



SANTA MONICA CONSERVANCY NEWS

VOL 8 No 3

ENSURING THAT THE PAST HAS A FUTURE
SEPTEMBER 2010

CONSERVANCY TRIES TO SAVE EARLY BYERS HOUSE



Adobe home at 201 S. Rockingham built for Harry and Olivia Johnson.

by Ruthann Lehrer

The Conservancy undertook a brief and intensive campaign – ultimately unsuccessful – to save an adobe residence in Brentwood that marked the beginning of John Byers’ architectural career. Byers, one of Santa Monica’s most important architects, was most famous for pioneering the creation of Spanish Colonial Revival homes in the 1920s, many built of adobe.

In 1919, when construction on the house at 201 S. Rockingham began, Byers was teaching Spanish and French at Santa Monica High School. He had previously built a house for

himself and his wife, and one for SAMOHI’s principal, W.F. (Pete) Barnum (both now gone). Byers was asked by owners Harry and Olivia Johnson to translate for Mexican workers hired to build the adobe structure. He quickly became involved in its fabrication and design, and after completion, gave up his teaching job in order to pursue the design and construction of “Latin homes.”

Byers’ desire for authenticity of materials and craftsmanship led him to create his own workshops for the hand-made production of adobe, tile, wrought iron and woodwork.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL BUILDING CODE WORKSHOP

The Santa Monica Conservancy, the California Preservation Foundation (CPF) and the City of Santa Monica will present a full-day workshop on the California Historical Building Code (CHBC) on October 20. The CHBC is one of the most effective tools we have for preserving historic buildings in California because it offers an alternative code that addresses the unique construction problems inherent in historic environments.

The workshop will address the differences between the CHBC and the California Building Code and will include coverage of sustainability and LEED issues. This workshop will also address recent changes in the CHBC; how to identify qualified historic buildings and their character-defining features; and how the alternative standards preserve historic buildings while meeting life-safety, accessibility, and structural mandates. Case studies will be used throughout to show how the CHBC has been successfully applied.

This workshop meets the California State Architecture Board License requirements on Continuing Education for Disabled Access requirements. Cost of the workshop is \$115 for CPF members, \$150 for non-members. For details and registration information, see the California Preservation Foundation website at www.californiapreservation.org.

THREE BIG CONSERVANCY EVENTS THIS SUMMER



PALISADES PARK TOUR

Thomasine Rogas welcomes tour goers to the Palisades Park tour. For more details see page 4. Photo: Dick Orton.



4TH OF JULY PARADE

Carol Lemlein and Tom Cleys lead the Conservancy in the Annual 4th of July Main Street Parade. For more details see page 4. Photo: Dick Orton



ADVENTURES TOUR, AUG. 15

Popeye impersonator Dustin Harnish spoke at the grave of Popeye’s creator, Elzie Segar in Woodlawn Cemetery. Nine other destinations made this a fun way to spend a summer afternoon. For more details see page 5. Photo: Mike Crosby

THE CONSERVANCY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our board comes from neighborhoods throughout the city and includes:

- Carol Lemlein, President
- John Zinner, Vice-President
- Tom Cleys, Treasurer
- Susan McCarthy, Secretary
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- David Kaplan
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- Ruthann Lehrer
- Nancy O'Neill
- Barbara Whitney
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MEMBERSHIP DUES

Individual Membership	\$35
Household Membership	\$45
Low Income Membership	\$15
Sustaining Membership	\$100
Supporting Membership	\$250

To support the Conservancy at higher levels, or with a business membership, call (310) 496-3146.

THE NEWS STAFF

- Alice Allen
- Margaret Bach
- Sherrill Kushner
- Ruthann Lehrer
- Nancy O'Neill
- Dick Orton
- Kay Pattison
- Judy Parsons
- Barbara Whitney
- Susan Zinner

HOW TO CONTACT THE SANTA MONICA CONSERVANCY

Phone us at
(310) 496-3146
-and leave a message.

Website www.smconservancy.org

E-mail info@smconservancy.org

Mail address: Santa Monica Conservancy
P.O.Box 653, Santa Monica, CA 90406

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT Carol Lemlein



What a busy time this has been for the Conservancy! As I sat down to write this column, I realized that this summer we had major efforts underway in virtually every aspect of what we do. In addition to participating in the final stages of the LUCE process, we presented two new tours, "Palisades Park" and the "Adventures" tour, and applied for the Shotgun House Conditional Use Permit. We also continue to plan next year's California Preservation Conference, now scheduled for May 15-18 at the Fairmont Miramar Hotel.

On the advocacy front, we undertook an attempt to prevent the demolition of an important early John Byers adobe home in Brentwood (see page 1). It is particularly difficult to argue for the preservation of a house after it has been purchased by buyers unaware of the property's historic and architectural value. This is a strong argument for applying for designation of your own property if

you think it is worthy of preservation!

This process highlighted the differences between the landmark and demolition processes in Los Angeles and Santa Monica, where every structure older than 40 years must go through a Landmarks Commission review before it can be demolished. It also reminded us of the importance of an up-to-date and complete Historic Resources Inventory --- something we have been waiting for in Santa Monica! And for members living in Los Angeles, the work on your first citywide historic resource inventory, called "Survey LA", is just beginning.

To end on a most positive note, I am pleased to report that the Conservancy has been named as the beneficiary of two corporate donation programs. We were one of ten non-profits chosen to benefit from Bloomingdales' Santa Monica Place Preview Day. And from October 1-15, we will receive 15% of wine tasting proceeds from Poutal Wine Bar's "Angel's Share" Happy Hour program. You'll find the details elsewhere in this Newsletter.

As always, thank you for your support.

Carol

PHOTO QUIZ See page 6 for the answer.



You've driven by this many times. What is it? Photo by Mike Crosby

VOLUNTEER PROFILE: NINA FRESCO

by Judy Parsons



Conservancy board member Nina Fresco left the Big Apple, came west and fell in love with little Ocean Park in 1996, moving into a community that was recognized for its small, charming older homes. "I immediately loved my neighborhood for its proximity to the ocean, its rolling hills, my wonderful friends and, of course, the charming older buildings." Almost immediately she became interested in the community's history.

"As a resident, I was disturbed at how often these little houses that characterized the neighborhood were being replaced. After a bit of research I discovered that Santa Monica, in fact, had a Landmarks Ordinance and Commission but that they weren't particularly proactive. Next thing I knew I was a Landmarks

Commissioner."

"In 2002, several individuals in Santa Monica were talking about the need for a local preservation organization to galvanize the scattered community of preservationists that could not otherwise gain momentum. Soon, we all came to know each other and founded the Santa Monica Conservancy."

Nina is most passionate about sharing our city's history. "So many of our residents are unaware of Santa Monica's story. Just a little awareness goes a long way toward helping people value our special places and understanding what makes Santa Monica different from other beach cities."

Nina was the Conservancy's first membership chair and created the original database for its first five years. Artistic by nature and education, she has designed graphics for countless Conservancy booklets, brochures, newsletters and fliers. Members of the Conservancy owe a great deal to this transplanted New Yorker.

SHOTGUN HOUSE UPDATE

by Carol Lemlein

The Santa Monica Conservancy has applied for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the Shotgun House. The permit is required because its future location, next to the Ocean Park Library, is zoned for residential use.

The Planning Commission will schedule a public hearing for the CUP application sometime this fall. In addition, the Landmarks Commission and the California Coastal Commission must review and approve the project at public hearings before construction can move forward.

Public hearings are opportunities to express your support for both the renovation of the Shotgun House and our plans to operate it as a Preservation Resource Center for the community. When the public hearings are scheduled, we will post the information on our website:

www.smconservancy.org.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Although self-taught, he became a licensed architect by 1928. His career lasted many decades, and his buildings are found throughout the L.A. area, particularly in Brentwood, Pacific Palisades and Santa Monica. Several of the most notable, including his office and the Miles Playhouse, are designated as Santa Monica landmarks.

The Johnson house was sold recently to buyers who plan to demolish it. The Santa Monica Conservancy responded to a request for assistance by nominating the house as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (a historic landmark) and generated considerable local support among Brentwood residents. The Los Angeles Conservancy supported the nomination as well, but unfortunately Councilman Bill Rosendahl opposed the nomination. On July 29, with just 3 of the 5-member Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission present, the motion to approve the nomination failed, with two votes in favor and one opposed.

Construction of the house was extensively documented in scrapbooks, copies of which are now in the possession of the Conservancy. Olivia Johnson wrote: "Thank God for John Byers, a trained architect, who added interest and beauty to our rather stark plan!"

HISTORIC PROFILE

ARCADIA BANDINI STERNS DE BAKER



by Kay Pattison

When Arcadia Bandini was born in San Diego in 1827, California was a Spanish colony. Her father Juan's ranch land included much of what is now San Diego and Riverside Counties and parts of the mountains of San Bernardino County.

When she was 15, Arcadia's father arranged a marriage for her to "Don" Able Sterns, age 43, a Yankee who had become a Mexican citizen. His business interests were in the Pueblo de Los Angeles. Intent on developing a port, Stearns established a large warehouse in San Pedro and a stage and freight line between San Pedro and Los Angeles.

Stearns died in 1871 leaving Arcadia a wealthy widow. Three years later she married Col. Robert S. Baker who, with his partner John Percival Jones, bought the Rancho San Vicente y Boca de Santa Monica. The partners built a wharf and railroad to compete with

San Pedro as a port city for Los Angeles.

The railroad failed as did the plan to make Santa Monica the region's port. The Bakers built a home on Ocean Avenue, where Arcadia remained for the rest of her life. In 1877 Baker sold all his land holdings to his wife, and Arcadia de Baker and Jones developed the land into much of present day West Los Angeles.

Widowed again in 1894, Arcadia became a great benefactress. She and Jones donated Palisades Park to the City of Santa Monica in 1891 and later donated land in Santa Monica Canyon to establish an experimental forestry station. She donated land to a variety of churches, schools and clubs and in 1888 deeded extensive lands to the federal government to establish a National Home for Disabled Veterans, now the Veterans Administration.

Arcadia was an astute businesswoman and gracious hostess and left a legacy we enjoy today. Her home at 1229 Ocean Avenue was demolished in 1936 for an apartment building, which was subsequently razed to construct the Wilshire Palisades Building.

DISCOVER PALISADES PARK



Ruthann Lehrer stands ready at the tour shuttle. Ursula Kress staffs the check-in. Tour goers hear about the "Montana Hole" and the Gables Hotel. Photos: Dick Orton.

"We had so much fun! The docents are simply the best, so enthusiastic and charming. They obviously love their subject." This is a typical response to the June 13 "Discover Palisades Park Tour." Yes, we are planning to repeat the tour next year, tentatively in September.

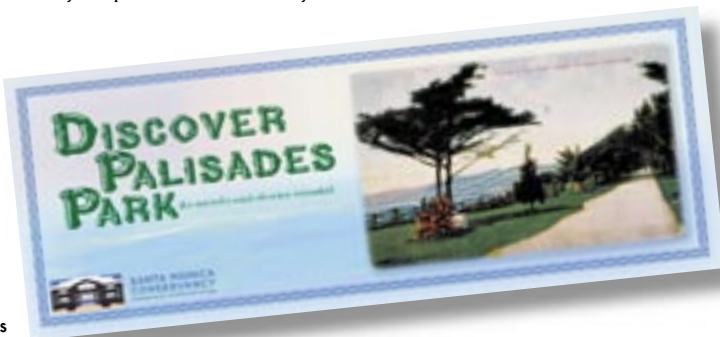
The tour was supported by a grant from the City of Santa Monica and the Arts Commission, and by a generous donation from the Bayside District. Nina Fresco designed the announcement and tour brochure. Roger Genser graciously loaned his vintage postcards of the Park, Margaret Bach lent her historic watercolors and Mary Ann Hays created the exhibits and provided research and tour development support. Thanks again to Jonathan Froines, USC student, for contributing to the research and photography and to Marguerite Wuellner and Nancy O'Neill for research assistance.

MANY THANKS TO THE VOLUNTEERS AND DOCENTS

- | | | | |
|------------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Elena Allen | Derry Cowan | Dorothy Jewell | Christine Pesis |
| Kitty Bartholomew | Michael Crosby | David Kaplan | Thomasine Rogas |
| Julie Berger | Julia Denholm | Ursula Kress | Rita Schneir |
| Phyllis Bernard | Margi Falk | Sherrill Kushner | Achee Stevenson |
| Monika Bialas | Dwight Flowers | Bob Lehrer | Becky Upchurch |
| Sabina Cheng | Audree Fowler | Mary Moran | Marcello Vavala |
| Jeff Cole | Martha Gruft | Dale Newman | John Zinner |
| Carolyn Coughlin-Grimm | Ellen Holden | Nancy O'Neill | |
| | Judy Hopkins | Kay Pattison | |

The "Discover Palisades Park" Guide Book was created for this tour and was intended to be of long-lasting use for exploring the park. If you missed the tour and want to explore the park on your own it is for sale for \$3.00.

See Back Cover for details



4TH OF JULY PARADE



Left to right John Zinner, James Zinner, Tom Cleys, Liz Bell, Susan Eric Natwig and Ron Davis. Oscar Vizcarra also participated.

The Conservancy marched in the 4th of July Parade in style! Marion Davies (Thomasine Rogas) and "WR Hearst" (Eric Natwig) greeted on-lookers from a 1939 Deluxe Ford Sedan. Thanks to Ron Davis of Santa Monica Ford Lincoln Mercury and his wife Vickie for

ADVENTURES IN SANTA MONICA TOUR



Tour goers ride the orchestra pit at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium, photo: Dick Orton. Docent Alison Jefferson tells the story of the Inkwell Beach, photo: Mike Crosby. Angie Behrns wears traditional dress as she shares the history of the Gabrielino/Tongva Springs, photo courtesy of Angie Behrns.

PARADE



in McCarthy, Kay Pattison, Carol Lemlein, Thomasine Rogas, Photo: Dick Orton.

the use of the car, to Kay Pattison for organizing the parade group and to ACBH docent Nick Steers who suggested Ron's car as a great vehicle for Marion and WR.

"I attended last Sunday's 'Adventures' tour with a friend, and we wanted to let you know how much we enjoyed ourselves. All [the sites] were fascinating and unique. What a wonderful opportunity! We hope you make this an annual event. Our thanks to your hardworking docents, and to everyone who made the tour a reality." Valerie Rose.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of our destination hosts:

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|--|
| Alison Jefferson & Cristyne Lawson... Local history | Aldo Rene Fierro | Living Homes |
| Carol Curtin and Louis Lind..... Civic Auditorium | Angie Behrns, President, | Tongva, Tribal Council, Indian Springs |
| Jim Harris Pier Restoration Corporation | Helen & Newton Harrison | California Wash |
| Jeff Klocke & Amanda Stump | Robin Gee | City TV |
| Charles Phillips | Dick Orton | Tour Development |
| Virgil County & Phyllis Romleski | Kay Pattison | Docent Coordinator |
| Sabine Pearlman & Yossi Govrin..... | Thomasine Rogas | Logistics Coordinator |
| Santa Monica Art Studios | Sherrill Kushner | Publicity and the brochure |

MANY THANKS TO THE VOLUNTEERS AND DOCENTS

- | | | | |
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| Jackie Baker | Phyllis Conkle | Eileen Kawas | Libby Pachares |
| Sarah Barnard | Carolyn Coughlin | Ursula Kress | Kay Pattison |
| Liz Bell | Derry Cowan | Sherrill Kushner | Harley Pattison |
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| Julie Berger | Clare Ellinger | Ruthann Lehrer | Jerome Robinson |
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| Winston Chappel | Ellen Holden | Richard Mestas | Tim Tunks |
| Elaine Cohen | Leslie Hope | Susan McCarthy | Robin Venturelli |
| Jeff Cole | Dorothy Jewell | Dick Orton | |

LANDMARKS COMMISSION REPORT

LANDMARK COTTAGE TO BE TRANSFORMED

by Margaret Bach

The Landmark cottage at 1012 Second Street will become part of a four-unit condominium development planned for the site. In June, the Landmarks Commission approved a Certificate of Appropriateness application for the relocation and rehabilitation of the existing turn-of-the-century Victorian cottage, along with a new three-unit building with parking, at the rear.

The vote was unanimous: 7-0. The Commission was enthusiastic about the project as an example of how flexibility in Santa Monica's development standards for historic buildings can be used to promote preservation and adaptive reuse by involving the strategic, appropriate use of variances.

The cottage will be moved forward on the lot, modernized on the interior, and restored on the exterior. The exterior color palette, beige siding, off-white trim, and brown accent for window sashes, is appropriate to the period. The new construction at the rear of the parcel incorporates compatible materials and colors, significant setbacks, and articulation on the primary and secondary elevations in order to highlight the existing Landmark rather than visually compete with it. The property owner/developer is the eponymous 1012 Second Street, LLC; the architect is Howard Laks, AIA; and the preservation architect is Chattel Architects.

This is the second project in Santa Monica involving the incorporation of a Landmark residence in a multi-family housing development. A project at 954 Fifth Street received its Certificate of Appropriateness in 2006. Similar projects are in the pipeline.



Illustration courtesy of Howard Laks Architects

UPCOMING PRESERVATION EVENTS

A SHARED PERSPECTIVE: THE CASE STUDY APARTMENTS AND BEYOND (LECTURE)

Saturday, September 18, 2010, 1:00 pm free. See website for details.

Society of Architectural Historians/
Southern California Chapter
(310) 458-8600

<http://www.sahscc.org>

SPECIAL EXHIBITION: "A CENTENNIAL OF FLIGHT IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA" (OPENING)

Thursday, September 23, 10 a.m. See website for details.

Flight Path Learning Center
and Museum

(424) 646-7284

<http://www.flightpath.us/special.htm>

LIFE BEFORE COLUMBUS DAY NATIVE AMERICAN FESTIVAL

Sunday, September 26, 2010, 11am-4pm. Free.

Tongva/Gabrielino Springs
1439 S. Barrington Avenue, West L. A.

(310) 397-0180 for details

ADOBE TO ATOMIC: GLENDALE'S RANCH HERITAGE (HOME TOUR)

Sunday, October 3, 2010. See website for details.

Glendale Historical Society
(818) 242-7447

<http://www.glendalehistorical.org>

MAK ARCHITECTURE TOUR 2010

Sunday, October 10, 2010, 11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Fee. See website for details

MAK Center, Schindler House
(323) 651-1510

<http://makcenter.org>

CITY PHOTO QUIZ ANSWER

THE GABLES ON THE PALISADES: ROARING '20S DREAM GOES BUST



Artist's rendering of the proposed massive cliff hugging Gables Beach Hotel Club in the 1920s. Photo credit: -Santa Monica Public Library

by Mike Crosby

The Gables on the Palisades project began in 1925 when J. Ward Cohen paid \$1,400,000 and signed a 50-year lease to build a luxurious, 23-story hotel at the foot of the Montana Hole along the new Palisades Beach Road. It was "destined to be a monument to Southern California."

The Gables Beach Club opened across the highway at 808 Palisades Beach Road in 1926, while construction began on the hotel. The new hotel promised indoor parking for 4,000 cars, an Olympic-sized pool, ballrooms,

restaurants, 1,200 dressing rooms, and luxury apartments, among other amenities.

On March 29, 1927, Mayor Herman Michel congratulated the company's "firm financial foundation." The 1929 Stock Market Crash forced construction to stop after only three floors of the hotel had been completed.

The sad shell remained for 37 years, until 1964 when Pacific Horizon Estates petitioned the City of Santa Monica for a 192-unit apartment/hotel to be built on the site. The City gave the company two years to complete the plans provided it demolished the old structure within the first year. Most of the structure was removed but, like the original Gables resort project, the new hotel became an unrealized dream. The small retaining wall built as structural support for the cliffs above is the only evidence of the vision of a luxurious seaside hotel.

THE CONSERVANCY THANKS

bloomingdale's

We were one of 10 non-profit community organizations chosen to benefit from their Private Preview Charity Day before the August 6th Grand Opening of Santa Monica Place.

SAVE THE DATE

FALL FUNDRAISER

Mid-Century House Tour
And Reception

Saturday, October 23rd

Details available soon

SEPTEMBER 2010 NEW MEMBERS

- Cameron Brown
- Ruth and Walt Buhler
- Bayside District
- Brian Burke
- Claudia Carol
- William Delvac *
- Sue and Ed Kandel
- Mary Marlow and Mark Kreher
- Deanna Peterson
- Ruth and Bud Smoot
- Sonya and Bruce Sultan
- Kay Ward
- Sue Petteyway
- Frances Mazur
- Christie Smith
- Maria Starr
- David Crellin
- Victoria Foote
- Ian Novos

* Sustaining Level or Higher

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- Adamm's Stained Glass *
- Bayside District*
- Kate Bransfield, Coldwell Banker
- Chattel Architecture, Planning & Preservation, Inc.
- Julie Chambers L Ac
- David Forbes Hibbert, AIA *
- Morley Builders *
- Eric Natwig, New West Partners
- Pankow
- Preservation Arts
- Spectra Company
- Margarita Wuellner, Ph. D., PCR Services

* Sponsor Member or higher

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

ON SALE NOW PALISADES PARK TOUR BOOKLET



"I had no idea of how much history is right there in Palisades Park, and I'm practically a Santa Monica native." from a Palisades Park tour participant

Now you can take your own tour of Palisades Park using the "Discover Palisades Park" tour booklet.

Available for purchase \$3.00

Convention and Visitors Bureau
1920 Main Street or
Kiosk on the Promenade
(1300 Block, across from Foot Locker)
Kiosk on the Pier
(across from Bubba Gump)

Note: Booklet is not available at the Visitors Center in Palisades Park

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(4 to 7 PM weeknights)
October 1-15.

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SUSTAINABILITY & PRESERVATION MIXER

September 8, 2010 7:00 pm
Red Bull North America, Inc.
1740 Stewart St., Santa Monica, CA 90404

Co-sponsors

Santa Monica Conservancy
California Preservation Foundation
U. S. Green Building Council-Los Angeles

- Learn how preservation and adaptive reuse can support sustainability
- Tour the 2010 Preservation Award-winning Red Bull North America Headquarters
- Meet our partners of next year's California Preservation Conference

Registration: \$10 for members,
\$15 for non-members

Purchase tickets through the California Preservation Foundation:
californiapreservation.org/workshops.shtml