

Reflections



on the Past 20 Years

Volume XXI No. 5 September 1989

Save Our Heritage Organisation

TAKING THE PLUNGE

KATHLEEN KELLEY-MARKHAM



The fight to save the Plunge (1986-1987) is a rather recent reflection on SOHO's past. Trying to save the Plunge was a lot like trying to stay alive in rough, murky waters. Do you simply float about and hope to be rescued, or do you swim for shore? There are risks associated with either choice. For SOHO, the choice was to swim for shore.

It was shocking for many of us that a City of San Diego Landmark, as well as a designated historic site, could be so threatened. Everyone agreed that the Plunge was in a state of disrepair, due to a lack of maintenance, but the drastic decision to demolish the Spanish Colonial Revival Building seemed backward and provincial.

The replacement for the Plunge, a large, unremarkable shopping center, ired the community and citizens at large. With so few public beachfront parks remaining in the county, who could think that adding a shopping center, and deleting parkland, was anything but a stupid and greedy solution? Would Balboa Park be next? Trade the Organ Pavillon perhaps, for a discotheque?

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San Diego Fire Alarm Station

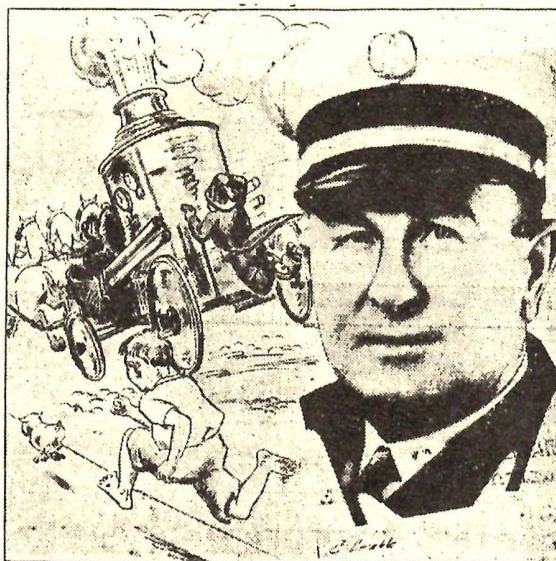
Alex D. Bevil

On July 26, 1989, the 60 year-old Fire Alarm Station Building in Balboa Park became City Landmark 235. Prior to that, it was given a reprieve from the wrecking ball by a seven to two City Council vote, allowing the city's Park and Recreation Department to occupy the building and use it for temporary office space after a \$250,000 renovation. The money will be available from the Florida Canyon Outlay Fund, which set aside a sum of money when San Diego and the Navy swapped land in Florida Canyon, in order that a new Naval Hospital could be built.

In addition to designating the old Fire Alarm Station Building as an historic site, members of the San Diego Historic Site Board speculated as to whether the building was a candidate for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Mr.

Ron Buckley, Secretary to the Historic Sites Board, said that it did indeed meet the necessary requirements. Mr. Harry Evans, a boardmember, then volunteered to prepare the nominating package for submittal to the National Registry.

It was also brought to the attention of the Board that the Balboa Park Master Plan eventually calls for the building to be demolished. Therefore, the Board suggested that efforts be made to prevent this, by finding ways to permanently occupy the building. Efforts need to be made by SOHO to gather support throughout the community to ensure the building's preservation. It is indeed an important link in the development of a modern fire alarm communications system for the city of San Diego, and worthy of our time.



Reflections

Celebrating 20 years
of active preservation
in San Diego

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Old Town, San Diego

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- o National Trust for Historic Preservation
- o California Preservation Foundation
- o San Diego Historical Society

From the President

I am now in the midst of getting business items together, in order that I may turn over the reins of leadership to your new President. It is a time of reflection . . . on how much I have grown; and I hope, how much the organization has grown.

My first thoughts are of all that is yet to be accomplished. On deeper thought though, I realize that this year has been a time of soul-searching and evaluation by the Board, as to the continued direction of SOHO. It will be some time before we really know if our decisions made for a stronger organization, as well as for a more positive climate for

preservation in San Diego. I do know that I have grown tremendously in my own understanding of all the facets of historic preservation, as well as dealing with the responsibilities of an entire organization.

As I close this column, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to serve as your President, and also, to thank those that have aided me in directing SOHO. Carol Lindemulder, past President, was so correct in her *Reflections* story last month when she said "Once upon a life, everybody ought to have to be President of something! It is an experience.

DATEBOOK

Sept. 11	SOHO Board Meeting, 6 pm	Senlis Cottage, Heritage Park
13	County Historic Site Board 1 pm	Dept. of Planning & Land Use 5201 Ruffin Rd., Suite B
16	SOHO Annual Meeting 5:30 - 9:00 pm	Kansas City Steakhouse, 535 5th Avenue
26	Preservation Action Comm. Meeting 5:30pm	Senlis Cottage, Heritage Park
27	City Historical Site Board 1 pm	City Administration Bldg. Community Concourse MS4A
30	CPF/SOHO CEQA Workshop 9:30am - 3:30pm	Rose-Robinson House, Old Town, San Diego
23	City Historical Site Board 1 pm	City Administration Bldg. Community Concourse MS4A
Oct. 2	SOHO Board Meeting, 6 pm Point Loma, 9am-4pm	Senlis Cottage, Heritage Park
11	County Historic Site Board 1 pm	Dept. of Planning & Land Use 5201 Ruffin Rd., Suite B
15	SOHO's 20th Anniversary Time T.B.A.	Horton Grand Hotel and the Hahn Cosmopolitan Theatre
25	City Historical Site Board 1 pm	City Administration Bldg. Community Concourse MS4A

Taking The Plunge

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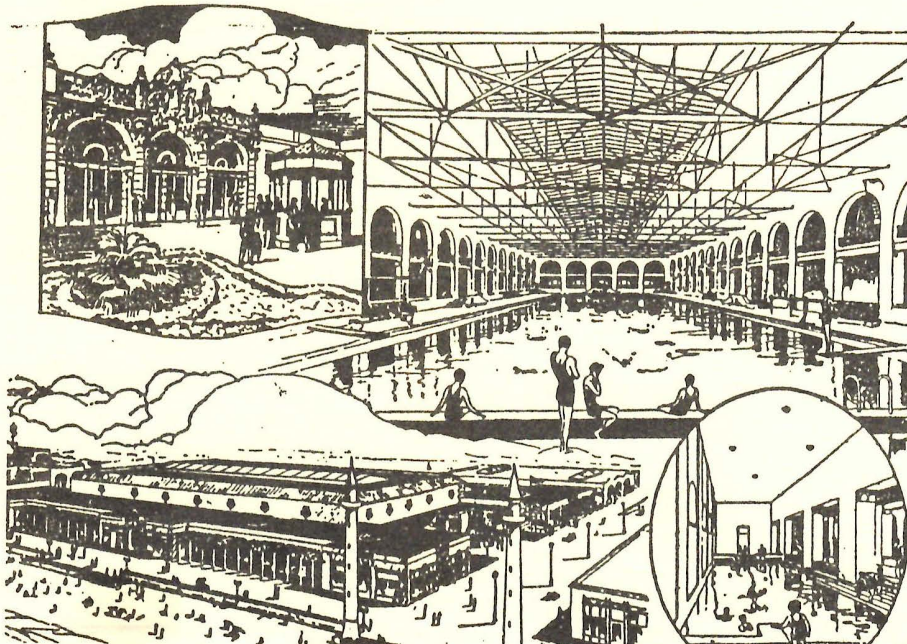
Any thoughts that I now have of the Plunge, usually are of its final day in operation. All the television stations sent their crews to capture the last moments. Hundreds of people came for a last look; for a last swim; or perhaps, just to take in the sounds of splashes and laughter. While I sat by the pool, city lifeguards, handicapped people, children, the elderly, and others came through the French doors for one last experience. Everyone knew that this was a special place. I wished that the City Council had been there to see this outpouring of love for a building! Later that evening newly elected mayor, Maureen O'Connor, arrived for her swim.

Maybe you ask, what good came out of this SOHO battle? Well, first of all, the ballot

measure (Proposition G) aimed at stopping the shopping center and saving the Plunge, received the highest percentage of votes in favor (of retaining the Plunge) than any other issue on the ballot! People spoke at the Ballot box, and SOHO was right. In addition, Proposition G gave extra protection to the rollercoaster, which had no exact preservation plan at the time. Secondly, SOHO once again argued the issues of cultural resource protection and restoration of architecturally significant buildings. We were right on the issues.

Today the rollercoaster has a new operator and hopefully a sunny future. It is regrettable that its true and rightful neighbor won't be around to share the good news.

S--nowhere will you find a bath house to compare with the natatorium at San Diego's own Mission Beach, either in size or beauty. A bath house that is a triumph of architecture and modern construction. Embodying every feature of sanitation, safety and convenience that is known to exist. A natatorium, where the pleasure of swimming can be enjoyed to its fullest extent in filtered sea water that is constantly changing.



MEMBERSHIP Application/Renewal

SOHO is a 501 (c) 3 organization, and membership privileges include the newsletter *Reflections*, as well as reduced prices for workshops, lectures, and tours.

Membership categories are:

- Active: \$20.00
- Professional: \$35.00
- Corporate: \$100.00 - \$500.00
- Patron: \$500.00
- Benefactor: \$1000.00

Call SOHO for more information at (619) 297-9327, or complete the form below and mail with your check to:

SOHO
P.O. Box 3571
San Diego, CA 92103

NEW MEMBER RENEWAL

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

I would like to help with:

- Newsletter
- Tours
- Workshops
- Office
- Other _____

Preservation Update

Mission San Diego de Alcalá

On August 7th, the San Diego City Council heard public testimony regarding the proposed multi-purpose structure to be built by the Catholic Church on the National Landmark Site. SOHO, as well as the National Trust for Historic Preservation, spoke in favor of preservation of the site for interpretive and educational purposes. The issue however, had been decided a few days earlier, when the Native Americans and the Church reached an agreement to consecrate a portion of the site as a cemetery. SOHO will continue to monitor the situation, as the Church's attorney's did request to use their original building permit when a new site is selected. We oppose this request, and will keep you informed.

SOHO's "Ten Most Wanted"

SOHO's Preservation Action Committee would like to hear from the membership.

Please let us know what buildings or sites make an appeal for preservation to you. Which "special places" define your neighborhood or your city, and what would you miss most if when you next passed, was no longer?

We all have our favorites: Balboa Park, San Diego Mission, Villa Montezuma, and the La Jolla Womans' Club, are probably on many lists. Many of us also have "empty" lists of landmarks that now exist only in memory, photographs, and other documents - - slim mitigation for the loss of placeness.

Send the committee your list of places, and/or places "saved," - The sense of place you save may be your own.

COUNTY HISTORICAL SITE BOARD

Over the summer, the County Historic Site Board has heard various issues, including their acceptance of an application from the Julian Hotel, built in 1897, for an Historic Designation. Other good news is that the Somers House in El Cajon, once in danger of demolition, apparently is safe. Developers and owners are working together to come up with a different plan in order to leave the home where it stands. Finally, four new Board appointments have been made: John Fleming and Edward Guishard, named by Supervisor Bailey; Donna Francis, named by Supervisor MacDonald; and Scott Molentin, named by Supervisor Golding.

CPF/SOHO CEQA WORKSHOP

On September 30, SOHO will co-sponsor with the California Preservation Foundation, a workshop to examine the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970. The workshop, intended to be an introduction and overview of this very important preservation legislation, \$65.00 for members of SOHO or CPF, and \$80.00 for non-members. This fee includes lunch, *A Guide to CEQA*, and other costs of the workshop, to be held at the Rose-Robinson House in Old Town, from 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.. For more information, call the SOHO office, or mail your registration fee to:

California Preservation Foundation
1615 Broadway #705
Oakland, CA 94612

SOHO SALUTES ITS NEWEST MEMBERS

August 1989

Active Memberships

Julie Nemechek
David Framberger
Jill D'Angelo
Charlotte Hardin

Professional Memberships

Meryl Howard Interiors
Thomas Rodgers
Tomes, Van Rickley and Assoc.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS August 1989

Active Memberships:

Alex & Patricia Bevil, Paula Stoher & Bill Bucklen, Robert McQuead, Jacqueline Hoefert, Marge Howard-Jones, Myrl Randel, Jon Wagner, Jack Meek, K.A. Sienknecht, Don & Karon Convington, Steven Sund & Renee Vallely, Elizabeth Dunshee, James Guthrie, Milton & Barbara Hallen, L.B. Fox, Marian Churchill, and Rhonda Kruse

Professional Memberships:

Wayne Donaldson
Rick & Gail Garbini

DONATIONS

Claire & Joe Kaplan
In honor of the
16th Birthday
of Neal Bennett Kaplan
for the restoration of the
Temple in Heritage Park

SOHO NEWS

1989/90 PROPOSED SLATE

The 1989 Nominating Committee met in August, and has brought forward the following slate of officers and directors for the 1989-1990 SOHO Board:

OFFICERS

President: **David Swarens**
Vice-President: **Rick Garbini**
Treasurer: **Charlie Sykes**
Secretary: **Suzanne Lawrence**

DIRECTORS

Corey Braun*
 Bruce Coons
 Kathy Flanigan*
 James Guthrie
 Kathleen Kellay-Markham
 Angeles Leira*
 Ann MacCullough
 Anna Majors*
 Charles Reilly*
 Mary Ward*
 Robin Webster

A brief biographical sketch of new nominees (*) is included:

Corey Braun - Assistant planner with the City of San Diego. He has been very active

with the San Diego Historical Society and the Boosters of Old Town.

Kathy Flanigan - High School History Teacher. She has been active with the Gaslamp Quarter Council and Citizens Coordinate for Century III.

Angeles Leira - Consultant to the City of San Diego Council's Transportation and Land Use Committee. Extensive studies and teaching experience in City Planning.

Anna Majors - Member of Southeast Development Committee, Police Review Board. Active in numerous groups concerned with community and Black issues.

Charles Reilly - Director of Communications, University of San Diego. Past Board member of Pasadena Heritage and Gaslamp Quarter Council.

Mary Ward - County Historian. Long time SOHO member, and active with Congress of History. Recent winner of SOHO's Preservationist of the Year Award.

It is with great sadness that we bid farewell to **Cindi Malinick**, our Executive Director. Cindi has done a superb job in organizing and stream-lining office procedures, as well as directing effective preservation positions, and cultivating important local and national contacts. Her positive presence will be sorely missed. We all wish her the very best as she continues her post-graduate studies.

Bidding farewell to someone is less difficult when you have the opportunity to welcome someone new to the organization. In July, **Kim Berry** joined the SOHO staff, part time, as a Staff Assistant. Her duties include answering the phones, as well as managing the membership files. Kim is a student at San Diego State University, working on a degree in the field of historic preservation.

AUGUST BOARD ACTION

- Heard reports of testimony made by members regarding the Mission San Diego de Alcalá.
- Approved final By-Laws Revisions, and authorized funds to bulk mail the new documents to the membership.
- Approved, with revisions, 1989-90 Annual Budget.
- Heard report from Executive Director, **Cindi Malinick**, regarding her lobbying efforts at "City Hall" related to the Mission San Diego de Alcalá; and her work with **Kathy Flanigan** for the 20th Anniversary History and the September Annual Meeting.

CPF/ESCONDIDO WORKSHOP

Cindi Malinick represented SOHO at a preservation workshop in Escondido on July 28, and presented a slide show of significant structures throughout the country. Sponsored by the California Preservation Foundation, this full-day event focused on specific historic preservation issues facing the San Diego region. The attendees heard an excellent presentation regarding the revised Mills Act, which allows property tax reductions for owners of residences listed on local, state, or national registers. Look for more information about this important incentive in future months.

SEND YOUR BIRTHDAY WISH TO SOHO!

For \$5.00 you can place a three-line greeting to SOHO or an individual in our October Newsletter.

Some examples:

Happy Birthday, SOHO! Here's to another 20 wonderful years!!! Best wishes! An adoring member.

Hats Off to John and Jane Doe for 20 years of dedication to preservation. Thank You both!

For more information, contact the Office at 297-9327 or send in your message and a check for \$5.00.

BEGOLE/HIGGINS BUILDING HISTORY

Kathy Flanigan

William Augustus Begole, who came to San Diego in 1869, erected his originally 1-story, tin, stove, sheet-ironware, and hardware shop on the north half of this business block that same year. He remained at this location through 1887, adding a second story to his structure in 1878 and a third level in 1886. The Santa Clara Lodging House, under various proprietors, inhabited the now three-story structure from 1888- 1900.

Thomas J. Higgins built a two story structure, with basement, on

the southern half of the same block in 1873, which contained his real estate and insurance

business. Payne and Lacy were the architects, and iron work now covered, was completed by the San Diego Foundry.

In 1881,

Phillips and Eisen, who ran a wholesale interprise "dealing in wines, liquors, cigars and tabacco," occupied this side of the building. That same year, the upstairs story was divided into rooms for offices. In 1882, the Star Restaurant provided "a good

meal for 25 cents" on the ground floor of this edifice, and offered "nice furnished rooms to let" upstairs.

Other tenants in the late 1880's in the Higgins Block included a gun shop, a jewelry store and watch repair establishment, and the Selwyn and Allison Butcher Shop. Meanwhile, in 1884, T. J. Higin's left to go into the whaling business. He operated his whaling stations off Punta Banda in Lower California and Ballast Point on Point Loma.

For more interesting information about these buildings, be sure to atten the Sept. 16th Annual Meeting, when Kathy Flanigan will give an in-depth tour!



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