

REFLECTIONS



Feb. 1977
Vol. IX, No. 2

Newsletter of the
Save Our Heritage Organisation

BANKER'S HILL CANYON THREATENED

Indiscriminate development is again threatening an historic area in San Diego. In Bankers Hill a real estate developer is seeking city approval to construct three homes in the undeveloped Arroyo canyon which will, in turn, create the need for a new city street. The three lots in question are situated directly beneath the Spruce Street Suspension Bridge.

Bankers Hill, at the present time, is a peaceful residential community. Its homes sit on large acreages and many were designed by Irving Gill or William Hebbard - thus of historical significance. The canyons throughout the area were planted, in part, by Kate Sessions to compliment the surrounding homes. On January 7, 1977, the Spruce Street Suspension Bridge was declared an historical site. It is an integral part of the community life in Bankers Hill and still supports much foot traffic from the surrounding homes on both sides of the canyon.

SOHO has conducted historical tours of the area and the Historical Society has chosen the Guiles' home at 3226 Curlew as the site for the 1977 Designers Showcase, just one block from the threatened canyon.

In order to combat the serious alteration of the historic characteristics of the neighborhood, residents have formed the "Bankers Hill Canyon Association," chaired by Iris Hicks. The area was zoned R-1-5 in 1910 but the zoning

did not relate to how the community developed. "Lots in San Diego were zoned in a blanket fashion," stated Mrs. Hicks. "There is a need to look at each area independently. Zoning is no protection for historic preservation or open spaces."

Community interest was triggered by the developer's desire to severely grade a lot directly adjacent to the suspension bridge on Brant Street and erect a forty-three foot structure. The variance was allowed only to thirty feet but the rim home may be built within three feet of the bridge. Community pressure was unable to deter this from happening. The non-profit, unincorporated association now battles the problem of saving the canyon. Development would destroy wildlife and vegetation as well as create a higher density condition than that which currently exists in the neighborhood. Said Mrs. Hicks, "the preservation of the canyon has been an incentive for neighborhood cohesiveness. The positive response has shown the magnitude of concern."

Initially the association was able to have the bridge declared an historic site. Next they have attempted to form an assessment district. If sixty percent of the residents agree to purchase the

(continued)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SOHO's first general meeting of 1977 was held at the La Jolla Women's Club on January 23rd, and was well attended by both new and familiar faces. All agreed that our hospitality committee under the leadership of Claire Kaplan did an outstanding job in providing a beautiful selection of delectable goodies.

The first order of business was the presentation of that most highly coveted of all preservation awards, the "SOHO Lady." Presenting the illustrious award was (as tradition dictates) its last recipient, past Board member Terri Recht. Terri expounded on the history of the award and explained how every year it is given to some deserving SOHO member for accomplishments above and beyond the call of duty. This year's honored recipient was past president Bill Cartwright who was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting (maybe someone tipped him off?). Remember Bill, tradition also states that the award must be placed in a prominent place in the winner's home or office.

After the committee reports were heard (for details on the Pythias Castle, Gill demolition by UCSD and Belmont Park Carousel, see news items), Mr. Dick Reed shared his program on the historic Hill District in St. Paul. This excellent presentation explains how a large neighborhood preservation project got started and operated through a group very similar to SOHO. Using this as background information, a discussion began concerning the direction SOHO should take in trying to acquire a location for headquarters. Marc Tarasuck, chairman of the SOHO office committee, handed out questionnaires to those present in an attempt to find out how the membership feels about a headquarters location. The questionnaire briefly stated SOHO's needs as follows:

Basic Needs: Office space (visible address, phone, administrative files), library space; Secondary Needs: Meeting space, space for sale items, storage space, display space, income property, training grounds for restoration.

Possibilities suggested were:

1. Purchase major historic building (could we support it?),
2. Purchase modest building in fringe neighborhood (could we initiate a project similar to St. Paul?),
3. Move into Gaslamp District (would we have to rent?),
4. Move

the
SOHO
Lady



into existing building in Heritage Park (do we want to lease space from the County?), 5. Move a structure to Heritage Park to restore (should we wait for a suitable building?), 6. Rent or purchase modern building (well it's better than nothing), 7. Just continue to save our money and operate as we have (out of my garage?).

The majority of those present seemed to favor the idea of purchasing an affordable building in a fringe neighborhood (such as Golden Hill), although many showed interest in the Gaslamp Quarter. At this time it is most important that the membership let the Board know its feelings regarding an office. Please take a few minutes to jot down your reactions to the suggestions listed above. Every SOHO member has helped contribute time and money toward seeing this dream come true, and every SOHO member has a responsibility to share ideas with the Board. This could be the most important decision that SOHO ever makes. Send your response (and why not include your membership renewal and save a stamp?) to: SOHO Office Committee, P.O. Box 3571, San Diego, 92103. Please do so soon as it is hoped that we will be able to vote on this at the next general meeting.

Bruce Kamerling

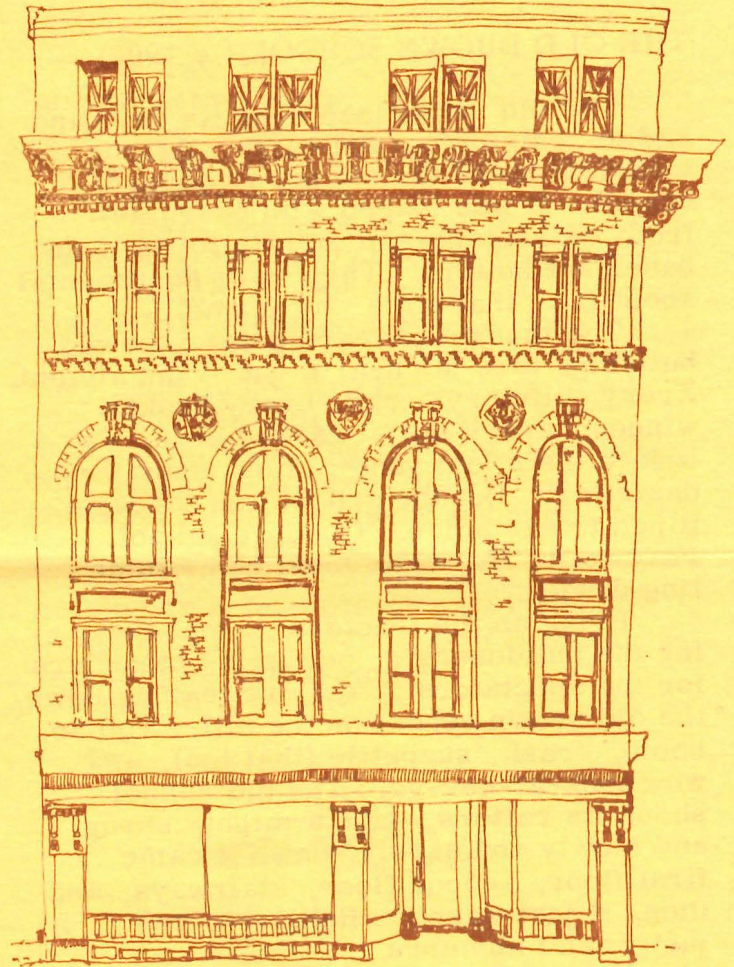
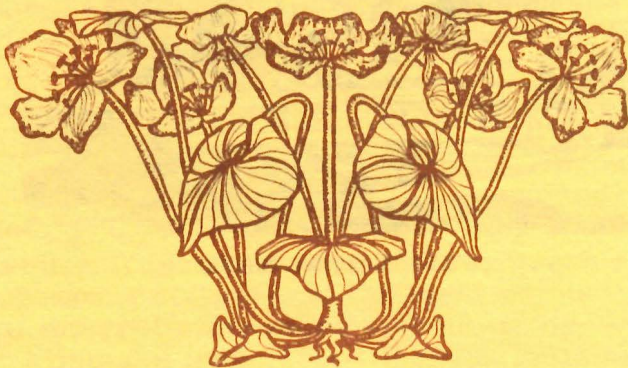
(Banker's Hill continued)

canyon lots, the city can then condemn the property and force a sale as has been done in Tecolote Canyon. An offer also was made by a philanthropic neighbor to purchase the lots and donate the land to the city. This was rejected by the developer.

At the present time, the environmental impact report is in review. Favorable to the association's cause, it failed to address itself adequately to some major factors, such as the impact on flora and fauna. Although the initial development under consideration is for only three homes, it opens the door for construction on approximately twenty different canyon lots.

According to Mrs. Hicks two good things have emerged from the public awareness of historic preservation which would be beneficial to all communities like Bankers Hill. A proposal has been made by the City Planning Department to identify, protect, and preserve historic sites and districts within the City of San Diego. As sites and areas are designated, the board would work to maintain the basic character of the area. Vacant parcels would have significance as they relate to the character of the district. Second, the City Council's Public Facilities and Recreation Committee cleared a proposal to allow bond issues for financing the preservation of canyon areas. Only a majority vote would be needed. This would allow less advantaged communities which could not afford to form an assessment district to preserve their surrounding.

"The city must come to grips with preservation," stated Mrs. Hicks. "The scarcity and prices of older homes indicate the amount of public awareness and concern."



The Knights of Pythias Castle

PYTHIAS PROPOSAL WINS TENTATIVE APPROVAL

The proposal to save the Knights of Pythias building on at least an interim basis has been approved in principle by the city's Redevelopment Agency. As advanced by an ad hoc citizens committee, the proposal calls for using the 70 year old building as a community center for the arts. Facilities, to be open to non-profit groups for a nominal lease, would include a theatre, gallery space, studios, rehearsal halls, and a coffee house.

In addition to providing vitally needed space for the arts, the Pythias would inject new life into an area that otherwise would be occupied by parking lots. The building was purchased by the City Redevelopment Agency for eventual demolition to make way for a mammoth shopping center, but marketing difficulties have made it unlikely the new center will be built for many years.

MY CORNER

THE OLD BROWN SCHOOL (c 1900)

The old school had seen its day, and had to resign from the earth. All the town folk loved the old brown square school. It was loaded with character from its gingerbread turrets to its little basement bottom. They were sentimental about it .. that's the way it was.

The thought of tearing down the old building, tore the hearts out of the alumni. Every splintery board, every broken window, every initial carved desk, was a link to their lost youth. How could they destroy it! But the school was through; it had to say adieu. Goodbye school. Farewell! The walls must come tumbling down.

Bring on the tractors .. make way for the bulldozers .. put up the bleachers for the spectators .. they're tearing down the old brown school on the hill. And so, boom, crash, skabuttle (that too), and wow look-at-her-go. The old school shook its rafters, gave a mighty shrug, and slowly and surely, down it came .. first floor, second floor, stairways, and then, it just wasn't. Rah, rah, rah .. it just wasn't anymore.

Level off the ground .. smooth it and pat it and mark it with "B" and start a new building for baby and me.

What a glorious new school this would be. Not brown this time .. not square .. and not a smidge of gingerbread. Ah so. "Hmmmmmph" said the old folks, "This is no school, it's only a building" .. a plain white one with round pillars in front and that was it. It looked fair naked. Not one cupola .. not one.

But the kids thought it was okay-so-so for them, and so's your old man they said as they marched into the new round-pillared white school .. on the same old hill. "I pledge allegiance in every room in the new building" .. and the old people said, "I guess so, and it's clean enough, but it isn't the Old Brown School .. it isn't like it was", and they were sad.

So the school was new and the kids were young and the school got older and the kids got wiser, and some just got older. And the new white school turned grey, from the off-white sooty air, and the little kids grew up and got a little grey too .. that is, the men did; the women went silver-blond. And the years went by.

Now the new grey school was beginning to split at the seams. The town fathers knew something had to be done; maybe give it a shot in the auditorium and bring it up to date. The pillars had pallor and the seats sagged.

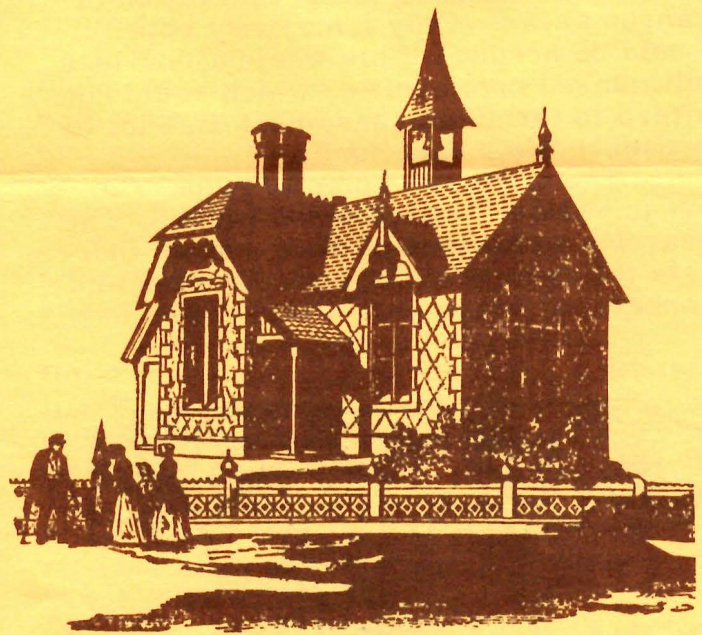
The years skipped over each other in their haste to get ahead, and the town was tearing down, down, down, and building up, up, up. Progress, you know. And the old grey school grew older.. it was outdated .. it too had to go.....

And so there would be a new school .. a school supreme .. this would be it! Ultra something .. all a surprise. First a fence. (No alien eye must view this spectacular new school being constructed.) All were alert. All were eager. Excitement reigned .. finally the day arrived. The School was finished. Down came the fence and up went a cry... There she stood .. there stood the NEW SCHOOL.

SQUARE, BROWN and GINGER-BREADY .. from its tippimost turret to its little basement bottom .. and a CUPOLA!!

All the people loved it .. they were sentimental about it .. that's the way it was.....

Claire Kaplan



VILLAGE SCHOOL-HOUSE

MAY WE HAVE A MERRY-GO-ROUND?

Lynn and I have been doing our homework and, while we still have more questions than answers, we now have several solid facts. Having conferred with Mrs. Roland Summit, who collects, restores, and researches carousels, we now know that the Belmont Park carousel was built by Charles I. D. Looff in 1910 to 1912. There are no California carousels that pre-date 1900. In the entire United States there are fewer than 300--approximately 14 in California. Looff was one of the earliest and best of the builders--between 1890 and 1918. The Belmont Park Carousel which was originally on the Santa Monica Pier, is one of the biggest and once best of these. It is a menagerie of camels, goats, giraffes, and many different types of horses. Originally there were 67 animals and two chariots. Of these, 56 animals remain, though 3 are badly damaged and 5 others are out of order. We are led to believe the missing animals are in storage at the park. We were totally appalled at the lack of maintenance. Many of the horses show their original paint or are through to the undercoating or bare wood.

We urge you to go and see both of San Diego's carousels. The lovely and loved one in Balboa Park that belongs to SOHO member Virginia Long and it's neglected relative at Belmont.

We feel that it is such a rare treasure, that it should be admitted to Heritage Park in spite of the fact that it is too young. We are excited at the thought of a project that is both portable and profitable. We don't know if Bill Evans will sell it. We don't know who it will actually belong to if the city takes over the park. We don't know how much protection its designation as an Historical site gives it. Can that keep it from weathering away or being sold out of town?

We were so encouraged by the response we got from the Jan. 23rd meeting and hope that, in spite of the obvious obstacles, this can go from a small idea to a fully restored merry-go-round--complete with brass ring.

Marilynn Crehore --and Lynn



Around the Town:

GINGERBREAD MONUMENT THREATENED - TIME RUNNING OUT ON LONG-WATERMAN-GILBERT HOUSE

by Mary Ward

The last day of the last extension to find a buyer for the Long-Waterman-Gilbert House, City Historic Site #37, is August 1. The search for an Angel has failed since November 3, 1975, when its owner Florence Hart Gilbert died. Sale of the house and its furnishings by the heir is being forced by inheritance and property taxes.

The house, also listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was designed by Architect D. P. Benson in 1889, for John Long, owner of the Coronado Fruit Package Company and the largest rotary veneer machine in the world. Long imported exotic woods and turned out seamless hardwood veneer 10 feet long for fine interior room, furniture and buggy decorations. The San Diego Union, 1888, described Long's profitable business and the materials he used as "primavera oak, pine, maple, and redwood floated down from the Northern Coast, and primavera mahogany and other hardwoods from Central America and Mexico."

The 3-storied gabled Victorian home is constructed of selected "heart" redwood from the first 60 feet of the trunks of the giant trees. Ceilings are 10 feet high and windows seven feet, with rounded casings bent in France. Some windows are clear, others paned with stained glass.

Robert Waldo Waterman, seventeenth Governor of California from 1887-1891, bought the home and retired there at the end of his term in January 1891. His residence was brief, for he died in April of the same year.

Fred Root Hart arrived in San Diego from Vermont with his wife Fanny, their 2 little girls, May and Florence, and son Robert, and were looking for a home to buy. There were two fine houses for sale at the time, according to Florence, who was 12 years old, the Villa Montezuma and the First and Kalmia Street house. For decades, Golden Hill and "Banker's Hill", that area west of the Park, rivalled each other as the most fashionable place to live in all of San

Diego. On April 13, 1897, Fred Hart bought the stately First and Kalmia Street home.

In time, the first marriage was held in the Hart mansion, in 1906, when Miss May Hart became the bride of William Henry Woolman. To honor the occasion a Magnolia tree was planted in the front yard, and the social news recorded the day. "Under the direction of Miss K. O. Sessions, the family residence on upper First Street was transformed into a bower of beauty. The parlors were made a bower of loveliness with white cosmos, orange blossoms and ferns. The halls and dining room were daintily trimmed in pink begonias and green." Two years later the carved mahogany doors to the parlor and back parlor were opened on another flower-decked wedding when Miss Florence Hart married Dr. A. H. Gilbert, Jr., on July 1, 1908. "Freddie" as the Doctor was affectionately called, had lived nearby at Second and Fir with his sisters, Bess and Gertrude Gilbert. Their home, threatened with demolition for a parking lot for Centre City Hospital, was moved to Heritage Park by S.O.H.O. in 1971. The "Gilbert girls", as Bess and Gertrude were called in the Community, distinguished themselves by founding the Amphion Club and saving the Balboa Park buildings when they were threatened. Dr. Gilbert, with several other prominent dentists founded the San Diego County Dental Society and served as its President. Many years earlier their father "Alf" Gilbert founded San Diego's first lumber company.

The home is essentially the same as when built, situated on the lot measuring 100 x 150 feet. The 3-storied structure has dimensions of first floor, 2020 square feet; second floor, 1840 square feet; attic, 1820 square feet; basement, 500 square feet. The carriage house is assessed to the same parcel and measures 780 square feet.

Lived in continuously since it was purchased in 1897, the family is also offering many of the original Hart furnishings brought overland from Vermont. Among the antiques are Madame Recamier chaises and love seats, Morris chairs and platform rockers, Eastlake easels and an S-curved tete-a-tete.



RSC

REAL ESTATE

FOR SALE:

Alice Lee Cottage #4 designed by Irving Gill in 1912. Historic Site #63. This is one of Gill's famous canyon cottages which sits on a lot 70x120 feet and was landscaped by Kate Sessions. The 6 bedroom, 3 bath residence is at 3367 Albatross. Contact Dave Menagh at 298-0535.



The Long/Waterman House

FOR SALE:

The Long/Waterman house (1889), 2408 First Avenue. Historic Site #37 (See "Around the Town" this issue for history of the house). Cost is \$420,000 with excellent tax shelter first year. Irving Gill's Christian Science Church (1904), more recently known as the Ivy Chapel of Goodbody's Mortuary at Third and Ash, is also part of this estate. For information on these two historic properties contact Ray Cadena, 275-0163.

TENANTS NEEDED:

Bushyhead house (1887), Heritage Park. Ideal for offices, shops, boutique, art gallery. Prospective lessees must be willing to invest in interior restoration--all money to be used as credit on future rental fees. Contact Ruth Padgett, 454-4623 evenings and weekends.

DESIGNER'S SHOWCASE PREVIEW

From April 24 through May 15, 1977, "Past to Present" a Designer's Showcase will be presented by the San Diego Historical Society, the American Society of Interior Design and the Junior League of San Diego, Inc. This year's house, built in 1912, is located at 3226 Curlew Street, San Diego.

There will be two opportunities to view the empty house before the designers begin work.

The "Banker's Hill Bash," a wine and cheese tasting party, will be held March 4th from 6:30 to 9:00 PM. Admission is only \$2.00 per person.

On March 6th, there will be a Flea Market from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM. There will be a lot of goodies for sale besides seeing a goodie of a house. The cost is at flea market prices, only one dollar per person.

Don't miss these two opportunities to preview the showcase house!

Patricia Minnich



BENT-WOOD TABLE-GLASS.

SAN DIEGO CENTRE CITY TOURS

SOHO tour guides were impressed by the great response of those who took advantage of the January 15th Centre City walking tours. The tours were part of the two day San Diego Centre City Redevelopment Conference sponsored by the League of Women Voters. SOHO's tour guides Mike Jones, Matt Potter, Marc Tarasuck, Keith Evans, Cathy Grigsby and Joe Jones provided background information on six of the structures on the tour route for conference participants.

Over 350 people attended the conference which was designed to explore contrasting philosophies and proposals surrounding the downtown redevelopment issues. Speakers, panelists and discussion groups examined such city redevelopment projects as the proposed 125 acre residential Marina, the building of a major convention center north of Broadway and the development of a commercial center in the Horton Plaza area. The various attitudes displayed by the panelists and speakers toward these projects generated challenging responses among the audience members, especially those who questioned redevelopment's impact on San Diego's downtown residents.

Especially moving was Dr. Paul Bohannon's detailed presentation of the residential make-up of the San Diego downtown area; rather than the downtown area being inhabited mainly by undesirables deserving relocation, a great number of downtown residents are long-time residents and old pensioners who feel that the downtown area is their home.

Those of you who missed the January Centre City walking tour or wish to tour again will have another opportunity in February. The League of Women Voters is sponsoring three walking tours on the morning of Feb. 26th: the main downtown tour; the tour of the Horton Redevelopment area and Gaslamp Quarter; and the waterfront tour. Background information on the areas will be offered beginning at 8:45 a. m. in the Copper Room at the Community Concourse at 202 C Street. Informally organized tour groups will then follow maps and written descriptions of the tour areas as speakers stationed at different points of interest offer more specific information and lead groups through buildings

of interest en route. The tours will last until noon, when participants may return to the Community Concourse to discuss what they have seen.

The League of Women Voters is requesting the help of SOHO members in providing on-site discussion of various historical buildings in the Centre City area. Among the buildings for which they need guides are the Horton Hotel, the Yuma Building, The Knights of Pythias Building and the Santa Fe Depot. Since there is a three-page article on this tour in the February issue of Sunset Magazine, we expect quite a response. Those of you interested in helping as guides please call Cathy Grigsby at 295-0204. (Don't hesitate to call late in the evening.)

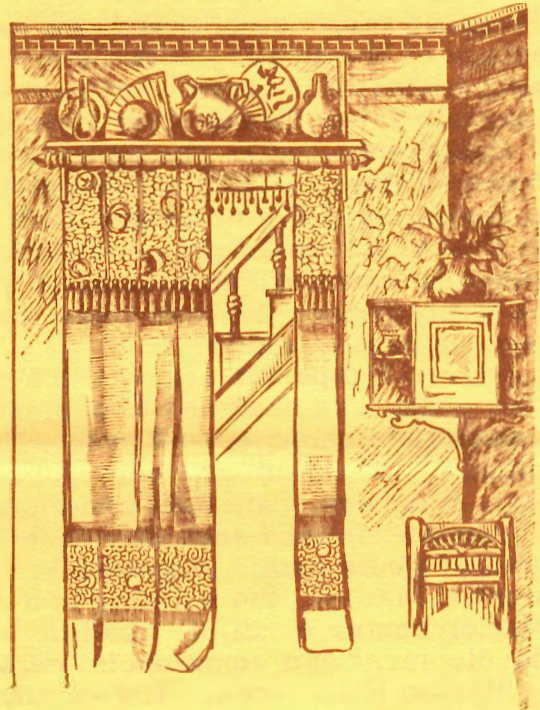


"ARABELLA MARIA. " Only to think, Julia dear, that our Mothers wore such ridiculous fashions as these!"
BOTH. " Ha! ha! ha! ha!"

CONGRESS OF HISTORY TO HOLD ITS THIRTEENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION

The Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Congress of History will be devoted to the various uses of California lands. The theme is to be, "California--Land of Many Uses." Special features this year will be a tour of the ranch house of the Santa Margarita y las Flores on Camp Pendelton and a talk and film on John Muir, the great naturalist. In addition, each registrant will receive a copy of the Magna Carta obtained from the Chartered Bank of London. The convention will be held in the Majorca Room, behind the Casa del Prado in Balboa Park, on Friday, March 4th and Saturday, March 5th.

Registration is \$3.00 per person (tour and meals extra). Make check payable to Congress of History and mail to Mr. John H. Sneed, 3768 Tennyson St., San Diego, California, 92107. Contact Virginia Tompkins, 276-0520, for further information.



TASTEFUL FURNISHINGS

We give here a pretty illustration, showing corner, with cabinet, door hanging, arrangement of shelf over door, etc. This requires little, if any comment.

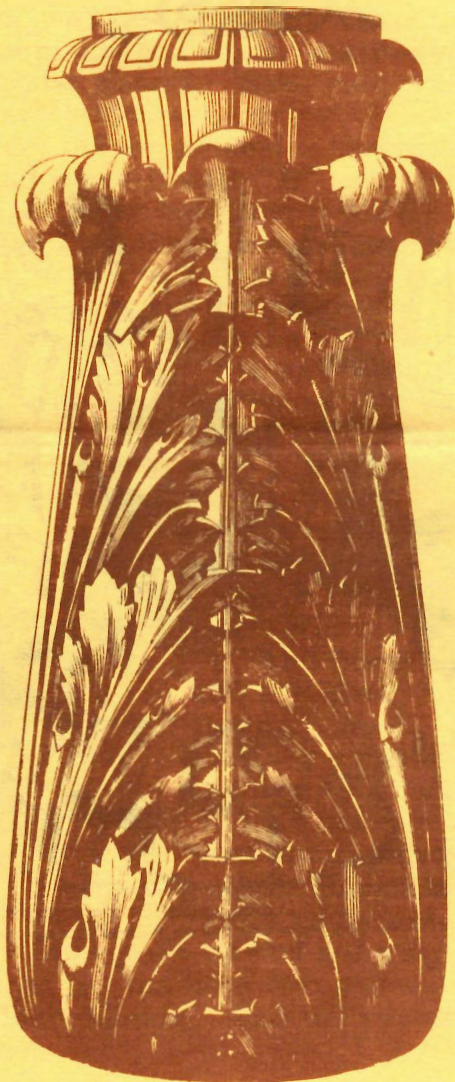
The portière is of rich copper plush, with a frieze and dado worked with a conventional design of oranges, and waved lines of gold filoselle. The oranges are of gold plush, slightly padded with wool to throw them out in slight relief. A gold silk fringe is carried across the frieze, while the dado is edged with long stitches of the filoselle.

A straight valance of gold plush finishes the door on outer side. This is lined, as are the curtains, with dead gold silk of soft texture. The valance is finished with plush balls.

The portière is suspended by gilt rings from a heavy gilt pole, and is not so wide as to hide the rich embroidery; hanging thus in rather scant folds, the full effect of the frieze and dado is shown.

The arrangement of shelf over door and corner cabinet require no description.

Ingall's Home Magazine, February, 1889



UCSD PLANS TO DEMOLISH GILL STRUCTURE

The Scripps Institute of Oceanography is planning to demolish its original building which was designed by Irving Gill in 1909 and donated by Ellen Browning Scripps. It is claimed that the two story concrete structure is a "seismic risk" although it seems the main reason for removing it is to straighten out a jog in the road. A structural report was made four years ago, but the plans could not be located to see if the building was properly reinforced. Apparently the different University of California campuses are not in communication with each other because Gill's original plans are all on deposit at U.C. Santa Barbara and have been for years. Several people interested in saving the building have now sent for copies of the plans in an attempt to check on reinforcement and construction methods.

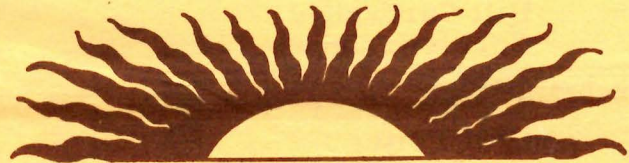
GASLAMP PROPOSAL MOVES AHEAD

Building code amendments which take into account the unusual problems encountered in rehabilitating historic buildings have moved one step closer to city approval. By a unanimous vote, the City Council's Land Use and Transportation Committee has endorsed the concept and recommended approval by the full Council. The new regulations are expected to permit widespread upgrading of the Gaslamp Quarter, turning the area into a functional, multi-use preserve of victorian commercial structures.



SOHO RECOGNIZED BY KIWANIS

On Tuesday, January 25, SOHO was presented with the "Quality of Environment" award by the Kiwanis Club of San Diego. Accepting the award for SOHO was president Bruce Kamerling. Also present were Board members Cia Barron, Donna Regan, and Michael Jones.



Dues Due!

All memberships are due and payable on the 1st of January each year. Due to the increased costs of printing and postage, we will soon be forced to limit circulation of the newsletter to those members whose dues are currently paid up. If the last time you paid was before November of last year, then your dues are due (sorry but we don't have the personnel to keep track on a month-to-month basis). Please continue your support with a membership renewal.

Memberships available include:

Single	\$8.00	Patron	\$ 100.00
Family	\$12.00	Benefactor	\$1000.00
Donor	\$50.00		

Please send checks, payable to SOHO, to SOHO at Box 3571, San Diego, CA 92103.

Membership

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Zip Code _____ Phone _____

I am interested in joining an action group. Please contact me !

Tax Exempt Status

SOHO is exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and has been classified by the I.R.S. as a charitable, educational organization.

FACE LIFT

There is an interesting little Victorian on Washington Street in Hillcrest that is going to undergo a face lifting. The building in question is the Colonial Revival style house that used to be the home of the A-1 Answering Service. Built around 1890, it is a very good example of its style. R L Associates, who will be painting the exterior, hope to specialize in painting Victorian style buildings. R L is a professional group of young people who hire only qualified college students and therefore both give students a job and give their clients competent work at reasonable prices. If you are in the area this month (near 8th on Washington St.), stop by and check the progress. Every Victorian that gets fixed up is just that much more inspiration for the next one.

NOTICE

SOHO has rented storage space at the Lincoln Space Center in the hope of consolidating our sale items, files, artifacts and miscellaneous junk. If you have a box of stuff that belongs to SOHO, here is your chance to get rid of it. Leave a message with the answering service (225-1033) and we'll send someone out to pick it up.

DEADLINE

Items to be included in a specific issue of "Reflections" must be turned in by the 15th of the preceeding month.

SOHO

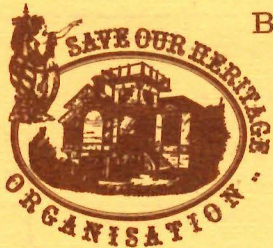
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