

## C. GLEASON PARK

Gleason Park was named in honor of Stockton's first female member of the City Council, Edna Gleason (nee Capurro). Appointed in 1951 to serve out the remaining two year term of a Councilman who had resigned, she was a tireless champion for her district. Mrs. Gleason died on September 25, 1963.

The Gleason Park neighborhood is principally a residential area south of the Central Business District which began to be developed as early as the 1860s. Residences in the Magnolia neighborhood, which developed to the north of the downtown business district at about the same time, were of a more ornate and substantial character. Gleason Park might be considered a working-class neighborhood from its start, providing housing for workers at the near-by Holt Manufacturing Company. Single-family residences of wood frame construction were the first improvements built, with the principal period of significance beginning during the 1890s to the beginning of World War I which is reflected in the Queen Anne Cottages prevalent in the area. The majority of the dwellings have horizontal shiplap or tongue and groove siding; many with elevated basements. Set-backs were minimal and landscaping was basic.

Built by local contractors, these modest homes often were erected in rows of identical designs, particularly notable on the 500 block of South American Street. This brought a continuity of design and materials to entire blocks.

Part of the Gleason Park neighborhood became intensely populated by the City's Asian groups. Little Manila occupied the blocks surrounding the intersection of El Dorado and Lafayette Streets. Numerous Japanese and Chinese businesses and rooming houses were established in this part of town since Asian groups were discouraged from living north of Main Street by local custom and prejudice. A number of multi-family dwellings were built just after World War I and the area was the site for numerous single room occupancy hotels, mainly built of unre-enforced masonry, meant to serve the population of single male laborers predominate the neighborhood, as well as small businesses who served the neighborhood's needs for goods and services. Structures in this neighborhood rarely exceeded three stories.

A couple of notable surviving examples of masonry construction in the Gleason Park neighborhood are the Salvation Army Citadel (today Quan Ying Apts.) built in 1912 and the Woodman of the World Lodge Hall (today Chinese Benevolent Assn.) built in 1914, both designed by local architect Walter L. King.

A subsequent construction boom occurred in the 1920s and 1930s, some using Art Deco and Moderne motifs such as the Rizal Social Club at 138 E. Lafayette Street.

The Gleason Park neighborhood was significantly impacted by the construction of the Crosstown Freeway in the 1970s which literally

established a sort of Mason-Dixon line between Gleason Park and Stockton's downtown. As recently as 2001, the bulk of the Gleason Park area was determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a Historic District.

Character defining elements include raised single-story, wood frame construction featuring low-pitched gable roofs, slanted bay windows, decorated gable ends employing shaped, bandsawn shingles, ornate wooden spandrels, pilasters and balustrades on small front porches reached by low flights of wooden stairs. Driveways are later additions to most lots and garages are detached and set back from the street.



*Photos provided by Leslie Crow, Historian*