



25 years
of Preservation

West Adams Matters

The "Secret Society" of the Preservationists

by John Patterson

When I first joined WAHA a few years back, I was looking forward to engaging with a group of neighbors who shared an appreciation for old houses. To my delight, I also discovered a wonderful sense of community, one that had eluded me for the past 30 plus years of living in this "mega-polis" known as Los Angeles. As I became more involved with my local neighborhood group as well as WAHA, another intriguing element slowly started to become apparent to me. There appeared to be this almost "secret society," a group of seemingly nice folks who called themselves "preservationists" but who spoke in such an incomprehensible and arcane language, that they might as well have been speaking in tongues!! I learned that a large group of them were gathering in Palm Springs in late April, so I set out to discover just what their story really was.

The conference was organized under the auspices of the California Preservation Foundation, and in very short order, I was pleased to understand that a "resource" in their vernacular was actually a reference to the very structures that we have come to call our homes! On the other hand, other references were much more perplexing. What pray tell is a "Shippo," and what does a "Sequa" process mean? I'd hear reference to "LEED certification" in articles discussing many of the new buildings going up downtown, but what exactly does that mean? It turns out there is a love affair

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WAHA Annual Preservation Meeting

Sunday, May 31 11 a.m. brunch • Noon program

Heritage Square Museum, 3800 Homer St. (Avenue 43 exit on the 110 Freeway, Highland Park)

Please join WAHA at its annual Preservation Meeting, an event held in celebration of National Preservation Month. This year WAHA is taking a field trip to Heritage Square Museum in conjunction with the museum's exhibit, "Lost To Progress: the Modernization of Los Angeles." The exhibit focuses on three representative neighborhoods: Chinatown, Bunker Hill, and Palo Verde (Chavez Ravine), and runs through June 28. At WAHA's event, people will have an



opportunity to view the exhibit, listen to a brief yet informative presentation about the subject, enjoy brunch provided by WAHA, AND be entertained by a repeat performance of WAHA's Three Minute Success Story, "Flower Power in the Trojan Wars," from the California Preservation Foundation Conference. WAHA will also present the Martin Eli Weil Historic Preservation to a noteworthy recipient. ●

Landmarks of West Adams: Our Best Foot Forward

Saturday, June 6 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Last ticket sold at 1 p.m.)

Tour Los Angeles's ONLY Greene & Greene residence, plus a half dozen other historic homes and buildings

WAHA celebrates its quarter century of historic preservation by opening the doors to some of West Adams' diverse historic treasures, ranging from small private homes, impressive manses, ornate religious institutions, and one of West Adams' best known estates.

We're excited to include the Lucy Wheeler House (pictured right), designed in 1905 by architects Greene & Greene. Please join us for this rare opportunity to visit this private Craftsman style residence (the former home of noted restoration architect Martin Eli Weil), which has never before been opened to the public.

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Survey L.A./Survey West Adams

West Adams residents and like-minded historic preservation advocates are being urged to participate in SurveyLA, Los Angeles' first-ever comprehensive survey of its historic resources. Please plan to share your knowledge of L.A.'s hidden gems -- historic and cultural sites in your neighborhood that may otherwise be overlooked. The survey marks a coming-of-age for Los Angeles' historic preservation movement, and will serve as a centerpiece for the City's first truly comprehensive preservation program.

The Historic West Adams District is among the first areas that will be surveyed. (The South Los Angeles and West Adams-Baldwin Hills-Leimert Park Community Plan Areas are included in the 11 communities to be reviewed in this first round.) So it is especially important for you to participate in this effort.

WAHA is planning to participate as an organization as well, contributing monies and effort to acquiring building permits in some specified survey areas. The WAHA Board has initially voted to utilize previously set-aside funds for historic resources surveying in Arlington Heights/Angelus Vista and Jefferson Park for this effort.

While Los Angeles has a rich and diverse cultural heritage and a remarkable architectural legacy, 85% of the city has never been surveyed to identify these significant historic places. Historic preservation professionals conducting the survey cannot know all of the potential historic resources throughout the city -- and that's why the city's Office of Historic Resources needs your helping in identifying your special story about local building(s)/historic site(s) and/or the neighborhood you live in. The current survey forms are available online, but WAHA is working with the department to create a form that may help us better reflect our own area.

For more general information on SurveyLA and Los Angeles' first-ever citywide historic resources survey, please visit <http://preservation.lacity.org/survey>. ●

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WAHA Membership News

Greetings, WAHA members! For most of you, it's time to renew your membership. This year, because we have added the option of on-line sign up, we have made a change in membership renewal dates. We have adjusted our membership to 365 days (instead of April to March). If you are a longtime WAHA member and usually pay your dues in April, your membership will continue to run from April through March. However, if you signed up on-line in July, your membership will run from July through June. Membership renewal letters will go out quarterly, with April to June renewal letters slated to go out in March.

We'd also like to note that your anniversary date remains your anniversary date whether or not you pay on time. For example, if you are due to renew in June in this new system and yet don't pay until September, WAHA will still send you an invoice for renewal the following June again.

If you're not sure of your membership term, check the address label on this newsletter. Pay your dues within 45 days of receiving your renewal notice to ensure you receive your newsletters and other membership benefits without a break.

In addition, we are updating the membership directory and would like any corrections/additions you need to make. Please e-mail membership@westadamsheritage.org.

If you have any questions about your membership, please contact Candy Wynne at 323-735-3749, or send her an e-mail at membership@westadamsheritage.org. ●

President's Message by Jim Robinson

I delivered the following "State of WAHA" remarks following an introduction of board members at WAHA's annual election meeting on Sunday, April 26:

I...want to mention an outstanding supporter of WAHA, and of historic preservation, who is no longer with us. Martin Eli Weil, a charter member of WAHA and of the Los Angeles Conservancy, passed away two months ago in his landmark Greene and Greene home in Harvard Heights. His work and presence are greatly missed, but his name lives on in the Martin Eli Weil Historic Preservation Award, which WAHA created in his honor three years ago. Martin was the award's first recipient; we plan to announce our latest honoree at our Preservation Brunch on May 31.

Just mentioning the Preservation Brunch reminds me how quickly the year has gone by, and how much we accomplished in that time. Surely it must be more than 12 months.

Here are some of the highlights:

We won official designation of a new historic district, Flower Drive, which the State Historical Resources Commission found eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources. More than a dozen historic buildings will now get a serious review if anyone wants to demolish them.

Our core mission is historic preservation, and Flower Drive was a great accomplishment. We owe a huge "thank you" to Mitzi Mogul, who argued our case at hearings in Santa Barbara and Sacramento.

In May, we celebrated our 25th anniversary with an outstanding audio-video presentation of WAHA's history, held at a Preservation Brunch in the old Union Square Theatre. Laura Meyers and Lisa Ellzey produced the Power Point, David Raposa narrated, and Jim Childs, Jonathon Hugger, John Patterson, Roland Souza and Mitzi organized the event.

We also celebrated WAHA's history by putting it on our web site. All but 10 of WAHA's more than 250 newsletters are there. We owe big thank-yous to longtime member Donald Ferguson, who scrounged up issues 3, 6 and 7 — the oldest in our collection — and to Leslie Evans, our volunteer webmaster, who put WAHA's history on line.

Three of our members — Suzanne Cooper, Don Lynch and John Kurtz — got Arcadia Press to publish their wonderful picture book called, simply, *West Adams*, filled with historic postcards and photos of our favorite neighborhoods. Lisa Berns and others organized a book-signing event at the historic Randolph Miner house on Adams Boulevard, where Fatty Arbuckle and Theda Bara once lived, and which most of us had never seen.

By the way, if you don't have a copy yet, we happen to be selling the books. Just twenty bucks...for a handful of history. When they're gone, they're gone.

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Cultural Heritage Ordinance Revision Moving Forward

The city's Planning Commission is set to weigh in June 11 on giving historic monuments throughout the city the same protection against demolition already enjoyed by non-monument properties in historic preservation overlay zones (HPOZs).

The new protection is part of a package of proposed changes to the city's Cultural Heritage Ordinance, the first significant overhaul of that legislation since it was passed by the City Council in 1982. Other changes would clarify criteria for historic designation and provide earlier notification to property owners. (For the complete ordinance, go to www.preservation.lacity.org.)

The ordinance changes were recommended for approval by the city's Cultural Heritage Commission in November, and had been scheduled to go to the Planning Commission March 12. But some property owners called for more time, and the deadline was extended to allow two more public workshops in April.

At a meeting for single-family home owners, held April 22 in the restored Dr. Grandville MacGowan Home, a West Adams monument (HCM No. 479), WAHA President Jim Robinson spoke on WAHA's behalf in support of the changes. He also echoed a concern raised by Laura Meyers, a member of WAHA's Historic Preservation Committee, that the revised ordinance should not exempt city-owned properties from the ordinance's protections and requirements to maintain properties in good condition.

“The city's Cultural Heritage Ordinance has been in place since 1962. L.A. was actually one of the first large American cities to pass a historic preservation ordinance. But our basic preservation law has not caught up with state-of-the-art preservation measures in other cities or with the tremendous evolution in historic preservation in L.A. since the 1960s. The Cultural Heritage Ordinance is long overdue for a significant tune up.”

— **Ken Bernstein, Office of Historic Resources**

Several other WAHA members attended the meeting, including Vice President John Patterson, Anna Marie Brooks, Jim Weber, and David Raposa, who assured a member of the audience that her home's historic status would not harm her ability to obtain financing.

Owners of commercial, industrial and multi-family buildings attended a separate meeting two days later at City Hall, another city monument. Ironically, under the current

(continued on page 11)

Stepping Out

Lost to Progress: The Modernization of Los Angeles

Coinciding with National Preservation Month, Heritage Square is exploring the controversial evolution of Los Angeles through the examination of three lost neighborhoods: Bunker Hill, Chavez Ravine, and the original Chinatown. **Lost to Progress: The Modernization of Los Angeles** runs through June 28th.

Beginning with its very early history, Los Angeles has been a city of constant reinvention and replacement. The original inhabitants of the area, the Tongva, were eventually usurped by the Mexican Californios, who were replaced by a large Anglo population after 1850 through a program backed by the United States Government. Yet throughout this history, large ethnic communities never went away, but formed ethnic enclaves such as Little Tokyo and Chinatown. Each community contributed its own social structure, architecture and economic system that both competed with and complemented LA's larger social fabric.

Lost to Progress begins its critical look at the first Chinatown. The "Last of the Great Railway Stations" in the United States, Union Station was built in 1939 and replaced the site of the first Chinatown. The "new" Chinatown was invented not far away, but many businesses did not return, nor did they look at it as the legitimate site of the Chinese community in Los Angeles. Visitors can view rarely-seen images taken from the archives of this first Chinatown and compare them with those of Chinatown today.

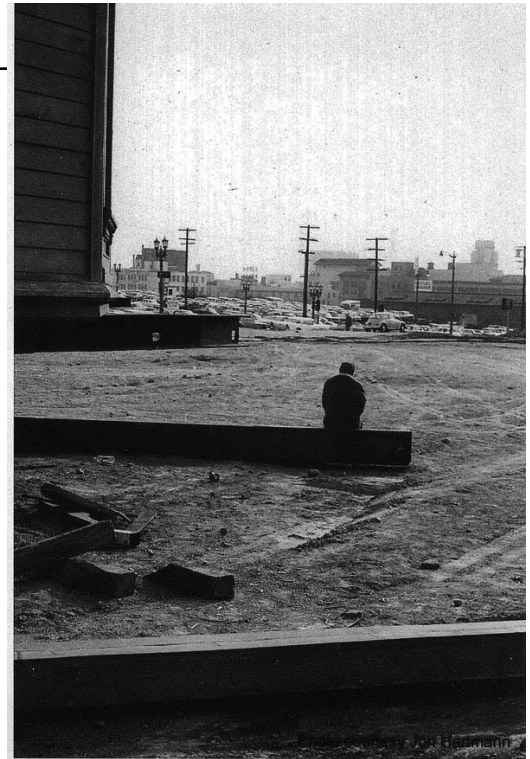
Continuing along the same theme, from the 1940s to the 1960s, massive public works projects would determine the fate of Bunker Hill and Chavez Ravine. As in Chinatown in the 1930s, both of these neighborhoods shared the characteristics of having large low-income, minority populations and being close to the City center. In the late 1940s, the once-stately Victorian-era dwellings began to have a high-rate of absentee land ownership, particularly as white flight to the suburbs began en masse. The resulting deteriorating conditions helped City leaders to justify creation of downtown as a civic and commercial hub.

The closely-knit Mexican-American communities of Palo Verde, La Loma and La Bishop made up Chavez Ravine. In 1962, these communities were forcefully replaced in what is one of Los Angeles' most well-known battles over eminent domain against a public-partnership consortium to create what is today Dodger Stadium. **Lost to Progress** takes you inside these battles and the communities the stadium replaced.

As the reinvention of Los Angeles continues, the public is often told it needs large-scale public works development projects and that eminent domain is a necessary means to achieving a positive end. Examining these neighborhoods, now forgotten or reduced to street names, visitors to the exhibit are asked "Was it worth it?"

Celebrating 40 Years of Preservation and Interpretation of the History of Southern California, Heritage Square Museum is a living history museum dedicated to telling the story of the development of Los Angeles. The exhibit is included in the museum's admission fee: \$10/Adults, \$8/Seniors, \$5/Children ages 6-12. The museum is open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, from 12 to 5 PM. Admission is free for museum members. **Lost to Progress** runs through June 28. **Lost to Progress** is co-curated by Jessica Maria Alicea-Covarrubias and Leticia Muñoz.

Heritage Square is located at 3800 Homer Street, off the 110 Arroyo Seco Parkway (110/Pasadena Freeway) at Avenue 43, just north of downtown Los Angeles. For further information, call 323-225-2700. ●




Bunker Hill, leveled




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Murder & Mystery at Greystone

Through June 19

Graystone Mansion, 905 Loma Vista Drive (Beverly Hills)

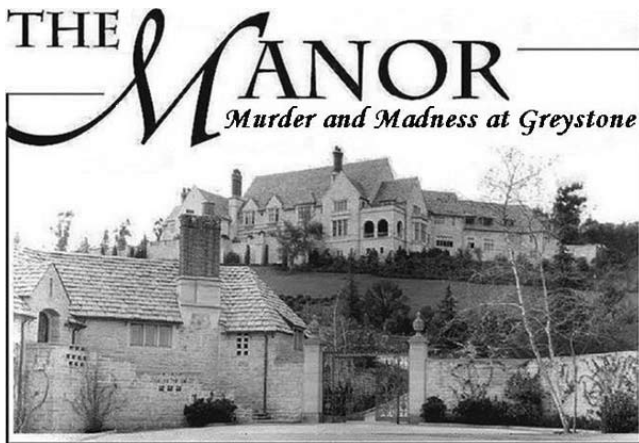
Since 2002, Theater 40, a Beverly Hills theatrical troupe, has been performing a roaming theatrical experience, "The Manor," at Greystone Mansion. During the play, which was "inspired by true and tragic events that took place at historic Greystone Estate," audience members follow the actors through the Mansion's first floor.

Greystone Mansion, the "other" Doheny Mansion, is a Tudor-style mansion in Beverly Hills designed by Gordon Kaufmann and completed in 1928. The house was a gift from oil tycoon Edward L.

Doheny to his son, Edward "Ned" Doheny, Jr., and his family. On February 16, 1929, four months after Ned Doheny, his wife Lucy, and their five children moved into Greystone, Ned died in his bedroom in a murder-suicide with his secretary, Hugh Plunket. Both men were involved in the trial of Ned's father in the Teapot Dome scandal.

"The Manor" takes place in a number of different rooms of the mansion. The audience is separated at certain times during the play to watch some scenes in a different order. The plot of the The Manor is a fictionalized account of the Doheny family, including Doheny's involvement in the Teapot Dome scandal and his son's murder.

Performances sell out well in advance. Reservations are required. Tickets: \$45. Theatre 40 Manor Reservation Line: 310-694-6118, www.theatre40.org. All performances at 1 p.m. See website for dates and times. ●



I Remember You! An Evening of Music from the 1920s and 1930s

Sunday, May 24 Doors open at 6 p.m.

Vintage Hollywood, 4000 West Washington Blvd. (east of Crenshaw, on 10th Avenue, Arlington Heights)

Step back into 1930 at VINTAGE HOLLYWOOD and listen to LIVE music of the '20s & '30s, including Dianne Lawrence AKA Storm Taylor and Her Ex Husbands.

- 6:30 p.m. Earnie Andrews' documentary, "Blues for Central Avenue"
- 8:00 p.m. Live music from the '20s and '30s: Scintillatin' Suzy Williams, the Sultan of Stride Brad Kay, The Gorgeous Guitar Boys, Richard Halpern (Al Jolson's gorgeous brother), and Storm Taylor and Her Ex-Husbands

Appetizers and bar available.

If you RSVP you will only pay \$15 at the door, otherwise it will cost \$20. RSVP by e-mail to dvlknc@yahoo.com or phone 323-871-8580.

This is a fundraiser for the *Neighborhood News* newspaper. ●



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President's Message *continued from page 3*

Along with the anniversary specials came our usual assortment of "routine" events — which are, of course, anything but routine:

- The coffee cart strolls through Jefferson Park and Wellington Square.
- The drive-yourself Landmarks Tour in June.
- The Halloween Festival.
- The Fourth of July Picnic.
- The Living History Tour in Angelus-Rosedale Cemetery.
- And, of course, December's one-and-only Holiday Tour — the incredible event that brings hundreds of guests to discover West Adams and that pays for the preservation work we do.

It's really been an outstanding year, and so, as they say in show business, what do we do for an encore? Well, here are some of the things on the program:

The City of Los Angeles is in the process of revising its Cultural Heritage Ordinance to protect the city's Historic Monuments against demolition. Laura Meyers and other WAHA representatives have been involved, and will be when the Planning Commission considers the matter on June 11, and later when it goes to the City Council.

The city's Office of Historic Resources has begun a survey of all of the city's historic resources — a huge undertaking that, unfortunately, is under-funded and won't be as intensive as we had hoped. WAHA will be involved with people and money to ensure as through a review as possible of West Adams' resources.

Concurrently, the city's Redevelopment Agency plans to survey what it calls its Normandie 5 area, bounded by Western, Normandie, Adams and Jefferson. Eric Bronson and I have met with the historic consultants involved, and we hope their work will ultimately lead to creation of another Historic Preservation Overlay Zone.

Normandie 5 is just one of the chunks of West Adams that isn't currently protected by an HPOZ. So our Preservation Committee is drawing up a priority list for creation of further HPOZs, to fill in the gaps between our current zones.

We plan to collect and scan the rest of our historic archives — tour brochures and other special publications — and add them to our web site for all members to see.

Finally, John Patterson is putting together organized game plans for the events we produce, so future WAHA boards and members will have timetables to guide their success.

All these projects are on top of WAHA's intensive agenda of regular activities, which brings us to the final topic of my remarks today. Some of our most active people are stretched too thin, and they're getting burned out. We do our best to cover the cracks, but frankly we need your help. We aren't asking you all to be on the board of directors — we don't have that many chairs at the table. But we really need people who can learn how to research the history of a house, or contribute an article to the newsletter, or knock on a door and persuade an owner to include their home on a tour.

So if you have some time — any time — please talk to one of our directors. We — and WAHA — will thank you. ●

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Landmarks Tour *continued from page 1*

In addition, visitors will tour the interiors of:

- An impressive 1908 Victorian/Craftsman mansion
- A charming Queen Anne Victorian cottage built in 1893
- An 1887 farmhouse, currently undergoing a major top-to-bottom restoration
- St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, a stunning 1925 Italian Romanesque house of worship that is both a local and national landmark
- The equally beautiful St. Sophia's Greek Orthodox Cathedral, designed in the Byzantine/Renaissance style in the form of a crucifix
- A unique 1911 Arts & Crafts manse, with a one-of-a-kind curving window
- And, one of West Adams' most extraordinary estates, the Guasti Villa (Busby Berkeley Mansion)

Purchase tickets in advance and save money. "Landmarks of West Adams" tickets are \$25 general admission, \$20 WAHA members, paid in advance (by May 31st). Log onto WAHA's website, www.WestAdamsHeritage.org to pay now; we will also be distributing postcards and flyers. Day of tour/pay at the door: all tickets \$30.



This is a self-guided, driving tour. Tour visitors will receive tickets, a tour brochure and map at check-in/will call.

We ENCOURAGE bicyclists, and have prepared a special bicycle route/map for those who'd like to tour under their own pedal power. You may drive to the tour starting point and leave your vehicle, or ride in.

We will e-mail confirmations and check-in location to tour guests who register and pay in advance, and who provide us with e-mail contact information. The last ticket will be sold at 1 p.m., and most tour properties will close promptly at 4 p.m. (St. John's will open at 1 p.m. and close at 5 p.m.)

Of course, we do need volunteers! (How can a WAHA tour event be complete without our wonderful members and friends, after all?) We try to plan it so docents can each work half-day shifts (morning or afternoon) and still have time to tour the properties. If you are available on

June 6 – or if you can lend a helping hand in advance with the myriad tasks that come with putting on a tour – please write tours@westadamsheritage.org and let us know your volunteering interest(s).

For more information and check-in location, write tours@westadamsheritage.org, call 323-732-4223 or visit www.WestAdamsHeritage.org. Tour at your own pace, but please do set aside several hours to enjoy the Landmarks of West Adams. ●



Preservation Matters

The Secret Society of Preservationists

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with anagrams in this group, and I'd have to delve much further to deduce what they actually meant.

From the opening day's Plenary Session, the mysteries began to be solved. A series of speakers discussed the future of preservation in the United States, addressing both the challenges and opportunities that will be present in the coming years. An announcement by Anthea King, Director of the Western Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation of a doubling of grant funds available specifically for Los Angeles was greeted with great enthusiasm. M. Wayne Donaldson spoke of "The Culture of Reuse," in which he expressed his belief that we have "the ability to *conserve* our way out of the current global economic crisis" which was to become a recurring theme in many of the conference's breakout sessions. "Interesting perspective" I thought, and sought in my program the identity of the speaker. He is the State of California's Historic Preservation Officer. Aha!! "Shippo" is really SHPO, and it's a person, not a thing! First mystery uncovered, and it was only 9:30 in the morning!!!

The keynote address was presented by noted economist Donovan Rypkema, Principal of PLACE ECONOMICS in Washington DC. He spoke at length to our country's future, and the important role that the preservationist movement will play. He anticipates a strong shift to the use of public transportation and a resurgence of neighborhood schools. He foresees a dramatic rise in multi-generational housing, one that could take advantage of the large, originally single-family homes typical to many of our WAHA neighborhoods. He anticipates a dramatic baby boomer shift away from ownership to rental, and suggests a significant investment opportunity exists in smaller dwellings, such as the bungalows found throughout West Adams. These houses could prove to be very attractive to this group who would share both an appreciation for the architectural details of the houses individually, as well as the historic ambience of the surrounding neighborhoods. He also spoke of a growing need for training in the skills of restoration and preservation, and a strong future for the growth of Trade Associations for small preservation contractors.

One of the first working sessions that I attended was entitled "The Delicate Juggling Act: Balancing the Developer, the Preservationist and the City." I chose this seminar because I have found a certain level of discomfort as I learn time and again that the submission for designation of landmark status occurs many times without the involvement, much less agreement, of the actual property owners. I wanted to understand how and why this might occur.

This seminar brought together speakers representing all sides in a mock "confrontation," and discussed the many factors that must be considered in such a process. The City Planner from Glendale was confronted by the developer, who had hired a Historic Preservation professional to argue before the City Councilman that an old house should not be considered a "contributing" resource to the neighborhood. It was a creative and lively discussion that proved to be highly educational, and over the course of the workshop another of the "codes" of this secret society was revealed. The "Sequa process" it turns out actually refers to CEQA – the California Environmental Quality Act. This law requires development projects to submit documentation of their potential environmental impact. This can prove to be a very time-consuming process, and one that most developers will try to avoid at almost all costs. They're often more inclined to work with preservationists to make modifications to their development plans, rather than be forced to undertake this very expensive process.

Without doubt, the most stimulating seminar I attended was the final workshop of the conference, entitled "Is it Easy being Green?" which discussed the "Challenges of Renovation in Accord with the Environment." It was stated without equivocation that the preservation of an existing structure is by far the "greenest" of any construction process. A far-ranging discussion took place on the need to incorporate "sustainability" into every aspect of our lives; our environment, our economy, our very lives depend on it, and it's really quite easy!!!

And it was during this seminar that the mystery surrounding yet another of the beloved anagrams was removed. The "gold" or "platinum" certification sought by so many developers of new construction is bestowed by "The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System." And while we can be very proud of the significant increase in environmental awareness that has resulted from these efforts, it was pointed out by one of our speakers, that there is as yet no "LEED" penalty to a developer if an historic structure is razed to facilitate a new construction. It was noted however, that in the ten years since the first "LEED" standards were introduced, modifications to this federal program have already occurred three times, as the movement strives to stay abreast of a constantly changing and evolving set of parameters and mind set.

The presenters shared with us their experience of how simple it was to incorporate the "principles of sustainability" into two recent historic restoration projects that they had overseen. And at the conclusion of this session, our moderator, Leo Marmol, stated unequivocally that "sustainability will provide preservationists the greatest battle cry for our movement"; one that will ring true with many who have thought that construction has to be new to be "green". Whereas the truth lies in the understanding, promotion and adoption of a real "culture of reuse" – this is true sustainability!! ●

WAHA sent three of our members — John Patterson, Roland Souza, and Mitzi March Mogul — to the California Preservation Foundation Conference in Palm Springs in April, and asked them to report back to us on their experiences. Here are their stories.

California Preservation Conference, In Context

by *Roland Souza*

During the recent California Preservation Conference held last month in Palm Springs, many of the tracks were focused on issues of historic context. Discussions of what constitute appropriate design guidelines in historic communities were discussed or alluded to in many sessions throughout the conference.

I attended the Designing Successful Rehabilitation and Contextual Infill Renewal Projects session conducted by Los Angeles historical architect Taylor Loudon and architect Annie Chu. With many new construction projects occurring in historic districts, examples were discussed and reviewed as successfully or unsuccessfully meeting the challenges of maintaining cultural context and local identity. The ways in which projects appropriately reference existing local context and historic identity were evaluated within their conformance with rehabilitation standards.

The architects gave examples of the difficulty and complexity of conforming to "Rehab Standard 9" which states that rehabilitation or new additions to historic buildings can be both "compatible with" and yet "differentiated from" existing integrity. The architects then discussed an infill project that they had been involved with in downtown L. A. involving the two 1880s commercial buildings across from the Pico House. They are rehabilitating those commercial buildings and designing a compatible infill between these Victorian buildings and the 1820s "La Placita" church as a center for Mexican American cultural history.

The project presents the complex challenges of incorporating a client's desire to include references to traditional Mexican architecture and the existing predominately Victorian streetscape in the area. The existing Victorian buildings originally functioned as an office building with many small offices and some Victorian interior fabric remaining. The center's requirement for large open spaces for classes necessitates the new infill to include large classrooms with a patio between the new building and the adjacent plaza Church. The infill's ability to relate to the two historic buildings on both sides and the historic buildings that it faces required much dialog with the center and many revisions to accomplish a successful project.

With many infill projects being proposed for historic West Adams neighborhoods, the value of a design based process that incorporates our unique historical context will continue to be a challenge. The conference gave me an opportunity to see how other communities have successfully dealt with these issues and a renewed commitment of the value of achieving these goals. ●

CPF Conference: A Modern Tradition

by *Mitzi March Mogul*

The California Preservation Foundation conference has been taking place annually for 25 years. It is held alternately between Northern and Southern California, always in a different city or town, in order to showcase different historic locales. These different locations also offer an opportunity to explore different themes within preservation, based largely on styles which are central to the history of that specific area.

To that end, the 2009 CPF conference, which took place in Palm Springs this past April, focused heavily on Mid-Century Modern styles during tours and events and in subject matter for lectures, discussions and workshops.

However, even if one is not particularly attracted to that style, the study sessions and lectures also offer an array of preservation topics which can be applied to issues facing preservationists everywhere. These included How To Get Your Story Told in Newspapers, Magazines and Online; Historic Context; Section 106 Review; Design Guidelines; Historic Landscapes, and more. Many of these are geared toward beginners while others assume a certain level of experience. Many of these topics are an important part of the process used by WAHA's Historic Preservation Committee in evaluating projects and in working through the often tangled process involved in trying to save a historic building.

(continued on next page)



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Preservation Matters

CPF Conference: Modern Tradition *continued from page 9*

Equally important and informative are the personal discussions between conference attendees. The chance to talk with others' involved in similar endeavors is often helpful as people share their strategies and information about what worked and what didn't, and it is always reassuring to know that you are not alone in your passions and your efforts.

The Keynote Address was delivered by Donovan Rypkema of Place Economics in Washington D.C., specialists in urban economies and conservation. His basic message was that "we can't build our way out of the current crisis, we must conserve our way out." His comments included observations on the role of Historic Preservation in revitalization of city centers (such as with West Adams) not just in terms of housing, but as a way of creating new environmental models. By including discussions about proximity to small businesses, transportation, multi-generational households, at-home workers, and other socio-economic issues, the debate about the relevance of historic preservation becomes more compelling. This has always been a far more productive approach than merely saying that we like "pretty" buildings. Preservation has to appeal to people because they find it meaningful and useful, not just aesthetically pleasing. When arguing a preservation issue, we frequently call upon cultural and historical justifications. It would be so much better if we could also, as a matter of policy, include sustainable development, landfill reduction, and preservation skills job training. Some of these issues have been raised before, but given the current economic situation, they are imbued with a new immediacy.

These are the kinds of conversations which take place during the conference. But it's not all hard work—there is plenty of time to play, too! The opening reception is always a wonderful meet-and-greet, connecting with old friends and starting new relationships. The closing gala is a great way to wind down and finish the weekend. These events are always held in some wonderful historic place, usually not open to the general public. In between is the Friday Night Three Minute Success Stories—undoubtedly the best event of the conference. This is the lighter side of preservation, where people get to tell their preservation successes of the past year. There's just one catch: tell it in three minutes and be funny! WAHA participated this year with our story about the listing of Flower Drive as a State Historic District—a definite saga. We were the grand finale and received a very enthusiastic response! (Our production will be repeated for WAHA members during the Preservation Month meeting in May, being held this year at Heritage Square Museum; don't miss it!)

It is very important for WAHA to be represented at these gatherings, both because of what can be learned and applied here in our community, and so that others in preservation will recognize who we are and what we do. This is not a matter of caché, it is politically expedient and critical to our continued success.

It may also interest everyone to know that during the Plenary Session program, CPF Preservationist of the Year as awarded posthumously to Martin Weil. ●

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Flower Power in the Trojan Wars

Listen! Listen, good people, to this tale of woe and joy, of unrelenting pride and the Power of Love. Far from Athens in the realm of LA-LA in the district of West Adams dwelt two disparate families: The Wahonians, who lived in cottages of wood...and the Trojans, who lived in fearsome fortresses of stone and brick.

It came to pass that a noble historian discovered a simple group of buildings along Flower Drive that time had forgotten. The Wahonians rejoiced. The Trojans did not.

Come learn how this "ancient" battle was fought and won at WAHA's annual Preservation brunch at Heritage Square, where those kookie warriors will perform an encore of their CPF Conference Three Minute Success Story, "Flower Power in the Trojan Wars." ●

Toga party in Palm Springs! WAHA's Flower Power team — Standing, left to right: Laura Meyers, Mitzi March Mogul, Suzanne Lloyd Simmons, SeEley Caldwell, John Patterson, David Raposa, Jeff Valdez. Seated, left to right: Terry Speth, Jean Cade, Roland Souza.

Cultural Heritage Ordinance

continued from page 3

ordinance, monuments such as the two meeting sites are protected only by a six-month stay of demolition and a possible six-month extension by the City Council, whereas requests to demolish more ordinary buildings in HPOZs may be permanently denied.

At earlier meetings, some owners had expressed concern over references in the revised ordinance to penalties for failure to maintain properties. At the MacGown Home meeting, Manager Ken Bernstein of the city's Office of Historic Resources said the references were to existing code requirements for upkeep of all buildings in the city, whether or not they are historic. He said the proposed preservation ordinance would be further revised to simply refer to the upkeep requirements, rather than detailing them. Subsequently, these changes were indeed inserted into the proposed ordinance.

According to the Office of Historic Resources' web site, the new ordinance will significantly improve the review process for owners of Monument properties, in the following ways:

- Well over 90 percent of requests for alteration of monument properties will continue to be signed off administratively under the new ordinance, just as they are today -- usually on the same day, "over-the-counter" or electronically.
- The new ordinance will create greater clarity for owners and make clear that certain work, such as ordinary maintenance and repair, is exempt from review altogether.
- The historic preservation standards on which approval is based will not be changing. These standards, used in every local government's preservation law, are meant to allow significant change to historic properties, not to "freeze" historic buildings in time.
- Demolition of historic-cultural monuments may still be approved, and may be approved even if no economic hardship exists.
- The new ordinance will, for the first time, ensure that property owners have the right to participate in all public hearings on the potential designation of a property as a monument.
- The ordinance will create a more "up front" system of preservation review, rather than continuing to surprise owners with review of proposed work only at the "back end," at a project's permit phase.
- Owners of designated properties will also, for the first time, have a right of appeal to the City Council if they disagree with the interpretation of staff and the Cultural Heritage Commission.

If approved by the Planning Commission, the ordinance changes will go to the City Council for final approval. ●

"Most members of the public have the impression that if a building is designated as a City Historic-Cultural Monument (a local landmark) in Los Angeles it is protected from demolition. In fact, almost the very opposite is true here." — **Ken Bernstein**

Preservation Matters

Back to Life!

Just as the proverbial Phoenix occasionally rises from the ashes, so, too, occasionally a historic property that we thought lost (or nearly lost) will experience a dramatic rebirth.

Since May is Preservation Month, we thought we'd share with you, happily, several current Phoenix-like tales.

• The Burkhalter Residence — A Tale of Three Heroes

At Christmastime in 2006, University Park neighbors were awakened by the sound of sirens and the view of a terrible fire consuming the Wells House at 2317 Scarff Street. It was a total loss. The same conflagration ignited the wood of the Burkhalter Residence, Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument No. 409, an 1895 Queen Anne Victorian located next door at 2309-2311 Scarff Street.

As you can see in the photo (top right), a goodly percentage of the Burkhalter was burned, and some Los Angeles city officials demanded that the house be torn down. "No," said Jim Childs, a Scarff Street neighbor and longtime preservation activist. He put his foot down (figuratively), and demanded that those officials back off.

The preservation side won that first battle, but then the family that owned the landmark residence decided it did not want to reconstruct it. They put the property on the market.

Enter Mrs. Susan Foo, who had already restored a small house in University Park. Susan Foo and her husband Wendell Foo decided to purchase and rescue the Burkhalter Residence from its uncertain future.

The third "hero" of this tale is general contractor Robert Carrere, who miraculously rebuilt the Burkhalter's authentic Victorian exterior from photographic documents and no small amount of loving labor.

Now nearly complete, the Burkhalter Residence stands as testimony to visionary optimism and devotion to historic preservation.

Kudos to all.

• The Starr Dairy Farmhouse — Time Nearly Passed It By

In 2006, when it was nominated as a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument, this 1887 Victorian cottage at 2801 South Arlington Ave. was filled with trash and live creatures. It was vacant, deemed inhabitable, and had been abated by Building and Safety as an eyesore and nuisance. And the conservator who controlled the property listed it for sale as a "tear down."



The Starr Farmhouse before its non-original porch was removed, and in May, after its 1887 projecting front gable was revealed in May. Photos by Jim Childs (above) and Taidgh O'Neill (right)



The Burkhalter Residence, after the fire (above), and in May 2009. Photos by Jim Childs (above, burned) and Jeff Valdez (below, today)

And then, after the property was officially designated as a landmark (HCM No. 865), the new owner (now former owner) gutted the interior — without permits.

All this despite the fact that the Starr Farmhouse is perhaps the last remaining residence reflecting the Jefferson Park neighborhood's prior existence as an agricultural area.

Today, new owner David Raposa is doing a literal, and painstaking, top-to-bottom

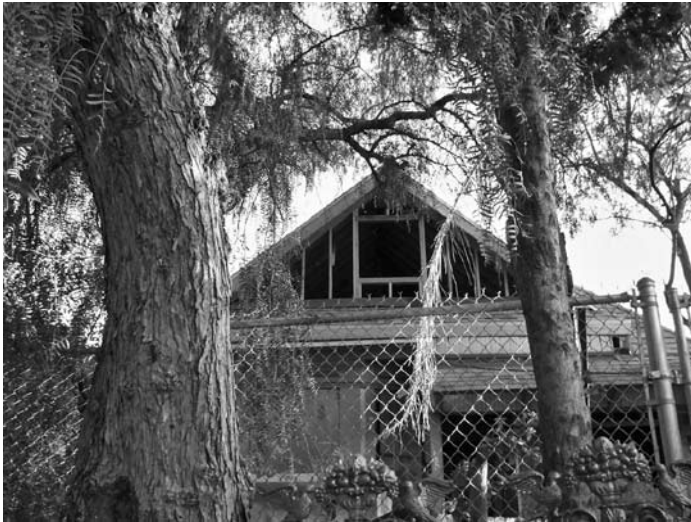
Preservation Matters

restoration, starting with structural engineering and a complete reframing of the house. In the course of evaluating the structural elements, it was discovered that the true original Victorian porches (or at least their remnants) were hidden under the later construction of a wrap-around porch and room addition.

Raposa decided to remove the non-original porch and extra room, to return to the original layout, which includes a projecting gable wing with fishscale shingles. Now the Farmhouse is on its way to standing out as its historic self — a Victorian residence in a sea of later Craftsman Bungalows. You can see further progress on WAHA's June 6 tour.

• **University Park Cottage — A Family's Commitment to Place**

This little Victorian cottage at 1036-1038 West 24th Street (just east of Hoover) burned nearly five years ago. Then it took several years of wrangling before the owners' insurance company agreed to pay for the damage. But in the end the family not only received the funds — they decided to rebuild. Today Sergio Arias and his family are beginning the task of rebuilding the house, a Contributing Structure in both the University Park Historic Preservation Overlay Zone and the St. James Park National Register Historic District.



Of interest, all three of these historic properties would have no doubt been summarily demolished by Building and Safety's Nuisance Abatement Unit had they NOT been designated as historic resources. Because of the historic designation, in each case it allowed an opportunity for dialogues to occur between city officials (including the Office of Historic Resources) and preservation advocates. WAHA and individual preservation advocates made clear that demolition was not an option without full state-mandated environmental clearance, and as well that — as clearly evidenced today — each of these structures was salvageable. Thanks to all involved, and all of you who support historic preservation efforts in West Adams. ●



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WAHA's 2009 "No Excuses" Calendar

We are planning a full slate of potlucks, Evening Strolls, Author Book Receptions and Historic Tours for 2009. Please put the event dates on your calendar.

MAY

Sunday, May 31:

WAHA's Annual Preservation Brunch

JUNE

Saturday, June 6:

WAHA presents its Annual Spring Historic Homes & Architecture Tour

JULY

Saturday, July 4:

WAHA's Annual 4th of July Picnic

AUGUST

Thursday, August 6:

WAHA New Member Dessert

SEPTEMBER

Saturday, September 26:

Living History Tour at Angelus Rosedale Cemetery

DECEMBER

Saturday and Sunday, December 5 and 6:

WAHA's Annual Holiday Tour and Progressive Dinner

Sunday, December 13:

WAHA Holiday Party

**WAHA....Creating Our Future by
Preserving Our Past**

Calendar ✓

Upcoming Events

Sunday, May 31:

WAHA's Annual Preservation Brunch
(see story, page 1)



Saturday, June 6:

WAHA Presents its Annual Spring Historic Homes & Architecture Tour, including a rare peek inside L.A.'s only Greene & Greene, pictured above. (see story, page 1)

Saturday, July 4:

WAHA's Annual 4th of July Picnic

Please review WAHA's 2009 Calendar of Events, on page 15

WAHA's Annual Preservation Meeting

Sunday, May 31


11 a.m. (brunch) • Noon (program)

**Heritage Square Museum, 3800 Homer St.
(Highland Park)**

WAHA's annual celebration of National Preservation Month takes place at the Heritage Square Museum in conjunction with the museum's exhibit, "Lost To Progress: the Modernization of Los Angeles." At WAHA's event, people will have an opportunity to view the exhibit, listen to a brief presentation about the subject, enjoy brunch provided by WAHA, AND be entertained by a repeat performance of WAHA's Three Minute Success Story, "Flower Power in the Trojan Wars." WAHA will also present the Martin Eli Weil Historic Preservation to a noteworthy recipient. (See story, page 1)



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