishing licenses from the California Fish and Game Commission which had denied licenses to "aliens ineligible for citizenship."¹⁸

Both the Chinese and Japanese established business centers downtown, including stores, restaurants, and laundries. With their residential options limited by the efforts of whites to keep non-whites out of their neighborhoods, Chinese and Japanese residential communities were also concentrated downtown, as were African American and Mexican American neighborhoods.¹⁹ The first Filipino residents were college students who arrived in 1903. Their numbers increased to include farm workers and other laborers and their businesses were also concentrated downtown.²⁰ Increased residential options for minorities following World War II and the forces of suburbanization that led to the decline of the urban core contributed to the gradual disappearance of the urban ethnic enclaves. The exception was the Japanese American community, which the U.S. government removed and incarcerated during World War II.²¹

With the movement of Chinese into California, Christian churches in the state established Sunday Schools to teach Chinese immigrants English and religion as part of the effort to "Americanize" immigrants and integrate them into society. In San Diego, the Presbyterian and Baptist churches started Sunday schools for Chinese children in the 1870s.²² First established in a rented home in the downtown region in 1885, the Chinese Mission repeatedly changed locations until the present building was constructed in 1927, including an eighteen room dormitory in back. Located on First Avenue, between Market and G streets, its construction was funded by donations from Chinese American and white residents. In addition to language and religious instruction, the Chinese Mission became one of the main social centers for the Chinese American community. In 1959, with the growth of the Chinese American population and its movement to residential areas throughout the city, the church was sold and the final worship was held January 31, 1960. A new church was built at 1750 47th Street.²³

Redevelopment in San Diego and the Chinese Mission

Urban cores across the country experienced decline in the 1950s and 1960s as deindustrialization and suburbanization accelerated and residents, shoppers, and businesses increasingly favored the new suburban shopping malls, office buildings, and single-family homes.²⁴ In San Diego, responding to the area's business community, the mayor and city council established the Center City Development Corporation (CCDC) in 1975 as "a public nonprofit corporation charged with handling all redevelopment efforts in downtown San Diego. Its seven-member board of directors is made up of business and real estate professionals."²⁵ Gerald M. Trimble, Executive Vice President of the CCDC in 1984, summarized the opinion of city officials of downtown San Diego in the mid-twentieth century. Trimble stated, "If ever an urban core cried for change, it was downtown San Diego in the late 1960s and early 1970s. . . . Its tax base was deteriorated, its adult entertainment uses proliferated, most of its residents occupied single rooms in old hotels, its street people abounded, and its overall appearance south of Broadway was one of acute physical decline."²⁶ The city council's commitment to invest heavily in the urban core and revitalize business, entertainment, and tourist activities, began with the approval of the Horton Plaza Redevelopment Plan in 1972, aimed at developing large-scale commercial and office projects. Horton Plaza broke ground in 1982 and the first major phase opened in 1985.²⁷

In the early 1970s, however, although these projects were proposed with the intention of generating economic development downtown, what remained unclear was the exact form that such development would take and which areas would be included. Los Angeles, for example, abandoned its historic core and shifted new development to the west while other cities, such as San Francisco, worked to incorporate new high-rises within its historic fabric.²⁸ When it first opened, Horton Plaza was focused inward and sealed itself off from the immediate neighborhood. Shoppers could enter its massive parking lot, shop and eat, without setting foot outside the complex.

Property owners, such as Tom Hom, concerned with historic preservation and economic development in San Diego's aging downtown, formed the Gaslamp Quarter Association in the mid-1970s. Hom, as a former City Council member, possessed substantial knowledge of economic redevelopment policies and city politics. Hom served as the Gaslamp Quarter Association president for four years and assisted the effort to establish the Gaslamp Quarter Redevelopment Project, adopted by the city in 1982.²⁹ The opening of Horton Plaza, and its commercial success, marked the turnaround of the downtown area as new hotels, apartment buildings, condominiums, and office buildings were constructed. New businesses transformed the Gaslamp Quarter as restaurants, bars, art galleries, and other usages moved into the historic buildings. Although many buildings were renovated, others were threatened with destruction as developers sought to maximize their profits.

Dorothy Hom (wife of Tom Hom), motivated by her interest in studying and preserving the Gaslamp and historic Chinatown areas, worked to create the Chinese Historical Society of Greater San Diego and Baja California, which was chartered in 1986. The Homs spearheaded the effort to save the Mission and the Chinese Historical Society served as a vehicle to mobilize the Chinese American community. The effort began, according to Tom Hom, when Dorothy Hom learned from someone at the Historical Site Board that the Mission was going to be demolished, so she went to City Hall to see what could be done to save it.³⁰ Dorothy Hom explained, "Tom and I worked so hard with the Gaslamp, and here we were losing our own heritage. . . . So I got really involved."³¹

On March 7, 1986, the CCDC commissioned a study by Ray Brandes, a history professor at the University of San Diego and an authority on the city's history, to research and evaluate the historic significance of buildings associated with the Chinese community.³² The report, "Research and Analysis of Buildings Within the Marina Redevelopment Project area known to be connected with local Chinese history" (hereafter referred to as the "Brandes report"), was submitted in April 1986. Brandes "evaluated and rated structures with respect to the criteria which he considers most important in determining which structures would be most important to retain."³³

Brandes found few buildings worth saving and gave little support to the idea of a Chinese or Asian Historic District. He wrote that the results "make for a disappointing picture. . . . In general, time has taken its toll. Too few buildings remained after the city 'cleanup of 1912' and the effect of the destruction of residences and living quarters since that time has also taken away the few grocery stores or merchandise buildings which were Chinese-Japanese."³⁴ In a letter to CCDC containing his ratings, Brandes wrote that the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, Ying-On, Quin, and Quong buildings received high to medium scores (50, 48, 33, and 28 respectively), suggesting that preservation would be worth considering.

Brandes gave the Chinese Mission Building a score of 18 out of 50,³⁵ concluding that, "The Mission was closed some years ago and when no longer used was sold, and rehabbed. The current condition is not good; it does not fit within that architectural category of an Oriental structure, and the building is not in proximity to the Chinese District."³⁶ The Woo Chee Chong Building received the lowest score, four, of the structures surveyed.³⁷ Brandes stated that "Although it was for a number of years the most important location of the first Woo Chee Chong store, there is no desire to utilize the structure, even if it weren't in such miserable condition."³⁸ It had served as a store from 1899 to 1964 and was destroyed in a fire in 1989.³⁹

A strong protest arose among Chinese Americans and city historic preservation groups in response to the Brandes report and a number of letters were sent to CCDC. Frank Wong, president of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA), wrote about the long history of Chinese and other Asian groups in the downtown area, the need to preserve the buildings in recognition of that history, and the possible negative effects of redevelopment, stating that "We are deeply concerned[ed] that developers are interested only in the financial aspect of the development of the area without due regard to the local community."⁴⁰ David Seid, president of the House of China, pointed out that the study was conducted in a very short period of time and that there appeared to be a "lack of contact with community organizations and members for information," noting that "Only one Chinese is listed as being interviewed."⁴¹ Furthermore, Seid states, "a very serious flaw" with the criteria used by Brandes for evaluating the building, was "not considering the human loves, joys, tragedies of the people who lived in the buildings."⁴²

A CCDC meeting was held on June 16, 1986, to receive public input on the Brandes report and about fifty Chinese Americans attended and voiced their strong disagreement with the report's assessment of the buildings and the area's potential as a historic district. As Dorothy Hom pointed out, "That area really does represent our roots in America."⁴³ Winnie Chu, of the CCBA, stated that "Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago and New York all have a China Town. We think here (lower Third Avenue) is our China Town."⁴⁴ An important step was taken at the meeting when a community advisory committee was established to assist CCDC with the "research and evaluation effort" of the buildings.⁴⁵

In the weeks following the meeting, members of the Chinese American community continued to attend CCDC meetings, send letters to CCDC in regards to the Brandes report, and inform CCDC that Chinese American community groups intended to build new facilities in the area. Frank Wong submitted a letter at the June 27, 1986, CCDC board meeting stating that "It is our intent to develop senior citizen housing unit(s) along with ancillary supporting functions for senior citizens. Also within this complex, we will include construction of some commercial activities and preserving the existing cultural/historical buildings that reflected the heritage of the community. Our formal appearance today is to let the Board know of our intent and to ask the CCDC to 'reserve' the area for the local community rather than to have outside developers take over the area without regard to the community."⁴⁶ Along with the letter, the CCBA submitted petitions to CCDC on June 27, 1986, and July 7, 1986, with a total of 524 signatures, requesting that the city preserve and restore the buildings, including the Chinese Mission. As the petitions stated, "Redevelopment by the City should not allow a developer to destroy these historically significant structures where the people of Chinese background lived, worked, and worshipped."⁴⁷

On July 11, 1986, Tom Hom wrote, "I find that Dr. Brandes' report does not substantiate nearly enough as to how he had concluded that a number of the Chinese buildings are not significant enough to be classified of higher historical value. In judging historical significance he should have done more research with the Chinese community, people who were there fifty to seventy-five years ago in order to gain additional background, as to significance. From all indications, he did not do that ... I feel because of the time constraints CCDC gave him to get the report in, he was not able to do as complete a report that he is normally noted for doing."⁴⁸ Ron Buckley, secretary to the Historical Site Board, wrote in a July 11, 1986, letter to CCDC that he believed "that the historical significance, architectural integrity and the categories regarding Chinese community concern over demolition and the degree to which the original exterior remains intact are undervalued" for the Chinese Mission and two of the other low-rated buildings.⁴⁹

At the August 21, 1986, advisory committee meeting, CCDC agreed to commission an architectural and engineering study by the firm of Milford Wayne Donaldson to assess the general state of the buildings.⁵⁰ Released in November 1986, the report, "Historic Chinese Community Buildings Survey Analysis" (hereafter referred to as the "Donaldson report"), contrasted sharply with the Brandes report. The Donaldson report stated that "It is important to realize the collective historic value of these nine structures, particularly for the Chinese community. Most of the buildings are in good structural condition. It is our opinion that rehabilitation can be accomplished without major cost."⁵¹ The report also recommended that the buildings remain in place, with the exception of the Chinese Mission because the "site ... and its surrounding neighborhood, has not retained its historical character due to new development."⁵² In terms of the feasibility for rehabilitation, the report rated the Mission "Good," stating that the "building retains much of its original exterior historic fabric."⁵³

The effort by Chinese Americans and historic preservation groups to educate the members of the city commissions about the significance of the buildings related to the city's Asian American history, and the value of preservation, eventually succeeded. As Dorothy Hom stated, "When preservation is brought to their attention, the people on the City Council are very enthusiastic.... But they're so busy worrying about everything else before them that unless someone brings (preservation) to their attention, it goes by the wayside."⁵⁴

However, as the effort to save the Mission and create a historic district moved through CCDC, the Historical Site Board, and City Council, the owner of the Mission, Charles Tyson, fought against its preservation because he hoped to develop high-rise housing on the site. After a long process of negotiation among city officials, Tyson, historic preservation groups, and members of the Chinese American community, a compromise emerged and

the Mission was relocated and a historic district was established. Speaking about the process, Tom Hom remarked on the difficulty of getting across the importance of the Mission to non-Chinese, "Sometimes I think the agency [CCDC] loses sight of the fact that this structure is not just for the Chinese community but for all of San Diego.... It's going to be a museum to share the heritage of a people that were here in the early stages of the city's history."⁵⁵

A historic district and the preservation of buildings contributed directly to CCDC efforts to revitalize downtown San Diego, providing another reason for the success of the Chinese American community efforts. As the Asian Pacific Thematic Historic District (APTHD) Master Plan states, "By recognizing the historically significant buildings and heritage of this district, they contribute ... to a continued redevelopment of the downtown area.... This in turn will lead to opportunities for a destination for visitors and tourists seeking the rich architectural and cultural heritage of San Diego's past.... This Master Plan recognizes the proximity of San Diego as a Pacific Rim city and the opportunity to revitalize the historic Asian Pacific District as a visitor and business destination with cultural ties to other Pacific Rim nations and cities."⁵⁶

CCDC reviewed and approved the establishment of a Chinese/Asian Thematic Historic District on February 20, July 17, and August 27, 1987. Similarly, the Historical Site Board discussed and approved the establishment of the District on April 29 and May 27, 1987.⁵⁷ At the February 20 CCDC meeting, two members of the city Historical Site Board spoke in favor of the historic nomination, pointing out that the buildings were all that remained of the once thriving downtown Chinese community. Carol Lindemulder stated that "I believe that today you are being asked to make a commitment for the very last of the Chinese heritage," and Ron Buckley noted that "These are the last remaining vestiges of Chinese culture, history and architecture in downtown San Diego."⁵⁸ A former pastor of the Chinese Community Church, Harold Jow, spoke to support the district, stating to the Site Board on April 29, 1987, that "The Chinese people have contributed a lot to the growth of the West, the railroad, mining and agriculture.... We hope that one day that history will be written. Meanwhile, it is imperative that we save these remaining structures in Chinatown to testify to that history."⁵⁹

Marie Burke Lia was the CCDC special counsel dealing with historic preservation.⁶⁰ She supported the findings of the Brandes report on the condition and historic value of the buildings and advised against establishing a historic district. Lia stated that "I believe the non-contributing [non-historic] buildings would outweigh the contributing buildings" and based on the San Diego Historical Site Board criteria, she suggested that "probably only the Benevolent and the Ying On buildings would qualify, but since both are already protected by the Historical Site Board listing and...procedures, there appears to be no practical reason to pursue a local historical district."⁶¹

Charles Tyson, owner of the Mission, planned to demolish the building and construct a high-rise residential project on the property. In a May 20, 1987, letter to the Historical Site board, Maria Burke Lia, now representing Tyson, wrote "to express the strong objections of the owners of ... the former Chinese Mission building, to its designation as part of the proposed Chinese/Asian Thematic Historic District."⁶² Tyson explained, "While I respect and understand the sentimental attachment members of the Chinese Community Church have for their former home, the property today bears no resemblance to what it was twenty-eight years ago when they vacated it. Nothing is left that is reminiscent of their use. The building is a vandalized shell, the condition of which fails to do justice to the integrity of the congregation's history. I understand and admire the importance of local history to the San Diego Chinese community, but I respectfully submit that San Diego's Chinese history is not honored by the property today."⁶³ In a discussion two months later on whether or not the building should be on the local and National Register of Historic Places, Tyson argued that "This is not even the original (Chinese Community Church Building). It was built in the 1920s. I find it difficult to understand the passions that seem to go beyond common sense here."⁶⁴ In response, Ron Buckley, Secretary of the City of San Diego Historical Site Board, stated that "For them (Tyson and Lia) to say it's not significant is to deny its history."⁶⁵

At the August 7, 1987, CCDC meeting, Tom Hom, speaking as the representative of the Chinese Community Church, stated their preference for incorporating the Chinese Mission Church, or its façade, into Tyson's proposed residential project. Plans developed by architect Milford Wayne Donaldson showed how this could be accomplished. Hom stated in approval that "It gives a real uniqueness and I see no reason why it can't be done."⁶⁶ Kristen Aliotti, a member of the San Diego Save our Heritage Organization (SOHO), also supported the idea, stating that "preservation is economically viable to a community," and that "Mr. Donaldson's drawings incorporating the Mission give the project a more public feeling and would attract more people."⁶⁷ Dorothy Hom also spoke in favor of keeping the Mission in place and suggested that the CCDC Board "direct the architect to find a way to incorporate the building."⁶⁸ Tyson rejected this idea as unfeasible because of the added costs and design problems. Gerald M. Trimble, CCDC Chief Executive, voicing his judgment on the topic, suggested that "The appearance of it might be crazy."⁶⁹ Although Tyson had applied for a demolition permit in February 1987, he offered to delay demolition so that a different site for the Mission could be found.⁷⁰

The CCDC board voted on August 7, 1987, to "not designate the Chinese Mission Building as part of the Chinese/Asian Thematic Historic District," to "authorize the Corporation [CCDC] to explore moving the entire structure to another site," and "not approve the issuance of a demolition permit for a reasonable period of time."⁷¹ Hom favored keeping the building in place, explaining "If you move London Bridge to a big lake in Arizona, it's not London Bridge anymore. If you move the mission building elsewhere, the echoes of history don't ring as true." Hom stated, however, that "if there's no other alternative we'll have to go along with it."⁷² In contrast, the chair of CCDC, John Davies, suggested that "The preservation purists don't like to move historical buildings, but I think it would be an improvement moving it closer to the other sites."⁷³

Finalizing the recommendations of the CCDC and Historical Site Board, the San Diego City Council voted to establish a Chinese/Asian thematic district on October 13, 1987. The Council also designated for the local Historic Register twenty buildings associated with the Asian American community but a decision on the status of the Chinese Mission was continued to the November 10, 1987, meeting. At that meeting, the Council, mirroring the actions of the CCDC Board, did not designate the Mission to the local or national historic registers, denied the "issuance of demolition permits for the Chinese Mission ... for a reasonable period of time," and referred the matter "back to the Corporation to explore alternatives for reconstructing the buildings elsewhere within the Chinese/Asian Thematic District."⁷⁴ Four months later, the Council approved a resolution dated March 22, 1988, designating the Chinese Mission to the local historic register with the understanding that the Mission would be moved to the Chinese/Asian Thematic Historic District.⁷⁵

The CCDC issued a Request for Proposals for the Relocation/Reconstruction and Reuse of the Chinese Mission Building on December 2, 1987, noting that Tyson was "willing to pay for dismantling, storage, and donation of the Mission building."⁷⁶ Two proposals were submitted, one by Tom Hom on behalf of the Chinese Historical Society with the goal of moving the Mission to the Historic District and transforming it into a museum and cultural center.⁷⁷ Developer Dan Pearson also submitted a proposal, with a plan to reconstruct the Mission as part of the planned Horton Grand Hotel in the

Historic District, but he had stated earlier that he would defer to the plans of the Chinese community. Pearson explained, "I'm not fighting them (the Chinese community). If they can come up with a better proposal, I'll back off. I think they'll give it a real try. Tom Hom ... is a close personal friend of mine and I'll do anything I can for the group."⁷⁸

The Historical Site Board continued its support for keeping the Mission at its original location, explaining in a February 12, 1988, report that in regards to the Pearson proposal, "Most disturbing is the impression that is given that historic buildings are portable and that by preserving the facades and concentrating them 'in the Chinese District' that the goals of historic preservation are met. Preservation 'on-site,' in an original context, is always the preferred solution for historic preservation."⁷⁹ If relocation could not be avoided, the Site Board favored the Chinese Historical Society Proposal because it "is more sensitive to the historic, architectural, and cultural significance of the resource. It places the Mission in a location where the structure stands on its own as a separate entity not a part of a larger, more complex development."⁸⁰ CCDC also favored the Chinese Historical Society Proposal, even though the proposal requested funds from the city, such as assistance in purchasing a site, not requested by the Pearson proposal.⁸¹ The Chinese Historical Society Proposal was approved by the City Redevelopment Agency on April 12, 1988.⁸²

The Chinese Historical Society chose the northeast corner of Third Avenue and J Street as its preferred site for the Mission. The location was within the boundaries of the old Chinatown and was near existing and planned Chinese structures. The city agreed to acquire the property and lease it to the Chinese Historical Society for \$1.00 per year for 55 years. CCDC estimated that it would spend "\$325,000 for land acquisition, \$50,000 for administration and relocation, and \$61,000 for off-site public improvements."⁸³ Wayne Donaldson had examined the original building plans and found an addendum indicating that it "had been structurally reinforced when it was constructed in 1927. Field testing of portions of the walls and inspection by several structural engineers confirmed that the building could be safely moved rather than dismantled."⁸⁴

The Mission was moved August 17, 1988, and placed temporarily at 428 Third Avenue. The Daily Transcript remarked, "Newsworthy about the move was how smooth it went. Not a brick came loose from the 1927-built structure."⁸⁵ Charles Tyson, working with Dorothy and Tom Hom, donated the \$40,000 cost to move the structure.⁸⁶

To formalize the fundraising, moving, and restoration efforts of the Mission, Alexander Chuang organized the Historical Museum Planning and Management Committee in 1992 and approximately \$460,000 was raised.⁸⁷ The Mission was moved to its permanent location on March 7, 1995 and the official dedication ceremony was held in January 1996.⁸⁸

In conclusion, the Chinese American effort to save the Mission and create a historic district, reestablished their physical, cultural, and economic presence downtown. They succeeded for a number of reasons. Their plans coincided with CCDC's effort to revitalize downtown and turn it into a commercial and entertainment center. As the APTHD Master Plan recognized, San Diego was the only major city in the "western United States that [did] not have a thriving Historic Asian District."⁸⁹ In other words, in contemporary San Diego, a "Chinatown" was appreciated as a positive element that would contribute to the ambience of the area, unlike the period of the Panama-California Exposition when "Chinatown" was synonymous with "slum." In addition, the team of Dorothy and Tom Hom provided knowledge of the political and redevelopment process so that the Chinese American community could effectively mobilize and utilize their considerable financial and organizational resources.

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