



CONTINUITY

Preservation Action Council of San José

Vol. 2, No. 4 November 1991

Preservation Action Council Presents 1991 Preservation Awards

The Preservation Action Council of San Jose presented its annual Preservation Awards at the San Jose Downtown Historic Commercial District Open House on October 5. Certificates of merit were given to the following individuals and organizations for their special efforts to support historic preservation in San Jose:

- Walter Harding and Nancy Reid, for authentic exterior restoration of Germania Restaurant and Hochburg von Germania Hall.
- San Jose Medical Center, for renovation of the Planetree House and for facilitating the move of an old house to a new site in Naglee Park.
- Keith Watt and Gloria Olson of Mother Olson's Inns, for adaptive reuse of Le Petit Trianon.
- San Jose City council member Judy Stabile, for her continuing efforts in local preservation.
- Dean Nelson of Babe's Mufflers, for maintaining a wonderful example of vernacular roadside art.
- Jim Fox and Barry Swenson, for the DeAnza Hotel renovation.
- Alan Hess, San Jose Mercury News, for outstanding architectural analysis.
- Hargreave Associates, for the Plaza Park fountain, contemporary urban design.
- John Bondi of Fox Corp. CA Inc. and the Redevelopment Agency

of San Jose, for relighting the marquee of the Fox California Theatre.

The Preservation Action Council of San Jose congratulates these award recipients, and hopes that the examples they set will inspire others to preserve and protect our architectural heritage.

First Church of Christ, Scientist Feasibility Findings Presented to City Council

On September 17, 1991, Sharon Heinrichs, chairperson of the Preservation Action Council of San Jose's Ad Hoc First Church of Christ, Scientist committee, made a presentation to the San Jose City Council about the reuse feasibility study of that structure. Following is the text of Sharon's presentation.

"On behalf of the Preservation Action Council of San Jose and the Ad Hoc First Church of Christ, Scientist Committee, thank you for the opportunity to make this presentation to you about the First Church of Christ, Scientist. The ad hoc committee was formed nearly two years ago at about the same time that the Preservation Action Council of San Jose was being organized. The two groups shared a common concern for the preservation of historic architecture in San Jose and specifically the fate of the long-vacant First Church of Christ, Scientist and so joined forces.

In June of 1990, after gaining the property owner's permission, the Preservation Action Council of San Jose submitted an application to the National Trust for Historic Preservation for a matching grant to fund a feasibility study to determine ways and means of rehabilitating the building. The National Trust grant was matched by generous donations from the Hugh Stuart Center Charitable Fund, the Community Foundation of Santa Clara County, and by funds raised by the Preservation Action Council of San Jose. We continue to be supported by a steady stream of donations from individuals at Christian Science churches throughout California.

Through a competitive process that involved presentations by respected architects in the San Jose area, Jerome King, of the Office of Jerome King, AIA, was selected by our board of directors to conduct the study and to assist us in conveying the significance of and our vision for the church to as broad an audience as possible. In this effort, Mr. King has surpassed our expectations and we are extremely grateful. We are also buoyed by the fact that the National Trust has endorsed the value of the building and is an enthusiastic and responsive supporter of our efforts.

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Feasibility Study

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The Preservation Action Council of San Jose and the asks that the city consider the following requests:

1. We believe that this building is a viable candidate for a respectful and historically valid restoration and that the feasibility study supports this. We urge the city to join with us and the building owners in a concerted effort to negotiate a mutually beneficial, creative, and swift solution to the impasse that currently exists.
2. We applaud the efforts made thus far to restore historic buildings in downtown San Jose, for example, the Fox Theatre, and the Ste. Claire and Montgomery hotels, and encourage the city to include the First Church of Christ, Scientist in the expanded redevelopment area as soon as possible.
3. We ask that the city do all in its power to motivate and support the building owners in the development of site plans and in proceeding with necessary interim repairs to ensure that the First Church of Christ, Scientist does not fall victim to so-called "demolition by neglect" or fire. Further, we urge the city, through its respective departments, to adhere to and carry out safety and structural inspections of the building recommended by the study without further delay.
4. We recommend that the city, in concert with the Office of Cultural Affairs and other relevant city agencies, actively recruit organizations and/or individuals willing to undertake the rehabilitation of the First Church of Christ, Scientist. Once a use for the building has been identified, we ask that the city

authorize restoration of this important building.

5. Finally, as potential users and capital expenditure requests for public and private program space and facilities (including the city's own needs) are identified by city agencies, we recommend that the First Church of Christ, Scientist be prioritized as an alternative to constructing new or remodeling existing modern space."



Seismic Retrofit Conference Scheduled for November

A conference titled "The Seismic Retrofit of Historic Buildings," sponsored by the National Park Service and the Western Chapter of the Association for Preservation Technology, is scheduled for November 18 and 19 at the Sheraton Palace Hotel in San Francisco. This technical conference seeks to provide information that will encourage building owners to seismically retrofit historic buildings in ways that preserve their historic character and materials. Experts from as far away as Italy and Costa Rica will be joining with other experts from throughout the country to present these technical sessions.

To register for the conference, contact the Western Chapter of the Association for Preservation Technology, P.O. Box 77405, San Francisco, CA 94107.

Historic American Buildings Survey Drawings Exhibit Opens at California History Center

A collection of drawings and artifacts documenting 75 of the region's historic structures opened recently at the California History Center on the DeAnza College campus. Titled "Building a History: The Historic American Buildings Survey in Santa Clara Valley", the exhibit continues through March 7, 1992.

The drawings are part of the nationwide Historic American Building Survey (HABS) done between 1977 and 1980. Locally, the survey was sponsored by the Santa Clara County Heritage Commission. The exhibit displays only drawings that document Santa Clara Valley buildings, from the Picchetti Winery in Cupertino, to the Emperger Grocery in Palo Alto, to the Hanchett Residence Park.

The exhibit is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. On Saturday, the hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Admission is free.



Letter to the Editor

"I have just read the current (August, ed. note) issue of *Continuity* and enjoyed the contents very much, indeed. Cheers! for your progress and activities...." Jane K. Brownnton.



We Need Volunteers

We need your help! Currently we need volunteers for every committee. Some openings are leadership roles. Join with us and make a difference in San Jose. For complete information contact Karita Hummer, (408) 971-0940.



From the President

Karita Hummer

The *San Jose Mercury News* recently featured a story on First Street. Ironically (since it was the day after our very successful open house in the historic commercial district), the story referred to the block of First Street from Santa Clara to San Fernando as "...an old folks home for historic buildings." This observation indicates that the district is seen as either half empty, or much more than half full, as we do.

As preservationists and advocates of good design, we focus on what makes the downtown core of old buildings a treasure trove of architectural gems connecting us to our past heritage and cheering us with a vision of how much aesthetic enjoyment this area can provide in the future. Among our finest gems are the Knox-Goodrich building, the Letitia building, the Bank of America building, the Moderne Drug Co., El Paseo Court, the Pomeroy-Skeritt Building, the New Century Block, the Security Building (or Ryland Block), Allen's Furniture store, the Jose Theatre, and the Odd Fellows' Building.

Indeed, the Open House attracted over 300 guests to the Historic Commercial District to view these buildings. All of our guests were, as we are, excited to look up and really see the facade of these magnificent buildings and, in many instances, to be inspired by the interior beauty of the old buildings, in various stages of restoration (or decay) as the case might be. As we worked on the event, we grew to love the area even more. We see it as absolutely essential to the city that it be brought back to its former splendor, and provide the community with a link to a center that was the commercial hub of the Santa Clara Valley at the turn of the century. We stongly believe that the full restoration of the district will be an impetus to attract people downtown, and will be a lightning rod

for future development and amenities for the city.

From here, we will continue to promote strategies for encouraging the preservation and restoration of the buildings in the Downtown Historic Commercial District and nearby areas. (For example, Post Street is not in the district but it is far too precious to neglect. It needs some special recognition!) We will be developing strategies to promote the seismic retrofit of unreinforced masonry buildings in the area. We also

recognize the importance of commercial vitality to historic preservation and believe that supporting businesses in the Downtown Historic Commercial District core is very important. That's why we stressed the inclusion of the local businesses in our tour. We are really proud of the partnerships we made with businesses through conducting the tour: Vigal Coffee Roasting Co., Bingham Gallery, Gordon Biersch Brewery, Don Pedro's, Guadalajara Bakery, Ace

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Open House guests view the Letitia Building.

Scott Hinrichs photo

From the President

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Loan Co., Machu Picchu Gallery, Barry Swenson Builder, Talking Heads (in the Knox Goodrich Building), Tio Nacho's, Santa Clara Leasing Co., Saratoga Capital, Ritchie and Ritchie, and Hank Coca's Downtown Furniture.

We have many people to thank for the success of our open house. It was a great pleasure to have cosponsored the event with the San Jose Downtown Association and the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. We are especially grateful to Laura Horman of Plaza Graphics for the brochure design, Scott Hinrichs for his photographic work, the San Jose Museum of Art, all the participating businesses, and all our many volunteers and Board members who contributed so greatly. Many thanks to everyone who worked together to make the day a success and to bring attention to the Downtown Historic Commercial District.



Thanks to Open House Volunteers

Tom King

More than 55 volunteers gave of their time and materials to showcase buildings in our Historic Commercial District Open House on October 5. Our volunteers came from such diverse groups as the San Jose Historical Museum, the San Jose Museum of Art, the Victorian Preservation Association, the Silicon Valley Tour Guide Association, American Youth Hostels, the San Jose Landmarks Commission, and the Campus Community Association. We thank you all for your assistance.



Open house guests enjoy refreshments at Don Pedro's.

Scott Hinrichs photo



Watchdog Subcommittee Report

April Halberstadt

The Watchdog (Cave Canum) Subcommittee of the Preservation Action Council's Program Committee keeps an eye on various buildings that may be threatened by demolition or neglect. As a Preservation Action Council member you are also a member of this subcommittee! If you see a building in need of a watchdog, contact me. I will do some screening, and make up a one-page review sheet. If the activity will require Preservation Action Council resources—time, talent, or money—I will forward it to the Program Committee. Sometimes, situations just need to be watched, and we do that also.

Here are the structures that the Preservation Action Council is watching.

- Naglee Park neighborhood homes are planned for redevelopment by the San Jose Medical Center.

- Wool Ranch, the Santa Clara Valley's last family-operated fruit packing company, is still for sale.
- River Street, an historic area in the future Guadalupe River Park chain is still being reviewed by the Corps of Engineers in Sacramento. The street has been declared eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Demolition of the Hill Houses on the Stanford University campus has been halted, but arson destroyed one of the structures.
- The Scheller House, on the San Jose State University campus, was scheduled to be moved to its new site by the end of October. It now looks like the new move date is sometime in November.

Lost Forever

Farewell to the Delta Tau Delta house on the Stanford University campus, destroyed by arson in October. Designed in 1907 by Arthur B. Clark,

this building was one of several damaged in the Loma Preta earthquake and marked for demolition until the Committee to Save the Hill Houses initiated legal action.

The tank house on the David Greenawalt farm, on Almaden Expressway near the Highway 85 intersection, is a victim of demolition by neglect. The structure was fortunately documented during the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in 1979. (See separate article on the HABS display at DeAnza College.) The farmhouse is being moved to the San Jose Historical Museum.

Thanks to all you vigilant watchpuppies!

For more information about Watchdog Subcommittee activities, or to bring an endangered structure to our attention, contact April Halberstadt at (408) 293-2860.



National Trust President Calls for New Preservation Vision

At the 45th annual conference of the National Trust for Historic Preservation that took place in San Francisco in October, J. Jackson Walter, President of the Trust, called for a new vision for historic preservation in his opening speech. Following are some excerpts from that speech.

"...twenty-five years ago a group of visionaries wrote a book called *With Heritage So Rich*. It had the two-fold purpose of giving preservationists intellectual underpinnings while directing us to take a number of practical steps that would make preservation a more powerful force in this country. To say the least it worked. Drawing on the book's

intellectual capital for guidance, we have succeeded in putting in place nearly all of the tangible programs those authors called for. But there has been a price. Twenty-five years of drawing down the intellectual capital of *With Heritage So Rich* has depleted the fund. It is up to us to replenish it. It's time to make some new deposits in this depleted account. Therefore, let me say that now is the time and this is the place and we are the people charged with honoring the debt to those who wrote *With Heritage So Rich*. To pay back this debt we must decide on a renewed vision that will be equally successful in guiding the preservation movement for the next twenty-five years."

"...the authors of *With Heritage So Rich* called for the preservation movement to broaden its vision from the past one of protecting famous homes and landmarks to a future one of protecting everyday historic places throughout our nation. But I also note that to broaden is not to leave behind; it's to include. Today, protecting famous homes and landmarks is still a very large part of what we do. This idea of broadening while including has been reaffirmed by the findings of the major membership study that we at the National Trust initiated more than a year ago.... Practically, we wanted it to tell us how to attract new members to the National Trust and to the preservation movement. Ideallyistically we hoped that it would help us shape our vision for the future in just the way that the book *With Heritage So Rich* shaped it in our past. In effect we used the research to say to the American public...' We hope that you'll be our new visionaries. You have witnessed twenty-five years of preservation based on our 1966 vision, what do you make of it?' And they said back to us, 'It's wonderful, don't leave it behind, but push it further. Preservation should become more of an active part in my community, in my life, and in the lives of my children.'

We'd be wise, I think, to take their advice and do our best to make preservation more active, more inclusive, more truly relevant to what's happening in our neighborhoods and communities. How? Let's just try one example."

"Because of our heritage tourism initiative, we know that millions of Americans annually travel to historic destinations... These places are our holy pulpits. They are the best argument for the importance and relevance of historic preservation that we have ever had or will ever have. This is hands-on history. Nothing is more experiential, nothing connects us better to our past, nothing helps us relive our history more vividly than a visit to such places.... And the same is true of a visit to the 19th century Victorian mansion up the street from you, or the tens of thousands of other restored and preserved historic buildings, districts, and tax-act rehab projects across the country. The point is nothing turns a person into a preservationist faster than visits to these places. Yet the historic preservation movement isn't recruiting these visitors in nearly the numbers we should. Mainly, I think, because we're not interpreting our historic sites in a way that would lead to that result. In the really public places, for example, we don't often tell their history at all. And even when we do, too often we tell a lush and fanciful tale of upper class domestic bliss that only reinforces the elitist image the public so strongly holds against us."

"We need to tell the real stories of the lives of the people who built these places. The stories of what possessed them to build the way they did, where they got their design ideas, where, for that matter, they got their money to build them. And all of the other authentic tales of the interrelationships between the places and the folks who lived there. We need to explain through these stories why we are right

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Preservation Vision

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to preserve these places. And we also want to tell the often incredible, often exasperating, but ultimately engrossing stories of how they were preserved and who preserved them. In sum, we need to pump some energy, creativity, intimacy, and urgency into our interpretation of historic places. We could in fact even make it fun for everyone to visit and learn from them, especially our children and grandchildren. Certainly, this is what our membership research says the American public wants us to do. To them the real value of historic places is their ability to teach our children and connect them to those who came before us. After all, only when people feel connected to something can they love it. And only if they love it will they work to save it. If the public has communicated anything to us at all about preservation, that's what it is."

"...we who were so energized by the threat to the cities thirty years ago can help [with the plight of cities] if we energize ourselves and decide on a newer, broader, and more inclusive role to play. Again, this is the role that the public has told us, through our research, that it wants us to play in the cities. They agree that the traditional preservation of historic buildings and districts should always be an integral part of our movement. But they also agree that preservation should take a more active part in the way cities are planned. This means working with others in such areas as economic development, land use, and so on. It also means helping determine the way future buildings and cities, even edge cities are designed. As Vincent Scully, who was just elected a National Trust trustee has said, 'Historic preservation is the only popular movement to critically affect the practice of architecture in this century.' He means that preservation has become more than just a grass-roots movement to protect our heritage

by preventing the old from being destroyed. It has also come to mean protecting our heritage by preventing the new from being built in ways that are architecturally inconsistent with more traditional values, values that demand that our cities perform more than mere economic functions, and that our buildings and cities be, to quote, '...beautiful, livable, and of human scale.' Those are the words of Joe Riley, Charleston's mayor..."

".. Let's do what we can to return our cities to the days when they instilled in generation after generation of Americans a sense of shared heritage. There was a time in America when the city, more than any other place, inspired us not to leave behind our ethnic identities, but to add them to the melting pot of our common culture..."

"...Americans are willing to pitch in and help, especially at the local level where preservation is the most effective. Literally, by the millions they will join us if we can shape the preservation movement of the next twenty-five years so that it's active, immediate, fulfilling, and relevant to the quality of their lives and the lives of their children. This is our greatest challenge..."

"...at a time when people seem fixated on what separates us, we preservationists can remind them of what unites us. Because what does unite us is our common past, history, heritage, and culture."

José Theatre Evaluation Task Force Forming

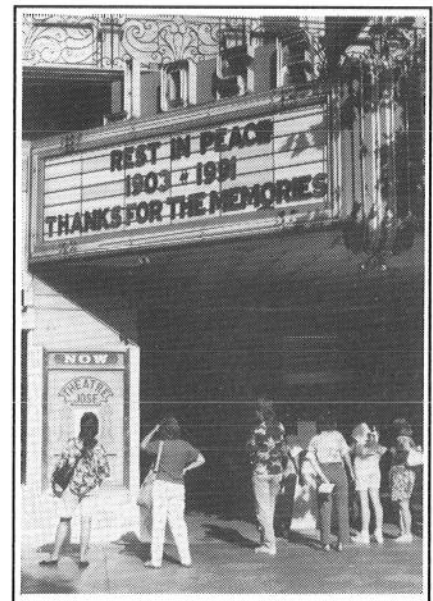
The José Theatre, an historic landmark, closed in May. Karita Hummer is forming a task force to study the issues with a meeting Sunday, November 10, 7 p.m., 96 Fox Ave. Call her at (408) 971-0940 to participate.

Seismic Retrofit Task Force Formed

To assist with the preservation of historic unreinforced masonry (URM) buildings in downtown San Jose which require seismic retrofitting, the Preservation Action Council of San Jose is forming a task force to address the situation. The task force, currently named the Seismic Retrofit of Unreinforced Masonry Buildings Task Force, will concentrate on gathering and disseminating technical information to building owners about the issue as well as connecting owners with funding sources.

Heading the task force is Peter Fenerin, who is managing the seismic retrofit of his parents' building on Post Street. He is a custom builder and has recently studied seismic retrofitting through a course sponsored by the City of Los Angeles.

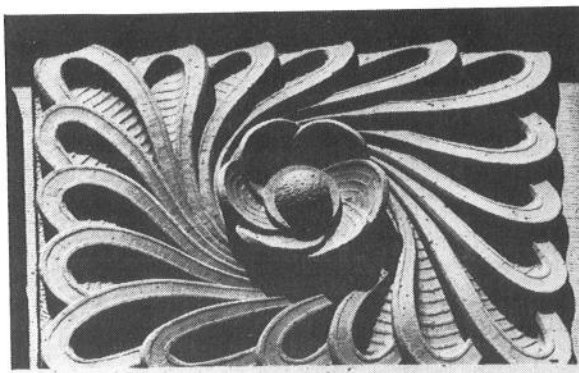
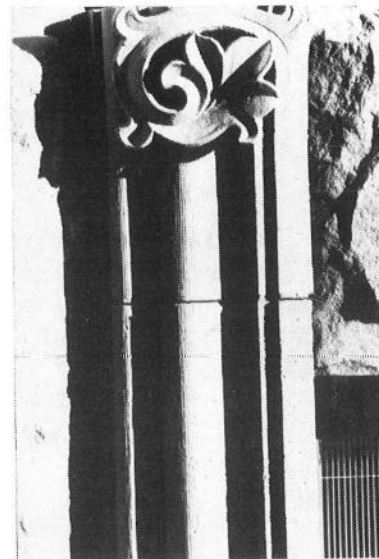
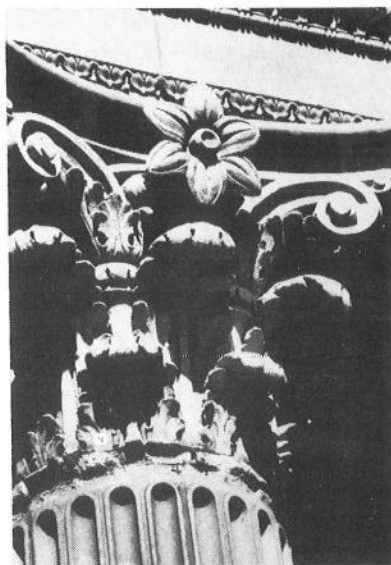
Interested in being part of this task force? Contact Peter Fenerin at (415) 322-7440.



Open House guests view the José Theatre. *Scott Hinrichs photo*

Details from Buildings in Our Historic Commercial District Open House

Scott Hinrichs photos



Hayes Mansion Developer Selected

The City of San Jose has entered into exclusive negotiations with Barry Swenson Builder for renovation and rehabilitation of the Hayes Mansion into a conference center operated by the Renaissance Conference Company. The first phase includes restoration and rehabilitation of the mansion into conference facilities, with dining and social events during evenings and weekends. The second phase calls for the addition of a two-story lodging facility with seventy-five guest rooms.

The Preservation Action Council of San Jose is a non-profit membership organization providing information to property owners and education to the public, and promoting programs and policies for historic preservation and compatible new architectural design.

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Calendar

November

- 11 Program committee meeting. April Halberstadt's, 240 S. 13th St., 6 p.m., 293-2860.
- 11 Executive Board meeting. Karita Hummer's, 96 Fox Ave., 7 p.m., 971-0940.
- 17 Board of Directors and members planning meeting, Le Petit Trianon, 72 N. 5th St., 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Karita Hummer, 971-0940. Everyone invited.
- 18-19 Seismic Retrofit of Historic Buildings Conference, San Francisco. (See separate article.)

December

- 2 Finance and Operations committee meeting. John Mitchell's, 209 S. 14th St., 7:30 p.m., 288-6459.
- 9 Executive Board meeting. Karita Hummer's, 96 Fox Ave., 7 p.m., 971-0940.

Note: No Board of Directors meeting this month.

January, 1992

- 13 Executive Board meeting. Karita Hummer's, 96 Fox Ave., 7 p.m., 971-0940.
- 20 Annual Board of Directors meeting, Le Petit Trianon, 72 N. 5th St., 7 p.m., 971-0940.

Ongoing:

Exhibit: "Building a History," HABS survey exhibit, California History Center, Trianon Building, De Anza College, now through March 7, 1991. (See separate article.)

Continuity is published quarterly by the Preservation Action Council of San José. Opinions expressed in *Continuity* are not necessarily those of the Preservation Action Council of San José. Editor: Nancy Newlin. Editor's Assistant: Pat Vaughn. Entire contents Copyright, 1991, Preservation Action Council of San José.



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