



THE WHITTIER CONSERVANCY

1987-2007: Twenty Years of Preserving Our Past & Planning for Our Future

THE PRESERVATIONIST

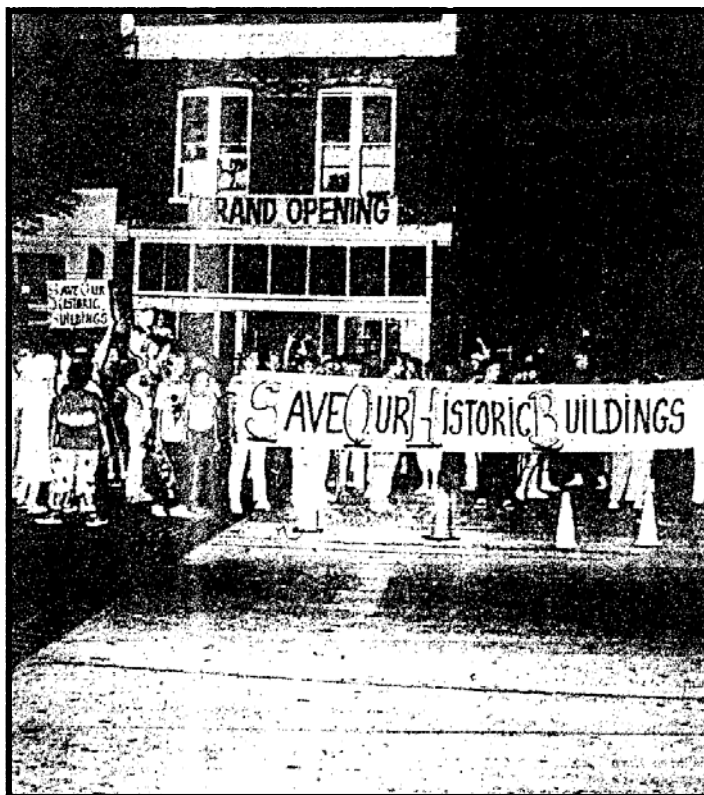
CONSERVANCY TO CELEBRATE 20 YEARS OF ACTION: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2007

Fall 2007

The Whittier Conservancy invites you to join us for our 20th Anniversary Awards Dinner. We will recognize outstanding residential and commercial buildings that contribute to Whittier's character, property values and quality of life.

- Time: 6:00 pm— silent auction, cocktails, dinner & program
- Location: Home of Mary Sullens, 6235 Bright Ave. Whittier
- Cost: \$25 per person

Please see the 2007 Annual Awards Reservation Form on page 3 for reservations to the celebration.



[Source: Whittier Daily News, October 10, 1987]

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Silent Auction items are needed for the 20th Anniversary Awards Dinner. If you have a donation, please contact Maria Claver at: 818-486-9147 or by email: mcarpiac@ucla.edu.*
- *Check out the Whittier Conservancy website for important news, updates and past newsletters: whittierconservancy.com*
- *Invite a friend to become a member! Membership information can be found on our website.*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY DOROTHEA BOYD

As someone prominent in Whittier life remarked recently, "the only good thing to come out of the earthquake was the Conservancy." After 20 years, this body of citizens continues to uphold its mission to "increase public awareness of Whittier's irreplaceable historical, cultural, and ar-

chitectural resources and to promote the preservation and enhancement of the important features of Whittier's unique urban landscape."

In the previous newsletter, I traced the first 10 years of the Conservancy, its victories and its defeats. This article continues with highlights

of the last ten years of the Conservancy's role in the life of Whittier and its citizens.

Development of the hills has been a constant concern of the Conservancy and the town hall forum it held in 2001 brought 600 local residents to protest the building of a cemetery in Turnbull Canyon by the L.A. Archdiocese. The protest re-

sulted in the sale of the precious open space.

The Greenway Task Force was formed in October of 2003 with three Conservancy members involved. Four years later, we see the final touches being made to create a scenic walkway through Whittier. Efforts to keep the historical bridge-way were defeated by Caltrans, but hopefully the re-

(cont. p. 2)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONT.)



Dorothea Boyd,
President,
Whittier Conservancy

WHITTIER CONSERVANCY BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2007

PRESIDENT- DOROTHEA BOYD
VICE PRESIDENTS- KAREN
BENNETT, SCOTT CRAWFORD
SECRETARY- MEL STURR
TREASURER- SCOTT NEAL

MARIA CARPIAC
CHARLES CLAVER
HEATHER CRAWFORD
LILYAN NEAL
SAM GUYAN
REGINA PHELAN
MICHAEL TACCONI
PHIL WINTNER

THE PRESERVATIONIST EDITOR:
MARIA CARPIAC

P. O. Box 9114
Whittier, CA 90608
www.whittierconservancy.com



[Historic District monument]

placement will be fitting.

Several thousand dollars have been presented to the city to replace needed trees in this, "A Tree City USA," which continues to be a high priority to keep Whittier green.

The wildlife corridor (still under siege by AERA energy) demands our constant vigilance to save the missing link in the corridor, that area where 3,600 homes may be built, cutting off animal movement and resulting in the impact of thousands of additional cars.

In 2003, through efforts of the Conservancy and city officials, the City of Whittier received an "A" rating for historical preservation by the prestigious L.A. Conservancy—one of only six cities to be thus recognized.

In Spring 2004, the Conser-

vancy questioned the advisability of building a seven story mixed use retail-residential development on Bright Ave. between Philadelphia and Wardman. The Conservancy was concerned about excessive height, density of 122 units, inadequate parking and no open space. Members of the Conservancy protested at Planning Commission and city council meetings. At a presentation by the Pasadena firm of Moule and Polyzoides, we were given many alternatives to successful mixed use projects. Finally, the initial project was rejected and the city council hired Moule and Polyzoides to plan a new future for the whole of uptown. Conservancy members, along with city staff and council members attended a four-day session in Pasadena on city planning and new urbanism, a bus tour of successful new

developments and many sessions with the Polyzoides team. Currently, the city is reviewing the new uptown specific plan.

The refurbishing of the wonderful old Southern Pacific Train depot in 2003 and its reinstatement on the National Register was the result of the perseverance of many organizations including the Conservancy.

Pio Pico reopened in September of 2003 after years of neglect following earthquake damage. Conservancy members played an important part in bringing this historic treasure of California's last Mexican governor to its true potential as a replica of a homestead surrounded by orchard, corn and barley field and corral.

That was a noteworthy year, for the Conservancy (*cont. p. 3*)

COUNCIL VOTES AGAINST PRESERVATION/NEIGHBORHOODS

BY HELEN RAHDER

Recent actions by the Whittier City Council have left several neighborhoods with situations they should not be tackling. From historic districts to Uptown remodels and on to the proliferation of apartments, Uptown Whittier is facing a threat it hasn't known since the era immediately following the earthquake almost twenty years ago.

Back in 1987, the Conservancy was formed in a direct response to the city's inabil-

ity and unwillingness to protect its historic neighborhoods from greedy developers, inappropriate zoning, unwelcome apartment construction, incompatible renovations, and shoddy redevelopment. After years of fighting on behalf of these neighborhoods, the Conservancy was successful in forcing the city (sometimes through the last resort---a lawsuit) to rezone, rewrite the development standards, form design guidelines, create historic districts, and adhere to the law, which protects

neighborhoods from being destroyed. This new era came about through community awareness and a political revolution that reminded those in power who their constituents were and what they expected of those elected officials.

It seems now, though, that the pendulum has swung once more and we are presently facing many of the same problems that were thought to be resolved a long time ago. Councilmembers Greg Nordbak, Cathy Warner, and Joe

(*cont. p. 6*)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONT.)

played a significant part in the rescue of the historic 1911 McGee House on College Ave. from demolition. It is now the home of Scott and Heather Crawford, who became valuable Conservancy members.

Our efforts to bring a new and beautiful entrance to Whittier at Norwalk and Beverly were thwarted as were demands for a bookstore in the city that once boasted half a dozen, despite a petition of 2,700 citizens' signatures.

However, following the Broadway massacre, Whittier developed a new tree ordinance giving citizens an opportunity to oppose proposed tree removals. Remember a sign on a tree and a letter in your mailbox gives you the responsibility to investigate a possi-

ble tree casualty.

We continued to oppose the Ibiza nightclub in the old B of A building with many city council meeting comments from the audience and final satisfaction.

The proposed Whittier Blvd. revitalization was warmly supported as was the hopeful possibility of developing the Nelles property with stores, homes, offices, park and some preservation of the existing historic structures. Today it remains but a hope but we are pleased that the renewed Whittwood is no longer a dream.

In a special edition of the Conservancy newsletter in 2001, a vision for Whittier is presented: attract quality businesses; Whittwood developed with housing and retail; quality development

design standards; code enforcement; historic train depot; Pio Pico mansion; Rails to Trains; new city sign ordinance; revitalization of Whittier Blvd.; new library/police station; completion of the Whittier wilderness preserve.

What an ambitious list and some dreams have already been accomplished! Perhaps the most pressing problems concern the library and police station. The possible development of the Alpha Beta property to library, condominiums, retail and park look most promising and city demolition of the old grocery store is a good start. Suggested plans are available for perusal at the current library.

For many years, the Conservancy has celebrated

Christmas with the candlelight walk when citizens join us on a guided tour of historic homes, areas, churches, learning the architecture and history of interest.

Another annual event is the October dinner and awards presentation when owners of property, either commercial, residential or institutional are commended for one or more of the following categories: historic preservation, historic restoration, new construction, and community enhancement.

Yet another community service is the candidates forum held in council chambers prior to local elections.

As our constitution demands, it is our responsibility to inform (*cont. p. 5*)

WHITTIER CONSERVANCY 20TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER



Name _____

Address _____

Email Address _____

Phone # _____

I would like _____ tickets to the 20th Anniversary Dinner @ \$25 each. Total: \$ _____

I cannot attend, but please accept my donation of \$ _____

Please return this form with your fee (checks payable to the Whittier Conservancy) to:

Whittier Conservancy, PO Box 9114, Whittier, CA 90608

REFOCUS ON QUALITY GROWTH: A CONSERVANCY EDITORIAL

A recent article by Mike Sprague ("Whittier Polarized Over New Projects") did an outstanding job of articulating a concern that a lot of us in Whittier have had about our Whittier City Council lately.

It seems like the present council majority of Warner, Nordbak and Vinatieri want to see a "win / lose", zero sum, winner take all, shoot-the-prisoners approach to local development issues in typical Karl Rove style. They have political capital and they're going to use it. Instead of working with the Whittier Conservancy to iron out differences, they use land-use decisions to show who's boss.

How has this approach worked in nearby cities? Do you want to pat-

tern the discussion over local issues after the examples set by Pico Rivera, Montebello or El Monte? How is the extreme partisanship we see in Sacramento and Washington D.C. working out for us right now?

We are highly suspicious of any group, religious or otherwise, which is created solely to be against another philosophy. (Besides, zealots are difficult people with which to negotiate). The self-appointed head of the "Presidents Council", (whatever that is), Allan Nakken, has set up a group so that he can rule Whittier from Friendly Hills. We are not sure what the charter of their group is but it seems to be "development at any cost."

Land use controversies are

nothing new in Whittier, mainly due to the devastating 1987 earthquake. The existing city council sat idly by as earthquake-wounded Craftsman homes were replaced with tickey-tack apartments on a wholesale basis. A transient, gang infested, graffitied Uptown was the result.

Unfortunately, the "everything new is wonderful" development philosophy still lives on in the cold hearts of people who only see life in terms of profits and losses. Our architectural heritage gets decimated in the process and the whining of developers gets them their way with the elected folks. The politicians will swear that "development money" campaign contributions do nothing to influence their

votes...

Statistically speaking, it takes votes from all over the city of Whittier to win an election here. Shouldn't being a "man or woman of the people" be a goal of those we elect? Shouldn't we who live south of Lambert Road get the same consideration as those who live in the Friendly Hills enclave?

Speaking of losing touch with the mainstream folks, it took a petition with 600 signatures on it to get our city council to unwind their proposal with the notable exception of Owen Newcomer), to re-introduce fireworks into Whittier during the biggest drought in many years. We are still driving to bookstores in other
(cont. p. 5)

"...these old buildings do not belong to us only; they have belonged to our forefathers, and they will belong to our descendants unless we play them false. They are not in any sense our property to do as we like with. We are only trustees for those that come after us."

-William Morris, Leader of the Arts & Crafts Movement

HISTORIC PRESERVATION: CORNERSTONE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

BY JIM RAWITSCH

The University of Southern California School of Architecture has recently announced the creation of a new master's degree in historic preservation. According to a statement of

purpose for the program, students will learn about "the philosophy, theory and practice of the historic preservation movement" and how it applies to the "economic revitalization of

communities and cultural landscapes."

At a time when a majority of members on the Whittier City Council views preservation as being in

conflict with development, the USC program underscores the value of historic preservation as an engine of economic revitalization.

(cont. p. 5)

HISTORIC PRESERVATION: CORNERSTONE... (CONT.)

Indeed, much research now confirms that historic preservation significantly enhances the value of real estate. If you want to protect and enhance property values, you have to protect community standards in the zoning, planning, and design of cities. Well-trained architects are part of the solution.

Research published by the USC School of Policy, Planning, and Development also examined the value of citizen participation in the development process. The study found that, around the globe, whether a project is in Thailand, Switzerland, or

elsewhere, the greatest economic benefit for a city is obtained when developers collaborate with the communities in which they build. Developer-driven projects, whether enabled by neglect, cronyism or

“MUCH RESEARCH NOW CONFIRMS THAT HISTORIC PRESERVATION SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCES THE VALUE OF REAL ESTATE.”

weak oversight by local governments, consistently

under-perform projects in which developers are held to a higher standard of community accountability.

The City of Whittier’s recent actions with regard to the Domestic Water site, the former Los Portales restaurant building, and apartment development on lower Pickering demonstrates an astonishing lack of understanding about how historic preservation goals supported by strong, informed citizen participation from groups such as the Conservancy and the Historical Commission, can help maximize Whittier’s economic and cultural potential.

Those in the community who advocate reduced oversight would have you believe that preservation somehow compromises economic potential. They are quite simply ignoring the facts. Preservation is not antithetical to great development, it is a cornerstone for it.

With USC ready to educate more architects, planners, developers and others about the opportunities and economic benefits of historic preservation, the Conservancy can look to the future with optimism. Is City Council listening?



RE-FOCUS ON QUALITY GROWTH (CONT.)

cities. Neighborhoods are extremely frustrated with trying to fight new cell phone towers, group homes for recovering addicts and speeding cars

[Photo: Cool-A-Coo Building]

Traffic Calming has been quietly ditched. We read of other cities that get library funding but nope, not us.

We hope our elected folks can re-focus on being a

“man or woman of the people” and represent our whole city. Let’s re-focus on **quality** growth, not just growth for the sake of corporate profits.

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE (CONT.)

the public and, when necessary, city council, when historic structures are in jeopardy. Hopefully, the new tier system currently under study will prepare property owners and potential buyers with the correct information thus pre-

venting disappointment and frustration in anticipation of removal or renewal of buildings. Prospective buyers need to be informed if a building is historic and therefore protected. We were disappointed to bring a lawsuit against our city

council to preserve historic buildings on the property of the Domestic Water Buildings on Whittier Blvd. Unfortunately, the council elected to give demolition approval without the required California Environmental Quality Act. The

result is in the hands of the judge and of course, all parties will abide by the law. One of us will be disappointed, the other satisfied. Whatever the outcome, the Conservancy will continue to work to keep Whittier special.

COUNCIL VOTES... (CONT.)

Vinatieri have consistently ruled in favor of inappropriate renovations, including some in historic districts, in order to satisfy the desires of developers at the expense of the entire district. They have recently approved a remodel of the Los Portales corner that is totally inconsistent with the current Uptown Specific Plan. They also overturned the Planning Commission and approved apartments on Mar Vista

and Pickering that violate the City's General Plan (the citizen-approved blueprint for development in the City). Most egregious was their approval of the demolition of the historic Cal Domestic Water buildings on Whittier Blvd. across from Whittierwood.

In their eagerness to install yet another chain restaurant (which they planned to subsidize at the taxpayers' expense), they bypassed state law and their

own municipal code, overturned the Historic Resources Commission, and ignored the Conservancy's pleas to follow the law and consider the adaptive reuse of the site. This was the final straw for the Conservancy. Our mission statement makes it clear that we have no choice but to challenge the City's action. We are very confident that the Conservancy's position will be upheld.

The Conservancy greatly appreciates the efforts of

Mayor Owen Newcomer and Councilman Bob Henderson who have consistently voted in favor of upholding the LAW and protecting historic structures, districts, and neighborhoods. The current strife is not just a matter of differing opinions. It is a matter of ideology and politics that flies in the face of common sense. The good work of the Conservancy, a not-for-profit, local, public interest organization, will continue despite these recent setbacks.

WHITTIER CONSERVANCY/ COMMUNITY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 6, 2007—6:00pm

Whittier Conservancy 20th Anniversary Dinner

Home of Mary Sullens, Historic Uptown Whittier

For more information: www.whittierconservancy.com

October 27, 2007

Whittier Historic Neighborhood Association Seventh Annual Home Tour

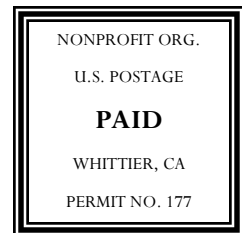
For more information: www.whittierhistoric.org

THE WHITTIER CONSERVANCY

P. O. Box 9114
Whittier, CA 90608
www.whittierconservancy.com



**PRESERVING OUR HISTORIC
AND NATURAL RESOURCES**



Return Service Requested