



TGHS QUARTERLY

The Glendale Historical Society

Preserving and Celebrating Glendale's History and Architectural Heritage

TGHS • P.O. Box 4173 • Glendale • CA • (818) 242-7447 • www.glendalehistorical.org

New Historic District Overlay Zone Ordinance is Approved!

By Arlene Vidor

On April 15, Glendale City Council unanimously approved adoption of a new Historic District Overlay Zone (HDOZ) ordinance. The ordinance, incorporated into Glendale's Zoning Code, overturns the long standing prohibitive requirement that 100% of property owners must give consent to form a historic district. The new ordinance provides citizens the right to apply for historic zoning status if a show of interest is demonstrated by the community. Like other zoning changes, a majority of the property owners in the affected area would have to sign a petition. A series of public hearings followed by a City Council vote of 4/5 would be required to confirm a district.

Over 70 supporters came to speak in favor of Historic Districting at the Public Hearing on April 8th

TGHS led the community movement to have the outdated ordinance overturned in favor of a more useable historic district ordinance. Over a two year period many public hearings, workshops, and neighborhood parties were convened to get people informed and involved. The city also appointed a

working team of approximately 15 community leaders to assist the City Planning Division in drafting the ordinance. Arlene Vidor and Gerri Cragnotti represented TGHS on this team.

At the final public hearing at City Council on April 8th, over 70 supporters showed up, many speaking very passionately about their love

of Glendale's period architecture and the need for such an ordinance to help us protect it. There were only four individuals who spoke in opposition.

Glendale is the 3rd largest municipality in southern California with almost 200,000 residents. An esti-

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HDOZ Advocates patiently waiting outside the Council Chambers for their turn to speak

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Cumberland Heights will be First Neighborhood to Apply for Historic District Status under the New Ordinance

Cumberland Heights, graced with many Period Revival homes built by Glendale pioneer Dan Campbell in the 20s and 30s, will be our city's first designated historic district. Helen Sipsas, Chair of the HD Committee reports that several talented architects and volunteers are working diligently to prepare the design guidelines and complete the application by July 1st.



Original members of the TGHS Historic District Committee meeting at Ard Eevin House back in the winter of 2001

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HDOZ Ordinance Approved...

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mated 50% of the city's structures are over 50 years old. At this percentage, it is estimated that there are anywhere between 5,000 and

The HDOZ Ordinance will help Glendale catch up to other Southern California cities in the quest to preserve its period architecture

20,000 historic structures which have never been inventoried. These as-yet-to-be-identified buildings are all vulnerable to destruction without being captured on a historic survey and eventually included in a preservation plan such as a Historic District.

If you are interested in the possibility of historic district status for your area, big or small, contact TGHS and we'll help you find out more.

* What the New HDOZ Ordinance Says *

- An interested group requests the City Planning Director to consider their neighborhood for an HD overlay zone. The request is accompanied by proposed boundaries and a draft design guideline.
- The proposal is forwarded to the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). If their evaluation results in a decision that the neighborhood qualifies as a historic district, the HPC will authorize circulation of a standardized petition to which the draft design guideline will be attached.
- Supporters must obtain signatures from homeowners representing at least 50% of the frontage area in the proposed HDOZ.
- If 50% signatures are obtained, public notice will be given in the proposed district and within 300 feet of its boundaries, including postcards to all affected property owners and notice in the Glendale News-Press.
- The HPC and Planning Commission will hold public hearings, outreach programs, and submit their recommendations to City Council.
- City Council will consider the proposed district. As with any zoning change, a vote of 4/5 of Council is required to establish an HDOZ.

Doctor's House Happenings By Judy Cabrera

Don't miss an opportunity to see a truly unique exhibit currently running at the Doctors House Museum.

Hanging in the parlor are ten

Hair wreath weaving reached the height of popularity as a craft during the Victorian Era. Ten of these relics are on display at the Doctors' House

framed Victorian hair sculptures, currently on loan from a private collection.

Though hair artists have been weaving hair for centuries, the craft reached its height during the Victorian Era, when it became part of the obsession with death and mourning, exemplified by the deep mourning of Queen Victoria for her consort, Prince Albert.

In a process similar to the weaving of bobbin lace, treasured keep-

sakes were created, commemorating events from birth to death.

This exhibit is funded at the Doctors' House for one year, thanks to a generous donation by Isabelle Meyer.



The Doctors' House, in Brand Park

The Doctors' House Museum is open to the public on Sundays from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm. For information, please call (818)-242-4290.

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www.glendalehistorical.org

Banking on the Art of Animation to Give a Historic Glendale Building New Life

Early last year, a group representing city officials, local architects, TGHS representatives, and members of the arts community gathered to take a tour of the now-vacant Fidelity Federal Building at Broadway and Louise. Built by noted bank architect W.A. Sarmiento, the green louvered, rust-

brick structure, has seen many lives in Glendale- a bank, a lending institution, a County Social Services building; but if things work out, its next life will be the most interesting. A group of artists and architects – led by Frank Gladstone of Dreamworks (and a Glendale Arts Commissioner); Max Howard of Melwood Pictures; Ted Osborn, Michael Pinto and the very dedi-

Willmering from Atomium Pictures and Gary Hopkins of Hopkins Construction; among many others, are helping to spearhead a multimillion dollar, privately funded effort to adapt this modernist, historic structure into an Animation Resource Center.



Feature article from November 19, 2003 Los Angeles Times describing the Animation Bank Project is posted in the window of the Fidelity Federal Building.

W.A. Sarmiento's Fidelity Federal Building is the focus of an Adaptive Reuse Project for redevelopment as an Animation Resource Center

cated crew at Osborn Architects; Karen Schmidt of the Music Center (also an Arts Commissioner), Tom Knott from Warner Bros., Kevin

This ambitious and cutting edge project will include a museum, a 160 seat theatre, workshops, stu-



Atrium lobby of the Fidelity Federal Building

Cumberland Heights, First Glendale Historic District...

(Continued from page 1)

Once the application is received by the City and approved by the Historic Preservation Commission a survey of the proposed district will begin.

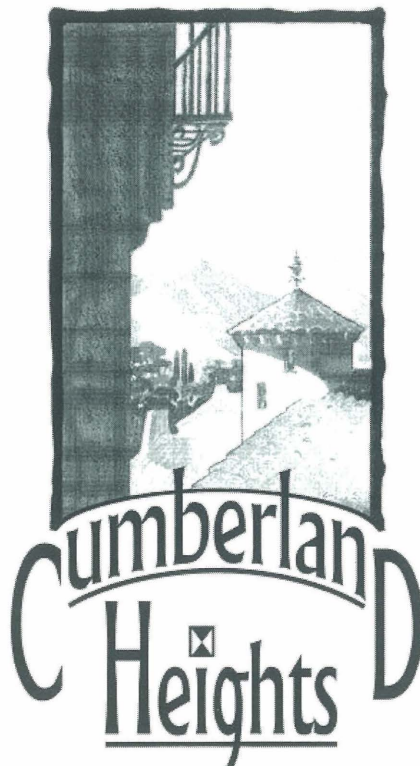
In May, Juliet Arroyo of the City's Planning Division informed TGHS that Glendale's application for a grant to survey Cumberland Heights was one of only a few selected by the State Historic Preservation Office.

Glendale has received a \$12,000 grant from the State to do a historic survey of the Cumberland Heights district

The City is obtaining the services of a consultant to conduct the survey with help from community volunteers. The survey will meet State standards and will include a photo of every home in the district and detail each structure's contribution to the historic fabric of the district.

The survey is expected to begin in

September. To become a survey volunteer please contact Helen Sip-sas @ 956-0596 or hsipsas@yahoo.com



The Cumberland Heights Historic District logo was designed by artist and TGHS member Dennis Greco



Detail of the Fidelity Federal front facade

dios, a gift shop, a café, leasable offices and other features.

TGHS supports adaptive reuse and enthusiastically advocates for the "reincarnation" of the Fidelity Federal building as a cultural resource. Now it is up to the committee working on the "Animation Bank" as they are calling the project, to obtain funding and support for this enterprise. The group has launched their website, www.animationbank.org, to raise awareness and solicit contributions from large corporate sponsors and individual supporters.

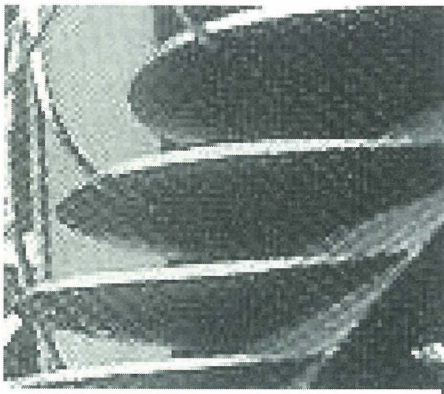
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Banking on Animation...

(Continued from page 3)

The City of Glendale's Redevelopment Agency is the current owner of the property and is willing to donate it for an animation museum if money is raised to rehabilitate the building and fund the museum.

Osborn Architects of Glendale is providing generous expert guidance and architectural renderings. Osborn hopes to be able to re-create Sarmiento's original spiral "floating" staircase down the middle of the lobby. The original stairway was one of the design highlights of the building's interior and could be developed from Sarmiento's original renderings.



Detail from a depiction of Sarmiento's floating staircase* which graced the original lobby of the Fidelity Federal Building*

The return on this investment could be priceless for the city in that it would be a huge shot in the arm for "cultural Glendale". The project would bring in tourists, entertainment industry professionals, museum and theatergoers, and likely become an attraction on a national scale, perhaps even serving as the apex of a major, international animation festival.

*Acknowledgment goes to *Los Angeles Magazine's* June 2001 issue, featuring an article on pages 95-96, entitled "Bank Statements" by Greg Goldin, which highlighted architect Sarmiento's renown bank buildings of the modernist era, Glendale Federal and Fidelity Federal

Discover Your Family History on the Internet

By David L. Smith

The internet has revolutionized the field of genealogy by allowing us to do the research from the comfort of our homes.

Two years ago, I prepared a family tree for the Smith family reunion and discovered a fascinating new hobby. One of the internet's powers, I found, is its ability to connect us with others researching the same family. I was able to share an old family letter that was not available in the library.

Recently, a cousin received "family archives" from our aunt. Among the papers was an original 1827 receipt from the federal government for the \$100 purchase of 80 acres of land in Indiana by our great-great-grandfather, Jacob Smith. From the Bureau of Land Management's website, gloreCORDS.blm.gov, I was then able to retrieve the Bureau's copy of the original land patent issued to my great-great-grandfather which was signed by John Quincy Adams!

From the same site, I also learned that a file was created for each land purchase. Following directions, I completed a form "NATF 84", submitted it to The National Archives and received photocopies of the entire file contents. It included an application signed by Jacob Smith to purchase the land, resulting in my now knowing the exact location of my great-great-grandfather's farm.

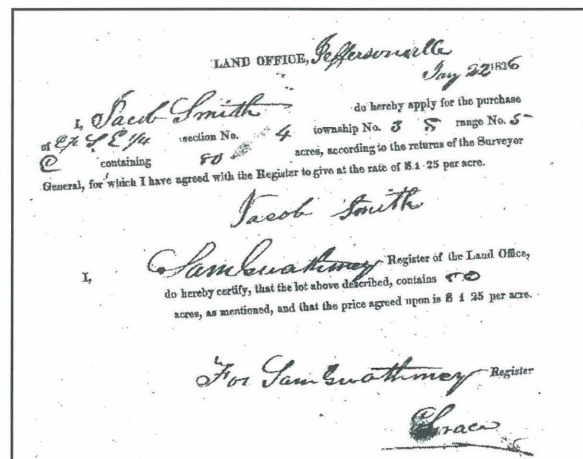
How does one get started? First, gather all the information you have on your family, such as names, locations, occupations, vital statistic

information such as birth, death and marriage dates.

If older relatives are available, pick their brains for additional information. There are family group sheets or computer software that can help organize your data.

Keep in mind that even official documents like census records may be inaccurate. For example, I located my maternal grandparents and great grandparents on the 1920 census. My grandmother's entry listed different birthplaces for her parents than was listed on their own census form. However, even if the information you have is incomplete or inaccurate, it can provide important clues as to where and what to look for.

Whenever possible, corroborate your findings with more than one source. The process can be painstaking but very satisfying as the family tree begins to take shape piece by piece --- or should I say twig by twig?



Application for purchase of land by Smith's great great grandfather in 1827

On page 6 David shares an interesting case study on how he used various websites to investigate the ancestry of Leslie Brand, early civic leader in Glendale.

Magnificent Magnesite

By Derek Catao, Jr.

It has been five years since Mark and I purchased our 1930's Spanish Revival home in the Cumberland Heights area of Glendale. What attracted us to the house was the character, craftsmanship and architectural details not found in newer homes today. Since moving in we began to make this home our own by landscaping, painting and restoring it.

Three months ago a hidden treasure was discovered. Our staircase, covered in carpet, had a stone-like material underneath it. Was it some kind of tile? The mystery was solved by our neighbors; the material was magnesite.

Magnesite is a powdery substance made from magnesium which can be poured like concrete when mixed with water. Although it is as hard as concrete, it is three times lighter. During the 1920's and 1930's magnesite floors were very popular and the material was used in kitchens, entryways, bathrooms, and staircases. It was often stamped with Spanish designs or even made to look like marble.

Magnesite floors are hand painted, usually in bright colors and sculpted into many different geometric shapes. In this area, magnesite floors are most commonly found in the older homes of Glendale, San Marino, Los Feliz, Hancock Park, and Beverly Hills.

In late January of this year, I hired Arturo Ferrel, a "magnesite restoration specialist" to restore the staircase. Arturo's passion for the beauty of this material came through in his knowledge and attention to recreating original details.

Magnisite was used in the 1920s and 1930s in housebuilding, vintage magnesite in a house is rare and should be restored

Arturo Ferrel has been restoring Magnesite and vintage Spanish tile for 22 years

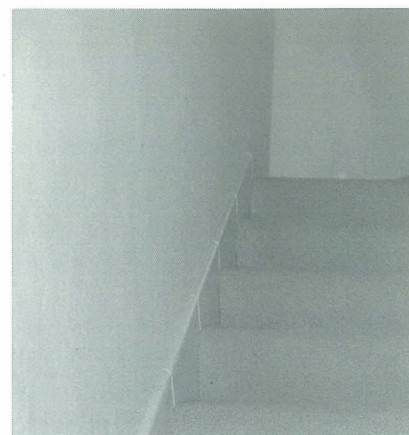
The carpet-covered stairway was painted white on its borders as was the wrought iron railing. When the carpet was removed we were pleasantly surprised to see stamped engravings of red and green flowers on the risers. But then disappointment hit when we saw hundreds of nails from the carpet tackboards hammered into the magnesite. Chunks

of magnesite were missing and there were numerous cracks. I could not believe the damage and thought the restoration was doomed.

"Not to worry" said Arturo, "your staircase will look beautiful". Working side by side with his son Alex for two weeks, Arturo meticulously removed the tackboards and each nail to prevent further damage. Three layers of white paint were stripped off the wrought iron railing to reveal a naturally raw, dark hue reminiscent of the Spanish Colonial Revival of the 20's and 30's.

Arturo Ferrel, originally from Mexico, is a specialist in the restoration of magnesite and Spanish tile pavers and has been practicing his art for 22 years. He is proud of his work, which he believes is important because it fosters an appreciation of the history and architectural style of early California. The end result of this project was a magnificent magnesite staircase restoration.

If you are fortunate enough to discover magnesite in your home and want to restore it, you can contact Arturo Ferrel at (818)504-6682. If you have any questions about this project you may also contact Derek Catao at (818) 500-7525.



Before restoration: Carpeted stairway and original wrought iron railing with 3 coats of white paint



During restoration: Magnesite under the carpet was ravaged by nail holes



Restoration Completed: Original designs and stamped stair risers on 1930s stairway and wrought iron railing with the original finish restored

TGHS Needs More Volunteers! Can you Help?

President's Message By Arlene Vidor

On behalf of the TGHS Board of Directors, I'd like to thank all of our

members who have so generously given of their precious time, funds, and energies to support TGHS activities and preservation advocacy.

The organization is growing rapidly and taking more and more of a leadership role in our community. With a higher profile and more goals, we desperately need more volunteers.

Can any of you talented, wonderful people out there help us with any of the following things?

- (1) Database maintenance and mailings
- (2) Excel spreadsheet for maintaining finances
- (3) Newsletter publication (we currently use Microsoft Publisher, but we're willing to change if someone can offer a better solution)
- (4) Obtaining advertisers for the newsletter
- (5) Archive organization and maintenance
- (6) Newsletter articles

- (7) Design Review Board monitors
- (8) Graphic design for flyers etc.
- (9) Fundraising

Please contact either Arlene Vidor at 500-7675 or Helen Sipsas at 956-0596 if you want to help out.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the following generous donations and membership upgrades:

Katherine and Steve Babbitt—\$800

Upgraded membership to Jewel City Patron.

Anonymous— \$500

Donation to The Glendale Historical Society Endowment Fund in memory of Dr. Robert Newcomb.

Isabelle Meyer— \$250

Donation for sponsorship of the Doctors' House Hair Wreath Exhibit to cover cost of insurance.

Andrea Humberger—(undisclosed amount)

Donation to the Glendale Historical Society Endowment Fund in memory of Dr. Robert Newcomb.

Discover Your Family History

(Continued from page 4)

How I Tested the Power of the Internet using Leslie C. Brand, Early Glendale Civic Leader, as a "Case Study" By David L. Smith

FamilySearch.org.	The website of the Mormon Family History Library. I started my search indicating that Mr. Brand lived in Glendale in the early 1900s. I got 60 "Leslie C. Brand" hits, many of them born too recently to be our Leslie Brand.
Ancestry.com	This is a subscription site. A library version of the service, called Ancestry Plus is available at the main Los Angeles Public Library. This site includes access to the scanned images of the actual US Census sheets from 1790 to 1930. This site gave me 29 "Leslie Brand"s, but only one had died in Glendale and was buried in Brand Park. That was our Leslie Brand. From this site I also learned L.C. Brand's parents' birth and death dates and locations. It also traced the Brand family back to the mid 1700s in Virginia.
USGENWEB.org	This is a free site that provides the burial places of famous people in Los Angeles County. Leslie Brand's burial place was listed on this site.
Glorerecords.blm.gov	Bureau of land management, a government site. This is a great place to find records and locations of ancestral land ownership in the United States.

TGHS/Community Calendar

IMPORTANT NOTICE

In City Council
613 East Broadway, after the hour of

6:00 pm

July 15, 2004

DEMOLITION ORDINANCE

PUBLIC HEARING

The City proposes an ordinance amending Section 15.04.160 and adding Chapter 15.22 to the Glendale Municipal Code relating to demolition permits.

The proposed ordinance establishes a review process for demolition permits. The ordinance has the power to protect thousands of buildings in Glendale which are potentially historical and may be worth preserving. Currently, demolition permits are available on demand, no questions asked.

Please come to this Public Hearing to voice your support!

Bring a picnic and enjoy theatre under the stars at the landmark Doctors' House Museum. We are proud to present the Reaction Theatre Company productions of two great plays.

"The Fantasticks", Performances Friday and Saturday, July 11 and 12 and Friday and Saturday, July 18 and 19. All performances 7:30 pm. Admission is free.

"The Vinegar Tree", Performances Friday and Saturday, July 25 and 26, and Friday and Saturday, August 1 and 2. All performances start at 7:30 pm. Admission is free.

TGHS members can reserve front row seats by calling (818) 786-1045

Brand Library Annual Book and Music Sale and Craft Fair - find architectural magazines and books for pennies! Saturday, July 19, 10 am—3 pm. Brand Library, 1601 W. Mountain St., in Brand Park.

Annual Members Meeting - Monday, July 28 at 7:00 pm, in Brand Park at the Doctors' House Museum Gazebo. Light refreshments will be served. Our annual awards will also be presented.

Adams Hill Hosts 120 People at Two Historic District Receptions

TGHS and The Adams Hill Homeowners Association co-sponsored receptions in March and April to create awareness of the need for neighborhood architecture preservation via the Historic Districting process.

The receptions were hosted by Dina and Erol Andac of Cottage Grove Drive and Matthew Mitchell and Tony Stately of Palmer Drive. Our hosts prepared fabulous spreads for their neighbors! We thank them all.

Attendees were very interested in the Historic District Overlay Zone Ordinance initiative. Most of all, neighbors enjoyed making friends and sharing a common interest in preserving the eclectic charm of this unique urban neighborhood.

Adams Hill just launched its website, www.adamshill.org, which is linked to TGHS and contains a terrific history section.



Adams Hill residents converse at Tony & Matthew's



Dina and Erol's Adams Square event was quite spirited



Some very young Historic District advocates showed up



Listening intently

The Glendale Historical Society
P.O. Box 4173
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TGHS thanks the following new and renewing members
 (*new members)

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 Steve and Katherine Babbitt

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 George and Virginia Young*

Visit our website!
www.glendalehistorical.org

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JOIN TGHS AND SUPPORT HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN OUR COMMUNITY

The Society is a non-profit, tax exempt organization and we encourage you to join and volunteer
 Please complete the form and mail it to the address shown with check payable to:
 The Glendale Historical Society, P.O. Box 4173, Glendale, CA 91202

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Jewel City Patron (\$500) | Organizational memberships (without voting rights): |
| Verdugo Patron (\$250) | Non-Profit (\$25) |
| Tropico Patron (\$100) | Small Business (\$35) |
| Sustaining (\$50) | Corporate (\$100) |
| Family/Dual (\$30) | |
| Individual (\$20) | |
| Individual Senior or Student (\$10) | |

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Interests: Preservation Historic Districts Event Planning
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