



OUR CORNERSTONE

VOLUME XV · ISSUE 1

WINTER 2009-2010

The Little 6422 Garvanza Street House

by Tina Gulotta-Miller

Here is an example of advocacy on a small level that has made a difference to our community in Garvanza!

This is an early 20th century or possibly late 19th century bungalow with all its original features, that is until they showed up one day and gutted the interior. There were permits for an addition but no permits to knock down interior walls, knock out exterior walls and replace windows and doors. I was called by Danny Bohbot, a fellow Garvanzan to go check out the property. They were in the process of demolishing this house. But I stopped them through Building and Safety

and the Housing Department came out and sited them and posted a stop work order! They were also ordered to restore the house, to put back the windows and doors and exterior walls they had begun to demolish on the sides and back of the house. I know they gutted the inside, as I was too late for that, but at least they restored the windows and did the new addition with clapboard instead of stucco. They are also landscaping it and put up a really nice looking fence along the alleyway. Oh and there are security bars inside the windows, at least they are not obtrusive. Anyway, just wanted you to see these pictures.



President's Message Winter 2010

The Highland Park Heritage Trust has accomplished a great deal over the past year:

- Our website has become popular even with folks traveling to Los Angeles. In fact, two master's degree students from Denmark communicated with me before and during their fact finding trip to research the Los Angeles River Master Plan. They visited with Council Member Ed Reyes and toured several areas of the City. We would like to get more of the membership involved in contributing content. Have you thought about a preservation subject that you want to pursue through the blog? You can link to it from the main page.
- The by-laws revision was accomplished in 2009 with the help of a committee of board members and general members. Their teamwork helped us refine the solid work of the founding members of the HPHT.
- The October 12 Member Appreciation Event at Café de Leche proved to be a lovely event. It was a great night for visiting with one another. We had quite a few people who responded to the online announcements and either joined online, or that night at the event.
- Docent Marilyn Robertson has agreed to be the lead on the bi-monthly Sycamore Grove Walking tours, with the other docents, Curt Robertson, Pat Griffith, Justine Leong, Charles Fisher, and Tina Miller, assisting to present a very successful series throughout the year. In fact, the special combination of the Poetry of Robinson Jeffers and the walking tours, two days in a row, accommodated 46 people on the October 24th and 25th weekend.
- Members Hillary Danner and Lupe Handy added their homes to the tour. Hillary also presented a charming reading of a Jeffers poem during those October walks, as well as a wonderful spread for refreshments for the walkers. Thanks to member Kathy Gallegos and the Avenue 50 Studio, for sponsoring the end of the walk location for hospitality. If you have never taken the walk it's time to sign up for the one on February 27. Sign up online at www.hpht.org/tour.html or by phone at (323) 256-4326.
- On December 14, Titina Folliero graciously invited us to have our annual Christmas Party in her home on Longfellow Street. There was standing room only which attests to the HPHT spirit of enjoying one another's company.
- Without Amy Inouye and her skills *Our Cornerstone* and the many post-cards, flyers and posters produced for us by Future Studio wouldn't be done on such a professional basis. Thank you, Amy.

Thinking ahead to the coming year, the Board of Directors will be discussing the Calendar of Events beyond the month of February and reporting to the membership on Monday, January 11, 2010 at Ramona Hall. The plan is to schedule less organizational meetings and more programs, such as the Adaptive Reuse program presented by Ryan Flegal and Justine Leong in April of 2009 and the Ed Sanchez Window Restoration and Repair presentation at the November Annual Membership meeting.

I appreciate your guidance and assistance as we create an atmosphere of thoughtful attention to the preservation of the Highland Park heritage that we all share—a rich and meaningful sense of place that grounds us as a community and provides for generations to come. I encourage all of you to get more involved in the coming year. There is still much work to be done!

Happy New Year!
Carmela Gomes



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Our Cornerstone is the official bi-monthly newsletter of the Highland Park Heritage Trust, a non-profit community organization.

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www.hpht.org

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BOOKSHOP

- **Images of America: Highland Park** by Charles J. Fisher and HPHT (\$21.95)
Signed copies available at Studio Root 66, 5917 N. Figueroa Street, Highland Park, 90042
or send a check to Highland Park Heritage Trust, 140 S. Ave. 57, LA 90042
Please add 9.75% LA sales tax and \$4.95 for shipping (each additional item, add \$2.00)

Questions? contact: hphtpres@gmail.com



Please Help Save L.A.'s Historic Interiors

On September 10, the City of Los Angeles Planning Commission voted 7-to-1 to approve proposed revisions to the city's Cultural Heritage Ordinance. The City's Office of Historic Resources has worked for nearly two years on a comprehensive review and revision of the ordinance, which sets in place protections for locally designated Historic-Cultural Monuments. This is the first major overhaul of the ordinance since its creation in 1962.

Official monuments are the "best of the best" among L.A.'s historic buildings. For 48 years, the city's Cultural Heritage Ordinance has protected them, inside and out. Although the proposed ordinance would leave interior protections completely unchanged, some business interests continue to push for their removal. They want the right to demolish monument interiors without delay, rather than wait up to 12 months to discuss alternatives.

L.A. has guarded its most treasured interior spaces for two generations. It would be a tragedy to abandon them now. We hope you'll write your city council member to urge them to support the proposed ordinance revisions:

councilmember.reyes@lacity.org
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Councilmember.koretz@lacity.org

Here's how the issue arose

- **In 2008**, officials in L.A.'s Planning Department proposed strengthening the city's Cultural Heritage Ordinance, which protects almost 1,000 historic-cultural monuments throughout the city.
- **The most important change**—and the greatest benefit—would allow the city to forbid demolition of a historic monument, rather than just delay demolition for up to 12 months, as the ordinance now provides.
- **At the workshops** and hearings that followed, some business interests urged elimination of protection for "private" interiors, so interior changes or demolitions could occur without delay.
- **Preservation groups** protested before the Planning Commission. A panel of preservationists and business interests debated the issue and recommended retaining the current process of delaying interior changes. The Planning Department adopted the panel's recommendation, voting 7-1 to approve the revised ordinance.
- **The proposed revisions** will go to the full City Council for approval, amendment or rejection in early 2010.

L.A.'s Preservation Ordinance: Myths and Realities

A proposal to update Los Angeles' Cultural Heritage Ordinance, which establishes and regulates historic monuments, has generated numerous false allegations aimed at scuttling the ordinance. Opponents particularly object to the ordinance's protection of building interiors. The following information is intended to foster a rational discussion of the changes proposed:

- *MYTH: The proposed changes would, for the first time, subject the interiors of monument buildings to historic review.*
FACT: The current ordinance, passed in 1962, has never distinguished between interiors and exteriors. Both have been subject to review for the past 47 years.
- *MYTH: The ordinance would not allow monument owners to make changes to the inside of their buildings.*
FACT: The current process would continue. The vast majority of requests for interior changes are approved quickly at the staff level. In rare cases, approval may be withheld by the city's Cultural Heritage Commission for up to six months—or extended to 12 months by City Council. After that, the owner may proceed. The Cultural Heritage Commission has not objected to even a single interior permit in the past decade!
- *MYTH: Under the ordinance, the owner of a historic house couldn't even repaint a bedroom.*
FACT: To encourage day-to-day maintenance and repair activities, "Ordinary Maintenance and Repair" is defined in the current draft ordinance and is exempted from review. If the work doesn't require a permit, no review is triggered.
- *MYTH: Reviewing interiors may inhibit owners of commercial buildings from responding to economic changes, and may stifle development.*
FACT: Over the past decade, numerous city monuments—including some of downtown's most prominent historic buildings—have been converted from vacant office space to residential use. Opponents have been unable to cite a single instance in which the ordinance inhibited such conversions.
- *MYTH: The city's Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZs) cover only the exteriors of historic buildings. This ordinance also should be limited to exteriors.*
FACT: HPOZs cover whole neighborhoods, with hundreds of historic buildings of varying importance. Their interiors are unknown. Monument buildings are chosen as the best of the best, deserving of special protection. Their interiors are inspected and documented prior to designation as a monument
- *MYTH: The ordinance subjects investors to restrictions they find onerous.*
FACT: The City of Los Angeles contains approximately 880,000 separate properties. Fewer than 1,000 are monuments. That leaves 879,000 properties available for purchase by those who find the ordinance distasteful.

Economic Recovery Assistance? Consider the Mills Act Program for 2010

By Nicole Possert

In our lovely historic neighborhoods along the Arroyo Seco, we are bountiful in resources. But are we taking advantage of one major economic opportunity that is available to help historic property owners? Read on, especially if you own a property that is either:

- a) listed as a LA Historic-Cultural Monument (there are over 70 of these in our area) or
- b) a Contributing Structure to the Highland Park HPOZ (2,500 properties are considered Contributing Structures in our historic district)

The Mills Act program was established in Los Angeles as one major incentive to owners of historic properties to reduce property taxes (yes, saving real money) thereby allowing that savings to be invested into the preservation of the property. In 2009, there were only 70 properties who applied for and were accepted by the City for this incredible financial incentive.

Our area has one of the largest concentrations of listed Historic-Cultural Monuments and we boast the largest HPOZ in the entire City . . . yet only five properties in all of Northeast Los Angeles received Mills Act contracts last year. In stark contrast to the abundance of historic resources that could participate, our region secured only 7% of the 2009 contracts totals.

Congratulations to the four in Highland Park and one in Mt Angelus who did receive Mills Act contracts in 2009. Unfortunately, not one property in Mt Washington, Garvanza, Hermon, Montecito Heights or Cypress Park took advantage of this benefit last year.

It is not a fast economic relief strategy but as you start 2010, ask yourself if you should be leaving money on the table . . . especially if you're scratching your head trying to figure out how to pay for a necessary project looming in the next few years. What historic house isn't in need of a new roof, exterior paint, window repairs or something that inevitably costs more than we have?

Mills Act applications take time and a bit of persistence. The City's application deadline is usually late June. There are consultants you can hire to successfully complete the application and walk you through the process. Or, HPHT has done educational sessions in the past on doing it yourself (DIY). It is not impossible, but you will need some time to pull it all together.

Let's get our fair share of this opportunity in 2010 and have our historic property owners gain tax relief that will help them re-invest and protect the value of their historic homes!

For more information on applying for the Mills Act visit <http://www.preservation.lacity.org/mills-act>.

Please take time to renew your membership

You may join or renew online at www.hpht.org or by sending your tax deductible check to: Highland Park Heritage Trust
PO Box 50894, Los Angeles CA 90050-0894

Individual \$20

Family \$30

Sponsor \$50

Benefactor (\$51 to \$150) _____

Angel (over \$150) _____

Renewal

New Member

I would like to become involved
in _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____



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**131 N. Ave. 50 • 323-258-1435
avenue50studio.com**

Calendar of Upcoming HPHT & Community Events

Free Tai Chi Class Every Sunday • 8:30 am—Audubon Center at Debs Park,
http://ca.audubon.org/debs_park.htm

January 2010 • *Sunshine and Struggle, the Italian Experience in Los Angeles, 1827–1927*—Renaissance Building, 437 West 6th Street, San Pedro, 90731, weekends by appointment, msgatto@earthlink.net, 323-422-2668

Saturday, January 9, 2010 • 7 to 10 pm—*NELAart.com* Second Saturday Gallery Night; many art galleries (including Future Studio Gallery, Home of Chicken Boy) in Highland Park and Eagle Rock open (free)

Monday, January 11, 2010 • 6:30 to 8:30 pm—HPHT Organizational Meeting, Ramona Hall, 4580 N. Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, 90065

Sunday, January 31, 2010 • 2 to 4 pm—Arcadia Book Authors Forum, Arroyo Seco Library, 6145 N. Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, 90042

Saturday, February 13, 2010 • 7 to 10 pm—*NELAart.com* Second Saturday Gallery Night; many art galleries (including Future Studio Gallery, Home of Chicken Boy) in Highland Park and Eagle Rock open (free)

Saturday, February 27, 2010 • 10 am to 12:30 pm—Sycamore Grove Walking Tour, register online at www.hpht.org, follow the “tour” link, or call (323) 256-4623

Sunday, February 28, 2010 • 2 to 4 pm—2009-2010 Award Ceremony, Preservation in Action, Arroyo Seco Library, 6145 N. Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, CA 90042

Sunday, April 11, 2010 • 11 am to 5 pm—L.A. Heritage Alliance, Heritage Day at Heritage Square Museum



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