

West Adams Matters

Paul R. Williams Legacy Plaza Soon to Be Unveiled in West Adams

by John Patterson



Project manager Hillary Henderson, architect Doug Davis and artist Georgia Toliver celebrate the installation of the new Paul R. Williams monument.

You have all noticed, no doubt, that our wonderful landmark - the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance building on the corner of West Adams and Western - has been undergoing a major transformation and now sports a new logo: SCLARC. The South Central Los Angeles Regional Center provides an extensive array of services to those in our community with developmental disabilities. They have recently relocated into new corporate offices constructed next door to GSM, and final touches are also being made to the renovation of the original Paul Revere Williams building itself.

After participating in the community battle to retain the historic pair of murals that grace the lobby of this building, I recently had the privilege to be given a sneak peak inside the "old" building. The occasion for this visit was not actually to view the restoration, but to witness the installation of a monumental bronze bas-relief sculpture of GSM's famed architect, Paul R. Williams. This mammoth plaque was conceived and created by local artist and long-time West Adams resident, WAHA Board Member Georgia Toliver. This impressive sculpture will be the focal point of the new Paul R. Williams Legacy Plaza. Architect Doug Davis, of the San Francisco-based firm AE3 Partners, designed the plaza to provide a contemplative transition between the

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Gearing up for WAHA's 2015 Holiday Progressive Dinner Tour

The enthusiasm is palpable when attending the monthly "block club" meeting of the West Adams Neighborhood Association (WANA). Not only are these neighbors striving toward HPOZ status to protect their homes, their President, Richard Parks, has also taken a very visible leading role in addressing community concerns about the numerous oil drilling issues in the greater West Adams area.

It is due to this community's vitality that WAHA has begun laying the groundwork to bring our annual Holiday Progressive Dinner Tour to this neighborhood for the very first time. It will be our intent to support this neighborhood in its quest for HPOZ status, and what better way than the holiday tour to introduce this pocket of Historic West Adams!

While the CRA/LA Historical Resources Survey, published in October, 2011, refers to the area in bureaucratic/city planning-speak as "Normandie 5," the more historic reference is usually the "Charles Victor Hall Tract." This neighborhood occupies the residential blocks southwest of the intersection of Normandie and West Adams Boulevard, stretching to Western Avenue and Jefferson. The original tract also included a portion of the commercial and residential buildings just north of Adams.

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DOHENY DITCH vs. I-110 FLYOVER

by Jim Childs



Countess Doheny Reads Her Gutenberg Bible

Author Don Sloper begins his book, *Los Angeles's Chester Place*, appropriately with a location map. The map's caption however touches on one of the many urban legends that still surround the notorious Doheny family name:

"The Harbor Freeway (Interstate 110) starts from downtown Los Angeles to San Pedro at the Port of Los Angeles on the west side of Figueroa Street. But before reaching Chester Place, the freeway suddenly curves, dives under Figueroa Street, and continues for a mere seven blocks completely below ground level before proceeding for several miles along the east side of Figueroa Street. The Los Angeles City Council approved the route by a vote of 11-2 on August 11, 1950, despite city councilman Kenneth Hahn's objection that proper hearings had not been held. The curve spared Chester Place and the short stretch below ground

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Holiday Tour Showcases Charles Victor Hall Tract

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The tour will offer our visitors a wide array of architectural styles that run the gamut from Queen Anne and Victorian vernacular Cottages, to the Arts & Crafts and Transitional Craftsman. The various “Revival styles” are also represented in the mix. This area also includes such gems as: the Paul R. Williams-designed Golden State Mutual Life Insurance building (HCM 1000), the “Engine House No. 18” firehouse as well as the beautiful Gothic Revival-style Greater Page Temple, designed in 1912 by noted Los Angeles architect John C. Austin.

While the selection of participating homes is still underway, we are hoping to include at least one or two of the 21 Frank Tyler-designed homes that were built in this neighborhood. The works of J.A. Mathis and W.R. Ziegler are also present here.

We are delighted to have several members of the WANA community assisting their WAHA friends in reaching out to their neighbors who will be interested in sharing their pride of ownership with our Holiday Tour-goers. The Progressive Dinner Tour is always the single-largest fundraiser for WAHA, and also the project that requires the participation of the largest contingent of volunteers. It is most gratifying that so many folks return year after year to offer their services in support of our organization.

John Patterson will be heading up the operational efforts for this endeavor, so please let him know of your interest in participating. John’s new WAHA email is: Communications@WestAdamsHeritage.org. ●

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Welcome New Members!

Marsha Harris and Robert McDuff

Stacy Lumbrezer and Mark Guilbeault



Engine House No. 18 and the Greater Page Temple are among landmark properties in the Charles Victor Hall Tract.

President's Message by Lore Hilburg

As the President of WAHA, I have several roles, one of which is to provide leadership. That role does not come naturally to me. I struggle with setting the right tone even while trying to move us forward. Forward movement sometimes requires changing the status quo which can be challenging. Some find it uncomfortable, including me. But it is necessary, especially when not changing will put WAHA at risk of becoming stagnant and out of touch.

This leads me to my next challenge which is to recruit more members to become involved in preservation, not just by attending the tours or fun events but by helping to put on those activities or to create new events. If you are interested, then join the Events or tour committees (Suzie Henderson heads Events; Laura Meyers is chair of the Living History Tour committee and John Patterson is chair of the Holiday Tour committee), or volunteer to help produce the newsletter, brochures, or develop advertising revenue, or attend important city hearings. Somehow lots of events get done but it is always the same core of people doing most of the work.

So, in order to change that dynamic on the Newsletter Committee we are seeking new voices and mixing up some of the roles. This will free up those who always have to do the lion's share of the work to put out the newsletter to begin other long overdue projects. Happily, there are people willing and able with the right skills and background to take over some of that laboring oar.

We are still looking for a committee chair of the Membership committee. Membership keeps track of the members, sends out renewal notices, recruits new members, and has a membership table at various local venues to let people know about WAHA. We could also use people, who are self-starters, to work on outreach to the community which would include educating those who move into the area about preservation and the cultural and historic nature of the West Adams area of which we are all custodians. Georgia Toliver, a WAHA board member, has been a one person outreach committee to the commercial corridor on Washington. She has received lots of positive feedback from the merchants. It would be terrific if someone else or a bunch of people wanted to get involved in that effort.

Feel free to contact Lisa Raymond at volunteer@westadamsheritage.org to work on upcoming events.

Lore Hilburg may be reached by e-mail at president@westadamsheritage.org

Paul R. Williams Legacy Plaza

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new and the original office structures, while at the same time honoring Williams. This impressive sculpture will be the focal point of the new Paul R. Williams Legacy Plaza.

Last year, following the ground-breaking ceremony for the new structure, the redevelopment team's Project Manager, Hillary Henderson, asked if there was a local artist I might recommend to create a sculpture in the likeness of Mr. Williams that would grace their planned plaza. Having been so extremely impressed by her recently completed bust of Don Lynch, I didn't hesitate to suggest Georgia. I subsequently learned that Georgia's late-husband Harold had not only worked at Golden State, he also filled a vital role in the company's support of emerging African-American artists. I knew that there wasn't a more appropriate nominee. I was ecstatic when I learned that Georgia had indeed been awarded this commission!

On a recent weekend, we all watched with just a bit of trepidation as a giant crane lifted this massive piece of bronze from the truck bed that had transported it from the foundry. I have a newfound appreciation for the skillset required of the crane operator, who was nothing less than masterful in how smoothly this installation progressed. The crewmembers on the ground were also diligent as they slowly guided the sculpture into place between two fountains. The artist and the project's architect watched excitedly as the keystone of their vision was set into place.

An invitation only grand opening has been scheduled for mid-November. We are hoping to arrange an unveiling of Georgia's sculpture specifically for WAHA so we can all celebrate this newest landmark. ●



A crane hoists the massive bronze relief sculpture depicting architect Paul Williams to its place of honor in the new Paul R. Williams Legacy Plaza.

My Sweet Beginnings: A Story of Food and Heritage

by Tene Harris

My great-great-grandmother Lula “Lou” Franklin Boyd was born in 1853. Lou and her husband, Mabe, are the reason that I am an entrepreneur today.

My baked goods company, Sweet Beginnings, was inspired by the recipes passed down by Lou through the generations of my family. They bring to life today my heritage and family memories. And they have inspired me, in turn, to create a family history archive. My family story is one of the personal archives that will be showcased as a part of the “West Adams Collectors Club” exhibit on view at the William Grant Still Arts Center in October (see sidebar, next page).

I only learned about my great-great-grandparents when I was in my 30s. In 1994, I planned my mother’s surprise 50th birthday celebration and, at the same time, my great Aunt Luanna Boyd-Ruffin was celebrating her centennial. Aunt Luanna lived to be 105 years old. She was the last of Mabe and Lou’s children. Her mind was sharp, her vision great and she was in reasonably good health until she passed in 1999.

The gift of long life was probably one of the benefits of staying on the family farm. At one time, they operated more than 1,000 acres of rich farm land in East Texas with cattle, fruit orchards, syrup mill, cotton gin, natural hot springs, and a primary school. Mabe Boyd was a self-taught businessman and entrepreneur whose vision and leadership created the farm.

For years, I had dreamed about having my own business, but the timing never seemed to be quite right while I was working full time, taking care of my family and building my career.

In 2010, inspired by Mabe’s success, I enrolled in an entrepreneur training program sponsored by Citibank through the Black Business Association. At the conclusion of the program, I had a finished business plan and the knowledge to properly set up a small business.

At 50 years old, I suffered a series of major life setbacks: a divorce after 22 years of marriage; my 30-year career in public television came to an abrupt end, and my nest was emptying as my children went off to college. It was a very dark period for me and my faith was tested. I had to choose to get back up after life knocked me down.

Thanks to my great-great-grandparents, I realized that even several generations later, I am connected to their legacy of growing and producing food. The world of small business was in my DNA. The real question was, did I have the courage to leave the conventional workforce and become an entrepreneur?

The answer was “Yes.”

Today, I am a culinary artist. I am the owner of Sweet Beginnings (www.sweet-beginnings.com), a cottage food home-based bakery business. I hold a Class B Permit which allows me to sell my products direct to consumers as well as, to retail businesses or restaurants.

My baked goods are full of the flavors that have been a part of my family for generations. Many family recipes and dishes have been passed down through the years and I am thrilled that I have the pleasure of producing amazing food and keeping the traditions and legacy of my family alive and the opportunity to share it with others.

My Ambrosia Macaroons selected as one of the Top 10 in the Los Angeles Times Holiday Cookie Bake-Off in 2011. In the summer of 2014, I served as the private chef to royal philanthropist Prince Bandar bin Saud bin Khalid Al-Saud. And my gingerbread collection was featured in Los Angeles Magazine’s Holiday Gift Guide in the winter of 2014.

Currently, I am a vendor at the Wellington Square Farmer’s Market in the parking lot of Smyrna Church at 4394 Washington Blvd., open every Sunday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. I teach children’s cooking classes for Ethan and Friends Afterschool Program at Baldwin Hills Elementary. I teach adult cooking classes through Side Tour and Cozymeal. I participate in artisan food shows and tastings throughout Southern California. In the future, I hope to open my own storefront and commercial kitchen.

Recently, I was blessed with the opportunity to merge my passions for food and small business with my background as a PBS content producer. I am currently working on a pilot PBS special about small business owners in Los Angeles. The pilot will be focused on women small business owners, but if all goes well, I hope to have a series funded and cover many diverse stories of small business owners throughout Los Angeles County.

One of the many vegetables that my great-great-grandparents grew on the Boyd farm was cucumbers. My mother shared stories of helping to pick cucumbers during harvest time as a little girl, with socks as gloves. One of my favorite summer drinks to this day is made with cucumbers like those grown on my family’s farm. I am sharing the recipe in the hopes that you might give it a try.

Cucumber Drink

1 inch size piece of fresh ginger peeled and sliced
1 cucumber washed and sliced (I prefer the peel on)
1/2 cup spring water (tap water can be used or sparkling water)
1/2 cup ice
1 TBSP honey or real maple syrup (optional)
1/8-1/4 cup fresh lemon juice (start w/ 1/8 and add more if needed)

Put all ingredients in a blender and mix until completely blended. When entertaining, serve in chilled glasses with cucumber and lemon slices as garnish on glass. ●



Stepping Out

Los Angeles Conservancy Tour of Hughes Aircraft's Hercules Campus Saturday, October 24

The LA Conservancy asks us to join them us for a very special tour of the Hercules Campus, the former Hughes Aircraft Company (HAC), in Playa Vista on Saturday, October 24!

This year's tour will highlight the historic aspects of the campus as well as the innovative adaptive reuse of the buildings and the landscaping. The tour will include access to several interiors, including Building 15 (the enormous wooden hangar built to house construction of the H-4 Hercules heavy transport craft, more commonly known as the "Spruce Goose").

Tickets are \$35 for the general public, \$25 for Conservancy members, \$15 for students, and \$10 for children twelve and under.

For more information on this and other events and tours see www.laconservancy.org. ●



West Adams Collectors Club

The William Grant Still Arts Center's Fall exhibition, focusing on local collectors' personal archives, will open on Saturday, October 3.

The exhibit represents the West Adams Collectors Club's final 2015 project (after a free 8-week, intergenerational workshop on archiving grassroots histories, hosted and organized by the William Grant Still Arts Center in collaboration with community members) is an exhibit of participants' own personal collecting passions.

From Black dolls and mix tapes to books, flyers, social movements and community spaces, this exhibition focuses on collecting, keeping, and exhibiting your own cultural and social history.

The workshop was facilitated by community historians Billie Green, BJ's Dress Up & Tea Garden; Alden Kimbrough, Independent Collector and owner of the Zambezi Bazaar; and C. Jerome Woods, The Black LGBT Project. The workshop and exhibit were supported by a grant from Cal Humanities. The William Grant Still Center is located at 2520 West View Street (West Adams 90016). ●



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Stepping Out



MAK Architecture Tour: The San Fernando Valley Sunday, October 18

For this fall's architecture tour fundraiser, the MAK Center for Art and Architecture at the Schindler House features classic works of architecture in the San Fernando Valley, with homes by Bruce Goff, R.M. Schindler, and more. MAK is dedicated to maintaining historic works of architecture and provides cultural programming.

Visitors will tour these houses:

- Van Dekker House (R.M. Schindler, 1939-1940)
- Goodwin House (R.M. Schindler, 1940, *left*)
- Phineas Kappe House (Ray Kappe, 1956)
- Barsha House (Ray Kappe, 1959)
- Struckus House (Bruce Goff, 1982, *right*)

All ticket sales are final and non refundable.

For more information go to www.makcenter.org. ●



Western Heights Soiree


Western Heights invites you to the first party of the 2015 holiday season. Plans include wine and hors d'oeuvres, musical entertainment, and a silent auction, benefitting the Western Heights Homeowners Association.

This soiree will be held at the elegant Newberry/Petitfils House, built by E.L. Petitfils and sold by him in 1910 to J.R. Newberry for \$21,500. The three-story chalet-style Craftsman is a Contributor to the Western Heights HPOZ.

Tickets are \$45 each (\$80 per couple). Make checks payable to Western Heights Homeowner's Association.

For more information and to use PayPal, go to www.westernheightsonline.com. Or e-mail Alice Singleton at a-singleton@att.net. ●

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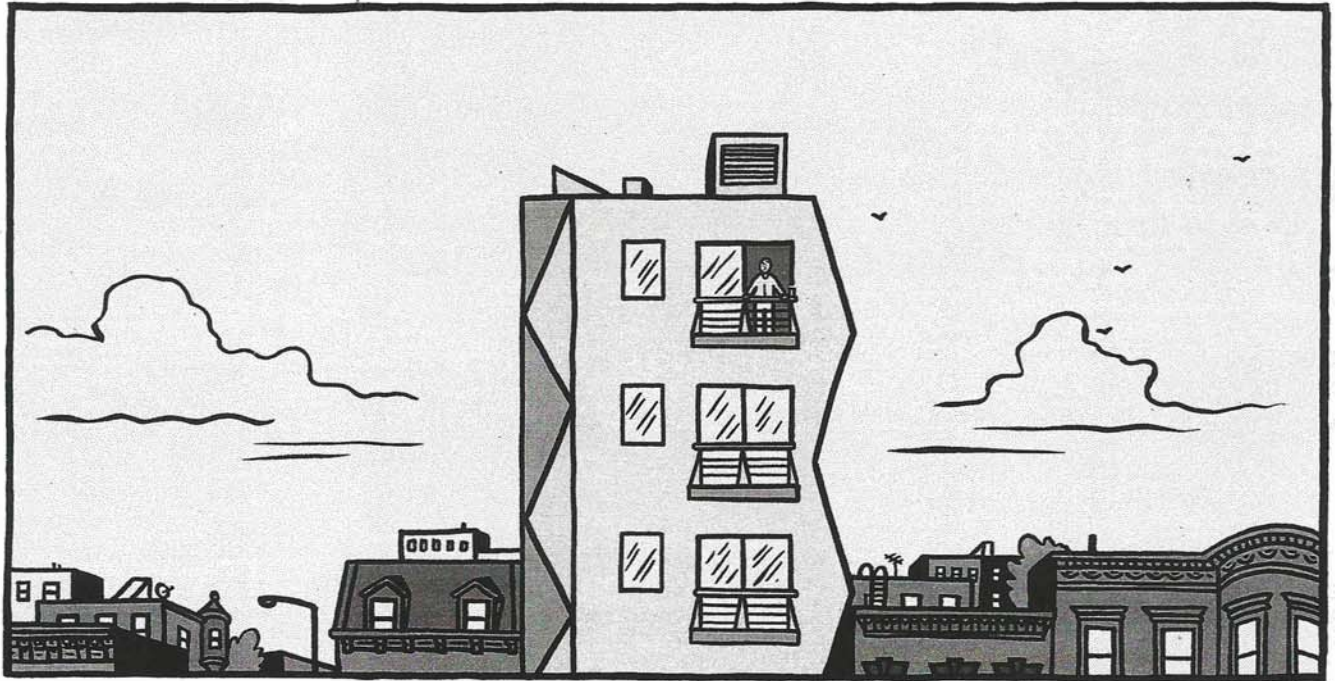
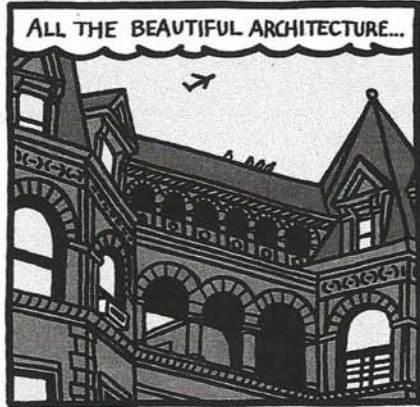
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Sunday Funny By Peter Gamlen



History Matters

History of the I-110 Freeway

In the 1924 Major Street Traffic Plan for Los Angeles, a widening of Figueroa Street to San Pedro as a good road to the Port of Los Angeles was proposed. Progress was slow and in 1933 the state legislature added the entire length to the state highway system as Route 165, an unsigned designation. This route not only extended from San Pedro north to Los Angeles, but continued through the city-built Figueroa Street Tunnels and along the northern extension of Figueroa Street to Eagle Rock, and then followed Linda Vista Avenue (via an overlap on Route 161 (SR 134) over the Colorado Street Bridge) to Route 9 (now I-210) at the Devil's Gate Reservoir. The entire length of Route 165 became Sign Route 11 in 1934. U.S. Route 6 was also assigned to the portion between and Avenue 26 in 1937, and at about the same time US 66 was moved from Eagle Rock Boulevard to Figueroa Street, overlapping SR 11 between Sunset Boulevard (US 101) and Colorado Street (SR 134).

The state completed the Arroyo Seco Parkway, which had been added to the state highway system in 1935 as Route 205, in early 1941, providing a faster route between SR 11 at Avenue 26 and Pasadena. US 66 was moved to the new route, while SR 11 remained on Figueroa Street and Linda Vista Avenue, the former also becoming a new U.S. Route 66 Alternate. Construction of a freeway to San Pedro was much slower, despite having been in the earliest plans for an integrated system. Initially, the Harbor Parkway was to split at the merge with the Venice Parkway northeast of the University of Southern California, with the East By-Pass and West By-Pass straddling the Los Angeles Central Business District and rejoining at the split between the Arroyo Seco Parkway and Riverside Parkway south of Dodger Stadium. The West By-Pass was soon incorporated into the Harbor Parkway and the first short piece, by then renamed the Harbor Freeway, opened on July 30, 1952 from the Four Level Interchange south to 3rd Street. The Arroyo Seco Parkway was completed to the Four Level Interchange on September 22, 1953, and renamed the Pasadena Freeway on November 16, 1954.

The Harbor Freeway gradually pushed south, opening to Olympic Boulevard on March 23, 1954 and Washington Boulevard on May 14, 1954. On March 27, 1956, the highway was extended to 42nd Street, and on April 24, 1957 it reached temporary ramps at 88th Place. Further extensions were made to Century Boulevard on July 31, 1958, 124th Street on September 24, 1958, Alondra Boulevard (which the county widened to carry the load) on May 2, 1960, 190th Street on July 15, 1960, Torrance Boulevard on August 28, 1962, and finally Pacific Coast Highway (SR 1) on September 26, 1962. There it connected with a section that had been open since June 19, 1956, from Pacific Coast Highway south to Channel Street. Along with the Vincent Thomas Bridge to Terminal Island, the final piece in San Pedro opened on July 9, 1970, completing the Harbor Freeway to its present length.

In December 1978, the Harbor Freeway was approved as an Interstate Highway by the FHWA. In 1981, the SR 11 designation was renumbered as Interstate 110 on the Harbor Freeway, and State Route 110 on the Pasadena Freeway. ●



Stepping Out

LOS ANGELES MUMBAI SISTER CITY CELEBRATES DIWALI

The Los Angeles Mumbai Sister City Affiliation celebrates its annual Diwali Night, India's Festival of Lights with a gala dinner at the Spice Affair Restaurant on Sunday, October 18 at 6 p.m.

The evening's festivities include a selection of sumptuous Indian regional cuisine paired with wines from Concannon Vineyards. Acclaimed dancer Anvita Kohli of the Kathak Kala Academy will perform traditional Northern Indian dance. Profits from the Diwali fund raiser benefit AMERICARES, India's flagship Mobile Medical Program which provides medical aid to residents of Mumbai's slums.

DIWALI GALA NIGHT, Spice Affair Restaurant, 50 North La Cienega, Beverly Hills. CA.

Underground parking, \$5.50 and Valet parking \$7.50.

Tickets - \$80/person or \$700 for a group of 10.

Space is Limited. Send in your checks by October 10 to:

Los Angeles Mumbai Sister City

c/o Mira Honeycutt, 2283 W. 21st Street, Los Angeles, CA. 90018

For more info, contact: honeycuttmira34@gmail.com ●



Anvita Kohli

Doheny Ditch v. I-110 Flyover *continued from page 1*



level saved residents from traffic noise. While some shift was desirable because of the University of Southern California campus and Exposition Park in the neighborhood, the positioning was exceptionally favorable to the influential residents of Chester Place.

Some of those “influential residents” included Rufus von KleinSmid, Frank Seaver, Thomas Dockweiler and of course the widow Madame Estelle Doheny. Author Sloper is cautious as an historian and avoids reporting specifically that Estelle wheeled a “back-room” deal. His book does however provide for a reasonable conclusion in support of my neighborhood’s long held oral legend of the “Doheny Ditch”.

When my wife Jean Frost and I first purchased our 1887 Queen Ann house on Scarff Street in 1978 I was only vaguely aware of the historic Doheny name through its’ connection to the

infamous Tea Pot Dome scandal. I hadn’t yet realized that our new-old home was sited in the shadowy domain of one of the most influential of Los Angeles’s elite families during the early to mid 20th century era.

By our time most of what constitutes the Chester Place National Register Historic District was now Mount St. Mary’s College campus. The Doheny mansion itself was just another, or the grandest, depending on your architectural preference of the noteworthy remaining residential mansion structures which were being adaptively re-used by MSMC for their institution’s educational purposes. Over the years as a neighbor and a historic preservation advocate I came to learn a good deal about the evolution of Chester Place and the impacts made by Madame Estelle.

She with her husband Edward, a “robber baron” oil magnet bought the 22 room French-Gothic Renaissance Style mansion at 8 Chester Place from the Posey family in 1901. By the time of her death in 1958 at the age 83 she had acquired all of the mansions in the Chester Place subdivision and many of the surrounding mansions as well. She bequeathed all of that property to the Los Angeles Catholic Archdiocese.

Estelle, who had formally converted from being a Methodist to Roman Catholicism in 1918, was a remarkable philanthropist in her own right and was awarded the title of “Papal Countess” by Pope Pius XII in 1939. As reported in Sloper’s book, “Six years later in February, 1945, the Pope approved the holding of services in her chapel on the third floor of the mansion. A priest and altar servers from St Vincent’s Church would offer daily Mass in her private chapel.” She would also find solace when reading from her personal copy of the Gutenberg Bible (one of the best of the only 48 extant copies).

That Madame would have daily access to her own private priest is not surprising since the Dohenys had been very substantial patrons in the building of St. Vincent De Paul Catholic Church (located on the NW corner of Adams & Figueroa). They also heavily endowed St. John’s Episcopal Church catty-corner on the SE corner. Their altruism has been viewed suspiciously by some cynics since their construction funding coincided with Edward’s extraordinary attempts to create a positive public relations image for himself during the lengthy investigations, hearings, indictments and trails connected with Tea Pot Dome / Elk Hills scandals of the 1920s.

The stress of the scandal is often cited as the reason for Hugh Plunkett’s breakdown resulting in his murder in 1929 of Ned Doheny (Edward Jr.) and his own suicide on the recently completed baronial estate of “Greystone Mansion” in Beverly Hills. Ned had been the “bagman,” along with his secretary, Plunkett, for the \$100,000 in cash that Edward Sr. was sending to Washington DC for the Secretary of the Interior, Albert Falls. Gift? Loan? Bribe?

His only son’s death devastated Edward Sr. Disconsolate, broken in spirit, he began a withdrawing from society and died in 1935 at the age of 79 leaving the family empire in the control of the former telephone operator who’s beguiling voice had

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Preservation Matters

Doheny Ditch v. I-110 Flyover *continued from page 9*

captivated him, Estelle. Sloper reports, "After the funeral, Estelle, her sister and her personal secretary burned his personal and business papers."

Mrs. Doheny had a married life with a husband who had established a massive fortune through his questionable "business practices" and was not timid about using it for political support when needed. He was considered as a Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate in 1920 and when rejected became a Republican. Madame Estelle herself was never hesitant about using this wealth for her own personal satisfaction. She demolished four of the Chester Place mansions, including that of its founder, Judge Silent, to create even more garden space for her obsession with flowers.

She bought four stately Victorian homes along 23rd Street solely to be demolished as a site for her greenhouses, which ironically today is an active oil-drilling operation (Allenco). She also bought the grand Sabichi Mansion at 2431 Figueroa and had it demolished for a parking lot for her beloved St. Vincent's Church.

A personal favorite of the Madame's legendary actions (since it doesn't include a historic demolition) was the 1948 purchase of the Thomas Stimson Richardsonian-Romanesque Style "Castle" at 2421 Figueroa. The palatial residence was then occupied by Pi Kappa Alpha, a USC fraternity, whose boisterous life style was a worrisome nuisance to her. When her complaints to her neighbor USC President Dr. Von KleinSmid went unheeded she simply bought the mansion, evicted the fraternity and donated it to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet for a convent. Quiet. I must admit to some envy of her ability to resolve the USC student noise problems in such an expeditious fashion.

The creation of the "Doheny Ditch" is a far more grandiose and complex urban oral legend than dealing with USC frat boys however. I have heard various accounts of the events from the telling and retelling by different neighbors over the years. Varied embellishments are after all at the heart of oral history and when factual data is not available to confirm or deny then sometimes, when plausible, a legend is born.

The story is told that in the early 1950's when Caltrans was in the process of determining a route south for the Harbor Freeway extension from downtown to San Pedro Madame Estelle was distraught that it would directly and severally impact "her" Chester Place and "her" St. Vincent's Church.

The very thought that a public freeway would be erected on "her" doorstep was not acceptable. Through her enormous wealth and political influence she would insure that the new right-of-way would not be allowed to negatively impact her realm.

Confronted with bureaucratic push back about the prohibitive costs of engineering changes to the proposed route by taking it below grade into a "slot" or "incut" to mitigate the intrusion of visual blight, noise and toxic pollution, Madame simple hired her own planners and engineers to design the necessary changes and forwarded them to Caltrans for implementation. A variant of the story also credits her with also writing a check to cover the actual difference in construction costs.

The reality of truth-or-legend is that the Caltrans' slot-incut was indeed constructed sparing that portion of the east side of University Park along the Chester Place frontage from the visual intrusion of the freeway. When completed in 1957 the slot-incut or "ditch" resulted in an at-grade streetscape vista along Figueroa between 23rd Street and Adams Boulevard that was an open space void of the highway's traffic. The "ditch" established a new environmental context for the surrounding historic setting that has existed for the last 58 years.

People entering or exiting our historic West Adams community at Figueroa can enjoy this sheltered open space without being confronted with the repressive visual blight that our freeway system has inflicted on so much of Los Angeles. So also can the worshippers at two of the finest examples of religious architecture in the city, St. John's and St. Vincent's.

There was a moment 25 years ago when this precious open space was at risk of being lost. In 1990 a Caltrans project planned for a new High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane along the Harbor freeway. The northern terminus of that expansion would have been at 23rd Street with a flyover of Adams Boulevard. Thanks in part to the public and historic preservation



community's objections to the potential impacts to the surrounding historic environmental setting the project was altered so that the terminus was at Adams itself. This solution approved by Caltrans as the "preferred alternative" preserved the existing open space from the freeway blight.

We all know how our historic West Adams communities have been devastated by the construction of the Santa Monica Freeway. University Park on its north side suffered extensive demolitions and was bifurcated from our neighbors by soaring concrete flyovers of the 10-110 interchange. Streets became cul-de-sacs, once prosperous and open boulevards reduced to filthy passageways beneath the overpasses, their sidewalks now havens for the homeless. Life under this forest of concrete columns supporting the canopy of never ending traffic with its oppressive noise and pollution is now fit only for recycling centers and vast parking lots for the Figueroa auto dealerships.

WAHA Matters readers have been made aware through a recent series of articles about a new Caltrans project to complete their abandoned Flyover Adams & Terminus at 23rd Street concept. Their rationale for this \$40,000,000 zombie project is to save a few minutes of time for the exiting northbound drivers on the HOV-HOT lanes during peak-hour traffic. The two traffic signals at Adams & Flower and Adams & Figueroa can cause west turn drivers to cue-up and wait for two or three signal changes to clear.

The engineering solution to a tiny moment of traffic flow inconvenience for drivers paying for the right to have special privileges is to build a double lane, 50 foot high concrete bridge over both Adams Boulevard and the Exposition Light Rail Line and descend within two blocks to 23rd Street. \$40,000,000 to go two blocks.

Concerned stakeholders, including St. John's and WAHA have already made their objections known to Caltrans environmental staff as they prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Report, which is expected to be released this fall. As acknowledged "consulting parties," we have objected to their limited definition of the Area of Potential Effect (APE) and requested that it be expanded to include more of the surrounding historic properties.

Our community was effective 25 years ago by raising our voice in objection to this proposed intrusion. We shouted and Caltrans listened. We will shout again with the hope that the new Caltrans will listen.

\$40,000,000 for 2-blocks. NO!

Save the Ditch and ditch the Flyover. ●

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Preservation Matters

Preservation Updates: CEQA, Harvard Heights and More

by Jean Frost and Mitzi March Mogul

CEQA is one of the finest protections for our environment yet over the years many bills have come forward to change it and diminish its important protections. Just recently a bill was introduced by Senator Berryhill (SBX111) which exempts a broad range of transportation projects from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and prevents suits under CEQA from being enjoined by the courts.

The impact of this bill could have a damaging effect on our ability to have an effective role in the proposed I-110 Flyover ramp which would place a 40 foot high ramp near St John's Cathedral and dump traffic at Figueroa and 23rd Street. A 40 million dollar project to divert traffic two blocks.

CEQA provides the public with an opportunity to participate during the environmental permitting process and mitigates environmental impacts. It is an invaluable law to protect the public and the environment, and should remain intact.

A coalition of environmental groups (CEQA Works) have analyzed and explained the possible negative impacts of this bill. CEQA Works is a coalition of Californians from all walks of life working together to prevent the California legislature from weakening our state's landmark environmental protection laws. Go to CEQAWorks.org for more information.

Section 2 of SBX111 exempts many transportation projects from environmental review under CEQA where they comply with all other state and federal laws and local agency conditions. This standard is insufficient to mitigate projects' potentially significant environmental impacts or to provide the public with enough information about projects that affect them. For example, the bill's exemption likely would apply to a current project on Highway 85, in which CalTrans is proposing to add HOV lanes within an existing right-of-way. The right-of-way is designated for a transit line, a different use with significantly dissimilar environmental impacts. If SBX111 became law, use of the transit right-of-way for new lanes would be exempt from environmental review. Similarly, a proposal to replace a two-lane road with a six-lane highway would be exempt, as long as it's done within an existing right of way.

The bill's supporters may point to the requirement in (a)(2) for a project to "comply with all conditions...required to mitigate potential impacts of the proposed projects." This is a virtually meaningless requirement without an environmental review to identify those impacts.

SBX111 also limits public participation in the environmental permitting process. While the bill does require notice of the project be presented, it does not require an environmental impact report, so the public will not have adequate information presented to them. Additionally, with a CEQA exemption, there is no guarantee that the comments that the public submit will be adequately considered.

Section 3 of SBX111 would prevent courts from issuing injunctions, so projects that have not complied with environmental permitting included in a Sustainable Communities Strategy can continue to be worked on while the public acts to uphold the law. This restriction on judicial autonomy is bad for the environment, especially since it concerns a variety of projects that will not be fully studied. (Under Section 2 of the bill, some of these projects will have been exempted from review.)

This restraint on the judiciary also has the potential to negatively impact public health where the impacts are not "imminent." For example, if a lead agency fails to review the particulate matter generated by a major road expansion through an existing neighborhood, Section 3 would prohibit a judge from staying construction while the impact on asthma rates is analyzed. Or, a new construction project could create contaminated runoff into a public waterway. If the threat isn't "imminent," a court could not issue a stay. This restriction on public oversight goes too far.

Lastly, a programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) done on a Sustainable Communities Strategies does not substitute for the site-specific review done by a project-level EIR and is not intended to do so. SCSs include thousands of potential projects. The broad review in the programmatic EIR does not closely examine any single project and is not an adequate substitute for the project-specific review.

For these reasons, WAHA members should oppose SBX111. Take the time now to write Senator Berryhill and your state senator to not adopt this bill.

In other preservation arena, WAHA attended an HPOZ Board meeting in Harvard Heights.

Several months ago a Contributing structure in the Harvard Heights HPOZ was purchased. Both the house and carriage barn were in need of restoration and the community was optimistic that the property would be properly restored and returned to its original glory. Unfortunately that was not the way things played out. Although, by his own admission, the purchaser had been fully informed of what the rules and processes were concerning HPOZ's and contributing structures, he elected to take the route of "asking forgiveness, not permission" and demolished the carriage barn without a permit. It had been one of the oldest structures in the district. When the owner appeared before the HPOZ Board to defend his action, WAHA's Preservation Committee was there to support the HPOZ Board requiring all mitigations available of the owner. Although the Board could have requested application of the Scorched Earth Ordinance, they—and the neighbors—were more interested in seeing the property restored/replicated to reflect the original design.



Preservation Matters



The Board itself was unanimous in its opinion that the owner would be required to rebuild the carriage barn. WAHA requested that the owner be required to retain a qualified Preservation Architect, someone who would be experienced and familiar with the Secretary of the Interior Standard for Restoration and Rehabilitation, as well as the specifics of the Preservation Plan for Harvard Heights HPOZ. The owner will not be permitted to do any work on the main house until the carriage barn project is completed.

A variety of additional requirements were imposed, with WAHA as an active participant in the process. We asked that the owner be required to appear before the Board with formal plans containing full specifications for materials, finishes, colors, etc. before being allowed to pull a building permit. All these were part of the conditions imposed on the owner.

Both WAHA and the HPOZ Board called attention to the fact that the owner had no doubt cost himself a considerable sum on resale value of the property by demolishing the original historic structure; it is hoped that the owner will tackle the needs of the main house hopefully with more care and integrity than he has shown so far.

It is disappointing that WAHA seems to still be fighting the most basic preservation battles after all these years: Demolition without permits.

Another demolition that occurred without permits and while the owner was in discussion with the West Adams Terrace HPOZ Board occurred at 2516 S 13th

Avenue. According to a Board member, the owner intended on living in the building with his family. The HPOZ Board had a number of consultations with him and thought his plans were in order. But when he started execution of them, apparently the owner got in over his head. "I think this is more a cautionary tale of what can go wrong, rather than greedy developers on a Saturday."

The West Adams Terrace HPOZ Board recommended that Scorched Earth be implemented, but if an appropriate age move-on could be found, that would be acceptable. They didn't want seven years of a vacant lot.

LADBS staff has confirmed that the new "Scorched Earth" hearing date, time, and location is: October 22, 2015, 10 AM, at 3550 W Wilshire Blvd, Suite 1800, LA., CA. 90010. "As this is a public hearing, all are welcome to attend and provided public comment. if you have any questions on this item, contact Kimberly Henry of the Office of Historic Resources 213-978-1216 or kimberly.henry@lacity.org."

To write Senator Tom Berryhill regarding SBX111:

Senator Tom Berryhill
State Capitol Room 3076
Sacramento, CA 95814
website: www.berryhill.cssrc.us
916-651-4998 ●

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Calendar ✓

Upcoming Events

SAVE THE DATE
NOVEMBER 15 2-5 p.m.

WAHA Potluck details to be announced. Please contact events@westadamsheritage.org to help plan the event and offer a location.

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Saturday & Sunday, December 5 & 6

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Or, if you want to switch it up, we would love to prioritize our repeat offenders and try to give you your desired assignment. We are hoping to get our volunteer commitments in early. Please contact volunteer@westadamsheritage.org.

(See article on page 1)

WAHA...Creating Our Future by Preserving Our Past

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