

John Adams Oral Interview - MP3 Transcript

Sharon: We'll go ahead and get started. I turned my recorder on and it is working.

John: All right. So hopefully it works for both of us.

Sharon: Yeah I'll put it right here. So this is the interview with John Adams. I'm Sharon Smith and Steven Churchill is with us. Kind of picking up maybe a little bit from where we were before at the La Mesa History Center Archive Day (*a transcript of that interview was done by SDSU students*). And one of the things that you said that then, is that you moved to La Mesa in 1950.

John: Correct.

Sharon: And where were you before?

John: Uh, before that, we lived at the head of Park Boulevard up on Mission Cliffs Drive on the south rim of Mission Valley. And, uh, I you know, that's right on the cusp of of my memory is when a mission cliffs and I can remember playing with my brothers in the backyard, which was a slope right down into Mission Valley, and there was a little two lane road on the south side of the valley, and then Friars Road, two lane on the north side of the valley, and the rest of it was grassland and cows and the Ferrari farm.

Sharon: Wow.

John: And so, yeah, there was just nothing down there. And to, to give you sort of a geographic location of where Mission Cliffs had a Park Boulevard is in relation to Mission Valley. Uh, it's, uh, just to the west of where the Masonic Temple thing was located there in that big conference area. And I know now they're building a new something that I'm not sure what it is, but it's very grandiose. Yeah, that's being built there.

Sharon: Wow. Have you ever. I don't know if you've ever been in the, um, old the Presidio Museum. They've got old pictures...of the Valley. Resembled what you remember.

John: Yeah. Remembering. I have seen some photographs. Where? From the Presidio. You know, normally looking up. Uh, but of course, that's the end of the valley, uh, where Hotel Circle and all of that stuff is, is currently located. But, uh, I do remember, uh, um, the. Well, what I find fascinating is the actual original Ferrari family, uh, farm building is still located tucked into the intersection of eight and 805. Uh, there you when you're doing the southbound 805 to 8 east, uh, when you're on that ramp, if you it's a quick glimpse, but you look to your right and buried in trees is still the original farmhouse.

Sharon: Wow. How cool.

John: Yeah. And I remember, uh, when highway 80 was cut in, uh, you know, finally, from College Avenue, uh, that wasn't built until around 1952. Uh, that allowed you to go, uh, into Mission Valley. Uh, prior to that, the only way to go between San Diego and La Mesa was you came out La Mesa Boulevard. I'm sorry. El Cajon Boulevard or University Avenue and the alignment of where eight (*is*) now didn't exist, uh, any further west than, uh, the, uh, College Avenue, which then went into the brand new development of Del Cerro at that time. And, uh, well, in fact, in, in, uh, this box here, uh, I shared, uh, x number of the stereo pairs in here of, of taken from Panorama Drive in 1950. Uh, and when you look towards Cowles Mountain and anything that you currently see north of I-8 didn't exist, uh, and, uh, and as a result, uh, the, the ways to quote come to East County, as mentioned University and El Cajon boulevard or if you were you're through Grantville, then you could go Mission Gorge Road and then end up in Santee. So there were just very few east west connections back then.

Sharon: Mm. Interesting. I, I think you can see part of that influence with old motor hotels and bits and pieces along those two roads.

John: Well, yeah, obviously El Cajon Boulevard is still referred to as business 80. Um, but uh, I can remember, conversely, before any of the interstates were built, uh, highway 80 was the two lane road. Uh, I remember driving out through, uh, Alpine, uh, going to, uh, and then when we would go further east, uh, I def, you know, the the

wooden plank highway through the dunes. You could still see, uh, quite a bit of it. It, you know, and then and then when highway 80 got more developed and then, of course, when the interstate was built, you know, all of that just was disintegrated. Mm.

Sharon: Wow. Cool memories. So in 1950, you moved to La Mesa.

John: Correct.

Sharon: To a house on Panorama Drive.

John: Yeah, it was on Panorama Drive. In fact, uh, there's some images, uh, in Jim Nolan's book, uh, round Mount Helix, uh, that, uh, we had contributed some photographs and things from there. In fact, some of the shots were, uh, just single camera shots done that show up in the stereo pairs here. And of course, uh, I don't know if the historic center has developed, uh, ways to truly replicate the stereo pair stuff. Um, but it is, uh, interesting to see, uh, there were obviously before the 125, uh, connector was made. Uh, there were much more east west connections through that part of La Mesa, which are now blocked, where you can only go via Lemon Avenue or Grossmont Boulevard. Um.

Sharon: Yeah. I think the big blockage came with 125, didn't it?

John: Correct. Yeah. It, um, well, the thing that, uh, interesting memories of once again living on a hill, uh, with, uh, you know, uh, three older brothers, uh, we were very, uh, you know, active when my parents built the swimming pool in 1950. And that became a fabulous, you know, energy dump device and entertainment center for the for us kids. Uh, but the other thing that was, uh, a wake-up call, uh, where we were on Panorama Drive was right on the ridge of it, uh, so that if you played in the front yard and lost a ball, it rolled towards Spring Valley. And if you played in the backyard and lost a ball, it rolled towards Lemon Avenue. Uh, elementary. And I remember a time we were playing basketball and it escaped, and we finally, uh, caught up with the ball when it ended up down. Uh, Garfield, uh, by the man. Egg ranch. And, uh, that that, uh, was an interesting thing of of, uh, you know, pre, uh, Costco scale, you know, mega stores. Uh, the, my member going many times with my mother to the, uh, egg uh, the man egg ranch there and, you know, you bought eggs right from them and you could see the

candling machines and the egg size sorters and, uh, what was interesting is, uh, you now, it was, you know, when you're feeding four boys, she sure appreciated getting the, in essence, wholesale. Uh, but the other thing that was fascinating is kids is when the chickens would lay eggs and forget to put the shells on them. You know, there it was in the membrane. And of course, they couldn't do anything with those. And, and we thought those were great to play with and were good ammunition.

Sharon: That's cool.

John: Yeah. And what was, you know, once again, sort of an interesting thing that you think about, uh, you know, everything today is you go into refrigerated rooms or whatever like that. Uh, but where they actually did the egg sorting and where they stored them, it was kind of in a it was in a nurse sheltered area. So ma (*mother*) nature kept it at a good temperature for free.

Sharon: Yeah.

John: And it you know, when you reflect back on that kind of stuff, it makes you realize, uh, you know, I think that kind of thing had an influence on me in architecture that I learned that if you work with Mother Nature? She'll do a lot of stuff for you for free. And if you work against her, she's always going to win.

Sharon: Right, right.

John: And I'm sure you know that, right? In spades.

Sharon: Yeah.

John: Yeah.

Sharon: So Egg Farm was off of Garfield, right?

John: Uh, it just, uh, you know, the hill on Garfield that people love to catch air... going airborne. Right, right. Uh, it was right at the base of that hill. Uh, you would, uh, turn to the east and you would go on a dirt road. Uh, and, uh, you know that area, you know,

the the Egg Ranch was, was up against what is now the 125 freeway. And then after the Egg Ranch went away, it became a nursery, uh, for a good while. And then finally, uh, the land got too expensive. And then they did the current housing development. And when I say current, uh, and now I'm having a hard time remembering, you know, I want to say it was in the early 2000 when they actually built that.

Sharon: I remember going through the houses. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. And it was empty lot before.

John: Well, one of the things that was interesting is right where the Y is of Garfield would go up and then now I'm trying to remember if it was actually Garfield continued to the left, and then you would turn right to go on to, uh, Panorama Drive. And then a bit further up, Garfield, uh, there was a house that had a huge, uh, bamboo grove. And, uh, and I think what was able to feed it. It was in a natural sort of drainage, a watercourse that would where there is natural drainage that would come off of that end of the Panorama drive. I never knew of a given name for that region versus like East Ridge or Mount Nebo. We referred to it as Pneumonia Hill because the wind was always blowing. But before the freeway that would watercourse would drain down into the creek that goes through, uh, Eucalyptus Park. Okay. And at that time it was abundant with crayfish and frogs and stuff. And my oldest brother was the one that was always good at bringing creatures home. Um, but where I mentioned about the bamboo grove. It was so prolific. Uh, once it got established, uh, the neighbor gave us permission to be able to cut down bamboo that would get up to a diameter of about three and a half to almost four inches. And we use that to make rafts and forts and things to play in the pool. Oh, cool. So, you know, it was, you know, once again, the classic case of kids, uh, you know, sort of like, uh, take off on your bicycle, be home before dark.

Sharon: Right. And make your own entertainment.

John: Yeah. And, uh, and I think I'd mentioned in the previous part of the interview and what related to the trains. Uh, was my oldest brother just loved anything connected with railroad, and we'd ride our bikes down, and watch the steam powered locomotive, bring the freight train through La Mesa and on out to, uh. At that point, the tracks, uh, made it almost to, uh, Lakeside.

Sharon: Lakeside? Yeah.

John: And, uh, unfortunately, uh, and then remember.

Sharon: That old, um, train station is there *in Lakeside*). It's a contractor's yard house right now.

John: Oh, right. Um, anyway, uh, it was a deal where obviously, uh, in the early 50s, La Mesa Lumber still got, uh, all of their, you know, bulk of their lumber came by rail via that system. Uh, and then I know pre-war, uh, there were self-contained railcars. Uh, that was the equivalency of today's trolley. And, uh, Elmer Drew, uh, was a good friend of my father's, uh, and I remember hearing stories of him when he was a school kid. Would ride that McKeen self-contained rail car, uh, from the La Mesa area to go into school, you know, and, uh.

Sharon: It's interesting that you said steam was still running in the 50s.

John: Early 50s and without ceremony or anything. You know, uh, we went down to, to go watch the, the steam train come, and it was a switcher diesel. And we my brother was so bummed.

Sharon: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So then, um, you had the house built at Lemon and Alto in 1957?

John: No. Well, the house at 9415 (*Lemon*). That's part of that historic complex. Uh, we built, uh, the summer of 1955.

Sharon: 1955. Okay.

John: And, uh, to show how different the process was, even in spite of a concrete strike that slowed down being able to get the septic tank built. Uh, that house stick built with, uh, plaster exterior and a button board and plaster interior. We built the house in six weeks.

Sharon: Wow. And I think you I know you told me the Wonder Building which is next to it that you helped build.

John: Right. Well, and in fact, uh, the, uh, my job as a kid, uh, was to do job site cleanup after the guys at the end of each day.

Sharon: Oh, cool.

John: And, uh, I showed a lot of interest in things, I guess. And, uh, there was a wall in the back of the closet in that house that they let me frame. Uh huh. You know, as a nine year old kid.

Sharon: Yeah.

John: And that was the start of my actual physical construction career. And then in 57 was when we built that, uh, Wonder Building, which was a pre-engineered, uh, trustless, stressed skin building. Mhm. And it literally came on a pickup truck. Uh, it was heavily loaded because of the weight of the panels, but it was ten feet long, uh, two feet wide and the stack of metal. Well, there they were, side by side, two stacks of the elements, and they were roughly about three feet tall. And you literally bolted them together like an erector set. And, uh, and the four of us kids, uh, assembled up that building and, uh, the the thing that also shows how more simplified things were in that era. I did find the building permit, uh, for it. It was roughly a 1600 square foot building, and the building permit cost a whopping \$3.98. Literally.

Sharon: Wow.

John: And I just went weep for those days.

Sharon: Yeah. Wow. And remind me who designed the house on Lemon and Alto?

John: No, the one at the top of the hill was, uh. It was basically. Yeah, it was a building designer draftsman. And I want to say it. Oh, gosh. It's like Dieter, but it wasn't, uh, it's similar to that I.

Sharon: That's the one that Israel and Joel live in.

John: Okay. The one that Joel and Israel, that's the main house that we built in when we started building it in 1959. And then we completed it, uh, beginning of 60.

Sharon: Oh, so where's the other house?

John: The 9415 is the one at the top of the hill, you know. Right. Right at the top of the driveway.

Sharon: Just the smaller one.

John: Yeah. The small house. That.

Sharon: Okay.

John: That was the temporary house that we were going to live in for, like, quote, a year or something was what my dad thought and how life gets in the way. It was about five years later.

Sharon: Wow.

John: And then and then the house. Uh, that was the, uh, Joe and Israel are currently living in that one. The basis of that design was by Leopold Fischer, who, uh, is, uh, was an Austrian refugee prior to World War II. And I've just learned, uh, that, uh, a, uh, history professor from the UC Santa Barbara has written a book, uh, about Leopold Fischer, um, Uh, to and he had interviewed me, uh, and, uh, I was able to provide him with the Fisher, uh, design plans. That was the basis of the house. That is that, uh, it went through multiple iterations before it came to the form that it is now.

Sharon: You said your dad had been an entrepreneur. Yes. And, um, so it's I mean, it's all of this sounds like that's really what kind of what was pushing you towards architecture. And did you get in, get to get involved in what the house was going to look like?

John: Well, that's an interesting story in itself. Uh, that is related to, uh, what ultimately got me into architecture. I was with, uh, the, It was a client architect meeting with Leopold Fisher when we were still living up on Panorama Drive, and it was the classic case. We were there at the dining table and um, uh, there were nice, you know. Then of course, it was all pre-CAD. There were just nice preliminary sketch drawings of what the house would look like. And my dad loved to play the piano, and he had a baby grand piano that he, Leopold Fisher, wanted to, uh, show, you know, how it laid out in the living room. And, uh, me being kind of a smart ass little kid, you know, I was just soaking all of this stuff up like crazy, and I finally I, I turned and sort of tugged on my dad's shoulder and whispered to him, I go, dad. I think the piano's out of scale. And there was a pause, and Leopold turned to my dad and said, Dick, your son is right. Oops. The reason I relay that story, uh, is that, uh, Leopold Fischer never had any children. Ironically, it turned out the exact plans of that were put together then were never built. But however, my parents had stayed in touch with Leopold Fischer. They, you know, through the years and, um, they, as I was, uh, graduating from, uh, uh, graduate school, uh, getting my master's in architecture, I get a letter from Leopold Fischer. He was living up in Seal Beach and he said, I've stayed in touch with your parents and all I. And they kept me informed that you've gone into architecture and all of this. And in the letter, he said, I want you to have all of my office equipment.

Sharon: Wow.

John: So Leopold Fischer set me up in my first office.

Sharon: How cool.

John: And, uh, and I, I had not that was in 75, and I had not, um, realized that was only like. Less than six months, I think, before he passed.

Sharon: Wow.

John: And, uh, so, uh, I had drawings and sketches and stuff from him, and that's what I ended up donating to. Uh, the history program at UC Santa Barbara for helping document, uh, Leopold Fisher's, uh. Architectural career in Southern California.

Sharon: Very cool.

John: So it is, you know, I guess the moral of that story is you never know what will happen at what stage of your life that will combination light a fire, uh, slash uh, and then, uh, the timing of his of his, uh, you know, he basically set me up in my first office, drafting tables, flat files, library, you know, the whole enchilada.

Sharon: Wow. That's incredible. So I think you you said, um, maybe you went to Claremont Men's College?

John: Yes. Which is.

Sharon: Now.

John: Yeah. That was undergraduate. That, uh, is now Claremont McKenna College. Uh, when they obviously when they went co-ed, it was a little difficult to call it a men's college, but they kept the CMC, which, you know, was not stupid. Uh, and what was so unique about going to the Claremont Colleges is CMC. It was while I was in college that I had the slow wake-up call that I really should be in architecture. So.

Sharon: So what did you start out with?

John: I started in management engineering, which was a special three two program where you went three years to CMC and then two years to Stanford, and you graduated with a dual degree.

Sharon: Oh, cool.

John: My older brother did that, uh, in industrial engineering and, uh, you know, I had other classmates who went through that program as well. And I realized that I was falling into a hole that just wasn't working. And it turned out there was a humanities class, uh, that you had to take, uh, when you shifted out of the program, the management engineering program. And, uh, I found out and that class, there was an architectural design class available from Scripps College, which was a women's college. So, you know, sort of at that time, go figure. In the Claremont College complex, if you

were a student in one of the colleges, uh, if there was room in a class, you could you could enter register between the colleges. Uh, so I ended up having classes from Scripps, Pitzer, Harvey Mudd, and CMC. The only college I didn't have a class from was Pomona, and so it was an extraordinary rich environment to be able to explore and do all of that kind of stuff. Long story short, it turned out the I found out from CMC guys that had taken this class, it didn't count as a humanity, uh, or fine art, uh, because somehow or another CMC didn't think it was. So being the typical smart ass, I went to our academic dean and I said, is it true you don't think this is a fine art? Yeah. Can you tell me why? Uh, no. Uh, and then I said my negotiation was, um, if I get a letter from their dean that they deem that this is a fine art, will you accept that? Okay, so I did, and I took that class to fulfill that requirement. And that was difference of night and day. And so I ended up writing my own degree in doing a collaborative effort between CMC and Scripps College. Neither one had all of the pieces, but there were enough pieces that you combined the assets of the two, uh, separate colleges. Uh, it worked. And so I ended up being the first, uh, Bachelor of Arts in Architecture graduate from CMC.

Sharon: Cool.

John: So I guess, you know, I was one of these kind of kids that, uh, uh.

Sharon: Set, set, uh.

John: Well.

Sharon: The road ahead for other people.

John: Well, yeah, it turned out that there were about, I think, maybe 5 or 6 other students who ended up going through the program. And then what made the whole thing, uh, disappear was the, uh, uh, studio master for that architectural design class at Scripps, uh, died, and there were no successors. And, uh, you know how many times when there can be that one quasi spark plug and, you know, when they pass on, there was no nobody to pass the baton to. Mm mm. So.

Sharon: So then you got your degree. Did you go into the Air Force? Is the Air Force in between?

John: Well, uh, the time frame that I was in college, uh, our class was the first one to have all graduate deferments taken away. So you got to graduate from college and just, okay, count the days before you got drafted because at that time, Vietnam was, uh, consuming individuals at a prodigious rate. Uh, so I did, uh, I, in essence, got drafted out of graduate school. So what happened is, uh.

Sharon: You went to University of Pennsylvania grad school, but then you got drafted.

John: So I got drafted. I did not want to go in the Army, so I ended up enlisting in the Air Force. And I had the unique issue of being simultaneously overeducated and undereducated, which is only something that can happen with the military. So the classic square peg in a round hole. Whole, but, uh, it turned out, uh, it, uh, it worked as well as I think it could, uh. And it allowed, um, you know, I needed a psychological break from just such a constant run of college. And, you know, and formal education. And then you realize, uh, in the military, you get a much.... It's a warped education, but it's a totally different one OJT kind of thing. Um, and, um, I ended up spending all four years in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, which was a nice environment to be in and a unique environment. Um, and I even had a unique situation of being able to take what they call a permissive TDY, um, Uh, and go one semester back to college while I was still on active duty. Um, and it allowed me to accelerate finishing up my master's, uh, as well as then that gave me a break from the military. And, uh, it it worked out remarkably well.

Sharon: What did you do for the Air Force?

John: I was what they called. What? The site development specialist, which was? It turned out the closest that I could get to of my profession. Uh, or responsibility in the civil engineering Squadron, uh, was to, uh, do site surveying. You know, learn how to do all the different survey work. Uh, the highest test, uh, equipment that we had at that time was a theodolite. It was definitely way ahead of laser stuff and everything. So you had to optically do things. Uh, do your trigonometric functions, uh, for, uh, compensating for elevation changes, etc., when you're doing a horizontal control. And then the other part of that discipline was preparing plans. So we you know that at that time we did pen and ink on vellum, uh, and or mylar.

Sharon: Mylar. Yeah.

John: And and the Leroy lettering things and having to do, uh, all of the, uh, uh, you know, stuff, uh, according to the military standards. No, we actually used, uh, the corner type, uh, you know, uh, for with the different line weight thicknesses and stuff. But the part that I found fascinating as a contrast thing. Fast forward many years. Uh. Uh, we got to do a trip, uh, to, uh, Florence and visit the Galileo Museum. And in there, you know, the thing that was so fascinating to me was seeing drafting instruments and everything else from the 1400s and realized there's were no different than what we were working with. Ours were plastic. Theirs were beautifully engraved, you know, brass things and stuff. But to realize that in the beginning of my professional career, we were still, in essence, doing it the way it was done for the last 400 years. Uh, you know, before the advent of computers and everything. Uh, and I'm sure you're year. You made the comment about having a draftsman that screwed it up slower on AutoCAD than being able to manually draft it, and that's a thesis of mine. Still forever is the computer can be a beautiful tool to assist you, but if you can't manually draft make a sketch to communicate what you're talking about, then the computer, all it can do is just help you screw up faster.

Sharon: Yeah, I think I shared with you my master's degrees from USC and USC places its graduates in the companies in LA area said these people don't know how to draw. So this was in oh eight is when I got my master's degree. They incorporated back in a whole year that they had to do everything manually. Nearly all the students so they could talk to their clients.

John: Well it is yeah, that's a whole different ball game of where architecture is. Uh, just a quick sidebar of, uh, I got drafted into being on the architectural, uh, California Architectural Board by an old guard, uh, California, San Diego architect to show you how old guard he was. His architectural registration number was two digits.

Sharon: Oh.

John: It was C.J. Pat Paderewski. And, uh, I, you know, he, uh, the sort of the local significance for him, uh, is, uh, the one of the more famous, uh, Uh, things that he did, uh, was the glass elevator up the side of the El Cortez Hotel.

Sharon: Oh, cool.

John: And, uh, he, uh, he also, uh, did, uh, aspects of the building that the the Ford building that the, um, San Diego Air and Space Museum is in. And so what was nice was when I was working on projects with the, uh, San Diego air and space, uh, I was able to have personal direct contact with, uh, Pat Petrovski, uh, in dealing with that stuff. So I sort of felt like I was touching architect California architectural history.

Sharon: Right.

John: But while I was on the, uh, Architects Board, I kept telling Sacramento headquarters that part of the internship program for architects is that they should have nail bags on construction experience before they're allowed to be an architect. And that reinforced my situation. Circling back, uh, to the house at El Dorado. Uh, the house that mentioned that Joe and Israel currently occupy. That was the first building that I apprenticed every trade, uh, in construction and that that, you know, in the architectural world, uh, proved to be totally invaluable.

Sharon: Yeah.

John: A perspective that you, I'm sure, appreciate.

Sharon: Yes. Well, my dad made me do that. I finished concrete, I did not finished carpentry, but basic carpentry, and he made me do all of that. Said, I need to know how to ...what t it feels like to build it if you're going to design.

John: It well, and also the consequence of what you've drawn. You know, like, will that thing, you know, support itself properly and how do you tie it together structurally and, and uh, and, and then you've got to think vertically and horizontally, literally and figuratively in terms of determining how structural systems integrate, uh, and mechanical systems and everything else. Mhm. Um, the building that you're in, uh, all of well, this is October, uh, I've been practicing architecture out of this building for 49 years.

Sharon: Wow.

John: And, uh, even before it was topped out, uh, but it was a thing where, uh, it gave me the ability to, you know, to integrate, Great, uh, you know, field experience. Uh, what was going on? Uh, what it took to run an architectural practice and all of that. So I felt very fortunate. And as a result, uh, it taught me micro-climate, uh, analysis. Um, the thing that's unique about, uh, being on this side of Grossmont, uh, is this is the highest thing, uh, this close to the ocean. So when there's a winter storm or whatever happening, uh, this bears the brunt of, you know, unimpeded. You know, when you're down lower, you get all of the eddies of of, uh, being in the lee of hills or canyons or whatever. And so it makes you get a different appreciation, uh, as well as how to use Mother Nature to help you. In terms of sun control and natural ventilation and all of that stuff. Mhm.

Sharon: We'll circle back to this house. But after you came back to San Diego after grad school in 75.

John: Correct.

Sharon: Right. And that's when you got the office set up from.

John: Leopold.

Sharon: Fisher.

John: Yeah.

Sharon: And about that time, is that when you started getting the (*commissions*) is it the Grossmont Land Company?

John: Well, working with. Yeah, it was in 76 that we started, uh, working uh, with uh, uh, Grossmont Center.

Sharon: Okay.

John: And, uh, that was an extraordinary combination, experience and unique situation of basically having an anchor client for roughly 35 years.

Sharon: Wow.

John: And, you know, work worked with the original, uh, you know, president and, uh, group of the that was the management company, uh, Grossmont Center had a unique organization there. There was a master lessor and then that master lessor, uh, effectively then there was overlapping management, then, uh, had the Grossmont Center Company that ran the shopping center and then the peripheral things. That was the medical stuff. That was Grossmont Land Company.

Sharon: Okay.

John: And so, you know, like, uh, medical buildings one, two and three and the convalescent, uh, center there, That's all. On Grossmont land. Land. Okay. And so that was under, uh, mostly, uh, a different, you know, I mean, it was a whole different sort of leasing entity and stuff, even though there were some of the same players, uh, that, that were involved in each.

Sharon: In the retail.

John: Uh, the that were that ran the actual Grossmont Center, uh, side of things.

Sharon: Because I think you, you maybe I'm not remembering. Right. You did the some of the retail work also in addition to the medical.

John: Right. The principal stuff we worked on was the retail. Um, you know, we there were there were sort of two major makeovers, uh, of the center, uh, the first one, uh, involved, um, a, uh, it turned out to be silicone fabric, uh, stuff that was stretched over the canopies. And it of the, uh, the original configuration of the center had parking lot, uh, facing storefronts. And then there was the center mall. So it was the hybrid of what became the classic, uh, traditional shopping mall set up where you would have anchors at each end, you would have an enclosed mall. So the concept was it wasn't like a convenience center where if you wanted something like originally Longs Drugstore,

which is now CVS, it had a parking lot, uh, access entrance, which allowed the if all you needed to do is go to the drugstore. You went to the drugstore. But then they went to the concept of wanting to drag you by everything. So there might be impulse shopping, etc.. So I, I was involved, uh, with aspects of, of that remodel and then additional ones where they changed the paving concepts and they closed up a lot of the exterior stuff to sort of turn it into a little more of a traditional, you know, where the principal traffic was on the exterior or, I'm sorry, the interior mall. So I, I was involved with a lot of individual, uh, storefront, uh, modifications, uh, combinations when they tore down a good percentage of building d, uh, Which then allowed for the new construction of the existing theaters. Um, that, you know, that was there very little of the original. Each of the segments of the center had letters.

Sharon: Did the medical go across the road?

John: Well, well, the medical use slash Grossmont Land Company stuff, only that was in the perimeter of Grossmont Center Drive and Center Drive.

Sharon: Okay.

John: Uh, so, uh, in fact, where, uh, the Guitar Center is and when, uh, that's, uh, and Stanton Optical and the and the bank building there. Right, right. Uh, that's all Grossmont Land. Uh, and what used to be part of Grossmont Land, where Trader Joe's and that stuff is now, that used to be part of Grossmont Land companies. But then when, uh, they changed where the, uh, when the major intersection changed to, um. Eight and 125. Uh, there had been an exit ramp right there, and that was closed. And it was thrown, uh, to sort of the quasi jughandle of where you get off to Jackson, uh, and Grossmont Center Drive when you're westbound on eight, uh, the, you know, when there there was huge impact on the peripheral to the Grossmont Center complex when they continued 125 north of eight, uh, back in the. That would have been the 90s. Um, I was fascinated. 75% of the interstate system was built in five years. This intersection took nine and a half years to build. However, uh, when they built that intersection, they had, I think it was 47 different traffic alignment changes, and they had to keep 135,000 cars a day moving on it. So talk about a logistics nightmare.

Sharon: Yeah.

John: But, uh.

Sharon: Well, it's still a logistic nightmare, I think.

John: Well, now it's just too many rats in the cage and too much traffic. That's when Covid was good. It it was such a flashback when you could, uh, you know, you were used to allowing. Okay. If you went to La Jolla, it was, uh, you know, a A half an hour exercise or whatever. And then when the freeways were empty, you were there in 15 minutes, practically. I remember for a while everybody showed up at their appointments early. Yeah, but it harkened back to what it was like driving, uh, on, like 125. I can remember in the early 60s driving that, uh, and, and there might be two other cars on the freeway going in town. Uh, and now you don't even get that in the middle of the night.

Sharon: Yeah, well, I know you had a prolific and still active. Aren't you still active designing something?

John: Uh, I, I do have currently, uh, there's a a project, uh, under construction for a consultant of mine I've worked with for decades. Uh, and it'll be a house for him to retire to. And it's currently under construction on the north side of eight. And the seven area. So it's very close here, but, uh, yeah, I with how painful they've made the permit process, I'm ready to be done.

Sharon: Are you you're kind of sliding into retirement with mostly residential.

John: Well, yeah. The last projects I've worked on have been residential.

Sharon: I know you, we I know that you worked on one of my neighbors, the Espositos. Yep. And, um. And then when did when did you design this house?

John: I, I start conceptually. I started designing the house in 70.

Sharon: Okay.

John: Uh, but I didn't acquire the piece of land until 72. Uh, and then then I started, uh, iterations of plans on this in earnest when I knew that I had possession of the hunk of dirt. And, uh, it went through multiple iterations. But in, in terms of configuration. But the bubble diagram did not change much. Um, but it is one of those things that, you know, I was quite young when I was designing this, um, and, you know, there are certain things, you know, I think there's a reason they call it the practice of architecture, because it takes you about 25 years of doing of practicing it before. Okay. Now I can just do it. And I've talked to a number of people and they say, yeah, the, the, the quasi magic number seems to be around 25. Uh, that.

Sharon: You know, 25 years.

John: Of, of, of, of the experience of, you know, working on things, knowing what works, how to listen to your clients, how to do all that type of stuff. And I in the beginning, I had hoped I wanted to do, uh, new technologies and stuff of this building because it was my own. And I figured it made sense to practice on myself and experiment with it before I would do it elsewhere. Uh, and I had hoped that I might possibly be able to have it as a forever house. But, you know, when one is self-employed and practicing architecture, you have no idea what the future is. But it was. I felt fortunate that by people being able to see an approach in creativity here, uh, that allowed me to be able to do enough work to then be able to, you know, pay the mortgage.

Sharon: So you used this as your, um.

John: Laboratory, in a way, a form of laboratory. I mean, some of the interesting things I think I mentioned, the foundation system in the building is an all weather wood system. It's the first, uh, that system, uh, first started out in the Midwest. And this was the first building with this system done in Southern California. Uh, this house was the first Pella all clad window installation in San Diego. Wow. Um. And at that time, uh, they, uh, dual glazing was done a la what would be considered the storm window approach, which is how Pella did it at that time. Uh, but, uh, I tried to make the building, uh, energy efficient way back. Parts of it are, er, sheltered. Uh, and I finally, in 2010, was able to put, uh, photovoltaic panels on the place. And with only uh, 20 panels up on the roof with a house that was basically a 40-year old or almost 40-year old design, uh, I was able to

make the thing electrically go net zero and that was through utilization of cross-ventilation sun exposure, uh, r values. Uh, at that I mean to today's windows, these are R would be considered poor performing windows. Uh, but I'm not excited to change them out. No, that would be a very expensive maneuver. And the mitered windows are, uh, are those are difficult to be, uh, dual glazed. It's not impossible, but it's very difficult. But, uh, in the, uh, European tradition, my, I, I live over my office, uh, downstairs is is a complete tenant improvement for office. Separate entrance and stuff so that the clients could come and go and, uh, not bother the household.

Sharon: So you did you always work out of your house here?

John: Uh, I for except for, uh, roughly two and a half years. The answer to that is yes. For a brief while, uh, when I, uh, still had an architectural partner, uh, we had an office in Ocean Beach for almost two years.

Sharon: Okay.

John: And then, uh, then he decided to go do, uh, Navy things, uh, as a civilian contractor. And so then that brought me back to here. And then in 86, I attempted a unsuccessful merger, uh, with the second oldest firm this side of the Mississippi. And, uh, that turned out to be a debacle. And so since 86, it's been strictly out of this building.

Sharon: Wow. Cool. So now I'm going to go turn a little bit. And because you really lived quite a long time in the la mesa mount helix area and just talk about your memories of being in this area and how you think it's changed and or has it changed?

John: Certain philosophical things haven't changed much. Uh, physically it's been radical. Uh, and I think the most radical part has been the development around the official part of the city of la mesa. Uh, what I find interesting, uh, in terms of, uh, and these statistics can help relate, uh, to the, uh, you know, the region of San Diego, uh, when we moved, uh, and the we I'm using is our family. And, uh, we first moved to the San Diego in 1948. At that time, San Diego was the 37th largest city in the country. San Diego has made it as high as number six. I think now we're number nine or something, somewhere around in there. For a while it was a battle. Was it Dallas or Phoenix or us? You know, you know, going back and forth in the US, meaning the city of San Diego.

But what's interesting is in that time, the city limits of la mesa have not changed much. But in round numbers the population has been on the order of 55,000. So, uh, the, the population of the city hasn't changed much, but the development around, uh, you know, call it, uh, east of the current 125 location. Uh, I don't know if you had an opportunity to see. I think this is a slide that shows. Oh, come on, get out of there. Okay, there's a shot looking from Panorama Drive to, uh, Cole's Mountain. And if you take a look, there ain't nothing. Oh, you push, you push the there's a little button on the bottom (*speaking about the 3-D slide viewer*). Turns the light on.

Sharon: Button on the bottom. Oh I've got it in. No okay, I see it.

John: Yeah. It's under your thumb.

Sharon: Under my thumb button on the bottom. Okay. Got it, got it. Okay. I do need my glasses.

John: Well, or there is a little focusing deal there.

Sharon: Okay. Uh, wow. How cool. Look at that.

John: As you can see, anything that in the alignment of I-8 does not exist.

Sharon: Right.

John: Okay, that's the wrong one there.

Sharon: So it's the build up of.

John: Well, uh, when. Well, for example, um, the, um, Uh, all of this area, you know, on on this side was a bulk of it was Avocado Grove, uh, where the, uh, uh, at the timing that Joe and Israel's house was, uh, being considered for the Mills Act. Uh, the Hinck estate was also being done. Uh, that's the area where, uh, fortune and treasure, right? Uh, you know, that was all avocados. Uh, that development happened in the early 60s, uh, down here on Alto, where there a batch of houses that was all avocados, uh, before, uh, uh, when it was still highway 80. Before it became Interstate eight. Where Anthony's

is located. Uh, that, uh, natural water course went across there and helped fill the pond that is now at Anthony's. But what was there then was a little, uh, literally it looked like it was from the turn of the previous century, tin shed, wooden sidewalk stuff. And they'd, uh, stock the thing with fish and and, uh, you know, you, they you could rent a fishing pole and go fishing in there. And that was what that looked like until around 58, 59. Uh, and then when they started, what developed were Grossmont Shopping Center is, is when they did this major cut through here, uh, the cotton fill created, uh, the pads for Grossmont Center. It created the pads. Where now? Walmart and Ross And those places are where Ross is. That used to be a white front a long time ago. Uh, and that property has gone through numerous buildings where they would literally just scrape it and start over again. Mhm. Um, so that major interchange stuff that happened here, uh, there were just thousands of yards of earth moved. And that's what created, uh, a lot of those construction sites. Yeah. That shot is looking towards Mount Helix and you can see there's nothing on Mount Helix.

Sharon: No. Yeah.

Steven: Did you take these pictures?

John: Uh, my grandfather did.

Sharon: Wow.

John: But, uh.

Sharon: Yeah. I didn't exist.

John: This, uh, in this slide, the run on the diving board is me. Yeah. Um, but anyway, uh, it's, you know, in looking through these things to try to, uh, continue to answer your question, you know, of, of change the the greatest change, uh, you know, they at the end of the 50s, uh, there in the aerospace industry was still quite robust. Uh, Convair had converted from building World War Two aircraft, uh, to then the Astronautics Division, uh, and then the astronautics, uh, plant. And all of the development was done on, uh, Kearny Mesa. And that's where the Atlas missiles were built. Uh, and, uh, it was those, uh, missiles that were utilized to launch the first Mercury capsules. And, uh, so

there was a very close connection to San Diego, uh, region in the beginning of the astronaut slash moon program. And, um, so there was and they referred to it as the soaring 60s. And, uh, that was when all of this huge development happened.

Grossmont Hospital, uh, started being built in 54. Uh, it was the it was a critical thing for getting a, you know, that was the biggest hospital facility, East County, you know, I mean, serving clear to the Imperial county line and, uh, you know, a special personal connection was, uh, my mother was involved in the development of the harvest ball program and slash recognition for the young volunteers, uh, candy strippers, etc., who volunteered at the hospital to help the patients and things. Um, so, uh, that kind of development, of course, was huge in, in the beginning of the 60s.

Grossmont High will a quick backup. Grossmont High School was the second high school in the county, after, um, San Diego High. And then very shortly after it, I believe it was Castle Park. And I'm trying to remember another one in South Bay, but then, uh, get into the very early 60s. They were almost building a high school a year in East County. Mm. Uh, in fact, the second high school in the Grossmont district was Helix High School, and my oldest brother was the first four-year class out of Helix High School. And, uh, the, uh, you know, the what ended up the, quote, closest touched, uh, to some fame was a classmate of my, uh, brother's, uh, he remembered him as a cut up in class and getting in trouble. Uh, but most people know him in Easy Rider. His name was Dennis Hopper. Huh. So, uh, and the other famous alum out of there, of course, was, uh, Bill Walton, the basketball player. Uh, but what I found in terms of history, and I don't think there's even another high school in the entire country that that has, uh, two astronauts that graduated from the school. And what's unique with Grossmont? It doesn't have one. It doesn't have two. It has three. Mm. And, uh, the one that was. I didn't realize until I ended up being able to, uh, help do some architectural design form was Bill Anders. And do you do you recognize the importance of that name offhand?

Sharon: No.

John: Okay. Well, part of it. You got to be a space geek.

Sharon: Okay.

John: As far as I am concerned, Bill Anders took the most iconic photograph of the 20th century, and he was the one that took the Christmas Eve photo of Earthrise over the moon of 1968. And, uh, our second astronaut is Ellen Ochoa. And the third is, uh. God, now, I've lost his first name (*Rick*) Sturkow. And my memory of him was that he and his family lived at the end of Starlight. And he was the smart-ass kid that kept running up and down Starlight too fast in his little Japanese pickup truck. But, uh, I remember a time meeting out at the, uh, his mom, Jan Sturckow. We were meeting out at the mailboxes, and she informed me, she said, well, my son had to turn in his, uh, F-18 cockpit for a shuttle. And so he got to fly, I think three shuttle missions.

Sharon: Wow.

John: You know, so, uh, it you know, that's an extra. I don't know what I don't know if it's the water out here or what that we manage to, you know, get a high school that, you know, raised up.

Sharon: Yeah.

John: Raised up three astronauts. Well, but, uh, you know, so there's been a, uh, oh, one of the interesting warps in terms of, uh, Grossmont High School. Uh, I you were talking about the Hubble house on, uh, Sierra Vista or, you know, the impacts there, uh, or Fletcher House that had the Hubble studio added to it. The Warburtons had lived in that house, and Tom Warburton, uh, had been, uh, the principal of Grossmont High School in 1960 when he was nominated the most outstanding high school principal in the entire country.

Sharon: Wow.

John: And that once again came out of Grossmont. So there had been a remarkable, you know, tradition of hard-core history. And part of what's tough now is to realize how dramatically demographics have changed. And then now, uh, there are only two buildings left that were there that when I went to the school. So it's like I don't recognize anything here.

Sharon: Right, right.

John: But there's wonderful history that's preserved there by the Baer sisters who run the museum there. And that's another fabulous source of, uh, you know, of just sort of history of the area.

Sharon: Yeah. Well, La Mesa is in another big period of change, I think, with all the apartment buildings going in and.

John: Well, the, the, the whole edu.... I mean, the pendulum. Yeah. The whole pendulum swing has been extraordinarily quick and people didn't think things out. But I mean, the real evidence visible here is the, uh. Uh, I, I have not seen what the finished product is supposed to look like, but at the old women's club site right there across from Discount Tire, that that is sure changing, uh, the landscape. And then where the Garfield medical offices were, you know, that was first built, I think, in the late 40s. Um, and now that's all. I guess turning into, uh, more apartments.

Sharon: Apartments. And then what's under construction by the old Lamb Engineering building is going to be three story apartments. And, yeah.

John: I that was one thing that really upset me was that the facade tiles could have been preserved from the Lamb building. Uh, I remember when that was, uh, bank, uh, and the story that I remember there was a brand new. Now I'm trying to remember the proper name of it, uh, because it went through iterations. It had been, I think it was San Diego Trust and Savings Bank. Um, and then there was a brand new bank opening up on la mesa Boulevard. And I'm trying I think it became Imperial Savings, but it was la mesa savings.

Sharon: Uh, Savings and Loan.

John: Savings and Loan, as I recall. But my memory was, you know, you know, we had accounts at one bank, and, you know, I had to have been. 6 or 7 years old. I remember having my, my withdrew money from the one to open the account in the other. And as I was walking across the lobby, you know, I tripped over a Ottoman or something, and my little hand fistful of money went everywhere. So, you know. Yeah, such go the things. But in terms of downtown la mesa, it was interesting. Uh, you know

how many car dealerships were there? Um, and, uh, you know, the whole configuration before they built, uh, la mesa Springs? Um, um, the, uh, of course, Drew Ford, uh, had been there since the 20s. Um, and, uh, you know, I still have one of the vivid, uh, memories was it was, uh, it was fall of 54 and in the window, you know, of the showroom, the there, uh, at Drew Ford was the brand new Ford Thunderbird sports car. Ooh, bright red with a red or white interior. And it was. That was in the days that if, uh, you brought, uh, you know, you went in the and test drove a car or whatever. They had a little model of the car with a friction motor in it. And so the parents like cars, and I still have the hulk of of that little friction motor car that we got back then.

Sharon: Wow.

John: But, uh, you know, it's, uh, interesting, you know, to realize, like, on the corner of, uh, palm, it would be the southwest corner of Palm and La mesa Boulevard was the Buick dealer. Uh, and then, uh, a where now la mesa Plaza is, uh, in that area, there was a Packard dealership, uh, and American Motors, and then, of course, drew forward where the restaurant and stuff is now. Um, and then on the corner of across the street from, uh, the helix, uh, movie theater, uh, was the Dodge dealer. Uh, and then a little further down, University boy, I'm trying to remember what that dealership was before that. Well, the Kellen Buick moved there. They had been, you know, and it was, I realize now, a tiny little showroom that was in I mean, the building is still configured, but it's now into little retail space and stuff on the corner of la mesa Boulevard and Palm. And then a and then right across the street from that was then it was Rexall Drugstore And the the green and black tile facade on that building. That was done just before we moved to la mesa. Mm. But it, uh, you know, just sort of painting the picture and, and when, you know, uh, I remember early on, as soon as I could ride a bicycle, you know, we'd it was always nice to zoom down the hill from Panorama, but it was, it was a tough go to get back up on your bicycle.

Sharon: Yeah.

John: But it was. Yeah, it, uh, you know, there are parts of what would be considered the little more traditional, uh, you know, much smaller scaled, like the car dealerships and, and, you know, at that time frame, it was short enough after World War two, uh, That. Like when it was new car, uh, model and introduction time. They'd run the klieg

lights and, uh, you know, I can definitely remember those being utilized into just about the early 60s. And then, you know, that phased out. I think part of it is just cost too much to run those lights. But I don't know if that helps on, you know, trying to, you know, trying to, you know, paint a picture, uh, you know, sort of trying to, you know, paint a word picture of, of what it was like. I mean, there are a lot of different photographs and things that were available. And then, of course, what was particularly huge in the 50s, uh, was the Mother Goose parade that was held in El Cajon. And at that time, I think El Cajon population was roughly 50,000. And then, you know, because at that time, El Cajon and La mesa were just about the same population size. But then El Cajon had way more real estate. So their population has grown like crazy. But I remember being fascinated, uh, you know, at that time, you know, it was only two lane roads around. Um, well, there were parts of, of El Cajon Boulevard that were two lanes each way. But that parade would draw over 200,000 people. And, uh, you know, I remember, you know, when when you kind of look at the parade of lights coming out and as it, you know, they were still pouring out when it was dark. Uh, and to realize it cram that many people, you know, along the streets, you know, of Main Street there and. Uh, El Cajon.

Sharon: Big entertainment for families.

John: Well, I you know, I once again, I mean, you know, thinking of that timing, it was it was before things like Disneyland, right. Uh, you know, at in the early 50s, the largest snazziest amusement park was Knott's Berry Farm.

Sharon: Mhm.

John: Uh, you know, and so, uh, just the whole, you know, sort of character of how things were done, it was a very different scale. It was much more homespun. Um, but of course, uh, something like Knott's Berry Farm was a very unusual thing, you know, where they had the, you know, the train that ran around the place and the campfire and, and, you know, the sing alongs and all that stuff. But, uh, anyway, that's obviously off course. That's just remembering early 50s.

Sharon: No, it's kind of. Yeah.

John: But it's contextual, I think. Um.

Sharon: Exactly. Yeah. Well, we have taken a lot of your time, and it's been.

John: Well.

Sharon: Wonderful to hear.

John: A lot of stories.

Sharon: Yeah, a lot of stories. So thank you. I appreciate your time.

John: Most welcome. Well, it's it, uh, uh, it's interesting. I have a brother-in-law who is a journalist, and he captured some wonderful oral history from, uh, my wife's family, you know, and it takes a, you know, sort of a special interviewing technique and what all to, you know, be able to trigger elements and stuff like that. So I think it's nice that they're being able to be done.

Sharon: Yeah.

Steven: I have a question for John.

Sharon: Sure.

Steven: Next to the mic. Um, it's kind of interesting to me to hear your perspective as an architect about the evolution of architecture here in La Mesa, particularly, well, residential, but even the civic center in the village. What is your thoughts about how architecture has evolved here? And I think that the city was pretty cutting edge in the 50s and 60s with what we now call mid-century modern, right? And the Civic center and the police, you know, office and stuff, where all that sort of early, um, mid-century design style, um, modern, sort of futuristic, you know, jet age, uh, kind of stuff. How did you perceive that at the time? How do you feel? It's evolved over time since then?

John: Well, um, there were, In a way, it's sort of hard element. I definitely, um, I remember, uh, when the, you know, the current, uh, Civic Center was put together, um, you know, it it's it was pretty classic, what I would call civic, you know, mid-century,

uh, you know, kind of, uh, put together, um, and, uh, you know, prior to the building of the, uh, uh, you know, current police station, uh, it was, you know, the library, the Mesa library was there. I mean, that was kind of a hodgepodge, uh, put together. Um, I in terms of the perspective of where things are now, um, I, I feel that, uh, I'm not sure quite how well the current, you know, actual council chambers and everything else, how well that is aged. Um, you know, it, uh, you know, it's a function. I mean, obviously it it, you know, it serves its purpose. Uh, however, uh, the thing that I find, uh, you know, sort of sad as to what's happened, uh, to parts of city services, uh, primarily thinking of what's happened to, uh, the particularly post Covid, uh, what's happening to, uh, building departments, uh, how many things that have been farmed out, uh, the fact that you can't talk to the building, the building official and be able to problem solve.

Um, it it, uh, just the, the there's been a huge paradigm shift there that's more dealing with the process of architecture and or construction, uh, versus, you know, how the actual architecture itself, uh, has done. Um, I, I felt proud to be part of, of, uh, updating processes and unifying stuff like at Grossmont Center slash Medical Center. Um, I particularly remember, oh, gosh, at this point, I'm realizing it was late 80s that we did, uh, the unifying elements of medical buildings one, two and three. Uh, prior to that, it was it it suffered a huge Legibility problem. And, uh, it was, you know, we devised an element, you know. You know, with the great big targets on them. One, two, three, you know, sort of. As opposed to, um. Uh. Oh, crud. I've just lost the name. Uh, um. Oh, well, scratch that one. Uh. Chalk it up to senior moments. Um, anyway, um, the, uh, in terms of, um, you know, when you really think about it, uh. There's been very little, um, you know, what would be considered civic architecture done in la mesa? Uh, there have been some relatively major, um, uh, you know, for example, the la mesa Plaza mixed use development. Uh, I happen to be on the architect, the city's architectural review board, uh, at that time.

That was a project that it got through the pipe way longer than it should have. Uh, before there had been the ability, uh, you know, sort of an architectural review of it. And I, you know, having been on both sides of things, uh, I've been before some architectural review boards where, uh, you know, sort of they got referred to as design Nazis, and, uh, that's not a good thing. Uh, and in the years that I did serve on that board, uh, we the my approach wanted to be of not wanting to quell or whatever of somebody of how they viewed how to design something or what to do. Uh, but we did

have some projects that came before us that, uh, I wondered how they were able to actually become licensed architects, uh, because I wasn't sure, you know, sort of where their design thing came from. But the most successful element where I think there was a, a very positive influence that the such a committee was able to do, uh, is the sharp, steely building that is on the corner of, uh, Grossmont Center Drive. And, um, I'm trying, you know, the actual road that goes up to the hospital. I can't remember if that's called health care or whatever.

Sharon: It's health care or something like that.

John: Anyway, that building, uh, if you noticed, uh, on the corner, uh, it is not just a block house, but it sort of softens up and it comes down. Well, it was a deal where they came before us and they just had a classic block house, and we the critique was, all right, you have much smaller scale stuff that you're relating to. Can you develop a just we didn't try to say, how can you develop a way to soften that corner to do the transition? And I think they came back to us again and then uh, it and they then what blew our minds was they said, can we come and have a design session with you guys? And the building that you see now is what was the result of that. And it and what made us feel really good was uh, they thanked us for working with them and trying to get, you know, their programmatic objectives and everything else. And, uh, and they thanked us for the process, and they ended up using that building as one of their flagship models. And so there was a case where I felt that there was, you know, all right. It wasn't civic architecture, but it was it was a building that could end up having a pretty dramatic, uh, you know, impact of how it melds into the community. And, uh, you know, that that was one that the city seemed to be proud of. And it was so neat to, you know, it turned out the way that it was approached. Uh, it wasn't a damn it, screw you kind of response. It was sort of like, wow, this is kind of synergistic. And everybody came away feeling winners that, uh, and I have no idea sort of where, uh, you know, things are now, uh, I think about, um, you know, the apartment complex built on the corner of Baltimore and, uh, El Cajon Boulevard, you know, that that used to be, uh.

Sharon: That was where McClellan.

John: Well, no, that was actually, uh, Bob Stahl. Chevy dealer was there.

Sharon: Oh, the Buick place was there, too, because I remember buying a car or used cars there?

John: Yeah. But anyway, uh, you know that that is a place that I think could have used some design review help. Uh, I and I at first was feeling that way about the the project along the trolley tracks and the Grossmont Trolley Center, but at least those facades had a little more articulation to them and, you know, sort of weren't so brutal to the street. But, uh, part of things that I find is there's so many times where things where the master designing and massing of things, uh, could take better advantage of the microclimate that they're in, uh, and, and specific site exposure and Methodology to soften what their face is to a street rather than it, you know, feeling like you're in New York City and you've got to, you know, you're in the concrete canyon kind of thing, right? I don't know if that kind of answers your question or not. Yeah, but, uh, no, it, uh, it I'm I am so pleased that that, uh, my father, uh, after his wartime job, decided he did not want to stay back east.

Sharon: Yeah.

John: And that he came out here.

Steven: Okay.

Sharon: Cool. Well, again. Thank you.

John: All right. Well, are you.

Sharon: Still working? *(talking about my recorder)* Yep.

John: I'll be. I hope you're able to get your guy operable.

Sharon: So I'm going to hit the stop button.