



SANTA MONICA CONSERVANCY NEWS

ENSURING THAT THE PAST HAS A FUTURE

OCTOBER 2004

VOL 2 NO 4

SAVE THE DATES:

NRDC TOURS -

OCTOBER 14, 4 PM
NOVEMBER 18, 4 PM

ARTICLE THIS PAGE

THIRD STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT TOUR

JANUARY 30, 2005

PAGE 8

ELECTION 2004 CANDIDATES SPEAK ON PRESERVATION

PAGE 1, 3-6

TOUR THE NRDC BUILDING

PAGE 1

SUBSTANTIAL REMODEL: THE VOTE IS IN

PAGE 2

SHOTGUN HOUSE UPDATE

PAGE 2

NEWLY LANDMARKED ON OCEAN AVENUE

PAGE 7

LANDMARKS COMMISSION NEW CHAIR

PAGE 7

THIRD STREET DISTRICT TOUR: THE PLANNING STAGES

PAGE 8

PASADENA HERITAGE CRAFTSMAN WEEKEND

PAGE 8

VISIT OUR WEB SITE:
WWW.SMCONSERVANCY.ORG

ELECTION 2004: CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



Santa Monica City Hall was built in 1938 by noted architects and contains the work of local artists and tile makers. It is a favorite of City Council candidate Patricia Hoffman.

Santa Monica City Council elections are coming up. There are four open seats. The incumbents, Richard Bloom, Michael Feinstein, Ken Genser, and Herb Katz will be running again, in addition to 10 other candidates. The Santa Monica

Conservancy sent each candidate a set of questions regarding preservation. Of the 14 candidates, nine responded. Below are the questions. The responses can be found on pages 3-6 in alphabetical order.

1. What is your favorite Santa Monica historic treasure?
2. Santa Monica has an award winning Historic Preservation Element and Landmarks ordinance. What new steps can the City undertake to better preserve Santa Monica's unique historic character?
3. What are your feelings on Proposition A, the initiative on the ballot in 2002 requiring property owner's consent before a single family home could be landmarked?

SEE PAGE 3 FOR THE RESPONSES

TOUR OF NRDC BUILDING WITH SMC ONE OF THE GREENEST BUILDINGS IN THE COUNTRY

The Santa Monica Conservancy is sponsoring members-only tours of the new state-of-the-art Natural Resources Defense Council building in Santa Monica which opened one year ago. It is in the forefront of green building design in the United States and is an excellent example of how contemporary styling can be perfectly compatible with surrounding historic fabric.

The tours will be on October 14 & November 18, 4:00 p.m., at 1314 Second Street (between Arizona and Broadway). Free two-hour parking is available across the street in the City parking structure. Reservations are required.

The NRDC building is a renovated 1920s-era structure, in the heart of downtown Santa Monica, chosen for existing transit services and to avoid building on undeveloped land. It conserves water and energy and uses environmentally sound materials.

For reservations for this members-only event, call 310-485-0399 or email info@smconservancy.com. Advanced reservations ONLY. Tours are limited to 20 people each so reserve early. Please indicate the number of people attending, if

membership forms are needed and leave a phone number for confirmation of reservations.



Photo: Tim Street-Porter

CONSERVANCY BUSINESS

PLAQUE COMMITTEE

George Washington may not have slept here, but many noteworthy events and people have graced our relatively young city. The City of Santa Monica has provided commemorative brass plaques for some of its designated landmarks. However, in recent years, the City stopped underwriting the cost (approximately \$300) due to budget constraints, leaving many landmarks without identification.

SMC member Bruria Finkel is now chairing a newly formed SMC committee to pursue the marking of designated landmarks as well as other historic buildings, locations of historic events, and places frequented by renowned residents. Committee members include Phyllis Bernard, Sid Fleischman, Steven Koeppel and Ruthann Lehrer.

The Committee is starting to determine criteria for receiving plaques, to explore the design of markers, and consider what other organizations might partner with the Conservancy in this endeavor. The Committee meets the third Monday of each month. If interested in becoming involved, contact Bruria Finkel at (310) 396-0899.

THANKS!

Thank you to a generous member who donated a Powerpoint software package to the Santa Monica Conservancy. We look forward to using this program in the future when we begin to arrange community presentations.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

If you care about preservation and are looking for a way to assist others in protecting Santa Monica's precious historic spaces, please consider volunteering with the Santa Monica Conservancy.

We have projects for every personality type from quiet background workers to gregarious party planners.

Please contact the Conservancy and say you would like to help us achieve our mission at 310-485-0399 or info@smconservancy.org

COUNCIL REDEFINES MEANING OF "SUBSTANTIAL REMODEL"

BY CAROLANNE SUDDERTH, EXCERPTED FROM THE OCEAN PARK GAZETTE

Aug. 4 - The Santa Monica City Council firmed up the remodeling law, taking steps to quash scofflaws who have taken advantage of the city's remodeling ordinances and, at the same time, to permit the legitimate shoring up of historic structures. The new law allows the replacement of structural elements between the footing and the finished floor of the first story.

According to the staff report, "substantial remodel is a term used to identify the point at which an existing structure has been altered to such an extent that it warrants compliance with all current applicable municipal regulations." Under current law, the substantial remodel definition kicks in if 50% of the existing walls are replaced or removed. However, per the staff report, "Wholly new structures are constructed under the pretense of being a remodel, which has allowed the retention of nonconforming structures to the detriment of the public health, safety

and general welfare."

Under the old law removal of the walls even to strengthen foundations would have classified the project as a substantial remodel.

For older structures built under previous building codes, this could turn reinforcing walls or foundations under older beach homes - many of which were built with single-ply walls and without foundations - into a substantial remodel subject to compliance with all current development standards, encouraging tear-downs.

Homeowner Adam Finkel said that he and his fiancée have been trying to upgrade their historic 1904 Hart Street home. "The new city ordinance does exactly what it needs to take the burden off the homeowner."

Santa Monica Conservancy President Joel Brand praised the council for taking action on an area of the municipal code "which actually discouraged preservation."

PLANS SHAPING UP FOR SHOTGUN HOUSE'S PERMANENT MOVE

Two years ago, the Shotgun House was moved from 2712 Second Street to the Santa Monica Airport. You may recall that the house was saved at the eleventh hour from demolition when Santa Monica residents (many of whom are Santa Monica Conservancy members), Ocean Park Community Organization and the City intervened to store it until a permanent site could be identified and plans for its rehabilitation could be determined. The house, built circa 1899, is one room wide, one story tall and three rooms deep. It may have been constructed initially as a beach

cottage or a home for laborers associated with the then nearby rail or oil industries.

Recommended relocation sites include the community garden on Nielsen Way and adjacent to the California Heritage Museum on Main Street, both in Ocean Park.



The Shotgun House is safely boarded up at the Santa Monica Airport awaiting a new home.

ELECTION 2004: CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES SPEAK ON PRESERVATION

BILL BAUER

Favorite Historic Treasure: The Santa Monica Pier(s). In the 1970s I served as the publicist for Save the Santa Monica Piers (both the S.M. Pier which is the roadway and the adjoining wooden Newcomb Pleasure Pier) when they were going to be demolished and replaced with a hotel and convention center on an artificial island. The Committee also targeted three council members up for election who favored the demolition and it convinced residents to vote in three new people who rescinded the demolition order. I helped draft and pass an initiative that makes it illegal to tear down the piers and provides fines, now part of our City Charter. I was a founding member of "Santa Monica Landmark Protectors" whose first mission was to save the Spanish Revival style city library on 5th and Santa Monica Blvd. Unfortunately it was demolished. More recently I worked to save a Craftsman house north of Montana which eventually was landmarked and re-sold to a property owner who has since restored it.

Next steps for preservation: There are not that many real landmarks left to protect. Many well-meaning people are landmarking to protect their homes or apartments from redevelopment rather than protecting them for any historical significance. The process has been abused by those with personal agendas and those who think "more is better." Credibility is further eroded when truly significant structures fall through the cracks and are demolished. The City and those who advocate for saving our historic heritage need to be more selective about what they choose to preserve. It is paramount that the City provide timely and proper notification to property owners of possible action affecting their properties. And finding a person willing to save a structure is important too.

For or against Prop A?: I supported the homeowner's right to choose because too many non-experts were involved in designating structures of marginal or no real

historic value beyond a 40-year age. The process had become compromised for some and a nightmare for others.

RICHARD BLOOM

Favorite Historic Treasure: My personal favorite Santa Monica historic treasure is the pier, the Loeff Hippodrome and our carousel. I name them as a group because they are inseparable and define our community to residents and visitors alike. The carousel is a sentimental favorite: the Friends of the Santa Monica Pier Carousel was the first group I joined when Robbie and I moved to Santa Monica in 1981. I also take personal pride in having been instrumental in the city's purchase of the historic band organ that was returned to its home in 2001.

Next steps for preservation: The most significant issue facing us over the next couple of years will be the review of the Land Use Element and other critical development standards. Historic preservation opportunities exist via the creation of incentives and code exemptions. The current Council has mandated a thorough and open public process so that staff will be able to hear from individuals and groups like the Conservancy who will be able to have their views aired. If

re-elected, I will be listening intently, as always.

For or against Prop A?: I publicly and strongly opposed Proposition A from the outset.

MATT DINOLFO, MD

Favorite Historic Treasure: The various John Byers-designed houses and the Santa Monica Pier.

Next steps for preservation: The land use elements and general plan for zoning should incorporate protection for historical structures into the commercial development areas.

For or against Prop A?: I supported Proposition A.

MICHAEL FEINSTEIN

Favorite Historic Treasure: Since we are saying 'treasure' and not just landmark, my favorite is Palisades Park, because the park spoke to my soul, long before I ultimately lived here.

I first came to Santa Monica in 1967 when I was eight years old on a family trip



The Santa Monica Pier, built in 1921, was enlarged soon after with an independent, adjoining pier to the south. Then, the Loeff Hippodrome was added with a carousel inside. In 1976 the pier became our first City landmark. The pier is a favorite of candidates Bill Bauer, Richard Bloom, Matt Dinolfo, Patricia Hoffman, Maria Loya, Jonathan Mann and Bobby Shriver.

ELECTION 2004 CONTINUED



The Rapp Saloon, 1440 Second Street, was built in 1875. It is the oldest and possibly the first masonry building in Santa Monica. It is a favorite of candidate Ken Genser.

from Minnesota, where I grew up. I returned in 1977 and stood in the park, and the panorama that day imprinted in me.

By 1984, I was here for good. I have Senator Jones to thank for the park and my cousin Penny, who lived here then and let me stay in her apartment during the Olympics.

Next steps for preservation: As Council liaison I sit in during the meetings of the Landmarks Commission and marvel at the local history that comes through during discussion of various local properties. I would love to get this knowledge more out into the public, as that would help build our collective historic consciousness.

We need to continue to educate people about the positive realities of the City's Landmarks Ordinance, including the improvements we made in 2003 in response to the Prop. A debate. The fact that we've seen an upswing in Mills Act awards suggests this overall process has already been fruitful. We have to build on this. The positive atmosphere at the Landmarks Commission meetings really helps.

We should be proud of our new real estate disclosure law requiring notice when

the property is designated as a historic resource or listed on the City's Inventory of Historic Resources. Hats off to the Landmarks Commission as well for this.

Recently we also took a positive step in granting greater flexibility to property owners in substantial remodels of non-conforming structures, which will incentivize retention and rehabilitation of potentially historic structures.

Looking ahead, by definition the comprehensive nature of the City's General Plan update is going to give us all a chance to really focus on who we are, which is going to generate additional excitement for historic preservation.

As we look specifically at updating the Landmarks Ordinance further, we will deal with exotic questions like adaptive reuse, parking, and even transferable development rights. I look forward to the community discussion of trade-offs involved in these and other approaches.

We should also keep in mind the flexibilities offered by development agreements in special circumstances involving potentially historic structures.

For or against Prop A?: I opposed

Proposition A and campaigned against it.

Determining the landmark status of a building is best left up to an open public process based upon local (and sometimes national) standards.

When one also adds in historic professionals, a Landmarks Commission, City Staff, City Attorneys, and public input, it is safe to say there are a lot of checks and balances as well in the process.

By contrast, the personal preference of any particular owner at any point in time -- while important for other reasons -- isn't really relevant to whether a structure is historic. I'm glad the community agreed.

KEN GENSER

Favorite Historic Treasure: I will always be fond of the Rapp Saloon because, as an employee of American Youth Hostels, Inc., I worked to save it from imminent demolition and preserved it for public use.

Next steps for preservation: As we rewrite Santa Monica's zoning ordinance, we should include "by right" incentives for preserving historic structures (including structures of merit and structures that could potentially contribute to an historic district.) Incentives could include permitting greater lot coverage and reduced parking to encourage additions, rather than replacement.

For or against Prop A?: I adamantly opposed Proposition A. I encouraged the formation of the committee that ran the campaign against it.

PATRICIA HOFFMAN

Favorite Historic Treasure: This is a really tough question since there are so many that are so important to me. I can, however, narrow it down to the three in which I have spent the most time: Loeff Hippodrome, Santa Monica City Hall, and Barnum Hall at Santa Monica High School. The historic resources that are public buildings are special because they bring everyone the opportunity to appreciate their beauty, form and function.

Next steps for preservation: It is important that Santa Monica honor its past as well as its present and future. Along with our

ELECTION 2004 CONTINUED

Historic Preservation Element, we have our Landmarks Commission and, more recently, the Santa Monica Conservancy. All are doing their job to preserve Santa Monica's unique historic character.

New steps would include better outreach and education to the public. I would like to see curriculum added in our public schools. School field trips, similar to tours given by the Conservancy, would raise the awareness, understanding and appreciation of historic sites and buildings among our youngsters. This could have a long-lasting impact.

For or against Prop A?: I opposed Proposition A. However, I do believe that the homeowner should be consulted and every effort taken to work out an agreement that preserves the historical character of the residence but allows additions and remodels that are compatible. It is important for homeowners to also understand that there are tax and other incentives available to landmarked buildings.

MARIA LOYA

Favorite Historic Treasure: Santa Monica Beaches and everything they sustain such as Muscle Beach, the Santa Monica Pier and Palisades Park.

Next steps for preservation: The City can do a better job of integrating key historic landmarks into a regional plan for



Palisades Park was gifted to the City of Santa Monica by its founders, Colonel Jones and Senator Baker in 1892 so that its breathtaking views would remain in the public domain forever. The park is a favorite of candidate Mike Feinstein.

preservation. These sites can then be included in a promotional strategy that targets residents and visitors to our City. I would recommend that tours be organized to educate our community about the historic landmarks that exist in Santa Monica. Heightened awareness of our City's heritage is essential to avoiding another Prop. A attack on our Historic Preservation Element and Landmarks Ordinance.

As a Board member of the Pico Neighborhood Association I am interested in completing our neighborhoods' inventory of our historic building stock. The City of Santa

Monica should invest resources to update our historic landmarks listing in every neighborhood. This will be important considering that the City's general plan will be reviewed soon.

Understanding our history is key to determining a collective vision for the future development of our City. The major challenge of development is in creating a mechanism to address the issue of growth and how it relates to protecting our neighborhood charm and character, affordable housing, traffic and the need for additional parking. I believe that public participation is key in addressing these issues. We must offer our residents an opportunity to create a collective vision for Santa Monica. As a City Council member I will work to expand mechanisms for community involvement in the City development process. In addition, I will work to improve customer service in City Hall by advocating for a more responsive and accountable City process for homeowners and renters alike.

For or against Prop A?: I believe we need to strike a balance between the rights of property owners and our community's need to protect our neighborhood charm and character. I opposed Proposition A because it would have curtailed public input and would have weakened our City's Landmarks Ordinance. In addition, Proposition A was a ploy by developers to place profits over the



This John Byers house built in 1925 is one of eight on La Mesa Drive. Byers was one of the most gifted local architects of his day. A Santa Monica native, he built many public and private structures here. John Byers' work is a favorite of candidate Matt Dinolfo.

ELECTION 2004 CONTINUED

needs of the people.

Currently, City officials are beginning to prepare for a review of the City's General Plan. This is an opportunity to propose new mechanisms to encourage public participation in the planning process and in turn ensure that the future of Santa Monica is a collective community vision.

JONATHAN MANN

Favorite Historic Treasure: My favorite Santa Monica historic treasure is the beach, which is rapidly losing its character and appeal due to public misuse. The Santa Monica Pier has been rebuilt in a way that attempts to recreate bygone pastimes and remains a treasure.

Next steps for preservation: To better preserve Santa Monica's unique historic character the City would require a time machine to reconstruct what has been lost. We must try to prevent further loss and save what we have from developer greed.

For or against Prop A?: Proposition A should provide generous compensation to buy landmarked homes so the owners can remain in Santa Monica with equivalent housing and be excluded from having their property taxes increased, or should provide funding to renovate their homes to period architecture.



Barnum Hall, located on the campus of Santa Monica High School, was built in 1938 by the WPA and also served as Santa Monica's first civic auditorium. The Streamline-Moderne building houses mosaics and a mural by celebrated Santa Monica artist Stanton McDonald-Wright. It is a favorite of candidate Patricia Hoffman.

BOBBY SHRIVER

Favorite Historic Treasure: It's a tie between the Santa Monica Pier and the Craftsman house (and huge tree in the backyard) at 236 Adelaide Drive.

Next steps for preservation: We must create incentives for people to restore old buildings. The City must hire inspectors familiar with specialized preservation

requirements, reduce permit fees, and speed up the rebuilding process for people who want to preserve our history. We can also educate ourselves about the value of our architectural heritage: the Cecil Gale houses, Craftsman bungalows, Monterey Revivals, and all the others. More voluntary preservation would be the result.

For or against Prop A?: Under Proposition A, an owner could have torn down any house in the city that hadn't yet been landmarked. Think of your favorite historic house in Santa Monica. How would you feel if someone just tore it down? We need a process in which the owners' and the community's interests are both weighed dispassionately, using clearly delineated criteria. Property owners need to be encouraged not forced to preserve our architectural heritage. I will work for that.



The home at 236 Adelaide has been in the same family since it was built in 1911. It is considered to be one of the finest examples of Craftsman architecture in Santa Monica. It is a favorite of candidate Bobby Shriver.

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.

NEWLY LANDMARKED ON OCEAN AVENUE

Another building along Ocean Avenue has been designated a Santa Monica landmark. Located at 1337, the two-story, Spanish Colonial Revival style building was saved from the wrecking ball last month by a unanimous vote of the Landmarks Commission.

John and Ella Balsley purchased the parcel in 1911 and in 1926 constructed the building and garage that are currently on the site. Its construction extended the downtown commercial area northward where development along Ocean Avenue had been mostly residential. The architect and builder are unknown.

The building was originally designed with commercial space on the ground floor and four residential units above. In the decade after it was built, a number of professional individuals, including the widow of the original owner, rented the upstairs apartments while the Universal Truth Library occupied the commercial space below.

The building was given its formal name, Casa Bonita Apartments by Edwin and Hazel Berdine who owned the property from 1948-1960. Starting in the 1970s, the building was converted to exclusive commercial use by

actor John Paine who starred in "Miracle on Thirty-fourth Street."

Amy Rothman, a long-time Santa Monica resident, says she was immediately drawn to the building as a place to open up her interior design studio, Architrave. When she signed the lease, the building was in severe disrepair. On her own initiative, she spent \$30,000 to renovate her portion of the ground floor, restoring moldings and tile, refinishing hardwood floors, and replacing a broken front door, all in keeping with the architectural style of the building. Having recently heard of the Commission's action, she is pleased that the building has been saved from demolition.



NEW MEMBERS

LISA MEAD AND JIM BIANCO

JOHN JUNCOS AND DEVON CHATHAM

THOMAS CHATHAM

HOLLYWOOD HERITAGE

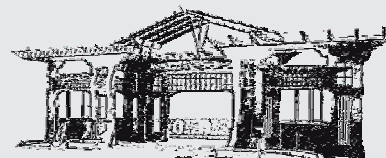
LEONARDO MARMOL

DORIS MAXWELL

CITY OF SANTA MONICA
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

SANTA MONICA PUBLIC
LIBRARY

WILLIAM TUCKER



BECOME A MEMBER!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

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:

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



NEW CHAIR FOR LANDMARKS COMMISSION

The Landmarks Commission has chosen a new Chairperson and a new Chair Pro Tempore as they do each year at the July meeting. The new Chair for this year is Roger Genser with Nina Fresco as Chair Pro Tem. The role of the Chair is to run the meetings, oversee the agenda and serve as the primary representative of the Commission.

In other Commission business, we are happy to see that Colin Maduzia, who was serving a partial term that had expired, was reappointed to stay on with the Commission this time, for full term.

THIRD STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT TOUR CALLING ALL DOCENTS!

On January 30, 2005, the Santa Monica Conservancy will be sponsoring a Third Street Neighborhood Historic District Tour of Santa Monica's premier historic district. Participants will be invited

into 5 or more homes within the district and may explore the district as a whole. Write it in to your calendar now and check your mail for sign up information.

If you wish to be docent on the tour, you

will be able to attend the event for free. Docents are stationed in various homes to assist participants and answer questions. Docents should contact the Conservancy right away at 310-485-0399 or info@smconservancy.org.



Ocean Park's Third Street Historic District consists of 42 contributing structures built from 1875 to 1935. It fully chronicles the range of architectural development trends for that period.

PASADENA HERITAGE CRAFTSMAN WEEKEND

Pasadena Heritage is sponsoring a Craftsman Weekend, the largest and most comprehensive celebration of the Craftsman Movement in the Western United States on October 15-17th. All aspects of the Arts & Crafts Movement in America from 1900 to 1915 will be explored via bus and walking tours of historic neighborhoods, exhibits of contemporary and antique Craftsman furnishings and accessories, workshops and lectures led by renowned experts, plus special evening events in historic sites. For more information, check out their web site at www.pasadenaheritage.org.



SANTA MONICA CONSERVANCY

SAVE THE DATES:

NRDC TOURS

OCTOBER 14, 4 PM
NOVEMBER 18, 4 PM

DETAILS PAGE 1

THIRD STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT TOUR

JANUARY 30, 2005

DETAILS THIS PAGE

Nonprofit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Santa Monica, CA
Permit No. 036

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