

# PROPOSED "ZOO" FOR THE MISSION.

## Tract Offered and Plans Drawn.

### TOPOGRAPHY AND FEATURES.

#### REPORT OF HANSEN, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT.

##### Baldwin & Howell Outline the Advantages of the Site for Park Purposes.

Baldwin & Howell have offered to the city a tract of about 145 acres for a park and zoological garden at the Mission. The land extends from Thirtieth street to Sunny Side and from Stanford Heights to the Fairmount tract.

In offering this tract to the city they base their claims for preference over other properties upon the following grounds:

"First—That its location is such as to commend it for the reason that it is accessible and can be easily reached by the present system of steam and electric roads.

"Second—That it is easy of access by present graded and well traveled roads, and that other avenues of approach are feasible and can be constructed with little expense.

"Third—That it commands the outlet from the Mission district to Golden Gate Park and Balboa boulevard and that a beautiful driveway can be constructed through it connecting these points with a comparatively small outlay of money.

"Fourth—That the property by reason of its topography is peculiarly adaptable for a park and zoological garden.

"Fifth—That there are a number of springs at different elevations on the tract, and that a water supply can be obtained with little or no expense, the value of which to the city can be reasonably estimated at between \$500 and \$600 per month.

"Sixth—That the price placed upon the property is fair and reasonable. In this connection the only exception we make is the five (5) acre tract in the southeasterly corner of the property known as the 'Gum Tree Grove,' the lowest price which we have been able to induce the owners to accept for this property being \$25,000. As stated in our written offer, however, the city will be given a two-year option on this land, and if the price appears unreasonable the property can be condemned, or if a right of way is required through it such can be obtained by condemnation."

Accompanying the offer is a report from George Hansen, the landscape architect, who drew up the plans. It is as follows:

"Office of George Hansen, landscape architect, Berkeley, Cal., July 6, 1897. Messrs. Baldwin & Howell, 10 Montgomery street, San Francisco—Gentlemen: Having completed the plan of the proposed Park and Zoological Garden, I hand you the map, upon which I have carefully located the paths and drives, lakes, paddocks for animals, children's playground, etc. I have thoroughly examined every acre of the tract and have located the houses, cages and inclosures with due regard to the convenience of visitors, topography of the land and habits and temperaments of the birds and animals.

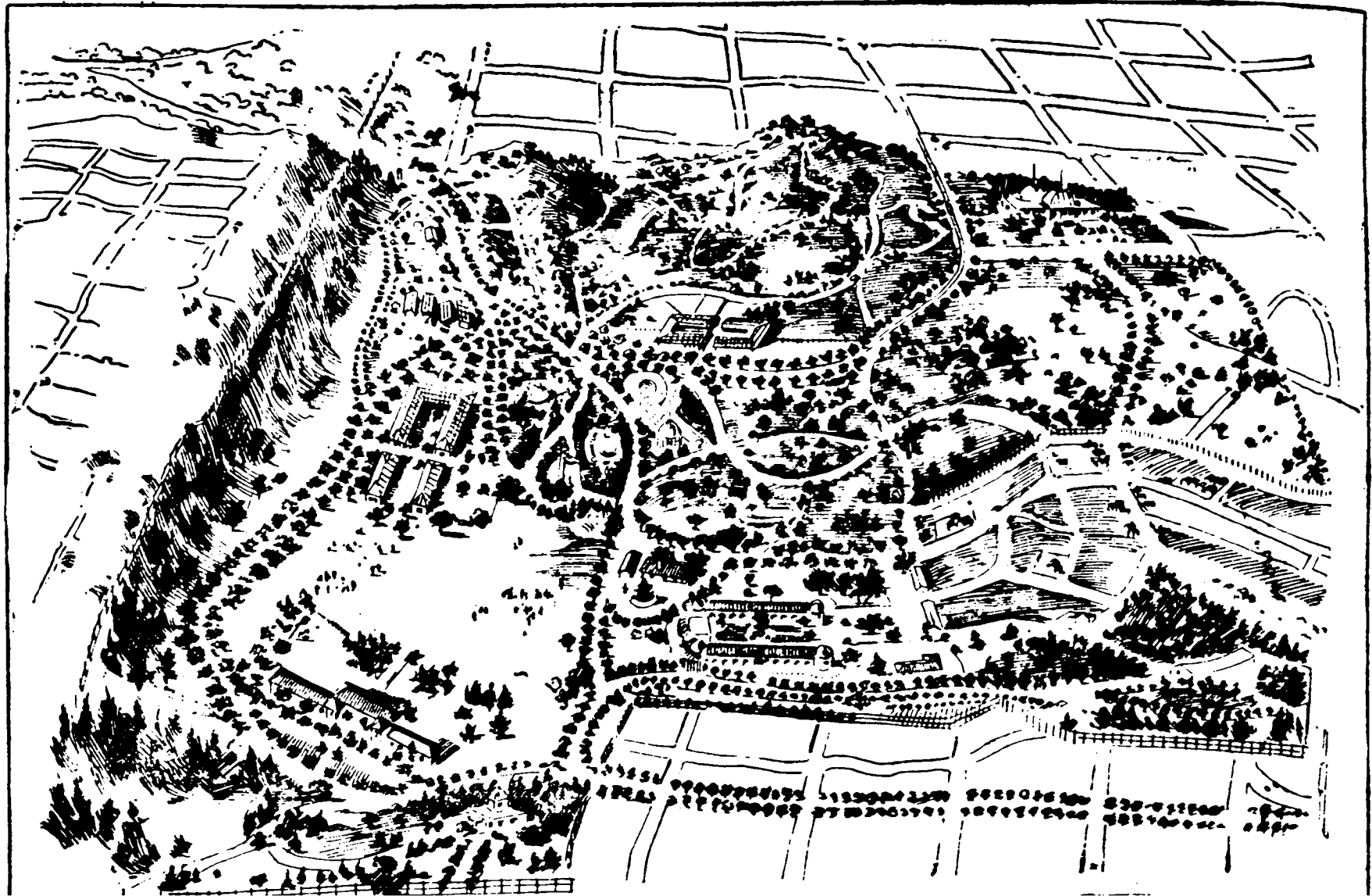
#### Location.

"My plan provides for a Park of about one hundred and forty-five (145) acres. I have also laid out on the map the floor plan and grounds surrounding the proposed site for an art gallery and museum, for the Zoological Society, at Diamond and Thirty-first streets. This, however, I understand, is outside of the tract which you proposed for the Park, and consists of two blocks of about eight acres in area.

"The boundaries of the proposed Park property may, in a general way, be described as follows: From Thirtieth street to Sunny Side and from Stanford Heights to the Fairmount tract.

#### Accessibility.

"The San Francisco and San Mateo Electric road passes the southeasterly corner of the property. The electric road on Twenty-ninth street could be extended at a comparatively small expense by means of an auxiliary cable to overcome the grade up Twenty-ninth street to Diamond, and from thence along Diamond street into the proposed Park. The cable road which now terminates at Castro and Twenty-sixth streets could be extended up Twenty-sixth street to Diamond street and out this street into the Park, terminating at the same place as the electric road. While the extension of these two roads into the property would be a valuable franchise to the Market-street Railway, it would, nevertheless, be a great convenience, and passengers over this system would be landed at a high elevation of the Park, from which a superb view of the same would be obtained, and, in addition to this, they would be enabled to inspect the attractions of the higher portions of the Park.



Birdseye View of Proposed Mission Park and Zoological Garden.

(From plans and drawings submitted by Baldwin & Howell.)

and afterward walk to the lower grounds.

"As soon as the patronage justifies it the Southern Pacific Company will, no doubt, establish a depot somewhere in the vicinity of Berkshire street, on its steam line, which point will be only a few hundred feet from one of the entrances to the Park.

"While the property is now comparatively easy of access for vehicles, several avenues of approach should be arranged from Mission street, which can be done with little trouble and at comparatively small expense. One driveway can be made by extending Bosworth street, thus forming a connection with Berkshire street, tunneling under the track and through the right of way of the Southern Pacific Company. A petition, I am informed, has already been filed with the Board of Supervisors by a number of property-owners asking that this be done. Another safe and convenient means of approach would be by a bridge over the Southern Pacific track at the intersection of Miguel street, in the Fairmount tract, and Thirty-fourth street, in the French & Gilman tract.

"One of the most attractive features connected with this property and its proposed system of avenues is the fact that a driveway through the canyon in the westerly part of the tract can be constructed at a very small expense. The grade of this roadway will be very slight from the San Jose road to the northwesterly corner of the proposed park. This avenue will connect at this point with Glen avenue, in the Stanford Heights Addition, and will from there on follow the streets and avenues in this addition along easy grades to the Corbett road intersecting at this point with the Althouse road, and thus constituting a most picturesque driveway from the Mission district to the park, over comfortable grades, by a direct and short route. This avenue may, in fact, be termed a branch of the Balboa boulevard, and as soon as it is completed it will be recognized as one of the most enjoyable drives within the city limits.

"This tract lies nearly all within sight of the Southern Pacific Railroad. When beautified and improved it will present a most conspicuous and pleasing spectacle to strangers approaching the city over this route.

#### Topography.

"It would be a difficult matter to find anywhere a tract of the same area presenting so many natural advantages as this one for park and zoological purposes. Accessibility, climate, soil, water and a diversified landscape are features so apparent to any one who makes an examination of the property that its selection for a new pleasure ground in the Mission ought to be assured, if merit is to be the basis of competition.

"The topography of this property may be described as follows: A high hill, the summit of which is about 600 feet above the city base, rises, sentinel-like, at the extreme northern boundary of the tract. This may be reached by footpaths, which can be constructed on comparatively easy grades. The view from the top of the hill is well worth the exertion of reaching it. The ocean may be seen at the southwest, the San Bruno hills and valley to the southeast, the city on the north and east. The beautiful bay of San Francisco appears almost at the base of the hill, and stretches as far north and south as the

eye can see. In the distance, plainly visible, are Oakland, Berkeley, Alameda, Sausalito, with the Contra Costa range, Mount Diablo and Tamalpais in the background.

"The slope of this hill is toward the south—a warm, sunny exposure—and, while its sides may be steep and abrupt in places, there are, nevertheless, many available plateaus upon which may be located cages and houses for animals, lakes for water fowl, casinos, rustic pavilions and resting places, from which may be obtained charming views of what can be made at a comparatively small expense the most unique and picturesque zoological garden in the world.

"At the southern end of the tract is another hill, much lower, however, than the one at the north, sloping gradually to the valley below. Immediately to the west rises abruptly a high ridge of hills, which protects the lower part of the land and constitutes a bulwark against the prevailing winds of the summer season. The lower portion of this property is therefore surrounded by hills and is a most beautiful valley—a natural amphitheater—narrowing to a wild and picturesque canyon as you approach toward the north. Through this canyon and valley flows Islais creek, filled by rains in the spring and winter and fed by perennial springs. The water is naturally low in the summer time, but a measurement of it now flowing over the small dam recently constructed shows that between 25,000 and 40,000 gallons every twenty-four hours are running to waste. Therefore, by constructing a higher dam the creek can be kept nearly full all the year.

#### Water.

"This property has an especial value, owing to the number of springs on it from which can be obtained, without great outlay, a supply of water almost sufficient to serve the purposes of the proposed park. In this regard, information and from an investigation of the supply, I am disposed to think that there are between 2,500,000 and 3,000,000 gallons of water a month now available. This amount can, unquestionably, be increased by developing the springs. When it is considered that this amount of water means a saving to the city of between \$500 and \$600 a month, as against the expense of water which are without a water supply the additional value which this land has may be readily appreciated.

"One of the best springs on the tract is in the extreme northwesterly corner, and is at a sufficiently high elevation to afford a supply with an excellent pressure for the lower and intermediate portions of the proposed park. The water from this spring can be piped to a lake or reservoir about half way to the summit and the valley, from which the overflow can be utilized for other lakes and for irrigation purposes on the places below it. Water will not be required for the higher portions of the property, nor on the steepest hillsides, as the plan which I have prepared contemplates that the most rugged portions of the tract will be set apart in large fields or paddocks for the use of deer, elk, buffalo, moose, mountain goat and bear. In these inclosures groups of trees and shrubs should be planted, but they will require water only for the first year or so.

#### Soil.

"The fact that the trees and shrubs planted on this tract within the past six months have made such a remarkable growth is evidence that it will require but few years to clothe the hillsides and every space where foliage is necessary in a manner that will both beautify and protect the property. The soil in the valley, the canyon and all the lower portions of the tract, and, in fact, on many of the plateaus, is a deep sediment, upon which grass, flowers, trees and shrubs can be quickly grown and easily maintained. Even on the rocky places the trees planted within the past six months show a growth which is strong, and conclusively demonstrates the adaptability of the soil for the growth of such species of trees and shrubs as may be required.

"At this time of the year the hills are parthened and brown, and one finds it difficult to appreciate the fertility of the soil and the beauty of the landscape, unless it has been seen and studied, as it has by me, in the winter and spring, when the hillsides are clothed in verdure and covered with wild flowers.

#### Roads and Paths.

"The driveways and paths have been arranged with due regard to the contour of the property and the roads, with the exception of Diamond street, have so small a percentage of grade that, in the eye, they will appear, when built, almost level. The main avenue, sixty feet in width, as will be seen by referring to the map, extends through the canyon and follows, on almost a perfect grade, the contour of the ground, until it connects with Sussex street, in the Castro-street Addition. It is proposed to construct another driveway from the Berkshire-street entrance, following along the slope of the hills to the south and west and connecting with the main avenue at a point about half way up the canyon. This leaves a space between the two roads clear and makes it par-

ticularly desirable for a recreation and playground for children.

"The location of the driveways will, I am sure, find favor with the public, as they are sufficiently above the amphitheater to enable those in carriages to obtain a good view of the grounds. Another roadway is formed by extending Diamond street. The grade of this avenue is somewhat steep at one point, but if the street designed for the extension of the Market-street Railway lines is used a grade of not more than 8 per cent will be encountered.

"The approach to the Park through the 'Gum Tree' grove should be reserved for pedestrians exclusively, as it will be at this point that the San Mateo electric road will take on and deliver passengers bound to and from the Park, and it will be but a short while before the car lines will find themselves taxed in handling the crowds that will visit the 'zoo.' This entrance, therefore, will be a busy place, and it should be as far as possible free from danger of passing vehicles.

"In this connection I recommend that, as soon as practicable, that portion of the San Jose road which now runs through the 'Gum Tree' grove be closed. Before this is done I would suggest that it should be extended in a straight line by constructing a brick or stone culvert across Islais creek and then filling the street up to an even grade. The San Mateo electric road should be willing to co-operate in this plan, as it would mean the abandonment of the trestle now in use by this company. For the corresponding benefits and expense of this work would be but nominal.

"It is gratifying to know that the struggle against nature, experienced in bringing Golden Gate Park to the perfection it now enjoys will not have to be repeated on this property. No costly outlay for loam and fertilizers will be necessary. The soil, as already stated, is rich and, with cultivation, the establishing of windbreaks, groups of shade and avenue trees and palms, and clusters of shrubbery, will be but a matter of a very few years.

"The arrangement for distribution of the beautiful plantation is indicated upon the map, and the selection of the proper varieties of trees and shrubs is a matter of detail easy for a practical landscape gardener to determine. Of laws but little will be required, the space devoted to the children's playground being the only large area necessary to be improved. Small grass plots will naturally be provided in other parts of the park, and borders of grass and flowers along some of the paths and drives will add to the beauty of the landscape. The high ground in the southwesterly portion of the property should be thickly planted with trees and a sufficient quantity of evergreens placed there to furnish shade and shelter in all seasons.

"This part of the Park has been designed especially for families who wish to picnic there, and in planting the forest the purpose for which it is intended should be kept in view. Most of the remainder of the tract is arranged in paddocks and other inclosures for birds and animals. These spaces should have some small groups of shrubs and trees placed within them, as already stated, which may be protected by wire fences from any damage from animals.

#### Buildings, Paddocks, Etc.

"I know of no other place in the world where a zoological garden can be established and maintained at so small an expense as in San Francisco. In other cities which have zoological gardens it is necessary to provide summer and winter quarters for the animals. This means expensive buildings and a heavy outlay for fuel in cold weather. In San Francisco a strong fence and open iron-bar cages, with inexpensive places for shelter during rainy weather, will serve the purpose. A casual glance at the map which I have prepared may suggest the necessity of expending a large amount of money in buildings. Such, however, is not contemplated. For the convenience of visitors, and especially for the comfort of elderly people who feel the fatigue of walking, I think there should be constructed one large building containing perhaps sixty cages.

"An appropriate and inexpensive plan for such a building would be a quadrangle in the old Mission style of architecture. The arcade should be wide enough to form a comfortable promenade and still leave room for benches near the arches. The court should be made attractive, with, perhaps, a fountain and an abundance of tropical plants, ferns and flowers. Would not a collection of animals housed in such a menagerie form an attraction which our own people would enjoy and visitors would appreciate and talk about when they return to their homes in distant places? The place I have selected for this building is in the southeasterly part of the property and within a short distance of a car line. The other homes for animals are very inexpensive affairs, and, as already stated, may be constructed almost entirely of wire.

"Monkeys require careful handling, and their home must be made secure against wind and rain. The aviary also will require protection from the side most exposed to the wind. A house

for the elephants, rhinoceros, hippopotami is provided for, with inclosures extending down to the creek. The other spaces or fields are for deer, elk, moose, mountain goats, tropical ruminants, burrowing rodents, flying cages for eagles, reptile house, aquarium, lakes for water fowl and sea-lions, all respectively designated on the map and located, as I have stated, with due regard to the habits of the animals, the convenience of the visitors and the topography of the land.

#### Conclusion.

"In concluding my report, I do so with a feeling that you are to be congratulated upon having so desirable a tract of land to offer, and the city is to be likewise congratulated upon the opportunity which presents itself at this time to secure so large a property close to the center of population and so accessible from all sides.

"The value of such an attraction as a zoological garden to a city has been so fully discussed and so intelligently demonstrated by the press of San Francisco that it is not necessary for me to repeat it. Many of the American, and nearly all of the European, cities take an especial pride in their 'zoos.' San Francisco can have the most interesting one in the world at the small outlay, and the time is certainly ripe to start it.

"In this connection it is to be hoped that the proposed park will be placed under the control of a zoological society. This is the case in Philadelphia and Cincinnati, and in New York the largest garden in the world—261 acres in area—is now being established under the auspices of a society. In European cities zoological societies manage the gardens as follows: At London, Dublin, Bristol, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Antwerp, Berlin, Hamburg, Vienna and St. Petersburg.

"A local organization, with Professor David Starr Jordan at its head, is already interesting itself in the proposed 'zoo,' and I am informed that capitalists and scientists are ready to lend their aid if the city will do its share. In the interest of its people and the State, I wish, therefore, to unite with the thousands of others in their petitions to the city officials, and pray that this attraction for the city will be provided. Respectfully submitted,

GEORGE HANSEN,

Landscape Architect and Engineer."