

Real Estate Report

By Manny Cruz

Downtown Landscape Architects Dig The North Park And South Park Scene

McCullough staff appreciates the local community style and history



Catherine McCullough (foreground), president and CEO of McCullough Landscape Architecture, is shown with other members of the company: from left, Teresa DeLeon, office manager; Joniene Swick, marketing coordinator; Jennifer Sabo Spencer, project landscape architect; David Solmes, project manager; David McCullough, Catherine's husband and firm principal; and Marco Luna, professional staff.

The offices of McCullough Landscape Architecture are in the Brunswig Building in Downtown's Gaslamp Quarter, but when the day ends, most of the staff go home to the same neighborhoods.

Catherine and David McCullough, the firm's principals, live in North Park, as does newly hired marketing coordinator Joniene Swick. David Solmes, the project manager, and landscape architect Jennifer Sabo Spencer live in South Park.

"It's all coincidental," says Catherine McCullough, president and chief executive officer. "When we interviewed people for jobs we certainly didn't ask them where they lived."

She surmises that her employees, like she and her husband and other design professionals, are drawn to the neighborhoods because of their appreciation for their architectural styles and efforts at historical preservation.

"I personally choose North Park because I love its diversity," says Swick, who holds a bachelor's degree in communication from SDSU. "I find that it is one of the most diverse communities in San Diego. The people as well as the businesses reflect it. I love the small, family-owned stores as well as the unique architecture of the bungalow houses. It's a great mixture of city life along with community, history and future development. The central location of North Park is easy. I can hop in the car, in a cab or bus and get to my location within 15 minutes."

Swick has held marketing and public relations positions with San Diego Distinctive Homes, the San Diego Film Festival and the American Lung Association. After leaving Distinctive Homes, she attended Harvard University's Career Discovery Program and received a certificate of landscape architecture from the Graduate School of Design.

The McCulloughs purchased a house on Mississippi Street in 1998. David McCullough, who had been with Ivy Landscape Architects, subsequently began a landscape consulting business out of the home and, in 2000, moved the business to the third floor of the Brunswig Building on Fifth Avenue. Catherine joined the firm in 2001. She had been marketing director for Westfield Corp. at its UTC shopping center. The couple have a son, William, 6, and a daughter, Molly, 4.

Solmes joined the architecture firm in 2003 and has led several projects, including The Healing Garden at the Naval Medical Center San Diego and Valley View Casino. The native San Diegan shares his South Park home with his wife, Elisha.

Spencer lives with her husband, Brian, and 2-year-old son,

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Matthew, in a 1915 Craftsman bungalow in South Park. She earned a bachelor of arts degree in landscape architecture from the University of Wisconsin. She is a member of the board of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

The McCulloughs' company has performed \$450,000 in landscape architecture work for construction projects in North Park, including the new Walgreens store on University Avenue under a \$150,000 contract. Other landscape projects were at the Children's Creative and Performing Arts School at El Cajon Boulevard and Ohio Street under a \$50,000 contract and a mixed-use condominium and retail project at Iowa Street and University Avenue under a \$250,000 contract.

In the Downtown area, McCullough Landscape Architecture has more than \$2.7 million in landscape projects in the works. It has performed a variety of residential

landscape work around the county for developers Barratt American, Centex Homes, Concordia Homes, Cornerstone Communities, Constellation Property Group, D.R. Horton, Fieldstone Communities and Hallmark Communities, among others.

The city development services department is considering condominium conversion projects of nine units in the 4000 block of Iowa Street and one unit — along with two already under construction — in the 4400 block of Ohio Street.

To submit items to Real Estate Report, e-mail Manny Cruz at manny@sandiegometro.com. The column is for real estate news in North Park, South Park, Hillcrest, University Heights, Golden Hill and Normal Heights.