

## Overview of Save Our Heritage Organisation

Since 1969, Save Our Heritage Organisation (SOHO), a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, has been a powerful catalyst for preservation of our nation's heritage by raising awareness and appreciation of the architectural and cultural heritage of the San Diego region.

Our mission statement is: Through education, advocacy, and stewardship our mission is to preserve, promote and support preservation of the architectural, cultural and historical links and landmarks that contribute to the community identity, depth and character of our region.

SOHO is the primary resource in the region for historic homeowners and as such answers thousands of inquiries each year. Educating the public is a large part of our mission and our success. We hold several annual preservation themed events. These are comprehensive and cultural events that include programs such as: lectures, workshops, architectural tours, art and artifact exhibitions, and resources and references. The events showcase the diverse range of architecture, history and culture of San Diego.

As San Diego County's historic preservation advocacy group, SOHO is one of the largest and most successful in the nation, and we are a local partner with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. As a non-profit organization, our financial resources are dedicated to supporting our preservation work, and our events serve as fundraisers toward that end. Our advocacy work is front and center to everything we do.

SOHO operates seven historic sites: the Whaley House complex (comprised of five sites) and the Adobe Chapel Museum in Old Town San Diego, and the Marston House Museum and Gardens in Balboa Park. SOHO is a leader in the cultural historic tourism arena. Heritage tourism significantly impacts local economies and helps preserve historic places making it one of SOHO's most powerful tools for saving San Diego's Heritage. Since taking over operations of the Whaley House Museum in 2000, we have raised attendance from under 10,000 to over 120,000 annual visitors, making it the most successful house museum in the region. At the same time we have been restoring the house and grounds to its period of significance, 1857-1885. In 2001 we restored San Diego's first professional theatre in its original location (the Whaley House) and began theatre productions, the first in 133 years. In 2009, we assumed operations of the Marston House Museum and Gardens, and are currently negotiating a long-term lease. We have begun repairs to resolve issues from which the property suffers after a decade of deferred maintenance. Long term plans for the 8,500 square foot home, carriage house and five acres of grounds include restoration of the landscape, one of the most historic and important gardens in the state, and to promote it as a public garden destination. The house will reflect the family, Marston's contributions to San Diego as preservationist and conservationist, along with revolving exhibitions, using two bedrooms as gallery space. The carriage house is now in use for the first time in 30 years as our admissions, welcome center and museum shop.

SOHO works to unite community leaders, business people, historians, teachers, environmentalists, historical and community groups, and preservationists in a coalition approach to historic education and preservation advocacy. We have negotiated unprecedented preservation agreements working with developers and city, state, county, and national agencies as well as the private sector. Our agreement with the San Diego Padres for the historic warehouse district in downtown San Diego is used as a national template, as is our agreement with the Hotel del Coronado.

Our award-winning magazine *Our Heritage* is used as a tool for advocacy, education and membership building. SOHO's additional tools include *Sherlock Homes*™, a Home Restoration Consultation Program for home and business owners, a reference library available to members, and we have also compiled a restoration Resource Directory, which is available online. We operate two web sites: [www.sohosandiego.org](http://www.sohosandiego.org) and [www.whaleyhouse.org](http://www.whaleyhouse.org).