
The Glendale Historical Society

Preserving and Celebrating Glendale's History and Architectural Heritage

Winter 2008

Photo: Arlene Vidor



GLENDALE MAKES HISTORY: Royal Boulevard Is Designated the City's First Historic District!

by Greg Grammer

Royal Boulevard, Glendale's first historic district, looking north from Mountain Street

A 30-home section of Royal Boulevard, defined by its grand, palm-lined street and its celebrated period revival homes, became Glendale's first historic district after the City Council unanimously approved the neighborhood's application for the designation on October 21.

Most of the homes in the new historic district, between 1400 and 1520 Royal Boulevard, were built from 1926 to 1948 as part of one of the first housing tracts in north Glendale. The houses range from 1920s revival styles to mid-century Minimal Traditional.

The historic district designation creates an "overlay zone" that protects these homes with guidelines that, while suggestive in nature, are aimed at preserving their architectural integrity. The historic district guidelines supplement general zoning rules and take precedence over existing design guidelines. The guidelines apply only to alterations that are visible from the street and cover such things as: siding and exterior finishes; doors and windows; roofs and porches; garages and outbuildings, and streetscapes.

A historic resources survey, undertaken earlier this year by the City of Glendale at the request of a majority of the homeowners, found that 22 of the 30 homes are "contributors" to the district's historic character and that Royal Boulevard qualifies as a historic district due to its "unique location ... representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood community," and as "a distinctive example of community planning."

In order to be re-zoned as a historic district, more than 50% of the property owners in a proposed area must sign a petition requesting the designation. On Royal Boulevard, historic district designation received the support of an overwhelming majority of 80% of the homeowners

Currently, a group of 87 homes in Ard Eevin Highlands and a neighborhood of 14 homes on Cottage Grove Avenue near Adams Hill are pursuing historic district status. To learn more about how your neighborhood might apply to become a historic district, please contact the City's Planning Department at (818) 548-2140 or visit our website at www.glendalehistorical.org.

President's Message

It is my honor to address you here, for the first time, as President of The Glendale Historical Society. I must confess that it's also just a bit odd to see a President's Message from someone other than my predecessor and dear friend, **Arlene Vidor**.

In her six terms as President Arlene oversaw the Society's maturation into an effective preservation advocacy organization, leading TGHS in a string of impressive successes that saved some of the city's significant buildings and neighborhoods. She fostered the Society's close working relationship with the City of Glendale and formed close and lasting partnerships with sister organizations like the Los Angeles Conservancy. She began the process of revamping our web communications, raised the funds to print an updated edition of "Glendale: A Pictorial History" to commemorate the city's centennial, and supervised the re-establishment of our annual tour program.

The greatest success of Arlene's tenure as president is headlined on the front page of this newsletter. The years-long community effort to establish historic districts in this city, spearheaded by TGHS, reached fruition with the establishment of the Royal Boulevard Historic District, Glendale's first, effective as of November 21. Two other applicants, Cottage Grove and Ard Eevin Highlands, face likely approval early in the new year.

That's a tough act to follow, but I have every confidence that we will successfully build upon Arlene's legacy as we move into the future. We will expand our membership to provide a wider and even stronger community base; we will further our educational efforts to increase awareness and appreciation of Glendale's history and heritage; and we will continue to advocate for the identification and preservation of Glendale's architectural landmarks and historic neighborhoods

Joining me in these efforts will be our outstanding Board of Directors. Our new vice president, **Greg Grammer**, will continue his successful chairmanship of the membership committee, ably assisted by our newest board member, **Sonia Montejano**. **Elaine Wilkerson** will continue to apply her invaluable organizational skills as our secretary, and **Judy Cabrera** will remain our treasurer, a role she has filled admirably for several years. **Isabelle Meyer** will remain curator of the Doctors House, while **Marcia Hanford** will reprise her much-appreciated hard work as events coordinator, with the assistance of longtime board member **Margaret Hammond**. And **Arlene Vidor** will remain on the Board to chair our new communications committee.

On behalf of the Board and the entire membership, I extend my heartfelt thanks to Arlene for her exemplary leadership and outstanding achievements as President. And I look forward to working with all of you as we continue our endeavor to preserve and celebrate Glendale's history and architectural heritage.

John LoCascio

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www.glendalehistorical.org

The Glendale Historical Society
Quarterly Newsletter is the official
publication of the Society

MODESTLY MODERN GLENDALE: Another successful tour for TGHS

Photo: Elaine Wilkerson



Richard K. Fleming, AIA, the architect of the Prock House; owner Catherine Burns; and TGHS president John LoCascio

This year's home tour, *Modestly Modern Glendale* on Sunday, October 12 proved enormously popular and was our most financially successful tour yet.

Nearly two hundred Modernism enthusiasts enjoyed the outstanding mid-20th century architecture of our five tour homes, each with its own unique character. The 1954 Daily House in Whiting Woods, recently listed on the Glendale Register of Historic Resources, is the product of a trio of Glendale-based designers and features extensive use of wood and stone. White House, built in 1955 in the Verdugo Woodlands, is a glass-walled retreat set amidst a grove of sycamore trees. Thomas House, nestled in a wooded hillside at the top of Whiting Woods, is a 1956 split level with late Moderne influences in its detailing.

Prock House, a classic post-and-beam built in 1961, was designed to take maximum advantage of a spectacular view from Adams Hill north to the Verdugos. And the 1973 Bloch House, a glass box perched on a granite ledge in the Verdugo Mountains, also features a panoramic view including all of Glendale, Bunker Hill, Griffith Park and the San Fernando Valley.

The highlight of the day was a visit from two very special guests: **Richard K. Fleming**, AIA, the architect of Prock House, and his wife Georgie, who made a trip to Glendale to see the beautifully updated house and meet its current owners. Mr. Fleming was a recent graduate of the USC School of Architecture when he designed the house, as well as four others, for Glendale developer **Robert Prock** in 1961. He went on to a successful career, including a partnership at the prestigious architectural firm of Buff & Hensman, and eventually opened his own office in Corona. Mr. Fleming was, in his own words, "bowled over" by the response to his design, and called the current owners' enthusiasm for Modern design "breathtaking".

Mr. Fleming said the tour was a "wonderful experience" and noted that "Mr. Prock, too, would have been astonished at what, for us, at least until Sunday, was a minor blip in our past."

Our thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Fleming for joining us on the tour, to our generous sponsors and to all the homeowners, volunteers and tour-goers who made this year's event such a great success.

SPECIAL THANKS

TO THE SPONSORS AND HOMEOWNERS
WHO MADE OUR TOUR POSSIBLE

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Window Restoration & Repair

HOMEOWNERS

Richard Bloch
Catherine Burns and Chris Lamson
Chris Burusco
Mark Trombino
Robin Urban



The Glendale Historical Society

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TGHS ONLINE

Please visit our organization's website at www.glendalehistorical.org

Latest additions to the site include the online version of our current newsletter and a reorganized "useful links" page with resources on the following topics:

Restoration and Decoration
Partner Organizations
How to do Research
Landscaping and Wilderness
Genealogy

PLEASE TAKE NOTE

If you are a member with a computer and have not lately received any announcements from TGHS, please ensure that your spam filter is set to allow receipt of messages from tghs@glendalehistorical.org. Also, if you've changed your email address please contact us.

- Arlene Vidor, webmaster

Members of The Glendale Historical Society are invited to



Celebrate

... the holidays
... the formation of the
Royal Boulevard
Historic District
... and the listing of the
Strangler Lewis House
on the Glendale Register

Sunday

December 7, 2008

4 to 6 in the evening

1415 Royal Boulevard

Hector and Sonia Montejano are opening their home, the Strangler Lewis House. See page 5.

The latest addition to Glendale’s Register of Historic Resources: The Ed “Strangler” Lewis House

by Greg Grammer and John LoCascio

This magnificent and beautiful home, with its eye-catching, double-entry staircase, towers like a sentry at the gateway to Royal Canyon and the stretch of 30 homes in the City’s newly designated historic district.

Built in 1928 by the Whitting family, who owned a hardware store in Glendale, the house was the second home constructed on Royal Boulevard as part of the Rossmoyne Village Development. The plans for the neighborhood originally called for a Spanish village, where the entire arrangement of homes would be reminiscent of Old Spain. By 1931, eight Spanish Revival homes were completed before the Great Depression brought the project to a halt. The home has several prominent architectural features which have sparked discussions among experts, who do not seem to agree if the house is a Spanish Colonial Revival or a Mediterranean Revival.

Its Classical entrance, topped by a triple-arched loggia is reminiscent of a Renaissance palazzo, but the



Photo: Arlene Vidor

The Whitting House near the intersection of Mountain Street on Royal Boulevard is also known as the “Strangler” Lewis House for its famous occupant.

formal composition is softened by a projecting corner tower, overhanging wood balcony and massive chimney that recall the rustic provincial vernacular of Andalusia, Spain. These contrasting features perfectly illustrate the combination of Italian and Spanish architectural elements characteristic of the Mediterranean style. But regardless of stylistic questions, it has proven to have substantial architectural merit with its recent designation by the City of Glendale as a Historic Landmark.

The home has been named after its most famous occupant, professional wrestler Ed “Strangler” Lewis, who actually never owned the house. He lived there during the 1930s, and probably leased the home from Mrs. Whitting until she sold it. During the 1930s, Lewis was a seven-time heavyweight world champion. Over the span of 44 years, he had more than 6,000 matches to his name, thus earning the nickname “Strangler.” Considered to be among the greatest wrestlers of all time, Lewis also owned and operated one of the most popular entertainment spots in the Los Angeles area, the Monterey Restaurant and Lounge on Brand Boulevard.

The home has changed hands only five times over the past 81 years. The Whitting family owned the home until 1943, when it was purchased by the Lynch family. Gerald Flavin, a member of the Lynch family, who lived in the home during the 1940s, recently shared interesting stories and old photos with the home’s current owners, Sonia and Hector Montejano, who found the information useful during their recent renovation efforts. For the past two years, the Montejanos have poured their hearts into restoring the home to its original splendor. They have also added an infinity pool and created a backyard paradise that is evocative of an old Spanish or Mediterranean Villa—a fitting setting for this gem of Glendale architecture.

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Presidential Election Exhibit Spiritedly Compares 1908 with 2008

by Isabelle Meyer

The exhibition about presidential elections at the Doctors House museum began with a memorable Grand Opening on October 5th. The house looked very festive bunted in patriotic fabrics and our visitors loudly cheered the stump speeches given by representatives of the candidates for both the 1908 and the 2008 elections. The 1908 election was represented by **Larry Meyer** for William Howard Taft, and **Kim Allender** for William Jennings Bryan, while the 2008 candidates were represented by **Art Fisher** (Barack Obama) and **Dan Cabrera** (John McCain). Vin-



A young voter casts her first vote at the Doctors House Election Exhibit.



Sid Gordon gets into the spirit of the 1908 election sharing his vintage gramophone.

Photo: Isabelle Meyer

tage music played by longtime member **Sid Gordon** added a colorful touch and lemonade and popcorn were served by board member **Margaret Hammond** and docent **Robin Hansen**. All our docents sported ribbons with “Women’s Suffrage” or “Votes for Women” emblazoned on them and curator **Isabelle Meyer** chained herself to the iron gates in protest of the lack of women’s rights to vote for the 1908 candidates. Her frustration was shared by the girls among the 360 Glendale third-graders who visited the exhibit during October and November. They demonstrated loudly with placards while their male classmates voted for candidate Taft or Bryan. Fortunately they were rewarded for their civic demonstrations in the upstairs exhibit room, where voting booths and real demonstration ballots awaited all our junior voters. They even received the obligatory “I voted” sticker. While attendance during our Sunday tours was only slightly above average, the enthusiastic response of Glendale teachers to our invitation for a field trip made the effort in creating this political display well worth the trouble and expense.

A spiral notebook upstairs contains all the artwork and thank-you notes we have received as a result of our school tours. This will make a lasting memory of this unique adventure of our young scholars and we plan to bring this exhibit back four years from now, when we will compare the 1912 and 2012 presidential elections for the benefit and education of the next “generation” of Glendale third-graders. We hope you all had a chance to see our exhibit and get a taste of how much things have changed over a period of 100 years of democratic process.

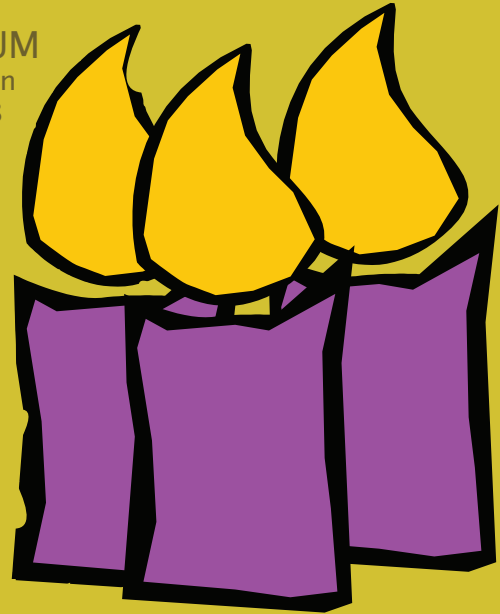
Special thanks are due to our school docents **Robin Hansen**, **Bill Shepherd**, **Sonia Montejano** and **Linda Lynch** who helped Isabelle staff these many weekday tours.

Candlelight Tour

DOCTORS HOUSE MUSEUM

Brand Park, 1601 W Mountain
Saturdays December 13 & 20, 2008
6:30 - 8:30 pm

The Doctors House will be decorated with greenery
and antique ornaments
Live Yuletide music and refreshments
Tableaux vivants (docent actors) in all rooms
Old fashioned advent calendars on display
Continuous tours
No reservations needed
Ornament sale on both evenings
Cash and checks only
Admission \$1.00 per person



The museum will be otherwise closed during December
For information call (818) 242-4290

PAST PRESIDENT HONORARY MEMBERS

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Steve Preston
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Arlene Vidor

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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

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*Nonprofit organizations are encouraged
to join TGHS as Associate Members
(No voting rights)
Nonprofit (\$35)*

Name _____ Phone _____

Street Address _____

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WANT TO GET INVOLVED? WHAT ARE YOUR INTERESTS?

Preservation advocacy
 Historic Districting
 Fundraising

Special events/Tours
 Outreach/Education
 Doctors House volunteers

Historic research/Surveys
 Archiving/Organizing
 Membership/Outreach

Welcome New* and Renewing Members

A HEARTFELT THANKS

to our new* and renewing
members and to members
who have rejoined.

Please consider a
membership upgrade+
the next time you renew.

**JEWEL CITY AND VERDUGO
PATRON LEVEL MEMBERS ARE
RECOGNIZED IN EACH
NEWSLETTER ISSUE**

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(IHOP #708) Ray Podesta
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