



TGHS WINS CEQA LAWSUIT AGAINST CITY!



Rendering of development project at 534 N. Kenwood

In June 2021, The Glendale Historical Society filed suit over a project at 534 N. Kenwood, arguing that its approval violated the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Last month, Judge Joel Lofton of the Los Angeles County Superior Court agreed. The City must vacate its approval of the project and prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) if the developers wish to proceed.

In May 2021, on a 3-1 vote, City Council rejected the appeal of Design Review Board approval of an 11-unit apartment building on the property of a rare 1913 Aeroplane Craftsman. At three stories, the new construction would have overwhelmed and substantially altered the historic property. Architectural historian Francesca Smith provided comprehensive evidence that the project would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of the historic resource. Numerous residents also identified aesthetic impacts on the historic Craftsman based on the project's size, scale and massing. On these grounds, the Court found there was sufficient evidence that the project may have a significant effect on the environment, thus requiring preparation of an EIR.

The City Attorney's strategy to attack Smith's credibility was unsuccessful. The City argued that as an advocate for historic preservation she is biased. The Court found this argument lacked merit and that attorneys "failed to cite a case which would discount expert opinion on the ground of such advocacy." Furthermore, the Court stated that the City "misrepresented" a legal case to suggest that a lead agency can "freely and outright reject an expert's opinion on the question of an impact's 'significance' on the environment." Throughout the decision the Court noted that Smith's opinion was amply supported by facts. In contrast, the Court twice used the word "unpersuasive" to describe the City's arguments, and once called them "wildly incorrect."

Also important—the Court did not accept the City's often stated contention that a project does not adversely impact a historic resource so long as it remains eligible for the Glendale Register. The Court properly understood that a substantial impact may occur when a project destroys character-defining features that "convey [a property's] historical significance."

TGHS congratulates Smith, who was thoroughly vindicated by the Court's decision and frequent reference to her thorough, fact-based analysis. Kudos and thanks as well to renowned CEQA attorney Susan Brandt-Hawley for this important win. It is possible that an appeal will be filed but unlikely, because TGHS's case and Judge Lofton's ruling are strong. Prevailing in the lawsuit means that TGHS can recover its litigation costs.

TGHS is excited by this victory and by the clarification of the City's legal obligations. The organization hopes that the City will subsequently exercise more care in preparing adequate environmental reviews rather than trying to sully the reputation of those who call them out.

Update for Pending Bellehurst Historic District

TGHS has good news involving the historic survey in progress for the pending Bellehurst Historic District, which would be Glendale's tenth, comprising 306 homes, if approved by City Council. The process is a few weeks behind schedule, but for a valid reason: the need for some critical field research that TGHS fully supports.

Deed research for restrictive and racial covenants is one key area of focus, and the City wants to bring to light these discriminatory practices in Glendale's historic neighborhoods. Additionally, the City wishes to highlight the contributions of prolific developer Walter H. Leimert to the greater Los Angeles area; he established Leimert Park, Baldwin Hills and Beverlywood, among others. Bellehurst Park was his first development in Southern California.

The survey is scheduled to be completed by early summer 2023.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



PHOTO: Matthew Letcher

“Glendale’s character-defining neighborhoods were what brought us here. And it is TGHS’s mission to ensure that they remain”

For any TGHS members I haven’t had the privilege of meeting yet, I’d like to introduce myself and share my journey to where I am today.

Thirteen years ago, my husband and I moved from Seattle to Los Angeles for a new job. I initially thought we would be here for five years or so, and then move again when the next great opportunity arose.

Our introduction to Glendale was like most others, I suppose. An occasional trip to The Americana and driving down Brand, back to Los Angeles, past the Brand Boulevard of Cars. Glendale, for us, didn’t seem very residential but just an extension of what we were used to: strip malls and traffic.

Eventually, as we discussed starting a family, we began looking for a home. We searched in pricey areas, including West Hollywood, Los Angeles, Sherman Oaks and Studio City. A co-worker who lived in Burbank recommended that we extend the search there. Taking his advice, we ended up on Kenneth Road in Burbank. As we continued to drive east, we saw an open house for a small 1927 Spanish Colonial Revival. We assumed it was out of our price range, based on what we’d seen in other areas, but we stopped and looked anyway. Surprisingly, it was reasonable and we mentioned to the Realtor that Burbank was less expensive than other areas we’d explored. We were quickly corrected. We were not in Burbank but in Glendale.

As we left the open house and continued east on Kenneth, then east on Mountain, we were in awe of the beautiful, well-kept character homes and tree-lined streets. This was a different side of Glendale from what we had seen before, and it became one of the top areas for our home search.

Eventually, a beautiful two-story 1928 Spanish Colonial Revival home in Bellehurst came on the market. We were the first to tour the open house and we put an offer on it that same day. It was accepted, and the rest is history.

Glendale is a special place. Our neighborhoods are a key draw for those who want a character home in a tranquil neighborhood.

Shortly after our daughter was born, we joined The Glendale Historical Society. I was fortunate to meet many members through the Home Tours, Taste of Spain or the Gala & Benefit. In 2021, I joined the Board and quickly ascended to VP of Preservation. I was then honored when the Board voted for me to assume the Presidency following Steve Hunt. Truly big shoes to fill

Glendale’s character-defining neighborhoods were what brought us here. And it is TGHS’s mission to ensure that they remain and to increase the number of historic districts and the number of properties on the Glendale Register. That is and will continue to be a key goal.

Thanks for your support of TGHS and our mission. I hope to meet everyone at a future TGHS event!

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Letcher', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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**Deceased*

Historic District Process Will Return to Council

On October 25, the City Council discussed streamlining the creation of historic districts, which recently has taken five years to move from application to designation.

The proposed changes are excellent. They include combining community meetings with less formal Historic Preservation Commission hearings and eliminating the first petition, which requires signatures to be collected from 25 percent (plus one) of property owners before the preparation of the historic district survey. In practice, that threshold has always been met, but it is time-consuming busy work.

Council had requested streamlining changes, which is why residents who attended the meeting were surprised that two councilmembers proposed changes that would seem to discourage applicants from creating historic districts.

New Councilmember Elen Asatryan supported the streamlining measures but then asked that the number of signatures on the final petition, on which property owners decide whether to create a district, be increased from 50 percent (plus one) to “70 or 75 percent.”

Asatryan also spoke in favor of “educating residents” about historic districts, although she seemed to have some misconceptions that living in a historic district makes the design review process more difficult and expensive for property owners, which is not, in fact, the case. Ara Najarian chimed in, stating that if the City were to eliminate the first petition, he would want more than 50 percent of owners signing the final petition. He went so far as to state that he would refuse to support any historic district unless supporters got more than 66 percent of owners to sign; this is the kind of prejudgment that elected officials are supposed to avoid. Some cities don’t require a petition at all before designating historic districts.

In the end, even though three councilmembers wanted to leave the threshold at 50 percent, Mayor Kassakhian suggested staff consider raising the number to 66 percent. TGHS will need your help to ensure this doesn’t happen.

Although most historic districts in Glendale have been designated with 70 percent or more of property owners in support, given the enormous effort involved in gathering those signatures, raising the bar will clearly have a chilling effect on applicants interested in preserving the historic character of their neighborhoods.

Walking Tours of Historic Districts Resume

TGHS's virtual tours over the past couple of years were wonderful, but strolling the actual streets of Glendale again is even better!



Arlene Vidor (far right) points out a charming section of Cottage Grove

On August 13, Arlene Vidor kicked off TGHS's revived walking tour series with an exploration of the Cottage Grove Historic District. Located at the foot of Adams Hill, the district comprises just one block with 14 houses, but it makes up in charm what it lacks in size. The tract, developed in the 1920s, consists mainly of Tudor Revival cottages and was meant to evoke the feeling of an English village.

Vidor began the walk at the Adams Square Mini Park with the story of the park's incorporation of the historic 1936 Streamline Moderne Gas Station. The group proceeded to the oldest and only wood-sided home in the district, a 1901 farmhouse on the corner of Palmer Avenue, where its longtime owner, Ute Baum, graciously invited everyone into her back yard to view some historic photos. She and Vidor were key players in the formation of the district, which was designated in 2009.



Ani Mnatsakanyan with a splendid example of Tudor Revival with English Revival influences in the Casa Verdugo district

Next up: the September 17 tour of the recently designated Casa Verdugo Historic District, led by Board member Ani Mnatsakanyan. Steve Hunt first gave an overview of the neighborhood's history, highlighting the eponymous Casa Verdugo restaurant. He amused tourgoers with the tale of how feisty restaurateur Piedad Yorba Sowl trademarked the name and retained her business, outwitting moguls Leslie Brand and Henry Huntington.

Mnatsakanyan guided the group around the district, pointing out several outstanding Craftsman homes as well as a Mid-century Modern house, its prominent garage offering architectural evidence of Southern California's growing car culture. The tour ended at the border of Bellehurst; the rained-out October tour of that district will be rescheduled.

On October 1, the season's final tour explored the Niodrara Drive Historic District, with a preview of the proposed Selvas de Verdugo Historic District. Both are located in the lush Verdugo Woodlands neighborhood, which features the



Cathy Jurca and Greg Grammer with the group in front of R. M. Schindler's Rodriguez House in the Niodrara district
PHOTO: Matthew Letcher

Catalina Verdugo Adobe and the remnants of the Oak of Peace, the site of negotiations that ended the Mexican American War. The group, led by Woodlands resident Cathy Jurca and Greg Grammer, assembled there under the many oaks that remain.

During the walk, participants learned of the complex history of the stream that runs through the district and viewed a variety of architectural styles, including Craftsman, Spanish Colonial Revival, American Colonial Revival and Mid-century Modern. The walk ended at Verdugo Park, where one tourgoer reported his delight in learning that the landscape architect of the park, Ruth Shellhorn, was tapped by Walt Disney himself to finalize the landscape design at Disneyland mere months before its opening in 1955.

Many thanks to the organizers and guides who led these informative and enjoyable walks.

EVENTS

Gala & Benefit Raises Preservation Funds



Attendees bid on auction items and socialize at the Gala



Jon Grayson and Gala Co-Chair Cathy Grayson



Gala hosts Darren Merritt and Stacey Boucher, with Glendale City Councilmembers Paula Devine and Dan Brotman

Gala Photos: Kara Elizabeth Photography



Marcia Hanford, TGHS President John Schwab-Sims and Gala Co-Chair Greg Grammer

As promised in the Fall 2022 issue of this newsletter, the Gala & Benefit returned after a three-year hiatus to the magnificent grounds of Stanford House, a 1928 Spanish Colonial Revival landmark in the South Cumberland Heights Historic District. On a cool October 22 evening, more than 100 attendees enjoyed superb hors d'oeuvres and craft cocktails as they perused and bid on auction items artistically displayed on several tables. The grounds were enhanced by festive lighting and a lovely autumn color palette of orange, gold and chocolate.

New this year: an online silent auction, which offered gift cards, art objects, opera tickets and more, with vacation stays and other special items for bidding at the Gala only. Knowing that the proceeds benefited TGHS's Endowment and Preservation funds, members bid enthusiastically up until the 8 pm deadline.

TGHS presented the Marie Luft Award for Excellence in Stewardship of the Doctors House to Isabelle Meyer and the Zelia Blanton Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation to Marcia Hanford and Greg Grammer, as well as

recognizing those involved in the formation of the Casa Verdugo and South Cumberland Heights Historic Districts.

Heartfelt thanks for a memorable evening to Gala Co-Chairs Cathy Grayson and Greg Grammer and their hard-working committee; gracious hosts Stacey Boucher and Darren Merritt; and Gala sponsors Forest Lawn, The Walt Disney Company, G&C Properties, Glendale Federal Credit Union and Supervisor Kathryn Barger.

DOCTORS HOUSE

Doctors House Documentary Receives World Premiere



Peter Rusch, star of "Discovering Glendale's Doctors House"

TGHS rolled out the red carpet—literally—for the September 24 premiere of Russell Harden III's documentary "Discovering Glendale's Doctors House," starring curator Peter Rusch and produced in partnership with Glendale TV. The event was sponsored by The Walt Disney Company, G&C Properties, Forest Lawn and the Los Angeles Breakfast Club Foundation.

Festivities prior to the screening on the grounds of Brand Park in front of the museum included a champagne reception on the lawn, along with treats from a popcorn machine and vintage candies in the Gazebo. Guests also had the opportunity to play old-time filmmaker with a genuine 1920s movie camera, clapboard, megaphone and director's chair, courtesy of longtime TGHS members Jim and Pam Elyea and their prop house, History for Hire.

As dusk fell, Event Chair Anita Rinaldi-Harnden welcomed the lively crowd and introduced TGHS's newly elected president, John Schwab-Sims. Director Harnden thanked his colleagues and received a certificate of recognition from Sarojini Lall, who attended to represent Assemblymember Laura Friedman. Glendale Mayor Ardy Kassakhian congratulated the filmmakers for producing this important documentary and

furthering the cause of historic preservation in Glendale.

A week later, "Discovering Glendale's Doctors House" was screened at the prestigious Glendale International Film Festival (GIFF). Thanks and congratulations to all involved!



Earlybirds picnicking during the pre-screening slide show of the Doctors House restoration



Event Chair Anita Rinaldi-Harnden, Doctors House docent Jackie Davis and documentary producer/director Russell Harnden III



Jackie Davis in costume as Nell Shipman, pioneering filmmaker who lived in the Doctors House for four years



A 1920s camera, courtesy of History for Hire

WELCOME!

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through the Glendale
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N - New Member
U - Upgrading Member

Please consider a membership upgrade the next time you renew.

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EVENTS CALENDAR

The Executive Committee of TGHS's Board of Directors is currently working on an exciting schedule of events for 2023. These include walking tours of historic districts, a Landmark This! workshop on historic preservation, and much more. The Spring 2023 newsletter will include an update with details, and those who receive our emails will be notified as these events are scheduled.

“STILL STANDING AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, PART V” by Katherine Peters Yamada

Several large orchards and farmhouses dotted the landscape around Grandview Avenue in Glendale's early days. This was county territory at the time, and students went to school in Burbank. Meanwhile, Civil War veterans were arriving in droves to spend their remaining years here; however, there was no place to bury the dead.

Find out how this problem was solved at:
<https://glendalehistorical.org/still-standing-5>



If you missed any of TGHS's great events, you can access the archived videos at glendalehistorical.org/past-virtual-events



To get the most up-to-date information on TGHS's events and preservation alerts, check out facebook.com/GlendaleHistoricalSociety AND instagram.com/TheGlendaleHistoricalSociety