



SANTA MONICA CONSERVANCY

NEWS

ENSURING THAT THE PAST HAS A FUTURE

JANUARY 2004

Vol 2 No 1

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BUILDING BIOGRAPHER
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4 - 6 PM

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JOIN AN SMC
COMMITTEE!

VISIT OUR WEBSITE
WWW.SMCONSERVANCY.ORG

CITY'S PRESERVATION EFFORTS GARNER HIGH GRADE

The Los Angeles Conservancy recently released the Los Angeles County Preservation Report Card and Santa Monica was near the top of the class with an A-minus. The LAC reviewed the preservation policies of 89 jurisdictions in LA County and found only six worthy of an "A" grade. (Santa Monica's minus was due to its high planning department fees and the absence of a full-time staff member for preservation.)

"Santa Monica has a significant architectural history to safeguard and the City realizes that. The City has done a fine job of laying the framework for preserving Santa Monica's unique identity," says Santa Monica Conservancy President Tom Cleys.

Cleys urges the city to integrate preservation as a consideration in all pertinent city procedures, including those of city departments, commissions and boards.

(CONT'D PAGE 6: HIGH GRADES)



SANTA MONICA CITY HALL WAS BUILT IN 1939

NEW INCENTIVES FOR SM LANDMARKS

SMC INCENTIVES COMMITTEE IS HARD AT WORK

City Council has directed Planning Department staff to study additional incentive programs for landmarked properties starting this February. Historic property owners know that maintaining and rehabilitating historic properties requires constant diligence. To assist, the City will develop a more comprehensive menu of incentives that owners can choose from for their properties.

The SMC Incentives Committee has begun a wide ranging review of existing state, local and private programs for the City to consider adopting to enhance our existing incentives program. The Committee will present several of these suggestions to the Landmarks Commission in February when the Commission will discuss numerous ideas to ask staff to investigate for Santa Monica.

Currently, Santa Monica landmark owners can take advantage of the Mills Act Program, conservation easements, and federal tax credits for income producing properties listed on

the National Register. Permit streamlining, fee waivers and parking waivers are also available to qualifying landmarks in Santa Monica.

Many new areas are being explored by the SMC Committee: 1) change of use or adaptive reuse (a residential structure could be converted into a bed and breakfast or into office space) 2) code flexibility for historic properties (setbacks, zoning issues, rebuilding in existing footprints for accessory buildings) 3) transfer of development rights to allow permit owners to sell unused development rights from historic properties to other sites seeking increased density 4) low cost financing options to encourage restoration, rehabilitation, maintenance and preservation of historic resources.

Stay tuned by checking our website at www.smconservancy.org and future newsletters. There will be significant opportunities for our members to get involved in the public process of developing these new incentives for our city.

CONSERVANCY BUSINESS

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Renewal letters have gone out to all of you who joined in 2002. Please return your envelope right away! Continue to be counted as one who truly cares about preserving our city's heritage by renewing your membership with the only local organization that advocates for those values city-wide.

BOARD CANDIDATES SOUGHT

Calling all people who love Santa Monica, value its historical treasures, and are willing to have fun and work hard with other bright and interesting people who serve on the SMC Board of Directors.

At our Annual meeting in May 2004, three new board members will be elected. The nominating committee is looking for interested candidates. A term of office is three years; two consecutive terms may be served.

Nominees must be members in good standing of the Santa Monica Conservancy. They will be asked to submit a statement on behalf of their candidacies that will be distributed to all members of the Conservancy prior to the election. The statement format will be provided.

The Board meets the fourth Wednesday of each month. The Executive Committee (officers) meet when needed. Board members chair and/or are members of one or more committees.

Submit your name or that of another prospective candidate, with address(es) and phone number(s) by e-mail at info@smconservancy.org or mail to SMC Nominating Committee, P.O. Box 653, Santa Monica, CA 90406-0653 before March 1, 2004. Questions? Call 310-485-0399.

SMC WEBSITE

We're happy to announce the launch of our website at www.smconservancy.org. There is a lot more content in the works that will be unveiled in the coming months. For now, we will regularly update the news section with Conservancy and preservation related news from Santa Monica and we will feature the latest details on upcoming events.

Check back often and we'll keep you posted on the Conservancy's growth and preservation issues in Santa Monica. If you'd like to volunteer to help with our website or our newsletter, please contact us at info@smconservancy.org.

Thanks to members Peter Altschuler, Nina Fresco, Sherrill Kushner, Pam Vavra and especially, Joel Brand for their hard (and continuing) work on the website project.

CONTACT US | PO BOX 653 SANTA MONICA, CA 90406-0653
310-485-0399 INFO@SMCONSERVANCY.ORG

DOWNTOWN GUIDELINES UPDATE

In our previous newsletter we published an in-depth article about the City's proposed development guidelines for downtown Santa Monica. ROMA Design Group, the City's consultants, is assessing the status of the downtown and recommending guidelines for developers. We urged residents to speak out about integrating historic preservation into the guidelines.

At the October 28, 2003 City Council meeting, nine preservation-minded residents spoke before City Council, asking that it direct the consultants to include language that reflects the City's commitment to preservation in its guidelines in order to make developers aware of the importance of preservation to our community.

The Santa Monica Conservancy presented a full color booklet with photographs of every structure in the downtown area that is a potential landmark (listed in the City's Historic Resources Inventory). SMC is concerned that these remaining structures could be demolished or

insensitively remodeled without preservation in the guidelines. The booklet, prepared by SMC member Nina Fresco, proved to be very persuasive with both City Council and the consultants. A draft of the guidelines will be presented in early spring, 2004, to the Council, Architectural Review Board, and the Planning and Landmarks Commissions.

SMC may turn the booklet into a walking tour guide of historically and architecturally significant downtown buildings.



DETAIL OF SEARS BUILDING AT 302 COLORADO BOULEVARD 1946

MARION DAVIES BEACH ESTATE PRIVATE DEVELOPERS WILL MAKE PROPOSALS

The historic beachfront property at 415 Pacific Coast Highway, also known as the Marion Davies Estate, has languished in disrepair while under the stewardship of the City of Santa Monica. This past October the Council voted to demolish several of the structures in the compound that had been badly damaged by the 1994 earthquake and were determined not to be of historical significance. More recently, the Council voted to pursue bids from private developer-operators to develop this public property, which could involve leasing part or all of the site under a concession agreement. City staff will evaluate proposals, select the one it considers to be most viable, and present it to Council.

There is no single historic resource as richly significant on so many levels as the Marion Davies Estate. Such a symbol in public hands can be used, enjoyed, studied and understood by the residents and visitors of our community. Will 415 PCH stay in public hands?



THE MARION DAVIES ESTATE TODAY
PHOTO: CHRIS ZIELEN, COURTESY SM MIRROR

THE MODEST, THE MODERN THE GREAT AND THE GRAND

NEWLY LANDMARKED

In the last months of 2003, the Landmarks Commission designated four buildings as the city's newest landmarks.

THE EMBASSY APARTMENT HOTEL

The Embassy, on the corner of Third Street and Washington Avenue, is a



THE EMBASSY APARTMENT HOTEL

four-story, Spanish Colonial Revival-style structure built in 1927. The architect Arthur E. Harvey designed the Apartment Hotel as well as several notable buildings in Los Angeles (the American Storage Company building, the Selig Retail Store building, and the Chateau Elysee Apartments in Hollywood). The Embassy has characteristics typical of an apartment hotel, including rich exterior ornamentation, courtyards, fountains, basement, gracious lobby, and extensive architectural detailing.

The Embassy was designed to attract high-end tourists looking for elegant, long-term accommodations as an alternative to the resort hotel or beach club. It reflects an era when Santa Monica business people participated in a regional effort to boost year-round tourism by promoting the benefits of the beach location in both summer and winter.

Although there are many examples of buildings designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style in Santa Monica, the City has only four multi-story, elegant apartment hotels from the early 20th century. The Embassy has uniquely continued to function as both a hotel and an apartment building, while other similar

buildings have become strictly apartment buildings. There are three other buildings in a potential "Elegant Apartment Buildings Thematic Historic District" including the Sovereign and the Charmont, both of which have already been designated as landmarks, and the El Cortez which is undesignated.

THE R.D. FARQUHAR RESIDENCE

This two-story, single-family residence was designed by architect R.D. Farquhar in 1910 and was moved to its current site at 147 Georgina in 1952 from its original location at 628 San Vicente Boulevard. It reflects the style and design of a French villa and is an early example of the French Colonial architectural style that was popular in

World War II when many American soldiers served in France.

Farquhar was one of the most notable architects in the Los Angeles region during the first quarter of the 20th century. He and his wife, daughter of Santa Monica founder John P. Jones, moved into this house from their residence at 500 Ocean Avenue and lived in it for nearly 10 years. Few examples of this early French Period Revival style exist today in Santa Monica.



SYMMETRY AND ELEGANCE AT 147 GEORGINA

Farquhar's work is known for such designs as the Clark Memorial Library and the California Club, both in Los Angeles, as well as the Fenyes House in Pasadena and Beverly Hills High School. His work is characterized by its symmetry and elegance.

(CONT'D PAGE 6: NEWLY LANDMARKED)

REALTORS, OWNERS MUST DISCLOSE HISTORIC STATUS

For many buyers, a property that is historically or architecturally significant has added cache. For others, such a building may seem less desirable, given some limitations apply to exterior remodeling and demolition. Purchasers of historic and potentially historic properties are often not made aware of the historic status of a property and the accompanying development guidelines as well as the benefits of owning, rehabilitating and preserving historic property.



UNDESIGNATED JOHN BYERS HOME ON LA MESA DR. CURRENTLY FOR SALE
A new city ordinance (passed

by City Council last December) now requires owners or their real estate agents to disclose to potential buyers that the building has been designated as a landmark, structure of merit, contributor to a historic district, or has been identified in the City's Historic Resources Inventory. The disclosure must be made as early as possible so that the potential buyer is fully informed before making a binding offer. The new ordinance also requires the buyer to file an acknowledgment of receipt of the disclosure with the City Clerk's office. The ordinance is patterned after state agent/owner disclosure requirements, although state law doesn't always require disclosure for commercial property. The measure was passed because the real estate community wasn't consistently implementing voluntary disclosure.

SMC NEWS STAFF

SHERRILL KUSHNER

NINA FRESCO

PHOTOS BY NINA FRESCO UNLESS NOTED.

PLEASE CONTACT US WITH NEWS IDEAS OR PRESERVATION ISSUES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE CONSERVANCY INVOLVED IN.

CONSERVANCY BUSINESS

FUTURE EVENTS

FEEDBACK REQUESTED

The SMC Events Committee meets regularly to provide educational and entertaining programs for our members and the public. The committee would like your feedback. Below is a list of possible events that the committee is considering. Let us know which ones you would attend by contacting us, and feel free to make other suggestions.

- Bus tour of the murals in Santa Monica
- Walking tour of the Merle Norman house and office
- Eli Broad Foundation art collection and building tour
- Annual meeting at Aero Theatre with screening
- Landmarks of the future (house tour of contemporary homes and commercial buildings)
- An evening with Landmarks Commissioners
- Santa Monica cemetery tour with actors portraying notable residents
- Art show featuring Santa Monica as subject
- House tour on Adelaide Drive
- Residential hotels tour
- Beach houses tour
- Downtown walking tour

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The Santa Monica Conservancy is an all volunteer organization. We rely on members and friends to write the newsletters, organize the events and keep up with preservation issues in town. Please let us know if you are interested in participating by calling us at 310-485-0399 or send an email to info@smconservancy.org.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRESERVATION AWARD SOUGHT

The SMC will present an award at the Annual Meeting in May to an individual, organization, or project in Santa Monica that has made an outstanding contribution to preservation in the past year. If you have some recommendations, contact the Conservancy via e-mail or by regular mail no later than March 1st. Please provide a brief description of the individual, organization or project, why you believe it warrants an award, your name, address, and a phone number where we may contact you if we need more details.

TAKING 52 PASSENGERS ON TOUR IN A 49 PASSENGER BUS

BY DICK ORTON

Forty-nine intrepid travelers took the Santa Monica Conservancy's Landmarks bus tour in November. Before pulling out in a Santa Monica Big Blue Bus, the travelers received snack sacks and tour folders from Conservancy greeters, Ursula Kress and Wendy Sharp.

Leading the tour was SMC President Tom Cleys and narrating the tour was Ken Breisch, professor of Restorative Architecture at USC and an authority on Santa Monica landmarks.

Once on board, the bus headed north to San Vicente past Chez Mimi restaurant, originally the offices of noted local architect, John Byers, and our first stop at Adelaide Drive. Off the bus, Ken led our landmark lubbers past a host of Santa Monica's finest landmarked homes, sitting on a spectacular bluff overlooking Santa Monica Canyon and the Pacific Ocean.

We continued to zigzag through the neighborhoods north of Wilshire, learning about specific landmarks and landmarking in general. For instance, the "sympathetic addition" to the Palama Bungalow Court at 211 Alta Avenue was a compromise that made the property viable for the owner, ensuring its survival. Ken also told us that the tax incentives available to landmarked properties helped



DR. BREISCH GUIDES TOUR IN 3RD ST. HISTORIC DISTRICT PHOTO: DWIGHT FLOWERS

the economic viability of restored apartment buildings like the Sovereign at 205 Washington and the Charmont at 233 California Avenue.

Our next stop was the Fairmont Miramar Hotel, once the site of the home of Santa Monica founder, Senator John P. Jones. Over 100 years ago, the Jones family planted the now landmarked Moreton Bay Fig Tree, an impressive feature of the hotel courtyard. Thanks to hotel manager Karl Buchta and his staff for their hospitality.

The tour continued south along Ocean Avenue, past the Gussie Moran House to Ocean Park. A highlight there was the Horatio Court Apartments, 140 Hollister, built by Irving Gill in 1919--years ahead of its time.

The last stop was the Third Street Historic District, a remarkable collection of structures built between 1875 and 1930, which today, looks much like it did in the 1930s.

Tours require a great deal of planning. Thanks to Wendy, Ursula and SMC's Events Committee: Anita Karbelnig, Sherrill Kushner, Dick Orton, Jill Riseborough, Thomasine Rogas, and Doris Sosin.

Old buildings, especially houses, are like old friends. They may get a bit wrinkly around the edges but they make you feel comfortable, they make life richer, and you'd miss them terribly if they were gone. This rewarding afternoon gave us a chance to make some new friends and have a new understanding and appreciation for some "old friends" through the windows of a Big Blue Bus.

So how did we get 52 passengers on a tour for 49?

We started with 49, but two people couldn't stay. Minutes later, two others overhearing Ken's remarks, joined the tour. That's 51. The 52nd passenger was a small dog, who luckily did not leave a "landmark" of his own.

WHAT IS THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION, ANYWAY?

Seven Landmarks Commissioners are vested with the authority to carry out the policies and procedures laid out in our Landmarks Ordinance. They make designations for landmarks, structures of merit and historic districts, approve changes to landmarked buildings and more. Who are these people? How are they chosen? What are they authorized to do?

QUALIFICATIONS AND SELECTION

The Landmarks Commission was established in 1975 with the passage of the Landmarks Ordinance. The Commission consists of seven volunteer members, appointed by City Council. Interested residents file formal applications that are available at the City's Web site (www.santamonica.org). Applicants must be residents and over 18 years of age. They serve four-year terms and may serve two terms. Three are at-large. Four have specific qualifications: 1) registered architect, 2) a person with a demonstrated interest and knowledge, to the highest extent practicable, of local history, 3) architectural historian and 4) a California real estate licensee.

WHO THEY ARE

As of this writing, the Commission has six commissioners and one vacancy. The six commissioners are: John Berley, Nina Fresco, Roger Genser (chair pro tempore and local historian), Barbara Kaplan (registered architect), Ruthann Lehrer (chair and architectural historian) and Deborah Levin. Council member Michael Feinstein is the liaison to the Landmarks Commission. Elizabeth Bar-El, Associate Planner, is the staff person for the Landmarks Commission.

WHAT THEY DO

The Commission meets the second Monday of each month, 7:00 p.m. in City Council chambers. The agendas are available online at the City's website, in City Hall, or at the Library. They are posted 72 hours prior to the meeting. The mission of the Landmarks Commission is:

“To protect improvements and areas which represent the City's cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history; safeguard the City's historic,

aesthetic and cultural heritage; and promote the use of landmarks and historic districts for the education, pleasure and welfare of the people.”

The Commissioners are empowered to do this in the City Municipal Code Section 9.36.060 by using the following tools:

- designating landmarks and historic districts, and conducting studies and evaluations of applications for these designations
- regulating and controlling the alteration, restoration, construction, removal or demolition of any landmark;
- maintaining a current listing and description of designated Structures of Merit, Landmarks and Historic Districts;
- providing a suitable sign, plaque or other marker, at public or private expense, on or near a Landmark or Historic District indicating the designation; and
- commenting, when appropriate, about environmental review procedures under the Municipal Code or under the California Environmental Quality Act.

If there is a property you would like to bring to the attention of the Landmarks Commission, call staff person Liz Bar-El at 458-8341 or attend a regular meeting and put in a request to speak during the Public Input item on the agenda.

The Landmarks Commission's current vacancy must be filled by a real estate licensee. If you qualify, why not apply?



STANDING: JOHN BERLEY, DEBORAH LEVIN, NINA FRESCO. SEATED: ROGER GENSER, RUTHANN LEHRER, BARBARA KAPLAN

NEW MEMBERS

JOY AND KEN ABBOTT
BRENT ACHESON
THOMAS ANDERER
BETTY BAILEY
DONALD LAHR & KAREN
BAILEY

PHYLLIS BERNARD
PETER BETTS
JEANNE BLAND
ROBERT BRACKEN
TRACY CONDON
JANANNE MILLER CRALLE
COLLEEN CREEDON
ANDREW & CAROLINE DENYER
CHARLES FINE
DWIGHT FLOWERS
STEFANIE FOOTE
AUDREE FOWLER
KEN GENSER
FIELDEN HARPER
FERN HAUSS
ANN HILLER
JOHN TIPRE & EVELYN
LANSBERRY

EVELYN AND TED LEE
CHRISTY & STEPHEN MCAVOY
RENEE MONTAGNE
VICTOR NEWLOVE
LUCAS OPPENHEIM
HELEN & EDWARD PARK
LAMBERT GEISSINGER & DORIS
POWER

MARLENE RANTA
ROBIN RASBURY
THOMASINE ROGAS
CLAIRE ROGGER
RUTH & LARRY ROSEN
ALICE & WILLIAM ROY
KATE & TOM RUNYAN
SANDRA SAVETT
HANS ADAMSON & AMANDA
SEWARD
VIVIAN SPURGIN
ROGER & CHRIS THORNTON
MARILYN WEXLER

HAVE YOU
RENEWED
YET?



SANTA MONICA CONSERVANCY

NEWLY LANDMARKED

FROM PAGE 3

STRICK/OSCAR NIEMEYER HOUSE



LANDSCAPE UNDER RESTORATION AT 1911 LA MESA DR.

When it was put on the market in 2002, a buyer intended to demolish this important house. A hue and cry went up from the preservation community that convinced that buyer to resell it. The current owners bought the home and are busy preserving and restoring it.

This single-family residence was designed by Oscar Niemeyer in 1964. It is the only work in Santa Monica of this internationally recognized modern master and is generally believed to be his only residential work in the United States. Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer won the 1988 Pritzker Prize, architecture's highest honor. His career spans seven decades. In the U.S. he is known for the United Nations building in New York which he designed with Le Corbusier, and abroad, the design of Brasilia, when it became the new capital city of Brazil.

The Santa Monica house was designed for director, producer, and screenwriter Joseph Strick and his wife, writer Anne Strick. They never met the architect face to face. Niemeyer was not allowed to travel to the United States because of his belief in international Communism. Thus, his design was carried out entirely through written correspondence.

The house is an interpretation of the International Style with its flat roof, extensive use of steel-framed glass panels, open floor plan, and unornamented exterior surfaces. The dwelling's horizontality and extensive use of floor-to-ceiling plate glass facing the dramatic north view of the Santa Monica Mountains takes advantage of its spectacular site. One of the most prominent

features is the row of tall, narrow exposed rafters that cover the entire roof in a serrated pattern and project beyond the primary and rear elevations.

CALIFORNIA BUNGALOW

The 1920s California bungalow at 1414 Idaho Avenue exhibits subtle Colonial Revival influences.

The bungalow style had its genesis in southern California and was widely used in Santa Monica and throughout the region.

This small, one-story, clapboard clad house has typical features of the California bungalow: primarily rectangular, capped by a medium pitched, front-facing gable roof with overhanging eaves and exposed rafter tails. The historic features of the house are amazingly intact.

Many of the older buildings in this area were replaced by modern apartment buildings in the 1950s and 1960s, and more



BUNGALOW AT 1414 IDAHO AVENUE

recently, with large, multi-story condominiums. Older houses like this one are often isolated or clustered in small groups. Though common in style and design, this house's intact existence is important as a physical document to the residential development and architectural history of the surrounding area during the first quarter of the 20th century. To the credit of its owners through the years, it has been maintained with very little alteration.

*SOURCE: STAFF REPORTS FILED WITH THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION.

CITY PUBLISHES NEW LANDMARKS MATERIALS

The City's Planning Division has published a new, 22-page booklet, "Santa Monica Landmarks Tour" featuring addresses and detailed architectural and historical descriptions and a photograph of every designated City Landmark. Each landmark is also noted on a map. It includes a history of the city and defines terms such as "structure of merit," "landmark," and "historic district."

Another new city brochure jam-packed with information is entitled "Landmarks Program: An Overview." This brochure includes: a history of the preservation movement in Santa Monica, a discussion of the benefits of designating historic structures, an outline of the criteria used in determining if a structure qualifies as a landmark, and how to apply for designation.

The City has also completed an updated, comprehensive list of all structures on the Historic Resources Inventory, which until now, appeared in a handful of separate documents.

All are available through the Planning Division at (310) 458-8341.

HIGH GRADES

FROM PAGE 1

"It is important to remember that our top grade is only for preservation tools, in this case the city's preservation policies. The report didn't review how well we've done at actually saving our architectural treasures. Preserving Santa Monica's distinctive identity is a struggle that is coming to a head now and over the next few years. We will need even more cooperation between residents, property owners and the City if we hope to earn an "A" for what we've saved. Cities like Pasadena are synonymous with preservation. Preservation is a way of life with both residents and city government. Here is where the citizens of Santa Monica and we at the Santa Monica Conservancy have our work cut out for us. After all, if we as a community show our support for preservation, we can expect that our elected officials and city staff should support it too," Cleys says.

The full Los Angeles Conservancy report is available on its website at www.laconservancy.org.

The Santa Monica Conservancy Presents

TIM GREGORY

"THE BUILDING BIOGRAPHER"

a noted registered public historian and certified archivist

LEARN TO UNCOVER THE HISTORY OF
YOUR HOUSE!

Sunday, February 22, 2004, 4:00 - 6:00 pm

2424 Fourth Street (between Ocean Park and Hollister)

Our homes are physical "documents" of our times. If you know where to look, they have stories to tell about who lived and worked in them and what they valued, and they can reveal what was popular (and possible) in architectural technology and style, as well as what changes were made over the years.

Tim Gregory will discuss the type of information to look for and, more importantly, where to find it so you can chronicle your own home's past. Deeds, maps, building costs, blueprints, photos, architects' and builders' names -- they're all listed somewhere... and Tim knows where. For the merely curious or those intent on landmark designation, Tim's insights on uncovering your house's history will reassure you that there's no place like (your) home.

Members: free. Non-members: \$5.

RSVP required: 310-458-0399 or mail in form below.

Space is limited.

ATTEND THE BUILDING BIOGRAPHER EVENT! BECOME A MEMBER!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

E-mail _____

I would like to reserve _____ free member tickets to hear the Building Biographer.

I would like to reserve _____ \$5 non-member tickets to hear the Building Biographer.

\$25 Membership Fee enclosed. (Join now and attend for free!)

I would like to volunteer for the Conservancy.

I am enclosing an additional \$ _____ to further support SMC.

Total enclosed \$ _____

Please make checks payable to:

SANTA MONICA CONSERVANCY
PO Box 653 Santa Monica, CA 90406
310-485-0399 info@smconservancy.org



SMC BYLAW REVISIONS AT ANNUAL MEETING

Members of the Santa Monica Conservancy will vote on proposed changes to the Conservancy's bylaws at its May 2004 annual meeting. A summary of the proposed changes follows. The full text will be mailed to members prior to the meeting. The current bylaws are posted at www.smconservancy.org. Changes are in the following areas:

1) Quorum for member action at annual and special meetings will be increased.

2) Powers of Board of Directors will be clarified and expanded to facilitate conduct of Conservancy business between annual and special meetings of Conservancy members. Changes include:

a) Clarification of Board's inherent power to conduct its business through the creation of standing and ad hoc committees.

b) Addition of interim power to fill Board vacancies until next annual or special meeting of members.

c) Addition of interim power to amend bylaws until review and action by members at next annual or special meeting.

d) Clarification regarding operation of the Board of Directors including:

i) Number of Directors: 9

ii) Director's term is 3 years.

iii) Limit: 2 consecutive terms.

iv) Three Directors are elected each year, with 3 of initial founding Directors to hold one, two, and three year terms to provide for rotation.

e) Functions of the Executive Committee (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer) are clarified to include exercise of powers of full Board of Directors between Board meetings, subject to ratification by Board at its next meeting.

f) Clarification of where and how minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors and annual and special meetings of the members are kept.

MILLS ACT PROPERTIES INCREASE BY FORTY PERCENT

Santa Monica's City Council has given approval for five new Mills Act contracts, a 40% increase in the number of Santa Monica property owners benefitting from this incentive. Mills Act contracts give owners of historic properties big tax breaks.

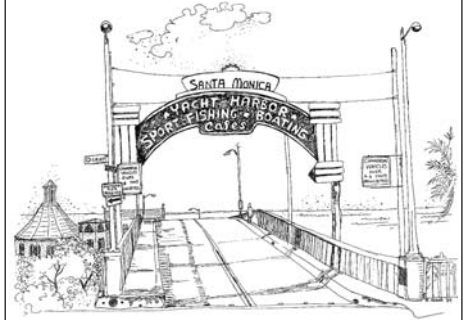
The Mills Act is a state-sponsored economic incentive program offering a property tax reduction for owners of "qualified historical properties." The properties must be privately owned, not exempt from property taxation, and listed on any federal, state, county or city historic register. In Santa Monica that includes Landmarks and contributing structures in Historic Districts. With the help of a professional architect hired by the applicant, owners and the City contractually agree upon a specific program for maintenance of the historical and architectural character of the properties. In exchange, the property taxes are reassessed based on the potential annual rental income of the property rather

than the actual property value. This can result in a tax savings of as much as 50%. The original 10-year contract will self renew in perpetuity, benefitting all future owners.

To take advantage of this incentive, owners file an application with the City's Planning Department. Staff will help owners through the process. Each November, City staff sends applications completed during that year to the Landmarks Commission. The Commission recommends which applications City Council might approve in time for the following year's tax bill. We all benefit when property owners take advantage of the Mills Act. It promotes owner's pride in their Santa Monica properties while preserving our heritage and visually enriching our community for its residents, business owners, workers and tourists. For more information, contact the City's Planning Department at (310) 458-8341.

SANTA MONICA NOTE CARDS

CREATED BY LOCAL ARTIST
RUTH ROSEN



At our upcoming events, SMC will be offering note cards featuring Santa Monica scenes by local artist, Ruth Rosen. The detailed, black ink line drawings feature familiar historic views of Santa Monica. A packet of ten cards, 6" X 4½," with envelopes are \$10.



SANTA MONICA CONSERVANCY

SAVE THE DATE:

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 4 PM

The Santa Monica Conservancy Presents:

TIM GREGORY

THE BUILDING BIOGRAPHER

Learn to Uncover the History of Your House!

(DETAILS PAGE 7)

P.O. Box 653 SANTA MONICA, CA 90406-0653

BOARD MEETINGS:

- JANUARY 28 SMC Board Meeting 7:00 pm
Fairview Branch Library
- FEBRUARY 25 SMC Board Meeting 7:00 pm
1525 Euclid St. - Main Conference Room
- MARCH 24 SMC Board Meeting 7:00 pm
1525 Euclid St. - Main Conference Room
- APRIL 28 SMC Board Meeting 7:00 pm
1525 Euclid St. - Main Conference Room