
The Glendale Historical Society

Preserving and Celebrating Glendale's History and Architectural Heritage Summer 2005

Outstanding Support for Vintage Gas Station

by Jane Brown

Adams Square mini-park. This was due, in no small part, to the Adams Hill community's efforts and support.

In only two weeks, Adams Hill petitioners gathered 652 residents' signatures, 15 Adams Square merchants' signatures, and 64 signatures from non-Glendale residents. *The Glendale News Press* received 21 letters in support of the mini-park and vintage gas station. Dozens of people from the community attended the July 6th meeting and voiced their support. In addition, the Parks & Recreation Commission received 36 letters of support.

Adams Hill residents' invaluable efforts have paid off. For now, our mini-park and landmark gas station revitalization plans are moving ahead. On August 16th the City Council unanimously approved preservation and restoration of the gas station in the Mini Park design and voted to expedite the construction process.

TGHS thanks the Adams Hill community and the many local merchants and residents of other neighborhoods who supported this effort.

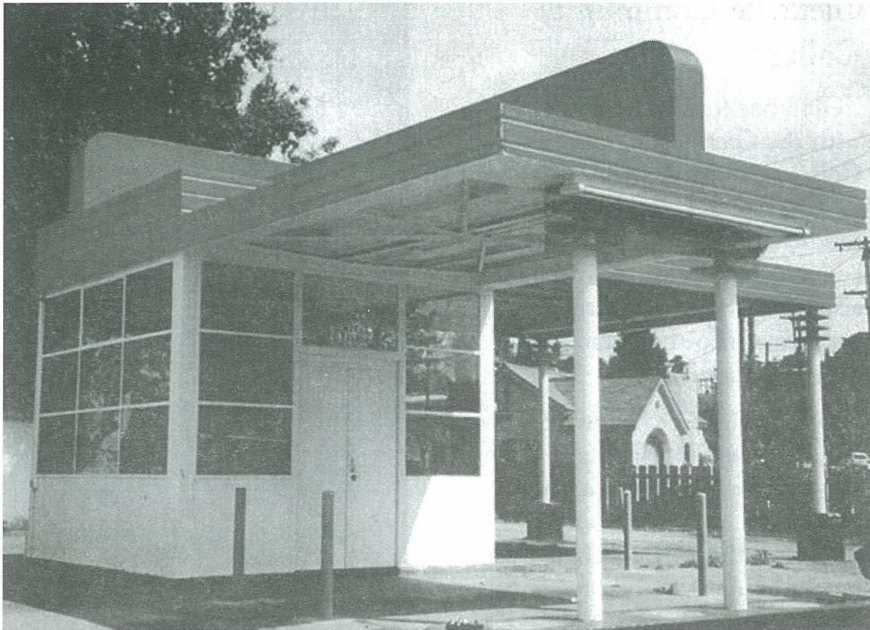


PHOTO: Gary Freeman

This 1936 Moderne gas station will be preserved as part of a minipark in Adams Square. It will provide shade and a space for community notices.

THOSE OF YOU who didn't participate in the recent Adams Square Streamlined Moderne Gas Station activity certainly read about it in the *Glendale News-Press*.

The 1936 gas station is protected under California Environmental Quality Act as a landmark eligible for state and local listing. With the intent of restoring the station building, and with full public support, the City took possession of the property using eminent domain. Designs for the mini-park, with the gas station as its centerpiece, were presented to the community at two city-sponsored neighborhood meetings. No opposition to preserving the station was voiced at either meeting.

Not until designs were submitted to the Parks and Recreation Commission did a few Adams Square merchants raise opposition to a park plan including the station. At the eleventh hour, these merchants called for the demolition of the station, suggesting that the space taken up by the structure be given over to parking. Unaware of the history of the project, the Parks Commission called into question the validity of a plan including a restored vintage filling station. Fortunately, the Historic Preservation Commission stepped in and reaffirmed the significance of this tiny but well-loved landmark.

At a hearing on July 6, the Parks Commission, now fully informed, unanimously supported the preservation and adaptive reuse of the gas station as the centerpiece of the

President's Message

Dear Reader,

Fitting the latest chapter into a chapter. . .

By now you have all received an order form for the pending publication of the Centennial edition of "Glendale, A Pictorial History." We are going to print 2,000 copies and expect them to go fast so please get your orders in. Katherine Yamada, one of TGHS's longtime members and a local historian and newspaper columnist of renown, is spending a huge amount of her personal time putting together the latest chapter of Glendale's growth and development for the new edition. Our publisher, Donning, allows us to add text of 7,000 words and 70 photographs. It sounds like a lot, but think about what it is like to sift through fifteen years of Glendale history—the glories, victories, events, calamities, controversies, and statistics—and boil it down to "Chapter 8"? Deciding how much precious space to give to what topics—whether to mention a specific issue that seemed vividly crucial five years ago, but may not rise to relevance in the context of a 100-year chronicle—is an exquisitely painful exercise that Katherine is tackling like a real trooper every day.

Fortunately she has received support from many colleagues and friends in this endeavor. Also, several financial backers for the project have come forward and we thank them profusely for their support. We are still seeking assistance and will provide an update in the next newsletter.

TGHS Partners with Glendale Community College

TGHS has formed a partnership with the Glendale Community College Service Learning Center (SLC). The SLC works with organizations and individuals within the community to give GCC students applied learning opportunities in supplement to their traditional classroom studies.

I'm very pleased to be working with SLC Director Hoover Zariani on this partnership. Our first joint project is Oral History and will be with the Honors English 101 class taught by Associate Professor Susan Henry.

The students will be conducting interviews with longtime residents of Glendale to capture their personal recollections—and receive class credit for this project. These interviews will be documented and formally archived with the city and the library special collections section. If you are a longtime resident willing to be interviewed, please contact me or Doris McKentley via the TGHS phone number. A more detailed description of this exciting venture will be reported in our next newsletter.

Happy reading.



Arlene Vidor
TGHS president

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TGHS

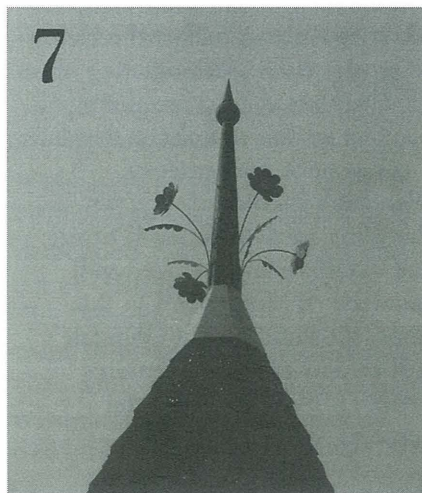
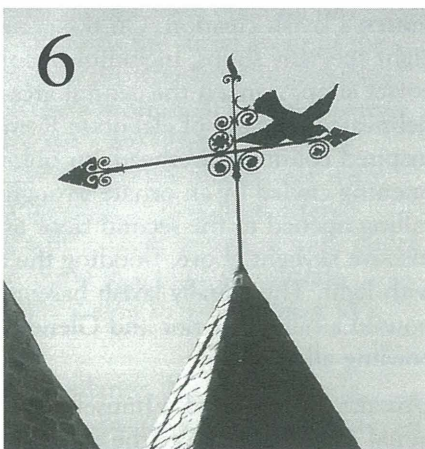
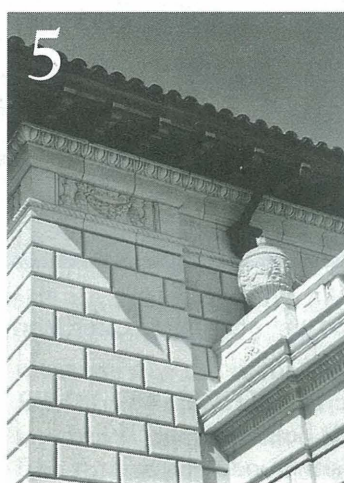
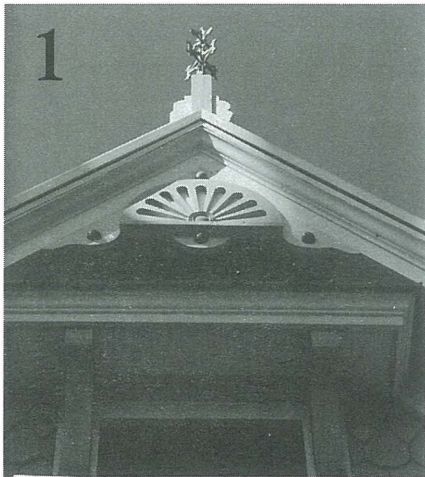
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Visit us on the web at:
www.glendalehistorical.org

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the Society

It's All in the Details . . .

HERE IS THE THIRD IN A SERIES testing your awareness of architectural elements scattered around Glendale. The series and photographs are the brainchild of Doctors' House curator Isabelle Meyer. Do you know where these rooftops are, what buildings they are attached to? Try to match the rooftops with the possible answers listed below. Turn to page 6 for the correct answers.



- A. Alex Theater
- B. Forest Lawn detail
- C. Doctors House
- D. YMCA
- E. St. Mary's Church
- F. Adams Square building
- G. Main Post Office
- H. Colonial Honda
- I. Kiefer & Eyerich Mortuary/Assistance League Thrift Shop

- J. St. Mark's Church
- K. Bekins Building
- L. Goode House

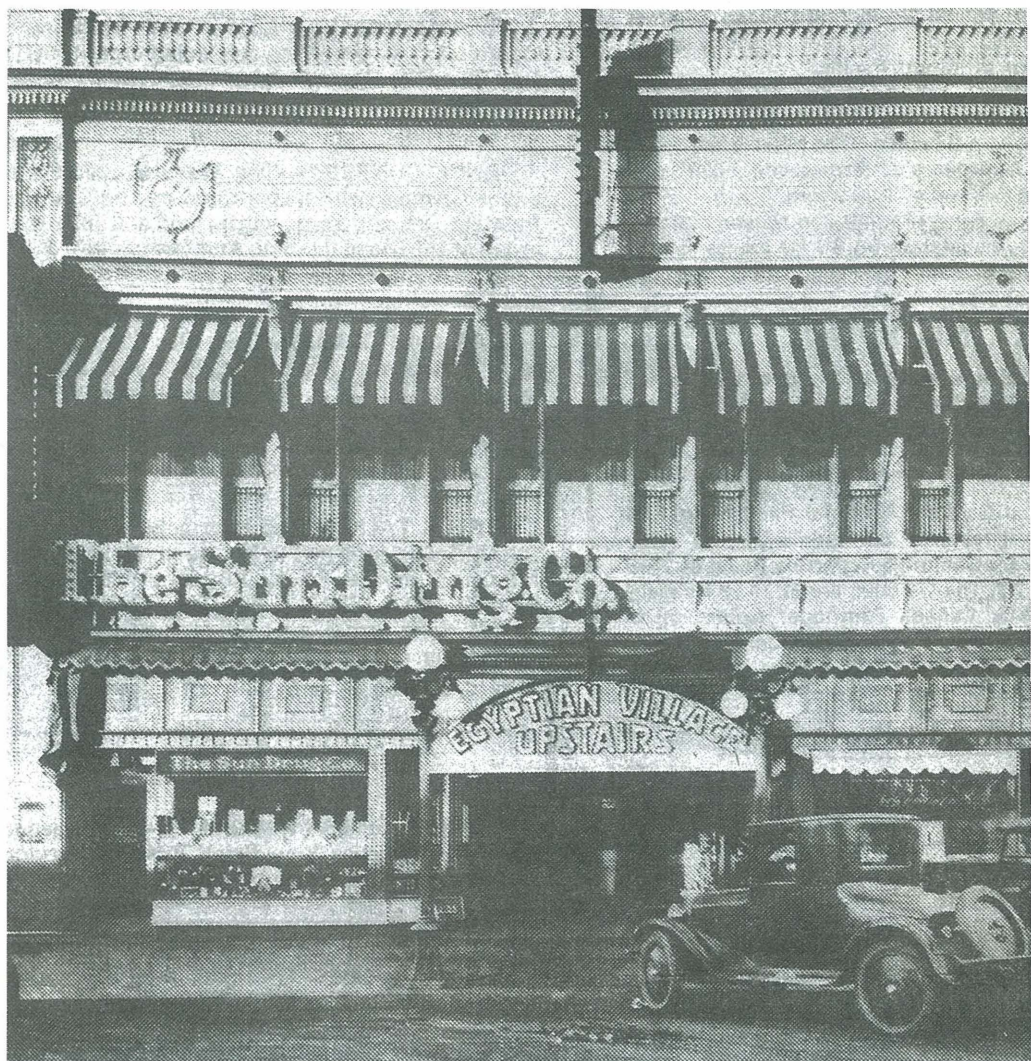
Look for the correct answers on page 6

Glendale's ROOFTOPS

Jensen's Palace Grand Shops and the Egyptian Village Café

Part one of a
two-part
article

by John LoCascio

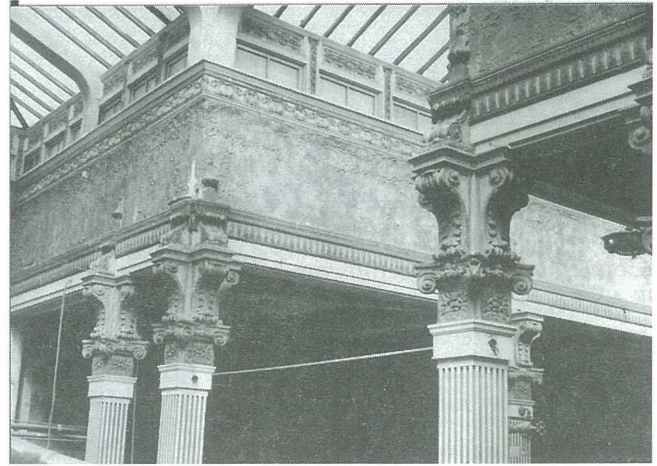
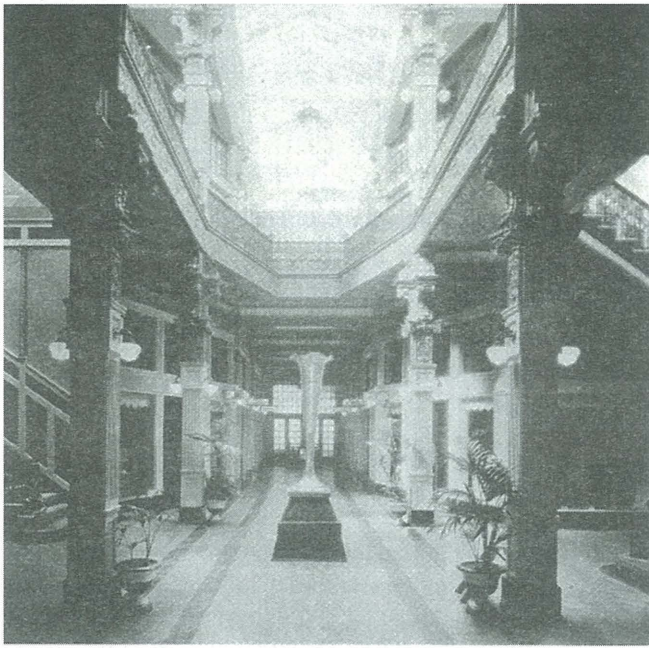


Above, the exterior of Jensen's Palace Grand Shops around 1922 where Marion Morrison's father ran the pharmacy. Later Morrison gained fame as movie star, John Wayne.

AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER of Brand Boulevard and Wilson Avenue sits an odd empty lot, occupying half the city block. A half-finished office/retail complex fills the southern half of the block, its semi-circular plaza opening onto the abandoned parcel to the north. But this lot was not always desolate; this was once the center of Glendale's thriving downtown, a charming small-town Main Street that would today be the envy of Pasadena or Monrovia. On this empty lot stood one of Glendale's greatest lost treasures: Jensen's Palace Grand Shops and the Egyptian Village Café.

Henry Jensen opened Jensen's Palace Grand Shops in 1922. The new building was an elegant glass-roofed shopping arcade, a rarity in Southern California; only the Bradbury Building and the Broadway Arcade in downtown Los Angeles could compare with Jensen's lavish creation. On the ground floor, eight specialty shops, including a florist and a corset shop, flanked the central arcade, delineated by pairs of elaborate Roman-inspired columns; overhead, an oblong opening circled by an ornate wrought iron railing opened to the second floor and the massive skylight above, flooding the arcade with light. The equally lavish basement housed a billiard parlor and Glendale's first bowling alley.

Upstairs, Jensen outdid himself. The sensational 1922 discovery of the tomb of King



Left: The interior of the Palace Grand Shops. The Egyptian Village was on the second floor; the skylight flooding it with light was matched only by the skylights at the Bradbury and Broadway Arcade buildings in downtown Los Angeles. Top: A closeup of the fluted square columns on the second floor.

Tutankhamun in the Valley of the Kings created a world-wide craze for all things Egyptian; Jensen capitalized on the mania by turning the second floor of his arcade into the Egyptian Village Café. More eclectic than authentically “Egyptian,” the Café’s décor was a unique example of fanciful Hollywood adaptations of historic styles. The giant cross-shaped skylight, 25 feet high, ran the length and breadth of the space; below, rows of squared fluted

columns, their capitals fantastic combinations of scrolls, volutes and acanthus leaves, supported ornate plaster friezes. To either side were huge canvases depicting sphinxes and pyramids as well as mountain landscapes, painted by unknown Mexican artists.

The Egyptian Village Café opening on August 4, 1923 was the social event of the season in Glendale. The favorite gathering spot of the city’s prominent and prosperous inhabitants, the Café offered its clients luncheon, afternoon tea and dinner with music and dancing. It may have offered something a little more potent as well; bullet holes later found in one of the murals attested to the Café’s rumored career as a speakeasy.

Despite its popularity, the Café was not profitable; high operating costs and logistical

difficulties could not be surmounted, and the Café closed in 1927. The Depression dealt a final blow to the Palace Grand Shops, and Jensen sold the building in 1936. Thereafter it was occupied by a number of tenants; the ground floor arcade was split into two storefronts, with the basement used as storage. The second floor balcony was filled in and the stairs removed; mechanical ductwork snaked through the former restaurant space, serving the shops below. Eventually the intricate terra cotta façade was covered with a bland false front, and all vestiges of Jensen’s Arcade disappeared from view. Sealed away like the famous tomb that inspired it, almost perfectly preserved, the Egyptian Village Café was forgotten for nearly forty years.

It was rediscovered by accident, in 1972, in the midst of the frenzy of demolition that characterized this era of Glendale’s development. The Glendale Planning Department stumbled upon the entombed Café while surveying the proposed redevelopment area, and was dazzled by the splendor of the

perfectly preserved relic. Except for the ducting on the floor and the sealed balcony, the Café was in its original condition. The skylight, the columns, the wall paintings, even the elaborate light fixtures were all preserved. The original terra cotta façade on Brand Boulevard still existed beneath the false front.

The Egyptian Village Café so impressed the Planning Department that it was specifically identified in the Historic Preservation Element of the General Plan, adopted in 1977:

“The Egyptian Village Café should be named as one of the most historic and culturally significant landmarks in the City of Glendale. It is recommended that this site, as well as others, be protected from demolition by the drafting and passage by the City of an Historic Preservation Ordinance.”

So what happened? Why was the building demolished? Stay tuned. The story continues in the fall issue of the Glendale Historical Society newsletter.

Historic Districting Update

ACTING ON THE recommendation of the Planning Department, the City Council has hired Architectural Resources Group, Inc. of San Francisco to prepare design guidelines for Glendale's future historic district overlay zones.

Under the guidance of the Planning Department, ARG is working with a citizen's advisory group made up of representatives from The Glendale Historical Society and residents of the neighborhoods that have been most active in the historic districting movement: Adams Hill, Northwest Glendale, Rossmoyne, and the Woodlands. The City's two design review boards and the Historic Preservation Commission are also represented, as are opponents of historic districting.

ARG and the advisory group are working together to prepare a set of comprehensive design guidelines that will be not only thorough and specific, but also easy to understand and use. The guidelines will individually address the various architectural styles found in Glendale's residential neighborhoods, and establish standards for the preservation of the elements and details that give each style its specific identity.

When completed and adopted by Council, the guidelines will serve as a single citywide standard for preserving the architectural character of Glendale's historic districts.

by John LoCascio

- Answers to Rooftops from page 3
- 1-L Goode House
 - 2-D YMCA
 - 3-C Doctors House
 - 4-E St Mary's Church
 - 5-G Main Post Office
 - 6-I Kiefer Eyerick/Assistance League Thrift Shop
 - 7-L Goode House



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TGHS IS URGENTLY SEEKING A NEW MEMBERSHIP CHAIR!
 Please consider serving as Membership Chairperson for TGHS. This critical position is responsible for membership renewal, outreach and maintaining that all important computer database of our members and other mailing lists.

Join The Glendale Historical Society 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 this form and mail it with a check payable to The Glendale Historical Society, PO Box 4173, Glendale CA 91202

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Jewel City Patron (\$500) | Organizational Memberships: (No voting rights) |
| Verdugo Patron \$(250) | |
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- CHECK AREAS OF INTEREST:
- | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Preservation | Historic Districts | Event Planning |
| Fundraising | Outreach | Newsletter |
| Doctors House docent | | Research Glendale history |

Doctors' House news



Pictured above are a few of the docents who volunteered to staff the house for A Midsummer Victorian Evening: Jenny Ruiz, Merry Franzen, Brooke Applegate (the inspiration and perspiration behind the event!), Mary Underwood, Doris McKentley, Joan Doyle, and Judy Cabrera

Time Travel: A Midsummer Victorian Evening

More than 100 visitors took advantage of the beautiful weather and setting to take a Midsummer Night's Tour of the Doctor's House Museum in Brand Park (August 20). Turn of the century games—crocquet, graces, hoops, and potato sack races—were available for the more energetic. Those not so inclined could enjoy their picnic on the lawn while being serenaded by three hours of live nineteenth century music played on authentic instruments. Refreshments were served.

by Judy Cabrera



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La Fontana italian kitchen

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*New members

+Members who have upgraded their membership or contributed more than the membership amount

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	Barbara Conry+
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Mike Resnick*	Moira Delaney & Julio Moline
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Susan Salmon	Curtis & Judee Kendall
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Bonnye LaPenotiere Sirk	Craig & Leyla Lighthizer*
David Smith	Laura & Bud Lovick+
	Doris & Melvin McKentley
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Dennis & Carin Greco	Peter Rusch & Scott Halloran
Doyle Kutch+	Joal Ryan & Steve Ryfle
Eileen & John Manus	Anne & Albert Wargo
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Steven A Preston & Janet Whaley+	
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Jeanette Stirdivant*	Royal Canyon Property Owners
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to be continued . . .

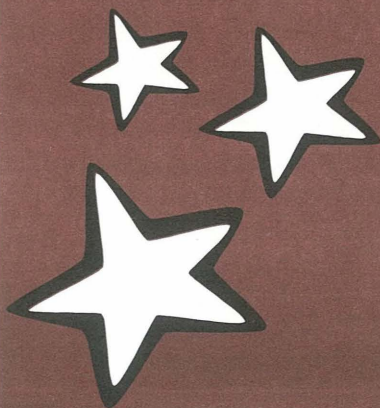


Coming
Soon...

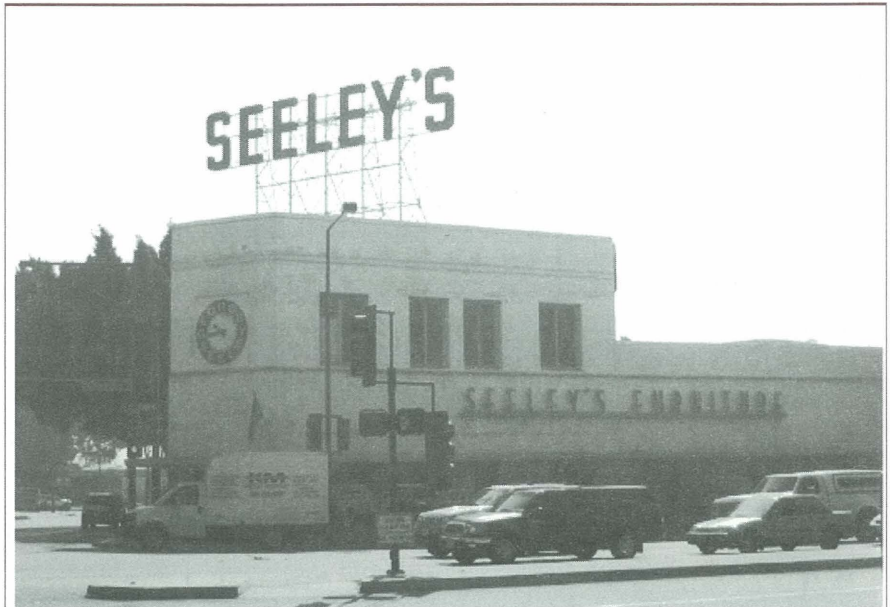
A Centennial Showcase:

Tour Glendale
in 2006 by
enjoying a
home tour
featuring a
house from
each of our
ten decades

Stay tuned!



The Glendale Historical Society
PO Box 4173
Glendale CA 91202
www.glendalehistorical.org



Historic Seeley Building to be Developed as Lofts

Developer Daniel Sullivan has entered into a contract to purchase the Seeley Building from George Seeley Jr. Sullivan's firm, Navilus LLC, plans to convert the property into a mixed use Live-Work development including residential lofts and commercial space. Mr. Sullivan has focused his activities on historic buildings in and around Los Angeles. He considers himself a preservationist and a developer. The Seeley Building is not currently a listed landmark, but it is deemed National Register Eligible and is, therefore, a protected structure under the California Environmental Quality Act. The Streamline Moderne style facade has an iconic sign and clock which will be retained as part of the new development.

The building has been used in several Hollywood film shoots including "Anchorman" and the department store scenes of the 2001 film, "The Man Who Wasn't There." Mr. Sullivan has developed other historic buildings and is currently redeveloping another historic property in Los Angeles into residential lofts, Buena Vista Lofts, a collection of Spanish Colonial Revival properties in Boyle Heights that once comprised the Santa Fe hospital complex. As of this writing, the preservation community is expecting to tour the facility and meet with Mr. Sullivan to discuss the planned redevelopment during September.

by Arlene Vidor