



THE WHITTIER CONSERVANCY

THE PRESERVATIONIST

Spring 2006

REVISION TO UPTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN BEGINS WITH COMMUNITY INPUT

SOURCE: CITY OF WHITTIER WEBSITE (WWW.WHITTIERCH.ORG)

Many of you have already heard that the Uptown Specific Plan will be revised this year. You may also have already heard that a Specific Plan is a detailed plan that guides development for a particular business district or neighborhood focusing on land use, design standards, infrastructure, parking and more.

But what is all this supposed to mean for you—the business owner, property owner, resident or member of this community?

The City of Whittier has chosen to revise the Uptown Specific Plan in an effort to encourage well-designed new investment in the area and hired Moule &



Photo Courtesy of Ron Pierce, Cinematreasures.org

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *If there is a property, residential or commercial, that you would like to have considered for the 2006 Conservancy Awards, please call Karen Bennett at 562-696-4458*
- *Silent Auction donations are needed for the 2006 Awards Dinner! Please contact Charles & Maria Claver for more information at 323-651-0524*
- *Check out the Whittier Conservancy website: www.whittierconservancy.org*

**Green
Dot?**

The Whittier Conservancy depends on and appreciates your continued support. If you have not yet paid this year's membership dues, you will find a GREEN DOT reminder on your mailing label. Payment of your dues will ensure that funds are available to help us continue our work to preserve the historic and unique character of our community.

CONSERVANCY/ COMMUNITY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 5-8, 2006—Review of progress meetings
Moule & Polyzoides
City Hall, 6:30-8:00pm

Whittier Museum Tours

Tuesday-Friday, 9:00am-2:00pm
Saturday-Sunday, 1:00pm-4:00pm
Call (562) 945-3871

June 9, 2006—Final Presentation
Moule & Polyzoides
City Hall, 2:00pm

Bailey House Docents Needed

Call the Whittier Historical Society
(562) 945-3205



Dorothea Boyd,
President,
Whittier Conservancy

**WHITTIER
CONSERVANCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
2006**

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE BY DOROTHEA BOYD

Attending a recent City Council meeting and the installation of Councilman Joe Vinatieri and Mayor Cathy Warner, I was impressed with the amount of work, unknown to the general public, that is expected of council members. At the close of the meeting, the new mayor assigned meetings or attendance to each member that in themselves would occupy many hours per month, quite aside from public functions to attend and the huge Friday package of study for forthcoming council meetings. I came away with a new regard for those who hold office. We may not always agree, but we do expect the smooth running of our city to be handled by five citizens who have Whittier’s best interests at heart.

With a great future for our city, at the moment in the hands of the nationally-acclaimed architects and town

planners, Moule and Polyzoides of Pasadena, we can all participate in suggestions, hopes, wishes and demands to be incorporated in the new Uptown Specific Plan.

Mr. Polyzoides took representatives from many Whittier groups, City Council, commissions and city staff on a tour of Hollywood and Pasadena where we reviewed several of his projects. I was impressed with his firm’s quality of design, ability to create a happy environment in multiple living and work areas and his respect for historic buildings.

Whittier will be in good hands for the next few months as Polyzoides designs a friendly Uptown environment, with suggestions for multiple living complexes with open space, feasible parking areas and homes welcoming both the young and old to live gracious lives in our city.

According to Mr. Polyzoides, there are 88 cities in L.A. County discussing town center renewal. With a future demanding more housing, Whittier can anticipate at least 1000 new units in a series of many independent projects. Home ownership must be encouraged with higher maintenance standards and hopefully many current rentals will become owner-occupied. His approach to change is traditional urbanism—a good place to live and work as opposed to freeway urbanism. Less dependency on cars will lessen parking needs.

We have the potential for a great future. The plans will be sound. We must follow them carefully, encouraging good development. Our city fathers have an exciting time ahead. We need to support them and the city staff with our input and encouragement. Whittier will once again be a city to be proud of.

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: SCOTT & HEATHER CRAWFORD BY MARIA CLAVER

Scott Crawford, a retired Pasadena police officer and Heather Crawford, a Whittier real estate agent, have been members of the Whittier Conservancy

for one year.

Their connection to the Conservancy was forged in 2003 when the group fought to save the Crawford’s current home from demolition. The owner of the house at the time petitioned the City for permission to knock it down. The Conservancy then did what it does best, resulting in the City’s designation of the structure as an historic building.

The Crawfords were already aware of the Conservancy’s accomplishments but became more excited and dedicated to actively contributing to the organization’s work after doing research regarding their current home and the Conservancy’s role in its

preservation.

Heather believes that the revitalization of Uptown is one of Whittier’s most pressing issues and she is eager to see what Moule and Polyzoides will propose to renovate it to its fullest potential.

When asked what she would say to Conservancy members reading this newsletter, Heather confidently stated that we cannot accomplish anything from the sidelines. It is important to take a look around and get motivated to contribute. Collectively, we carry a lot of weight and have a strong voice in this community. If you want to be heard, get involved!



Scott & Heather Crawford

COUNCIL'S CORNER BY GREG NORDBAK

It's a pleasure to be able to provide this newsletter article for the Conservancy's Summer issue of *The Preservationist*. It comes at the time that I begin my fourth term serving you as a member of the Whittier City Council. Isn't it ironic that many of you felt some trepidation as I took my seat on the City Council in 1994; some in our community believed that I would be driving the bulldozer through Uptown and our historic neighborhoods with a "development at any cost" philosophy. Well, 12 years later it is clear that perceptions were very different from reality.

It's no coincidence that our new economic development newsletter carries the philosophy of "Planning the Future, Preserving the Past." This is a belief that I carry as I make decisions with the other members of the City Council. Restoration and relocation of the Historic

Train Depot, historic neighborhood entry signs, establishment of the College Hills Historic District, my commitment to a community-based revision to the Uptown Specific Plan, along with supporting the appropriate maintenance and lighting in Uptown speak for themselves. In order for us to be successful, there must be a partnership between City Hall and our constituents. I am proud to say that I value that partnership with the Conservancy.

In a letter I received from your President, Dorothea Boyd wrote, "with Whittier on the verge of new and remarkable growth, it should be an exciting time." I couldn't agree more. What sits on the horizon for us?

- Construction of the Greenway Trail will be starting early this summer;
- The Uptown Specific Plan revision is underway;

- The balance of development and preservation of the Fred C. Nelles site is a reasonable expectation as the State of California moves to sell the property;
- The 14-acre site at Whittier Boulevard and Philadelphia Street is being actively encouraged for reasonable development;
- Whittier Boulevard is reinventing itself;
- Literally hundreds of homes are under some construction at any point in time, as our residents reinvest in Whittier.

These are good things. A vibrant economic climate brings value to our City and significance to the history that we cherish. There are lots of examples where other cities' economies decayed around a beautiful historic neighborhood. Sadly, areas like Bunker Hill of Downtown Los Angeles didn't



Greg Nordbak, Councilmember, City of Whittier

survive the collapse in tact. I believe that to save what is precious, we need to constantly be "polishing" and improving our City. Re-thinking how we provide value to our residents so that services can be maintained, our history and protected open spaces is what makes a City special. Whittier is that special place and I intend to preserve that balance for everyone—residents and members of your organization alike.



JOIN NOW!

Yes! I want to be a part of the Whittier Conservancy!

<input type="radio"/> \$10 Student	Name _____
<input type="radio"/> \$25 Individual	Address _____
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<input type="radio"/> \$100 Patron	Email Address _____
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Please return this form with your membership fee (checks payable to the Whittier Conservancy) to:

Whittier Conservancy, PO Box 9114, Whittier, CA 90608

UPTOWN NEEDS YOU! UPTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN... (CONT.)

Polyzoides, an urban design and planning firm, to manage the revision project. This revision process may last between 9 and 12 months.

Moule and Polyzoides and the City have provided several opportunities for the public to participate in the planning of the future of Uptown. The revision of the Uptown Specific Plan will rely on the participation of all interested persons and stakeholders.

The first part of the public participation process was the Discovery Workshops/Listening Exercise. These sessions were designed to interview stakeholder groups in the Uptown area and note initial concerns and desires about Uptown. Those not involved with an organization

identified as a "stakeholder," provided Moule and Polyzoides with input at the Public Discovery Workshop on May 16th at the Train Depot.

The next step in the process was a Pre-Charrette Study Session, held on May 25th in the Council Chambers. During this session Moule and Polyzoides presented their initial findings to the City Council and explained the Charrette process scheduled for June 5-9 at the Crystal Marquis.

The Charrette is an intense work session with public workshops. The Charrette is the planning process that occurs over five days and incorporates the input of all interested parties to create the plan that will most adequately

represent the community and the future of Uptown. During the five days of presentations/workshops on various topics such as New Urbanism (residential density and housing design), Economics and Retail, Transportation and Form Based Codes will be scheduled at noon. These presentations are designed to be educational and to open a dialogue with the public regarding possible changes to the Uptown Specific Plan.

The most successful Charrette process will have many participants from the public and key stakeholder groups. The City understands the noon presentations may not be convenient for some members of the public and business community; therefore, there will be evening Review of Pro-

gress meetings held from 6:30 to 8:00 pm from Monday to Thursday (June 5-8) to discuss the work conducted throughout the day.

On Friday, June 9th, the last day of the Charrette process, Moule and Polyzoides will hold the Final Presentation, which is scheduled at 2:00pm. During this meeting they will present their findings and review the week's work.

The City encourages you to make time, get involved in the process, and share your voice for the future of Uptown Whittier.

For more information, please contact the City of Whittier Community Development Department at 464-3380.

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View of Greenleaf Avenue late 1950's
Postcard History of Whittier, Valdez 1987

**PRESERVING OUR HISTORIC
AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

