

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Balboa Park Carousel Designated Historical Resource**

**SAN DIEGO (December 2, 2021)** — The City of San Diego’s Historical Resources Board has unanimously voted to designate the Balboa Park Carousel and adjacent Kiddie Ride as Historical Resources. Currently operated by Forever Balboa Park, the Balboa Park Carousel has been ridden and enjoyed by countless San Diego residents and park visitors since it was first installed in Balboa Park nearly a century ago.

In a rare move, the city’s Historical Resources Board approved the historical designation under three of six possible criteria: Criterion A: “special element of the City’s historical development”; Criterion C: “excellent example of Golden Age Menagerie Style Carousel”; and Criterion F: “contributing resource to the Balboa Park Historic District.” The research and application for the designation were prepared by Heritage Architecture & Planning under the direction of David Marshall, AIA, and Forever Balboa Park board member. Al and Kathleen Steele generously funded the research report and application process.

“Everyone loves this carousel, but most don’t realize how rare and unique it is. Carousels of this vintage are rarely in such good condition with their original animals, murals, ring game, organ, and even motor from 1910,” said David Marshall. “Historic designation means that the city formally recognizes the carousel as a landmark that must be protected and preserved.”

Currently located near the San Diego Zoo entrance at 1889 Zoo Place, the Balboa Park Carousel was constructed in 1910 during the golden age of carousels (c.1880–1920) by the Herschell-Spillman Company of North Tonawanda, New York. It was first located at Luna Park in Los Angeles before being purchased and moved to Coronado’s Tent City in 1913. The carousel was relocated to Balboa Park in 1922 and the Kiddie Ride was introduced in the early 1950s.

The Balboa Park Carousel is a classic wood carousel of the menagerie type, featuring 23 original hand-painted horse figures and four miniature horses, along with two dozen other animals, a sea monster, and four chariots. The scenic center panels and outer ring of decorative panels are also hand-painted originals and represent various pastoral and natural scenes. The vintage military band organ at its center completes the authentic turn-of-the-century carousel experience. The building enclosing the Balboa Park Carousel is also historic, which is itself a rarity, as many historic

carousels that have survived over the years have been moved inside modern structures.

Since acquiring the Carousel in 2017, Forever Balboa Park, formerly Friends of Balboa Park, has made significant progress toward restoring the Balboa Park Carousel to its original glory. This would not have been possible without the help of the project's lead donor Dorothea Laub, the generous funding from local private donors and foundations, and the expertise of the carousel's longtime manager, Bill Brown.

### **Forever Balboa Park**

Forever Balboa Park is the City of San Diego's partner in advocating for the greater good of Balboa Park. Its focus is to sustain the park's legacy, enhance its many assets, and collaborate with park stakeholders to envision and execute future plans to benefit both residents and visitors for decades to come. It brings valued resources to the park as a convener and organizer, raising funds and cultivating volunteers to realize and activate projects, programs, and services for the best interests of the park and the greater San Diego community.

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