



# Reflections

Volume XXIII, N. 2, November 1992

Save Our Heritage Organization



## Governor Wilson Signs State Register Bill

On September 29th., Governor Pete Wilson signed into law a bill (Assemblyman Robert Frazee, AB2881) which creates a California Register of Historic Resources, long a goal of preservationists. A notice from the California Preservation Foundation describes the law as "the final step in a long and successful effort to establish this program." Automatically included in the California Register will be National Register Properties, State Landmarks, and Points of Historical Interest. Properties eligible for nomination to the Register are individual resources, locally designated historic resources and historic districts, local surveys and properties submitted to the Office of Historic Preservation, State Historical Resources Inventory. Under the new law, any citizen is free to nominate a property to the Register. More detailed guidelines on the new law are expected to be available within six months, according to the notice from California Preservation Foundation.

## New SOHO Board Elected

Broms named president

At the annual SOHO meeting in September, the 1992-93 slate of directors was ratified by a unanimous vote of the members in attendance.

Robert Broms, operation supervisor for an attorney service, was named as the new president. He served as vice president last year and succeeds outgoing president Suzanne Lawrence who remains as a director. Other new officers are Paul Johnson, vice president; Corey Jon Braun, secretary; and Brigette Noel, treasurer.

An important item of business was naming of the recipient of "SOHO Lady," the old, worn looking lamp which, by tradition, goes to the member who goes "far and beyond" the call of duty. David Swarens, the current holder of Lady, named Alex Bevil to keep and display the lamp for a year.

Congratulations, Alex!

Johnson, an architect with the respected architectural firm founded by Robert Ferris, was secretary for the last board. Braun, a planner with the city of San Diego and a ninth generation San Diegan, has served as a SOHO director for three years. Noel, a realtor, is in her second year as a member of the board of directors.

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1992-93

<b>Robert Broms</b>	<b>president</b>
<b>Paul Johnson</b>	<b>v.p.</b>
<b>Corey Jon Braun</b>	<b>secretary</b>
<b>Brigitte Noel</b>	<b>treasurer</b>

Margaret Elliot

Nick Fintzelberg

Brad Kerchner

Suzanne Lawrence

Anna Major

Ron May

Dale O'Day Robison

Alicia Ryden

Kathleen Stoughton

David Swarens

Sedonia Weathersby

Ryden is active with the greater North Park community planning committee and helped during the historic surveys of North Park and other mid-city communities. A partner in a physical therapy business, Ryden also has extensive experience working with community boards and neighborhoods groups.

Stoughton is a professor of art history with training and interests in art, music and architecture. Owner of an historic home, Stoughton brings to SOHO an expertise in fundraising and event planning.

The 1992-93 board includes five new members and David Swarens, a past president who was selected to another 2-year term.

### **The New Board Members**

Fintzelberg will be remembered by many long-time SOHO members. He was a founding member of SOHO and a past president. He has graciously consented, to once again lend his experience and expertise to the challenges facing the organization. Fintzelberg is a professor of anthropology.

May is another longtime member and supporter of SOHO. He is staff archaeologist and historian for the County of San Diego. May has an extensive background in cultural and historic resources including the Fort Guijarros Museum Foundation.

Kerchner, a graphic artist by profession who also does pen and ink drawings of Victorian Homes, has a strong interest in preservation advocacy. Kerchner has experience serving on other boards.

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### **From the President**

We are in our 24th year. As the new president of Save Our Heritage Organisation, I am the seventeenth member to have the honor and duty of guiding our work for historic preservation in the public interest of the citizens of San Diego County. I would like to give you an overview of SOHO's current efforts toward the conservation of cultural resources.

To increase our efficiency, we recently streamlined our internal structure into five committees to supervise our many projects. These are Preservation Action, Education, Property, Resources Management, and Finance. The chairperson of each committee along with the elected officers, and the executive director make up the Executive Committee.

SOHO's activities can best be appreciated by considering three broad categories: preservation, communication, and cooperation. Any given project has each of these aspects, but differences of emphasis allow us a more comprehensive view of the developing role of the organization.

In the preservation arena, many interests, private and public, compete for short term gain. A defensive stance has become habitual for those attempting to save particular sites. Even the public agencies governing the processes of development find themselves in the disadvantageous position of reacting to events. It has long been argued that inventories of historic resources can provide a level playing field. The City of San Diego took a positive step in this direction by adopting the Inventory, Incentives, and Education Elements of its Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan. However, lack of funding has left us a hollow victory. By contrast, the City of La Mesa has actively encouraged historic preservation by establishing a program to designate properties and contract with the owners under the Mills Act for continued conservation. The City itself then clears the way for the resulting tax benefits by arranging the owner's appointment with the County Tax Assessor.

SOHO is taking a similar proactive position. We hope to achieve preservation through prevention. The first step is identification of resources. We are participating with the San Diego Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in creating a county-wide list of Buildings-at-Risk. We have suggested to the City of San Diego that they use Community Development Block Grant funds to contract with SOHO to complete the surveys needed for a city-wide inventory of historic resources. The second step involves education. One project team is working on a pilot program to bring San Diego into the Mills Act process. Our facade easement program is expanding to actively solicit donations.

When losses do occur, we focus on using such tragedies to improve the application of public policy. In the wake of the demolition of 4159 Lark Street, SOHO successfully pressed the City Manager of San Diego to reform the

procedures whereby projects involving potentially historic structures are referred from Building Inspection to planning for evaluation. At other times, despite everyone's best efforts, a site of obvious historic value continues to be targeted for destruction, even though publicly owned. The 1922 Bungalow court called Babcock Court in Coronado is such a case. Here we will continue our call for the retention and restoration of the structures to the next level of the struggle.

The realm of communication is a complex one comprising many avenues for presenting the facts about the value to a community of preserving its historic resources. We continue to organize neighborhood awareness tours. We offer forums on specific topics in historic preservation. And we intend to teach by example. County Parks dropped Senlis Cottage, SOHO's headquarters from the repainting schedule for Heritage Park. Our Property Committee is proceeding with plans to accomplish this needed task with volunteer labor and donated materials. Further, this committee has launched a search for a property to be acquired by SOHO and restored as the private seed for a test block to continue a revitalization project currently stalled within the City of San Diego.

An important change in our channels of communication will be a re-formatting of "Reflections." This current issue is a transition to a longer format incorporating scholarly material. This will appear quarterly beginning in January. Member comments are invited.

One clear lesson learned in over two decades of preservation is that every successful instance of the conservation of cultural resources is based on cooperation. Historic sites are valuable precisely because they embody our common heritage. Our conscientious attempts to foster cooperation are

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based on the recognition of this necessity for wide-spread coalitions to preserve, maintain, and utilize historic resources.

Cooperation takes many forms. Most recently, SOHO co-sponsored a tour of Bankers' Hill with Mesa College Art Galley and Museum Studies Program as part of the exhibit series "San Diego Lost and Found." In a project set for February, SOHO will act as the liaison among all the historic site boards and preservation officers in San Diego County, acting as conveyor and facilitator of a workshop to be co-sponsored with the County Historical Sites Board. In a long-term commitment, SOHO has joined with the La Jolla Conservancy in plans to salvage and re-use for educational purposes the remains of the Green Dragon Colony.

We have representatives on a number of committees and projects, among them the AIA's Special Interest Group on Historic Preservation and Renovation. David Swarens represents us on the San Diego City Council's Preservation Ordinance Review Committee. Bob Ferris, long-time SOHO member and respected preservation architect, represents us on the Seismic Retrofit Committee. Our vice president, Paul Johnson, sits on the Heritage Tourism Committee formed by ConVis, the Historic Site Board (S.D.), and SOHO. Immediate past president, Suzanne Lawrence, has worked for several months with Ralph Lewin, local project coordinator for the California Council for the Humanities, on an ongoing project, "Searching for San Diego," designed to acquaint local communities with the historic roots of their sense of place. And yours truly sits on the San Diego City Manager's Horton Plaza Oversight Committee, looking out for the continued upkeep and historical integrity of Irving Gill's 1909 plaza and fountain so ably restored in 1984 by M.Wayne Donaldson, FAIA.

As always, we stand ready to assist in crisis. When the recent acquisition of the Stein Family Farm, National City's last farmstead, by that city's Community Development Commission, was jeopardized by the potential operator's lack of insurance coverage, SOHO offered coverage under its own policies as a stop-gap. The show of support bought time, enabling the group to find coverage. Today the farm is run by The National City Living History Farm Preserve, Inc.

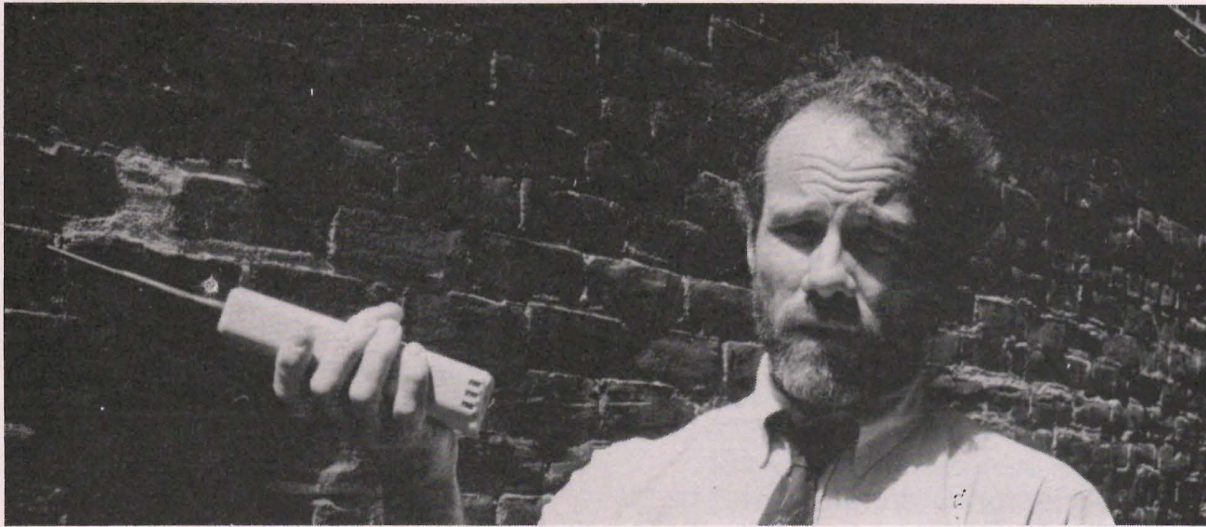
When necessary, we expand our focus beyond architectural conservation of the built environment, the designed landscape, to the "cultural landscape." We have offered public support recently to "Save Our Forests and Ranch lands," Duncan McFetridge's group working to reform County zoning and land use policy in the Cleveland National Forest area of the Laguna Mountains.

SOHO is a vital and growing organization. We approach our 25th year as a respected member of the regional community. Our counsel is sought and our advice is heeded. We are recognized as a friend in need. We are an educational resource to the entire county. And we are a protector of the cultural heritage of all its citizens.

Robert Broms  
President

## 20th Anniversary

The San Diego Historical Society has announced a 20th anniversary observance of its stewardship of the Villa Montezuma (The Jesse Shepard House), located at 1925 K Street. Admission will be free for the month of November. On Sunday, November 8th. from 1 to 4 pm a celebration will be held at this outstanding example of Victorian architecture, one of the Historical Society's four facilities.



SOHO president Robert Broms with his ever-present cellular telephone.

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## The Case of 4159 Lark Street

SOHO recently managed to snatch a significant victory from the jaws of a potential defeat. On April 14, 1992, the so-called "Kate Sessions House", designed and built for his own account by William Templeton Johnson in 1916, on land formerly occupied by a portion of Kate Sessions original nursery, was demolished under what can only be described as a rather circumspect remodeling permit issued by the City of San Diego's Building Inspection Department. Building Inspection refused to approve seismic retrofit plans they had previously encouraged for the hollow clay tile structure. The owners and architect were forced into a corner, having to choose between trying to satisfy Building Inspection with an original research program to develop a new method of seismic retrofit to be based on destruction of the original structure or, alternatively, to re-create the building in wood-frame construction. Rather than embark upon an expensive endeavor of dubious outcome, the owners chose to accurately reconstruct the residence in wood frame. Building Inspection satisfied itself with directing that an obscure reference to demolition incorporated on the filed plans, rather than requiring a demolition permit and properly referring the potentially historic

structure to the Planning Department for consideration under the Demolition Review Ordinance currently in effect for the Mid-City Planning Area. Such a referral would have led to submittal of the project to the Historic Site Board for review, with the possible result being historic designation and the concomitant right to apply the standards of the State Historic Building Code to the proposed retrofit. Instead demolition proceeded under the permit as issued.

On May 8, 1992, SOHO brought Building Inspection's error of omission to the attention of the City Manager in a letter stating:

**SOHO's Preservation Action Committee finds the action by Building Inspection neglected to follow several City Ordinances designed to prevent just such a sequence of events. Specifically, SDMC 91.8602 (b) states: "no person shall demolish in whole or in part any building or structure, or cause the same to be done, without first obtaining and having then in effect a valid demolition permit." Failure to require such a permit in this case avoided through omission the requirement for Demolition Review for the Mid-City Communities Planning Area, as codified at SDMC**



Pictured at the SOHO annual meeting are (l-r) new president Robert Broms and former presidents Suzanne Lawrence, David Swaren, and Robin Webster

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## Historic National City Farm To Be Preserved

On October 24th., the National City Living History Farm Preserve Inc. hosted a "Close of Escrow" party to celebrate a milestone in the group's untiring efforts to save the historic Stein family farm. SOHO salutes the group and points to its success as an example of what communities can do to preserve their local landmarks.

Lori Peoples, president of the National City Historical Society, and realtor Ron Maze spearheaded the efforts to save the farm. In response to their request, SOHO provided technical assistance to the group, wrote a letter of support, appeared before the National City city council on its behalf, and was ready, in needed, to offer the use on some of its in-place corporate provisions.

The group plans to develop the farm as a living history museum. As envisioned, the farm preserve will have

a resident couple or family to tend crops and farm animals, and to arrange tours of the Victorian home, demonstrations of turn-of-the-century skills such as blacksmithing, farm chores, and hay and buggy rides. There also will be heavy emphasis on the educational opportunities at such a facility. For instance, local school children will have a rare chance to plant a row of corn, and return to see how it is growing, and later to harvest it.

The property, located at 1808 F Avenue in National City, was purchased in 1900 by German immigrant Charles Stein, who ultimately owned about one hundred acres in National City, Chula Vista, and San Diego. The one and one-half acre site that is being preserved is all that remains of the family's holdings. Stein built the Victorian house shortly after buying the property.

(Material for this article was provided by Ron Maze.)

## **Countywide Workshop for Historic Site Boards and Commissions**

Much of the history of our part of California is the product of regional forces. These broad forces, such as the railroads, ranchos and cattle ranching, and the Native Americans of the county, have left their marks all around us, in historic and prehistoric resources. In order to recognize and help insure the preservation of these resources, many of the cities in the county, and the County itself, have established historical boards of commissions. But, while the structures and sites are often inter-related aspects of a common history, jurisdictional boundaries have created the situation where they usually are not viewed as such when preservation and landmarking decisions are made. And the communication among these volunteer boards and commissions has generally been fairly minimal.

To create a forum to begin to reverse this situation, SOHO and the San Diego County Historic Site Board will co-sponsor a workshop for historic site boards and commissions from throughout the county on Thursday, February 18, 1993. Planning for the event is well underway, and the cities are being contacted by SOHO. Bob Broms of SOHO and Jim Royle of the County Historic Site Board are the coordinators for the event. If you have any comments, questions or suggestions, please contact the SOHO office (297-9327) or Jim (274-2768).

### **First Church of Christ & Irving Gill**

In 1909, the famous architect, Irving Gill designed First Church of Christ, Scientist, at 2442 Second Avenue, San Diego. A restoration is being planned for the church, which is often considered one of Gill's most significant

commissions. The 1909 Christian Science Church design was the second of three Gill church commissions. The first design came in 1903 with the church building at the corner of 3rd and Ash, San Diego. This began a 26-year relationship between Christian Science churches and Gill, the last being the 1929 design for First Church of Christ, Scientist, Coronado.

Early Christian Scientists quickly outgrew the 1903 building and turned again to Gill to design a much larger church on a lot on Banker's Hill. 1909 was a design transition period for Gill. Early in the 2nd an Laurel renderings, Gill designed ornate parapets and fancy fenestration. During the design drawings, these early features gave way to clean elevation lines, simple arched windows and doors that became Gill's design trademarks. If you pass this building today, it unfortunately does not reflect the original appearance. In 1953 the church was masked over in a "modernization" remodel. Fortunately, the original building structure was minimally altered in 1953. This will allow the stripping away of the stucco, opening up of the arched windows, restoring the original height of the bell tower, and reinstalling the roof dome.

Now, the church will be restored on the exterior, while the interior will be re-proportioned to reflect the current needs of the members. Sandra Geist, building committee chair, said that the restoration will cost an estimated \$1.1 million dollars. To achieve this financial goal, First Church will require community support. Those interested in supporting this project are encouraged to contact the building committee at First Church of Christ, Scientist, 2442 Second Avenue, S. D., Ca. 92101.

(Editor's note: Watch the transformation of this 1950's "ugly duckling" remodeling to an Irving Gill "swan"! This is a major Gill work, rivalling his La Jolla Women's Club.)

## Welcome New Members

SOHO wishes to acknowledge and welcome the following members who have joined since the last publication of Reflections.

Professional Members:

CH & N Inc.  
Albert Cutri, DDS.  
La Jolla Conservancy

Judith Bond  
Dennis Brule  
Romeo Carambas  
Marilyn Cornell  
Sharon Ellis  
Judith Fisher  
Margaret Goldstein  
Abbie Hanson  
Tamizin Harris  
Ingrid Helton  
Mary Alan Hokanson  
Kate E. Johnson  
James & Cynthia Krutsch  
Mark Landerghini  
Georgia & Bill Lippincott  
Jane MacKenzie  
Dough McPherson  
Joey Perry  
Sharon Peterson  
Jane Petitmermet  
Jean & Don Roth  
Alicia Ryden  
Bryan & Lori Savage  
Desi Scott  
Karen Spring  
Anna Stump  
Kerry Summers  
Wendy Swart  
Gerrie Thurman  
Cathy Whalen  
Katy Wilson

## Membership News

Congratulations to:

**Alex Bevil**, SOHO member / research volunteer received two of the six awards at the 24th annual Institute of History. Bevil was awarded a first prize for a paper on the restoration of

Mission San Diego de Alcala, and honored for Best Student Essay.

**Nicole Howard**, student intern at SOHO in the spring, graduated from the University of California at San Diego and has returned to Los Angeles where she will do graduate work at UCLA.

**Stephanie Meade**, student intern at SOHO in the spring, graduated from the Design Institute of San Diego and is planning a career in interior design.

Condolences to SOHO member Carole Lindermulder and her family. Carole's mother, Leone Lindemulder, passed away recently. Leone Lindermulder was involved in many civic activities.

Condolences to the family of Martin Gregg, SOHO member and founder of the North Park Theatre Foundation, who passed away recently.

Sally Johns, SOHO member and member of the County Historic Site Board, continues to recover after being hospitalized with a serious illness.



## A Holiday Reminder

SOHO memberships make great holiday gifts for family, friends, business associates, and fellow workers.

And it's so easy for you to do.

Simply fill in the enclosed forms and return them to the office by mid December. A nice gift certificate will be sent to the new member in your name.



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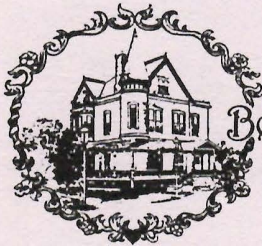
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Save Our Heritage Organisation

November 7, 1992

Dear Preservationist:

Save Our Heritage Organisation is pleased to announce the inaugural formation of a regional *Buildings at Risk* listing.

Similar listings have existed at the national level, produced by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the National Parks Service. These listings have helped to identify structures in particular distress and rally support for them. The local *Buildings at Risk* is designed to do the same at the regional level. With the area's diverse geographical and cultural variations, it is easy to be ignorant of specific structures in need.

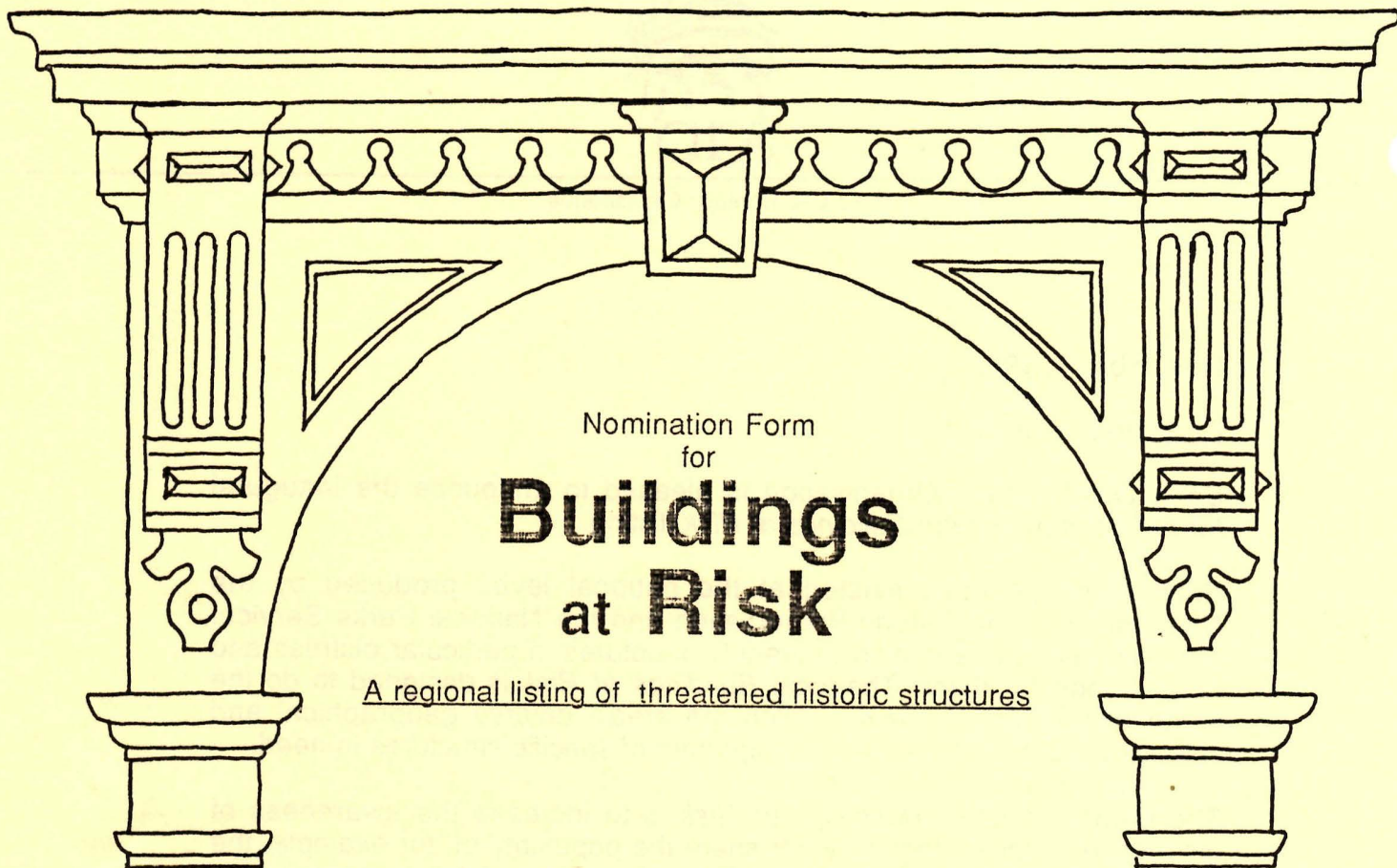
The primary goal of *Buildings at Risk* is to increase the awareness of distressed buildings that may not share the popularity of, for example, the Gaslamp Quarter or the Hotel del Coronado. A secondary goal is to rally enough support to rescue these distressed buildings.

Negotiations are underway to publish in local newspapers. Additionally, many of the region's historic preservation associations will publish the listing.

The value and strength of the listing is dependent upon concerned participation. All preservationists are urged to nominate that grand old building in your neighborhood that just needs a little help.

Sincerely,

Paul W. Johnson, A.I.A.



Nomination Form  
for  
**Buildings  
at Risk**

A regional listing of threatened historic structures

Name of Structure

Location

Owner

Manner in which it is threatened  
(i.e.: neglect, development, etc..)

History (construction date, architectural style, architect, history, etc.)

Nominator's name and phone number (for research purposes only)

Please return nomination form by December 31st. to:

Paul W. Johnson, A.I.A.

3776 Front St.

San Diego, Ca. 92103

297-4659 fax 297-2402

## SOHO Membership Application

Membership privileges include the newsletter *Reflections* to keep you informed of preservation issues and activities, as well as special prices for SOHO workshops, tours and related activities and events.

Please call the SOHO office (297-9327) for more information. To apply for membership, complete the following form and send it and your check to SOHO, P.O. Box 3571, San Diego, CA 92163.

**Thank You For Your Support!**

### Membership Categories

- \$1000 Lifetime
- 500 Benefactor
- 250 Corporate
- 100 Executive
- 50 Professional
- 25 Individual/Family
- 10 Student
- Yes, please send information on SOHO' Planned Giving Program

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to help with:  Tours  Newsletter  Office  Membership  Workshops  Other  
You will be contacted regarding your choice(s).

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City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

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City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

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