

REFLECTIONS



June 1977
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Newsletter of the
Save Our Heritage Organisation

SOHO

Does It Again!

HORTON PLAZA SAVED

The campaign to save Horton Plaza from being paved over ended in victory at the June 8th Council meeting. Supporters had to sit for almost 4 hours before the Horton Plaza issue was heard. Many SOHO supporters had to leave before it finally was heard. But those who persevered the long wait found the outcome worth it.

The city staff made their presentation showing what the "new" Plaza would look like after a layer of concrete and new planter boxes. Mike Jones presented SOHO's preservation plan and admonished the Council for even considering the paving of the Plaza. Mike asked several SOHO members and supporters to speak. Frank Curran, former San Diego mayor, spoke against the SOHO plan and in favor of paving, citing that many downtown property owners wanted the Plaza cleaned up. Not all property owners were for paving as Roy Lake, president of the U. S. Grant Hotel, favored SOHO's plan.

Councilman Jess Haro made a motion to allocate \$100,000 to restore Horton Plaza to SOHO's 1912 proposal. Those of us in the audience cheered in delight. The motion carried with Lee Hubbard casting the only dissenting vote. We were all ecstatic.

SOHO owes a debt of gratitude to Jess Haro, Leon Williams, and Maureen O'Connor who supported us from the beginning. SOHO's Violet Beck contributed a great deal of energy and time to this battle, and her contribution was instrumental in gaining this victory.

The restoration of Horton Plaza will begin immediately with Mike Jones working on SOHO's behalf with the City Manager's office to coordinate the restoration project. The project will take about three months to complete.

Thanks to all who wrote letters, signed petitions, and especially those who were diligent and stayed for the Council meeting.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

IRVING GILL'S SEMI-PRECIOUS GEM

The University of California has withdrawn its request to the Coast Commission for the demolition of the original laboratory building at Scripps Institution of Oceanography. This, however, does not mean that the building is saved. To remain on site, the structure must be restored, and restoration could be a very costly process. Financing will be difficult, because it is not easy to raise interest (much less money) for a building as plain and functional as the Scripps Lab.

Many "closet" preservationists come out of the woodwork when a flashy Queen Anne monstrosity is in danger (and don't get me wrong--I love Queen Anne monstrosities), but show them an early modern building and they are not impressed. It is very difficult to generate support for a seemingly architectureless pile of concrete with a few windows. The fact that it might be one of the first architectureless piles of concrete seems to be of little consequence.

Louis Gill, also an architect, said that his uncle, Irving, didn't know one architectural style from another. Obviously, this worked to his advantage. As Esther McCoy once wrote, "...he makes poor fare for the researcher interested in precedents; his borrowings are from the spirit of indigenous work, reconceived for the present." Indigenous sensibility is the essence of all great architecture. Irving Gill was unquestionably a great architect. Even Henry-Russell Hitchcock Jr., who wrote of Frank Lloyd Wright and the International Style in 1934 said, "Except for Irving Gill in California, who created out of a radical simplification of Spanish Colonial design a modern treatment of poured concrete construction for houses, Wright has been the only modern architect of consequence of the first quarter of the century in America." Strong words, but still true.

The Scripps Lab is an excellent example of functional architecture. Windows are placed for light and ventilation. What else does a window need to do? Interior walls are constructed by Gill's unique thin-wall method to make every possible inch of interior space usable. Not a single feature is irrelevant.

And so I say we must put aside for a moment our personal tastes and open our minds to the importance of modest structures. If we save only the mansions and palaces of the past we will end up with a distorted view of our forefathers' achievements. Let's hear it for the humble and the homely--or maybe take another look at the homely and discover that homeliness might really be a misunderstanding of the stark and simple beauty of a straight line and a clean surface.

Even though the Scripps Lab may only be a semi-precious gem, it is an important building that deserves your appreciation and support.

Bruce Kamerling

(If you would like to contribute to the Scripps Lab restoration, your tax-deductible check should be made out to "Old Scripps" Restoration Fund, and mailed to:

UCSD Foundation
212 Mathews Campus
La Jolla, CA 92093

If your employer has a "Matching Gift Program", be sure to include an application. In the event that the project is not successful in raising the necessary funds, all money will be returned.)

A. I. A. GUIDES

To all of you who volunteered a special thank you. We knew another successful tour was in the making when people came back to sign up for more tours after going on our preservation, history and Balboa Park tours.

A special thank you goes to:

Ann Kantor and the staff of the Villa Montezuma.

Ted Krauss of the Sherman Doig House.

Marc Tarasuck of Brick Row.

A thank you to all the great tour guides and drivers: Matt Potter, Ray Cadena, Bruce Kamerling, Barry Worthington, Rae Berry, Cathy Grigsby, Cia Barron, Keith Evans, Pat Skidmore, Donna Regan, Ted Krauss, Carol Lindemulder, Carole Collier, Marc Tarasuck, Ted Foley, Nick Fintzelberg, Clare Crane, Joan Easley, Sally Spiess, Mike Jones, Harry Evans, Virginia Evans, Pat Teaze, Jean Rudd and Barbara Briggs.

We love everyone of you!

SAN DIEGO FEDERAL'S LOAN POLICY FOR OLD HOME REHABILITATION

This spring, San Diego Federal Savings and Loan Association announced a loan policy for the rehabilitation of older homes. San Diego Federal hopes its special lending rate policy will encourage people to invest in older homes and improve the quality of older neighborhoods.

On a case by case basis, San Diego Federal will approve real estate or consumer loans under terms of a 1/4% reduced interest rate and a 1/2 point reduction in fees collected from construction projects. In order to qualify for this preferred rate at least 10% of the sales price must be used for renovation. Appraisals for the loans are based on the estimated market value of the property after completion of renovation.

Other criteria for loan qualification:

- A. The building must be substantial enough to merit rehabilitation. The building's superstructure, foundations, sewer and utility systems, plumbing and heating are taken into consideration.
- B. Cost breakdown will be reviewed to see that renovation costs are realistic.
- C. The quality of the existing structure and the economic future of the neighborhood are considered in estimating the "economic life" of the house. The economic life should merit the necessary renovation costs.
- D. The proposed improvements should be in keeping with the municipality's building codes in order to comply with civil codes or be approved under historical site designation.



PLEASE HELP

Help SOHO save some money. With our bulk non-profit mailing permit, we can send out our newsletters for .02 cents each. Every time one gets returned for address correction, however, it costs us .25 cents. If you are planning to move, let SOHO know your new address as soon as possible. Those quarters add up fast!

GRANT AWARDED

A matching fund grant has been awarded to the La Jolla Research Program to make a survey of early structures in that area. The grant monies come through the California State Park & Recreation, Office of Historical Preservation and are part of the funds available through the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

The survey will inventory all of the structures still standing from the time period 1887-1926 within the village area of La Jolla. It is estimated that approximately 200-250 structures may be worthy of inclusion in the State's Inventory of Historical Resources. This type of survey is being carried out throughout the state of California and will give a valid picture of the historical resources still standing. Inclusion in the inventory does not in any way indicate site designation; in order to receive this, a research report must be submitted to the local Historical Site Board for consideration. The survey is meant to identify the state's historical resources only.

The survey time began on June 1, 1977, and will be completed October 1, 1977. Three SOHO board members are working on the survey: Marc Tarasuch and Mike Jones as architectural advisors and Pat Schaelchlin as Supervisor. Carol Mansfield is doing the photography and Joan Zeenkov, Polly Bowers, Karen Sharp and Ron Miller are doing the historical investigation.

--Pat Schaelchlin



Dear S. O. H. O. Readers:

S. O. H. O. 's Reflections is the most interesting when a variety of people contribute articles and art work. If you come across a neighborhood restoration project, relevant news item or recent publication regarding historic preservation, please let me know so that we may pass this information on to other S. O. H. O. readers.

Cathy Grigsby, Editor
295-0204
6506 Friars Rd., #206
San Diego, CA 92108

Around the Town:

BILL STRAND'S TRIBUTE TO THE SEA

The rock house that Bill Strand built still looks out to sea. Perched atop a 2.8 acre site at 1290 Van Nuys in the Pacific Muirlands, it commands a spectacular view of the south coastline, Mission Bay and the Pacific Ocean. Both locale and structure set this old stone house apart from its neighbors. Its sturdy walls bear the individuality of the Swedish sea captain who built it by hand over fifty years ago.

As tenant Diana Alexandra showed me through the house, I could see Bill Strand's love of the ocean and sailing ships. Each room's wooden beams and brass hinges might well be salvaged fittings from old sailing vessels. The front room window is fashioned in the shape of a large porthole. Two-way cupboards and built-in furniture reflect the economy of space necessary aboard ship.

Relatives of Mr. Strand feel that he was ahead of his time with such installations as indirect lighting and floor heating. The thick stone walls provide coolness during the summer and hold warmth during the winter months. One outstanding item is the large, semi-round livingroom fireplace--its raised hearth could have been used for cooking purposes before the kitchen was built. Passing through each room, I saw many unique features that contribute to an exceptional structure.

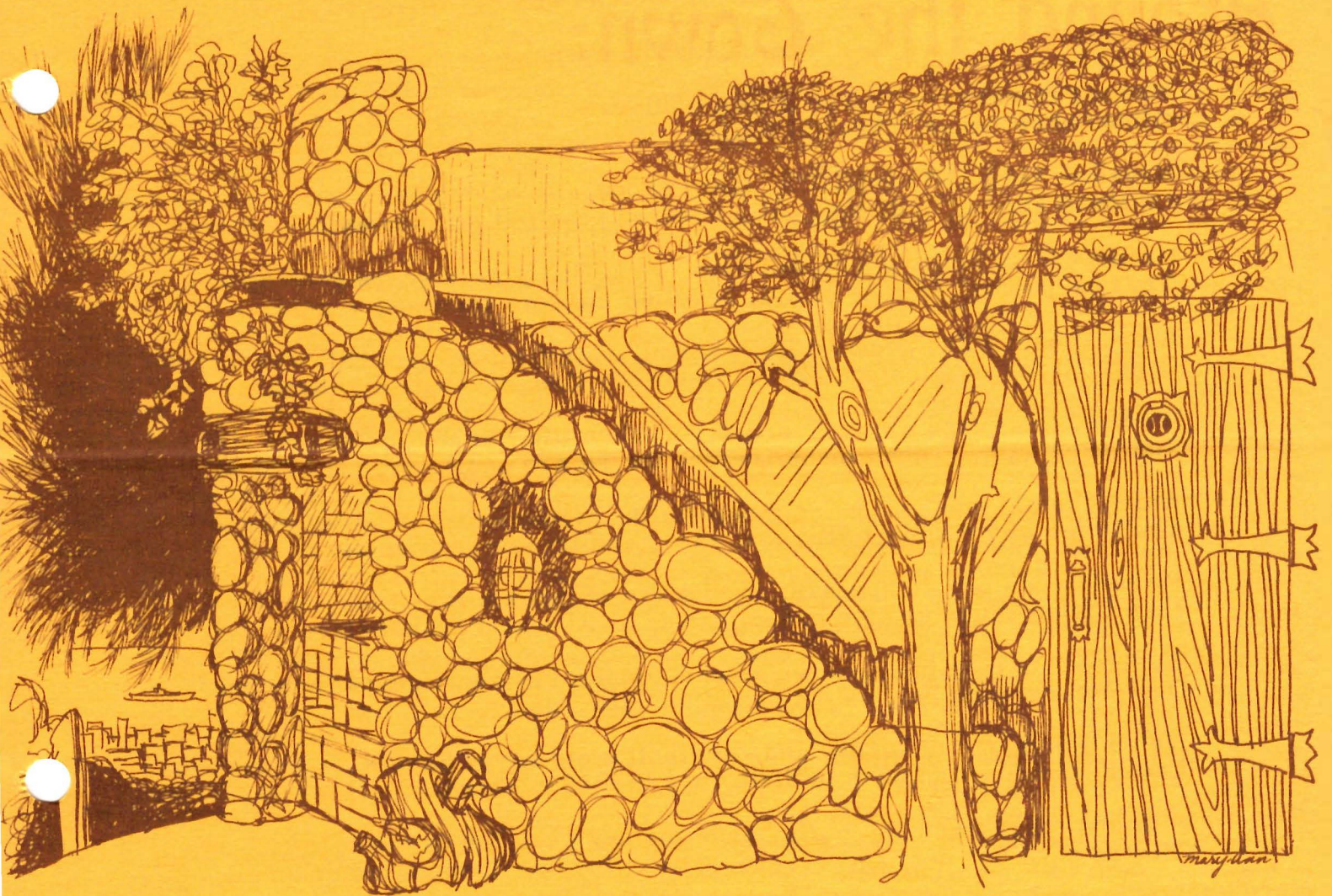
SOHO became aware of the Strand House in mid-May when Diana Alexandra alerted us to the possibility of its imminent demolition. New owner Dick Grumet plans to begin the construction of nineteen single family homes on the 2.8 acre site this summer. Ms. Alexandra was originally told the house would be destroyed to make way for construction. However, as of this writing, Mr. Grumet is entertaining the possibility of selling the house instead of destroying it. An encouraging note: Diana Alexandra's eviction has been postponed from mid-June to the end of July.

The additional six weeks time will give SOHO the opportunity to make an architectural survey evaluation of the house for historic site designation. In judging a building for historic site designation, the San Diego Historic Site board considers the building's historical and architectural merits. If the board declares the structure an historic site, demolition can be delayed for at least a year and any major alteration must first be reviewed by the board.

Designating the Strand House an historic site would allow SOHO time to seek alternatives for its disposition. Those who have experienced the personality and fine craftsmanship of the Strand House feel that every effort must be made to save it.

--Cathy Grigsby





GHOST

There is a juggle of masonry here, on a small hill
Above the gray-mouthed Pacific, cottages and a thick-
walled tower, all made of rough sea-rock
And Portland cement. I imagine, fifty years from now,
A mist-gray figure moping about this place in mad moon-
light, examining the mortar-joints, pawing the
Parasite ivy: "Does the place stand? How did it take that
last earthquake?" Then someone comes
From the house-door, taking a poodle for his bedtime
walk. The dog snarls and retreats; the man
Stands rigid, saying "Who are you? What are you doing
here?" "Nothing to hurt you," it answers, "I am just
looking
At the walls that I built. I see that you have played hell
With the trees that I planted." "There has to be room
for people," he answers. "My God," he says, "That
still!"

Robinson Jeffers
The Beginning and The End

GAS LAMP QUARTER

by
Donald R. Thompson

Painted street cars, horse drawn trolleys -
Gilded show house, cheerful follies.

Keystone cops and model T's, fancy shops with balconies, -
Children staring in dismay, at a hundred year old toy display.

Grandparents smiling with sad eyes, recalling joys of years gone by -
Tin type photos, frames of old, bevelled mirrors trimmed in gold.

A pretty girl with special fella, sharing their first sarsaparilla -
Candy sticks and licorice black, discovery time of things way back.

We need this place where families go, when life was not the same -
That easy going peacefulness, before the jet age came.

Watch the old man smile, so thoughtfully, at some tool of yesteryear -
You'll see why mother keeps that vase, and treasures it so dear.

Be sad as history disappears, in this age of throw away -
Like barber poles and ice cream carts, a little past should stay.

We have this past in downtown's heart, just a few short years from true -
Our city tho must help us out, as other cities do.

We're talking not of Disneyland, or Knott's old berry farm -
Lower Broadway, Fourth to Sixth, has this 1890 charm.

Eliminate that trash and porn, make the law work for us all -
Give us back our heritage.....Hear the Gas Lamp Quarter's call.



TRAIN TOUR

For those of you who did not go on this year's train tour, you missed the most fantastic trip of all.

A foggy San Diego morning was surrounding us as our Amtrak car pulled out of the station. When we reached Los Angeles it was a beautiful, sunny Saturday morning.

We then boarded our buses where we journeyed to the Banning House. We all enjoyed the beautiful, Greek Revival home in the process of restoration. A delicious catered lunch was enjoyed in the patio area. A special thank you to Beverly Bubar who made all the arrangements.

On full stomachs, we were transported again to the Hollyhock House in Barnsdall Park. It was a great tour of the Frank Lloyd Wright building. We also visited the museum.

Dinner was enjoyed by everyone in Little Tokyo, Chinatown and Olvera Street.

A fun train ride home ended a long, fulfilling day.

A special thank you to the train tour committee: Rae Berry, Cia Barron, Cathy Grigsby, Ted Foley, Bruce Kamerling, Donna Regan and Marc Tarasuck.

We hope to see you all next year for an even greater train tour!

Pat Minnich, Chairman



BACK-ON-THE-MARKET

The Long-Waterman House is back on the market at a reduced price. Interested parties should call the agent for the Owners:

Ray Cadena
275-0163

MEMBERSHIP IN SOHO

SOHO depends upon membership dues, contributions, and fund raising activities to support our restoration/preservation expenses. Members receive the monthly SOHO Newsletter, "Reflections", and invitations to special events. Gift memberships are available and we will send the recipient a card in your name announcing the gift. Memberships and donations are tax deductible. Please join us!

Membership categories:

— Founder	\$5,000
— Benefactor	\$1,000
— Corporate	\$ 500
— Patron	\$ 100
— Donor	\$ 50
— Organization	\$ 25
— Sustaining	\$ 25
— Contributing	\$ 20
— Family	\$ 12
— Single	\$ 8
— Donation Only	\$ _____

Save Our Heritage Organisation
Box 3571, San Diego, CA 92103
(714) 225-1033

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City _____

Zip Code _____ Phone _____

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

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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.

SOHO

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DEADLINE

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



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