



SAVE THE DATE:

THIRD STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT TOUR

JANUARY 30, 2005
12 PM - 4 PM

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WWW.SMCONSERVANCY.ORG

TOUR OF HOMES IN OCEAN PARK'S HISTORIC DISTRICT SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 30, 2005

THIRD STREET WAS HOME TO MANY PROMINENT EARLY SANTA MONICANS

In just a few short blocks, the Third Street Historic District in the Ocean Park section of Santa Monica provides visitors a visual history lesson. The neighborhood represents all the architectural styles that were popular in Santa Monica from 1875 through 1935. Many of the city's most prominent early residents built their homes here. A remarkable 84 per cent of the 42 structures now in the District are original. Five of these, including an 1875 church converted into a family residence, will be on public view Sunday, January 30, 2005 from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm as part of a Santa Monica Conservancy walking tour.

The tour is funded, in part, by the City of Santa Monica. Each participant will receive a self-guided brochure identifying the open houses and other significant houses in the District. The tour features visits to the interiors of historic Victorian and Craftsman homes and exemplifies the creative ways that vintage homes can be modified, expanded, and adapted for contemporary living while preserving



those distinctive features that give them their architectural and historical value.

Docents will be on hand in the homes to provide detailed information to participants. Light refreshments and free preservation materials will be offered at the Church in Ocean Park. CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

AERO THEATRE REOPENS

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE

The Aero Theatre on Montana Avenue reopens January 6th under the auspices of American Cinematheque with the airing of its first film, a sneak preview of "In Good Company." The film's star, Dennis Quaid, will appear at the opening.

Originally built in 1939, the Aero was opened by Donald Douglas as a recreation facility for the employees of his aircraft company during World War II. While his plant was operating 24 hours a day, the Aero did the



Photo: SMPL Image Archives

same so that workers could see movies any time during their off-hours. Today, it is one of the few remaining single screen, neighborhood theaters in the Los Angeles

area. The renovation, costing a half-million dollars, features new seats, movie screen, and state-of-the-art sound and projection system, and keeps its Art Deco interior and distinctive marquee, roofline and ticket booth intact.

The American Cinematheque is a nonprofit, viewer-supported cultural organization dedicated exclusively to the public presentation of the moving picture in all its forms. The Cinematheque presents the best of film and video - ranging

from the classics to the outer frontiers of the art form. Information about the Aero's film schedule can be accessed at www.aerotheatre.com.

CONSERVANCY BUSINESS

CONSERVANCY'S ANNUAL MEETING WILL BE HELD AT EMBASSY HOTEL APARTMENTS



Photo: SMPL Image Archives

The Conservancy will hold its annual meeting at the Embassy Hotel Apartments on Third Street in Santa Monica in early March. The Embassy was constructed in 1924 and designed by Arthur E. Harvey who also designed several notable buildings in Los Angeles. The Hotel/Apartments typify the Spanish Colonial Revival style. In addition to a featured speaker, participants will be given a tour of the building.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY - HELP CONSERVE SANTA MONICA'S PAST



As a member of the Santa Monica Conservancy, you know that knowledge and public awareness are keys to preserving our historic and cultural treasures. Your membership dues provide valuable financial resources to develop and fund programs like the Third Street Historic District Tour scheduled for January. Your continued support will help ensure that Santa Monica's past has a future. Please renew your membership today. Thank you!

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

THIRD STREET TOUR

DISTRICT PROVIDES A VISUAL HISTORY LESSON
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

THIRD STREET HISTORY

The Third Street Historic District was officially designated in 1990 and is Santa Monica's first historic district. Architecturally, the buildings chronicle the evolution of design from the Victorian era through the revival styles of the 1920s and 1930s. Ocean Park, formerly called South Santa Monica, was originally settled by the Vawter family in 1884. The Vawters subdivided their property and established South Santa Monica's first bank, the first water company, a carnation farm, the first Presbyterian church, and a horse car line connecting it to the rest of Santa Monica. Not long after, The Crystal Springs Bathhouse and Plunge was built—the first South Santa Monica beach attraction. Visionary developer Abbot Kinney helped turn South Santa Monica into a beach resort later called Ocean Park. Soon, year-round residents began to populate the area.

HOUSE DESCRIPTIONS

The house at 2619 Third Street is a classic Craftsman bungalow built in 1910. It has been extensively restored by its current owners who have done much of the work themselves.

The Victorian Gothic-inspired redwood structure with high-pitched gables at 2621 Second Street was once a Methodist Episcopal church. One of Santa Monica's oldest buildings, it was built by volunteer labor at a cost of \$683! It was sold in 1923 and used for meetings of the women's auxiliary of Union veterans of the Civil War. In the early 1970s artist Helen Taylor Sheats converted it into a residence and had it landmarked. A local architect now owns the structure and is preserving and restoring it with minimal intervention.

Congregants of the Methodist Episcopal church who previously worshiped in the church that was converted into a residence built a new, larger church on the corner of Second and Hills Streets in 1923. Now called The Church in Ocean Park, it features beautiful stained glass windows.

At 2544 Third Street, originally the home of a local Main Street butcher, is an airplane style Craftsman bungalow, characterized by its broad overhanging eaves, exposed rafters and large, front wrap-around porch. A built-in secretary in the living room has a "Holmes Disappearing Bed" which slides out from a bottom panel.

The home at 2612 Third Street (1912) was purchased by the current owner when it was a triplex. She has restored the original floor plan. The house was built by J.L. Packard, the tobacconist on Main Street. It is a cross-over Victorian/Craftsman with an eyebrow balcony.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for the tour are \$35 per person, \$25 for non members, and \$45 for those who join the Conservancy and attend the tour. Tickets will be held at the Ocean Park Branch Library, 2601 Main Street. Parking is available at Muir Elementary School, at Fifth Street and Ocean Park Boulevard. A public parking structure on Main Street and beach parking are also within easy walking distance. Reservations are required. For reservations and information, call 310-485-0399 or go to the Santa Monica Conservancy website at www.smconservancy.org.

Volunteer docents are needed for the house tour. For two hours service, each docent will receive a free tour ticket. No experience necessary. Please call Ruthann at 310-828-0692.

ANOTHER JOHN BYERS HOME IS LANDMARKED

HISTORIC HOME IS MODELED AFTER EARLY CALIFORNIA HACIENDAS



Photos: City of Santa Monica

The newly-landmarked William S. Hart adobe is a fine example of the Mexican Colonial Revival style, based on 18th century regional architecture.

The rich legacy of former local premier architect, John Byers, has been protected for posterity thanks to its next door neighbor and current owner, Joy Jones. Her application for landmark designation of her home at 404 Georgina Avenue was confirmed by the Landmarks Commission who agreed to the designation this past November.

Jones moved to in the neighborhood in 1979 and at one time lived across the street, then a block away and finally next door. As their neighbor, Jones knew the former owners and told them of her interest in the house. When they were ready to sell, she made them an offer they couldn't refuse. It had been a rental property for many years before she bought it last April.



"I was interested in protecting the house and the neighborhood," notes Jones, a property manager by profession. "I didn't want to see someone tear this pretty house down and build a monster mansion that would fill the lot." She hopes to remodel the interior, opening up the small rooms and ridding them of dust, mold and termites. "I would like to preserve the character and the flavor of the house and add on a second story while preserving the large lot around it," she adds.

ARCHITECTURE: MEXICAN COLONIAL REVIVAL STYLE

Built in 1920, Byers styled this one-story, single family residence of adobe construction after dwellings once found on haciendas during the Mexican Colonial period (1821-1846). The Mexican Colonial Revival style was popular in Southern California, the Southwest, and northern Mexico, based on a style that first appeared in this region in the 18th century. Byers, a former Santa Monica High School teacher, achieved a wide reputation in Southern California with a large following among entertainment world celebrities. He was known for interpreting this style of architecture and using indigenous materials (especially adobe) and traditional construction methods to achieve this style. This home is one of the earliest examples of Byers' use of adobe for residential construction in Santa Monica.

Common elements of Mexican Colonial

Revival style include thick adobe walls finished with smooth stucco; low-pitched, red-tiled roofs; broad front porches or verandas shaded by deep overhangs; deeply recessed, wood-framed windows; arched porches or walkways; heavy wood front doors; and interior courtyards.

The Georgina house had an original U-shaped floor plan that is traditional for hacienda-type structures built around an interior courtyard. It is constructed of adobe bricks sheathed in stucco and capped by a gabled, red tile roof. The front façade of the Georgina house is an especially authentic reproduction of the first adobe buildings. The two-story rear addition is rendered in the Mexican Colonial Revival style using compatible surface materials and architectural elements, similar to those of the original house.



The house is located in what is known as the Palisades Tract neighborhood which began to be developed in 1905. The tract was laid out with broad, tree-lined streets that provided a view toward Ocean Avenue and the Santa Monica Palisades. The area stretches from Montana Avenue to Adelaide Drive. The structure has been determined to be eligible for National Register status.

FORMER OWNERS

The house is listed on the city's Historic Resource Inventory as the William S. Hart House, named for William S. Hart Jr. (1923-2004), the only child of Broadway actor and silent western film star, William Surrey Hart. Hart Jr. lived in the home from approximately 1952 to 1989. The first owner, a widow named May MacBennett, never occupied the house, but lived a few blocks away on Ocean Avenue. It's speculated that it had been constructed as an investment rental property.

TWO HISTORIC LANDMARKS = ONE NEW HOTEL

“A WHOLE NEW LIFE AND A WHOLE NEW USE” FOR OLD STRUCTURES



Image: RTK Architects

The old is new again on Ocean Avenue: Architect's rendering of a proposed new 77-room hotel and restaurant bridging two landmarks – a Queen Anne house and a Spanish Colonial Revival office building.

Through a proposed development agreement with the city, a new 77-room hotel and restaurant arranged around a publicly accessible plaza may be created on Ocean Avenue by incorporating two historic landmarks on three lots. At the north end (1323 Ocean Avenue) is the Queen Anne-style Gussie Moran House. At the south end (1337 Ocean Avenue) is a Spanish Colonial Revival home-turned-office building that will be moved one lot to the north. An open plaza will connect the two structures once an existing multi-family structure is demolished at 1327. A three-level subterranean parking garage would service the new structure.

“It’s a creative and bold adaptive reuse,” notes Nina Fresco, Landmarks Commission Chair Pro Tem and board member of the Santa Monica Conservancy. The Landmarks Commission held several public hearings regarding the historic buildings involved in the project. The Landmarks Commission’s primary concern about the possible development was the importance of maintaining the current review process for changes to landmarks in order to ensure the preservation of the buildings’ historic integrity as changes are necessary to meet

practical requirements and city codes. The commissioners also recommended that the contractor who is selected to move and store the Victorian building have the necessary qualifications to properly handle this work which is crucial to maintaining the integrity of the historic structure. Additionally, the commission recommended that the new building be carefully differentiated from the original Spanish building to which it will be attached, and that the plaza be designed so that the Victorian building is well-integrated into the overall concept and in keeping with the historic co-existence of the two building styles.

The Planning Commission approved the concept in late November, thereby allowing city staff to go forward with negotiating a development agreement with Hill Street Realty to work out the details. Tom Cleys, who represented the Conservancy at the Planning Commission meeting, stated that the Conservancy supported the new hotel plans as long as the historic integrity of the buildings would be kept intact and that a qualified mover would be engaged. City Council will be the ultimate approving body, informed by recommendations from the Planning Commission and potentially,

the Landmarks Commission.

“This is what we like to see for our historic buildings, bringing them into a whole new life and a whole new use,” says Fresco. At the request of Fresco and representatives of the Santa Monica Conservancy and Natural Resources Defense Council, the Planning Commission directed staff to specify in the development agreement that the Landmarks Commission will oversee any changes made to the historic buildings.

NEW MEMBERS

ELLEN CASTIN
 WINSTON CHAPPELL
 DAVID LAWRENCE GRAY
 SHIVA MANDELL
 ROBERT S. REES
 JEFF SCHWARTZ
 LINDA SULLIVAN
 TED WINTERER
 JOHN AND SUSAN ZINNER

TWO NEW BOOKS CELEBRATE THE HISTORY OF SANTA MONICA

NEW LOCAL HISTORIES LAVISHLY ILLUSTRATED

Two new books about Santa Monica have hit the bookstores.

Historian and Santa Monica Conservancy member Paula Scott has written *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge*.



Paula Scott wrote her history of Santa Monica in order to satisfy her own curiosity about the city's past.

Intended for residents and visitors, this paperback book presents a compact and readable account of the area's history from the time of the Gabrielino Indians to the present.

Within its 160 pages are fifty images that illustrate themes developed in the text, including the growth of the city, its complex relationship with Los Angeles, life during World War II, popular amusements at the beaches, ethnic groups, the sports and leisure capital, and political independence throughout the city's history.

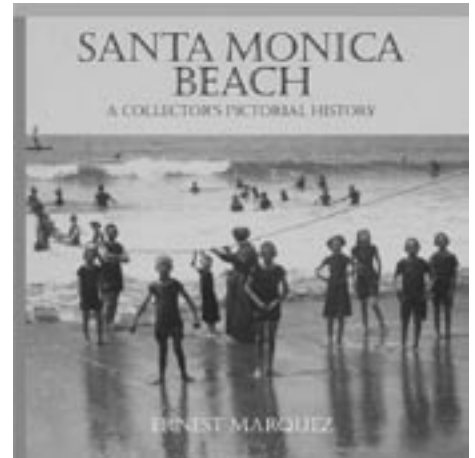
Scott, who holds a doctorate in American history and has worked as a lecturer at UCLA, wrote the book to satisfy her own curiosity about the city's rich and interesting past. Available at local bookstores for \$24.99.

A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF SANTA MONICA BEACH

The second book, by local historian Ernest Marquez, is *Santa Monica Beach: A Collector's Pictorial History*.

Marquez grew up in Rancho Boca de Santa Monica in Santa Monica Canyon, formerly a Mexican land grant given to his grandfathers in 1839.

As a young boy he swam the Pacific at the heels of Olympian Buster Crabbe, and snacked on watercress that grew in the canyon's creek. He watched what had been known as the Roosevelt Highway become the Pacific Coast Highway, and Hollywood stars build homes along what



ultimately would be referred to as the "Gold Coast."

Over the past several decades Marquez collected both images and information that together define the history of our well known beach. The book is hardbound, contains 200 rare vintage images, and sells for \$35.



Photo: Scott McAuley

Author and local historian Ernest Marquez surveys Santa Monica Beach.

SMC TOURS NRDC "GREEN" BUILDING

BY JILL RISEBOROUGH, EVENTS COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR

This past fall, SMC members toured the Southern California offices of the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) on 2nd Street in Santa Monica. The building, also known as the "Robert Redford Building," was recently awarded a "Platinum" rating by the U.S. Green Building Council, recognizing the highest possible achievement in sustainable design. With its ability to reclaim water and generate electricity from sunlight, and its use of recycled or recyclable materials, the NRDC building is a showcase of "green" construction and maintenance. The building, originally built in 1917, was stripped down to its wooden

skeleton and rebuilt as an example of urban renewal. The current building was designed by Moule & Polyzoides Architects and Urbanists.

NRDC staff members Evelyn Slavin and Gisela Lesin led our group through the cement and fiber composite building, enthusiastically detailing the various construction techniques and materials used. We walked through skylighted and naturally ventilated offices, across bamboo and hemp-floored offices to the solar paneled rooftop. We saw tables made from recycled wood and chairs made with excess seatbelt fabric. In the basement of the building we viewed a filtration system which

processes rain, shower and sink water to irrigate landscaping and flush toilets, allowing the building to use 60 percent less water than a standard building of its size. The tour ended in the Action Center where we browsed among the exhibits on global warming, ocean pollution, everyday toxins and green building, and a timeline of environmental milestones.

Thank you again to Evelyn and Gisela, for a fascinating visit. For those who couldn't attend, The NRDC offers tours on Tuesdays at 10am and Thursdays at 4pm, by appointment. The NRDC's phone number is 310-434-2300.

CANYON GAS STATION - DEMOLISHED OR SAVED? FATE OF L.A.'S OLDEST FULL-SERVICE GAS STATION STILL UP IN THE AIR



Photo: Kathleen Herd Masser, Santa Monica Mirror

The Santa Monica Conservancy has joined with the Los Angeles Conservancy, the Palisades Historical Society, the Route 66 Association, the Society for Commercial Archeology and Los Angeles City Councilwoman Cindy Miscikowski in urging preservation of the historic service station.

You've probably driven by the Canyon Gas Station with the distinctive orange and white gas pumps on Entrada Drive in Santa Monica Canyon as you wended your way down to Pacific Coast Highway. The station, actually located in Los Angeles but 500 feet from the Santa Monica border, had been the oldest full-service gas station in Los Angeles—in operation since 1922. This



Photo: Palisaidan-Post

Business owner Brian Clark has been locked out from the property since November.

past November the station was in danger of being demolished when the property was sold. The station has been leased in 1995 and restored by tenant Brian Clark. When he found himself locked out from the property this past November, he removed the vintage Coke machines, the neon lights, the restored gas pumps and the street sign to a storage facility for safekeeping in hopes of reaching a settlement. Clark had tried to purchase the property but was rejected.

In an attempt to save the station, the Santa Monica Canyon Civic Association (representing neighboring residents) applied to the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission to have it declared a historic-cultural monument. According to the municipal building code, it can be deemed a historic-cultural monument if it is "of particular significance to the City of Los Angeles, in which the broad cultural, political, economic or social history of the city or community

is reflected or exemplified."

A hearing of the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission took place in mid-November. The Santa Monica Conservancy Board supports the preservation of this rare cultural resource and joins with the Los Angeles Conservancy, the Palisades Historical Society, the Palisades Council, the Society for Commercial Archeology, the Route 66 Association, and Councilwoman Cindy Miscikowski in this effort. The

commission agreed to take the application under consideration, and will discuss it in January after making a site visit.

If approved, the new owner would not be allowed to demolish, alter or move the station for one year which would buy Clark and the community more time. As of the time of this publication, no decision had been made with respect to the station's designation as a historic-cultural monument by the City of Los Angeles.

When your children ask where you got married, will you have to say, "Over there, by the unloaded?"

When we lose a historic place, we lose a part of who we are. To learn how you can help protect places in your community, visit NationalTrust.org or call 1-800-303-NTHP. History is in our hands.

Ad Council NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Image: National Trust for Historic Preservation

"When we lose a historic place, we lose a part of who we are." The recent ad campaign sponsored by the National Trust and the Ad Council uses humor to underscore the importance of preserving our cultural and historic heritage.

LOVE OF OLD HOMES A FAMILY TRADITION

LOUISE BILL HAS CHERISHED HER JOHN BYERS HOME FOR MORE THAN 50 YEARS

“Mother liked old houses,” declares Louise Bill, with a twinkle in her blue eyes. Louise is a proud native of Louisville, Georgia, a former capitol of the state of Georgia and also the home of her now deceased mother, Louise Warren McMillan. Her mother, from a Southern family with early roots in America, lived in a stately Victorian home that was capped with a colored glass cupola and wrapped with a verandah around the first floor.



Photo: Joan Charles

Redwood wainscoting, built-in bookcases and a brick fireplace grace the interior of the Craftsman home.

The love of old homes was passed from mother to daughter. Louise Bill herself cherishes her Craftsman home, built in 1914 by noted architect John Byers. It is flanked by large old eucalyptus trees that Louise says ran down Seventh Street into Santa Monica Canyon where the Carillos had their ranch. According to Louise, the Carillos donated land in the Canyon for a school on the condition that each year they host a fiesta where neighbors could get together and become a community. Louise used to attend the annual fiestas there.

“Byers bought a shipload of redwood,” says Louise. He put it to good use in this house, which is all redwood except for some stucco. Built-in redwood bookshelves and wainscoted redwood walls in the living room are testament to Byers fondness for the wood. The typically dark Craftsman interior lends serenity to the place. Louise was told that the Byers family had benches around the perimeter of the living room. Apparently he and his wife belonged to a dance society and they must have cleared the center of the room for dancing and used the benches for sitting.



Photo: Doris Sosin

Louise Bill greets visitors at the impressive front door of her John Byers home.

Louise and her husband bought the Byers house in 1950. Louise notes that the initials “JB” appeared over an archway leading out to the garden. Ironically, Louise’s husband, Joseph Bill, had the same initials. Her husband had an art degree from Yale and a Harvard degree in landscape architecture and planning.

Louise has lived in the home for most of more than fifty years, renting it out at times when she and her husband moved to Sacramento for a number of years or when she spent four years back in her native Georgia. Odie Carillo, brother of Leo Carillo, helped her find tenants. He had a real estate office on Montana Avenue then.

Many people who lived in the house have come back and asked to take a tour. They share their stories. “One woman told me that she and her husband used to sleep on the sleeping porch upstairs, only to find out later, to her embarrassment, that all the neighbors could hear what they did and said!”

BECOME A MEMBER!

Name _____

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E-mail: _____

- \$25 Individual Membership Fee enclosed.
- \$35 Family Membership Fee enclosed.
- \$15 Senior/Student Membership Fee enclosed.
- I would like to volunteer for the Conservancy.
- I am enclosing an additional \$ _____ to further support SMC.

Total enclosed \$ _____

Please make checks payable to:
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SMC NEWS STAFF

SHERRIL KUSHNER
 JOAN CHARLES

PHOTOS BY NINA FRESCO UNLESS NOTED

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

ANGEL'S ATTIC: A SANTA MONICA HOUSE OF HOUSES



Visitors to Angel's Attic can enjoy afternoon tea on the verandah.

ONE OF SANTA MONICA'S FEW REMAINING VICTORIANS IS NOW A MUSEUM SHOWCASING ANTIQUE DOLLS, DOLLHOUSES, TOYS AND MINIATURES

Tucked into a spot on Fifth and Colorado Streets is a lovely restored Queen Anne Victorian house built in 1895. It is allegedly one of two remaining Victorian houses in Santa Monica and now houses antique dolls, dollhouses, toys and miniatures in seven galleries and many display cabinets. The Museum was founded in 1984 and is a nonprofit enterprise sponsored by Angels for Autistic Children for the benefit of the Julia Ann Singer Center.

In the beginning, dollhouses were playthings for adults - and only extremely wealthy adults could afford the "baby houses" of the late 17th and 18th Centuries. Early dollhouses were usually elaborately constructed to fit inside a cabinet. Today, of course, they are enjoyed by all ages.

Angel's Attic also offers afternoon tea on its enclosed verandah. Advance reservations are required. The private garden is also rented out for special events.

The Museum is open Thursday through Sunday from 12:30 pm to 4:30 pm. It's located at 516 Colorado Street and the phone number is 394-8331. Adults are charged \$6.50 admission; children under 12; \$3.50 and seniors \$4.00.



SANTA MONICA CONSERVANCY

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THIRD STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT TOUR

SUNDAY
JANUARY 30, 2005
12 PM - 4 PM

VOLUNTEER DOCENTS NEEDED FOR THE TOUR.

FOR TWO HOURS SERVICE, EACH DOCENT WILL RECEIVE A FREE TOUR TICKET. NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY. PLEASE CALL RUTHANN AT 310-828-0692.

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