

## Whitney Baine

1. Worked on the restoration of historically land marked Crest Theater in Westwood, restored a Datsun 240Z to show room condition and worked on restoring a vintage 1941 WWII P-38 Lightning. Both the car and aircraft are now in museums.

2. The current city council lacks culture. They wouldn't know Bauhaus from an outhouse. None of them have worked hands-on on a project like I have. I have worked closely with art and restoration experts that have given me a broad spectrum of knowledge.

The landmarks commission and Santa Monica Conservatory need to work together along with the public's input, but most of all members of the city council must be the fourth member of this group. Petty bickering and egos aside they must focus on what is best for the preservation of a landmark so that locals, students and tourists will benefit by this.

Critical work in preserving our heritage and landmarks is crucial to the future of Santa Monica. The destruction of the Santa Monica High School History building that none of our city council members defended to save is a travesty.

Currently, our city has been overdeveloped by monstrosities all under the guise of affordable housing, which by-the-way, ironically, no one can afford. It looks as though they want the seniors, low income families and students out of Santa Monica who live in home sand apartments that are under rent control, and some of those homes and apartments have classic architecture, bulldoze what culture and architecture of what we have left and build a sky giant of steel and concrete that no one can afford that looks as though we have to look at it sideways in a mirror for fear of turning into stone the way Perseus did with Medusa.

3. The system is flawed based on greed and too costly for the average person that has a restoration idea to save something that we'll never see the likes of again. History will be lost forever if those with a dream to restore something precious for prosperity for those who can learn from it in future generations.

\$6,000 is incredibly steep and there is no guarantee that if the property isn't designated a landmark there's isn't any refund of the money invested. We need to cut through the perennial the city's red tape and encourage preservation more effectively involving the public's opinion. A reasonable price should be closer to \$1,500 and if the property isn't designated a landmark for preservation, then that money should be returned to those individuals.

## Albin Gielicz

1. Unfortunately, I do not have any direct experience with historic preservation. However, I love history, historical buildings and the lessons it teaches us. While living in London years ago, the building next to mine was where Florence Nightingale began her career as a nurse before heading off the Crimean War. Seeing that factoid visibly called out on the building was not only educational, it became a sense of pride for the neighborhood.

2. One barrier to historic preservation in Santa Monica is the pressure to redevelop and max out FAR and massing in all new structures. While the number of large development projects is low at the moment, we have our housing element and RHNA numbers to contend with. Where are these 9,000 units of new housing going? I think the answer is everywhere, including historically significant structures or potentially historic and significant. And then what will the RHNA numbers be in the next cycle from 2029-2037? Another barrier is the absence of a city planner with an education or even interest in historic preservation. This void inhibits the abilities and efforts of the Conservancy and other groups interested in Santa Monica's history from having a bigger impact to preserve essential parts of our cultural and architectural past.

Some obstacles and disincentives can be or are perceived to be restrictions on new construction, additions or alterations of any historic structures. Current owners and would-be buyers might find this to be limiting their rights as owners, and hindering investment opportunities or potential capital gains.

3. First, I would like to know more about this system, where it's been and how it got here. I would expect that history lesson would help me to understand the rationale for such a high fee and what it goes towards. Additionally, I would hope that such a substantial fee would be applied to the salary of the full-time planner with a background in and appreciation for historic preservation. Regardless, \$6,000 seems to be too much for this process and seems rather arbitrary. I would advocate for the fees to be reduced so that they are commensurate with other jurisdictions.

I'm all about using proven best practices from around the country and world and NOT reinventing the wheel. There are MANY cities around the world much older than Santa Monica with much longer stories to tell. How do they approach historic preservation while keeping up with growing populations and other 21<sup>st</sup> century issues and concerns? I believe there are some good lessons out there that would help build support and understanding in Santa Monica.

## **Troy Harris**

1. My closest experience with historic preservation is in Phoenix. There was a neighborhood that was historically black that later became Downtown Phoenix. The name of the area was named after the historic Black neighborhood called Eastlake Park. Many of the homes went away but they named the part of downtown after this neighborhood.

2. Gentrification is the biggest barrier to preserving our historic resources. The obstacle is that the land value continues to rise and people want to capitalize on it despite there already being construction there such as historic architecture.
3. This is exorbitant because nominating something doesn't guarantee it will be approved. The fee should be lower so staff can consider whether something is landmark worthy regardless of whether the requestor can afford the expensive fee or not.

## **Armen Melkonians**

1. I am a licensed civil engineer and I own a boutique civil engineering consulting business. In my professional career I have had the distinct opportunity to work on two projects which required historic preservation efforts. The first was a commercial parking structure in Hollywood on Vine Street as part of a community redevelopment project. The project frontage had Hollywood Hall of Fame Stars in the public sidewalk area. The second project I was involved with was a complete site and landscape renovation project for a Frank Lloyd Wright designed home located in the Hollywood Hills area of Los Angeles. Both projects provided special challenges and I am super proud to include them in my work experience. The Frank Lloyd Wright project I did for a near pro-bono fee just so that I would have the opportunity to work on such a special home.

2. In 2019, the National Trust for Historic Preservation sent out a survey which included questions of the top challenges facing the field of historic preservation. The top seven results were:

1. Need for funding
2. Need to communicate the relevancy of preservation
3. Pressures from new development
4. Bureaucratic nature of some preservation processes
5. Need to educate the next generation of preservationists, particularly in the preservation trades
6. Lack of diversity in the preservation movement
7. Risks posed by climate change

I would say that in Santa Monica, picking from this list, the top three challenges would be 1. Lack of funding, 2. Pressures from new development, and 3. Bureaucratic nature of some preservation processes.

3. The city should return to the \$500 fee it used to have prior to the change as fast as possible. Having a \$6,000 fee will keep legitimate properties worthy of landmark status from being protected.

## **Samantha Mota**

1. There is a vacant lot near 17th and Pico that a neighbor went into and created dirt ramps for the neighborhood kids to ride their bikes in. What once was a place we used to play in, eventually became a place of greenery because vegetation grew. My neighbor and I had would grow a wide variety of plants, fruits and vegetables in pots that we decided needed more space to grow their roots, so I started guerilla gardening in the abandoned lot. For the past 3/4yrs, I began cultivating the land that wasn't legally mine but the owners didn't mind. I invested much of my own money to start a garden on the lot, as a silent means of protest and direct action to preserve the Pico neighborhood and community as overdevelopment continues to permeate our streets.

2. I see funding, budget cuts, and staff reductions as the biggest barrier to Santa Monica's stated goal of preserving its historic, architectural, and cultural resources because of the COVID-19 pandemic. An obstacles or disincentives to historic preservation I am aware of is, giving the community intervention to file a landmark application and fees, instead of allowing the commission to pursue an investigation of a potential landmark. Evidently, it has led to the loss of protection of threatened historic or cultural resource, where much of the history of communities of color is and will be erased if not protected.

3. It makes it expensive and might turn away individuals within the community who would like to file a site as a historic or cultural designation.

## **Ellis Raskin**

1. Historic preservation is one of my passions. That being said, my experience with historic preservation comes from my work as an environmental attorney and as a community activist. A significant portion of my legal work involves advising public agencies, community stakeholders, and other parties regarding the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"). When public agencies conduct an environmental review that is required by CEQA, the agency must study (and potentially mitigate) impacts to historic resources. I regularly work alongside historians and other experts to ensure that potential impacts are studied appropriately and that impacts are either prevented or minimized.

As a community activist, I have fought to preserve and memorialize key historic resources. Most recently, I appealed the Landmarks Commission's approval of a landscape plan that would have radically altered a courtyard in the San Vicente Courtyard Apartments Historic District. I ultimately reached a settlement with the property owner that led to the preservation of key landscape features, including several

mature trees. To give just a few other examples, I advocated against placing screens over the City Hall murals, I advocated for the preservation of the historic sycamore tree at 1122 California Avenue, and I have called for greater protections for historic apartment buildings in the Pico Neighborhood.

I have also had the opportunity to work on key issues relating to local history as a City of Santa Monica Commissioner. From 2017-2019, I served on the Santa Monica Urban Forest Task Force's Heritage Tree Subcommittee. I currently serve as Vice Chair of the Santa Monica Planning Commission. The Planning Commission regularly reviews applications for projects that involve historic resources. When crafting long-term planning strategies, the Planning Commission must identify strategies for balancing long-term growth and development plans with historic preservation objectives. I hope to continue to be an advocate for historic preservation as a City Councilmember.

**2.** Local historic preservationists face numerous challenges. The City is lacking key resources, and there are a number of other long-term obstacles that affect historic preservation. One crucial priority is for the City to hire a full-time historic preservation planner to support the work of the Landmarks Commission. The Landmarks Commission needs to be given the tools, resources, and authority necessary to effectively protect Santa Monica's historic resources. This will inevitably require additional funding, and it will also require careful collaboration with community stakeholders.

Development pressures are another key issue. Santa Monica will need to build nearly 9,000 new housing units by 2029 to meet its Regional Housing Needs Allocation. City leaders will need to diligently enforce our Landmarks Ordinance, and for projects that are subject to CEQA review, the City will need to ensure that impacts to historic resources have been adequately disclosed, analyzed, and mitigated through the CEQA process.

The City also needs to empower local citizens and community organizations (including the Santa Monica Conservancy) to be partners in the fight to protect local history. The Conservancy and other not-for-profit organizations should not be forced to pay exorbitant fees to nominate landmarks, and City leaders need to work collaboratively with local organizations. Our leaders must take the time to listen to historic preservationists, and we all must make every effort to preserve local history for future generations.

**3.** The system is fundamentally flawed and needs to be changed immediately. These fees place an unfair and unworkable burden on local residents, and this process is inherently inequitable. These exorbitant fees discourage traditionally disadvantaged members of our community from participating in the landmarks application process. The fees also substantially increase the risk that important landmarks will not be preserved. We need to immediately restore the fee exemption for the Santa Monica Conservancy and other not-for-profit organizations.

## Caroline Torosis

1. I have been a strong advocate for historic preservation throughout Los Angeles County and in Santa Monica. I believe that we can preserve our cultural and historical assets while still inviting progress. This year, in my professional capacity at the Senior Deputy for Economic and Workforce Development for Chair of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, I have stood up a program to help small, community serving businesses who have served as cultural anchors buy their property to keep it in the community. Our pilot project is in Leimert Park Village, which has become the center of both historical and contemporary black art, music, and culture in Los Angeles. More information about the program and its pilot can be found here

– <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-07-27/gentrification-leimert-park-black-owners-buy-building-generational-wealth>. With these projects, we are preserving buildings of cultural significance, as well as the history of a community while providing for wealth-building opportunities.

Moreover, in an effort to dismantle systemic inequities and discriminatory practices by government, this year, our office worked with the state to return Bruce's Beach to its rightful owners. The City of Manhattan Beach has now installed a plaque commemorating the history of the beach as one of the only beaches where black people could gather and swim at Bruce's Beach Lodge in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Bruce's Beach could provide a model for as we reckon with past injustices that dispossessed Indigenous people and blocked Black people, Latinos, Japanese Americans and many others from owning property and building wealth.

2. Lack of outreach and education from the city about the preservation work that is already happening is a barrier to advancing preservation goals. We need champions on City Council to advance a budget and strategic plan for historic preservation. Residents and stakeholders should better understand and be aware of the importance of our Santa Monica cultural anchors – they serve to further enrich the unique character of Santa Monica.

Moreover, we need to staff our Landmarks Commission and our historic preservation team in the city with staff that have technical expertise in historic preservation. We should seek to be more flexible in our city code around integrity requirements so that we can more easily designate historical landmarks. Finally, we must communicate that preservation and progress go hand in hand. We can honor our past while also promoting smart growth for our city.

3. I absolutely believe that we should pursue fee waivers. If we are a city that uplifts equity as one of our values, we should not only open landmark status to the wealthy few. Nonprofits and neighborhood groups can help those who are interested in applying for landmark designation status. The fees oftentimes prove disqualifying for many, and we should absolutely be exploring fee waivers. We also should work with our planning department so they can provide technical assistance to building owners about what a designation status means, and how it adds value to the community. However, we will only be able to do this if we recover economically as a city. One of my priorities, if

elected, is an equitable economic recovery that invites businesses, tourists, and visitors back to our city so that we may recover lost revenue. I believe that enhancing our landmarks and celebrating our history and historic buildings only adds to the character of the community and draws new visitors. I appreciate your consideration of my candidacy.

## **Natalya Zernitskaya**

1. I supported landmarking of the “Pier House” at 504 Pier Avenue and attended the meeting to support its historic designation.
2. I believe there is a balance between preserving our historic, architectural, and cultural resources and creating space for new residents, homes, and businesses. Where practically feasible and economically feasible, we should adaptively reuse existing historic resources. However, we can also design new buildings in a way where they can co-exist with historic landmarks. For example, the Ocean Avenue project which protects city historic landmarks while creating new housing, hotel rooms, restaurant space, retail space, and public open space is a great example of balancing preservation and innovation. One of the key obstacles is funding for maintenance of landmarked properties, regardless of whether they’re publicly or privately owned.
3. There is nuance regarding the costs to nominate a property for designation. The costs to nominate a property should be reflective of the value of historic, architectural, or cultural benefits that it would bring to our community. For example, some properties are nominated by the owners in order to make it more cost-effective to preserve our historical resources. However, in some cases, other community members seek to landmark properties to prevent much-needed new housing or other projects that would create a net benefit to our community. I would support exploring how we could perform an audit of existing properties to consider what is historically relevant.

## **Jesse Zwick**

1. Many of the best buildings and neighborhoods across our country were built before the widespread adoption of the automobile and modern zoning codes. From the courtyard apartments and bungalow courts of Los Angeles to the West Village neighborhood in New York, I have always gravitated towards beautiful, walkable, multifamily, human-scale construction and design. I have done this in my personal life, always opting to live in and restore homes that reflect the craftsmanship and care of previous generations, and I have done this in my academic life, learning the lessons of Jane Jacobs and other urbanists and neighborhood activists about the particular neighborhood qualities that ensure our sense of safety, vitality, and community.

As someone running for city council to build a more safe and sustainable Santa Monica, I believe we must look back to our pre-automobile, streetcar suburbs and towns of the past for example when it comes to designing more walkable cities of the future. Without preservation of these historic homes and neighborhoods, we would have nothing to point to when it comes to convincing our fellow community members of the ingenuity, desirability, and charm of these historic, walkable neighborhoods, and the urgent need for our city to return to and replicate many of their best qualities today.

**2.** Santa Monica faces a number of obstacles in meeting its stated goal of preserving its historic, architectural, and cultural resources. This includes, but is not limited to, the absence of fully qualified Preservation Professionals on city staff, the exorbitant fees associated with nominating new properties for preservation, the national standards to which local candidates for preservation are at times mistakenly held, and the perceived but false conflict between the imperative to add more housing in our community and the need to preserve and honor our past.

**3.** Because historic preservation is a prominent part of our city's laws and values, and contains a considerable public benefit, it seems inappropriate for the full cost of the application process to be borne by private entities. Of course, city revenue shortfalls remain a big concern. If I were on city council, my first move would be to draw upon the expertise of all relevant stakeholders, most notably the Santa Monica Conservancy, in crafting a mutually satisfactory compromise.

Absent this stakeholder engagement process, one idea I might venture would be that the city explore the creation of a two-part process, whereby initial applications to nominate a property for designation incur only a nominal fee. Those applications would be reviewed by the Landmarks Commission, which would make an initial determination as to whether there exists sufficient evidence in the application to merit further review.

Applications that meet this threshold would then require an additional fee to perform a more thorough review of the property by either city staff or outside consultants. The city would cover some portion of this fee, and the original applicant would be granted a period of time to raise the money required to cover the remainder.