

# West Adams Matters

## The Miracle from Menlo Avenue

by Jean Frost



The dictionary defines the word *miracle* as: 1). an event or action that apparently contradicts known scientific laws; 2). a remarkable thing; marvel; 3). a wonderful example. Each of these definitions are applicable to recent events in University Park.

A historic house has been given an eleventh-hour reprieve and saved from certain demolition. The circa 1904 Victorian-Transitional cottage located on the corner of Menlo and 20<sup>th</sup> Street is part of the dozens of the historic structures to be demolished by the Los Angeles Unified School District's new construction for Central L.A. High School #2 at Washington and Vermont. In fact almost all of the historic homes have been razed as of this writing

*(continued on page 9)*

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## WAHA's March Event: Newcomers' Dessert

Wednesday, March 10, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

WAHonians have traditionally gathered and welcomed new neighbors to West Adams. Once again this event is being held, so if you have the evening available feel free to come and join the MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE in welcoming your new neighbors and friends into WAHA. As always a dessert is appreciated but by no means necessary.

The Newcomers Dessert will be hosted by Paul King and Paul Nielsen (relative newcomers themselves), who are in the process of a historic restoration of their turn of the century home, located at 2260 West 25th Street (just east of Arlington).

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## South Seas House Wins Preservation Award

Congratulations are in order. After years (and years) of effort to save the South Seas House, our work has been recognized by a major statewide preservation organization.

The California Preservation Foundation has given the South Seas House Rehabilitation Project one of its 2004 Preservation Design Awards, presented at its annual conclave in San Diego on Saturday, February 28.

"The South Seas House Rehabilitation Project successfully restored a very deteriorated, yet highly prominent, single-family residence in a historic neighborhood and returned it to a viable use as a community

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### Save The Date! **The Garden Conservancy's Los Angeles Open Days**

*Visit Some of the Most Beautiful Private Gardens  
 in Los Angeles and West Adams  
 Sunday, April 25, 2004, 10 am to 4 pm*

Ten gardens in Windsor Square, Larchmont Village, Hollywood Hills and West Adams will be open for private touring. Proceeds from three of the gardens will be shared with the West Adams Heritage Association.

For more information or to purchase discount ticket booklets and Open Days Directories, call the Garden Conservancy 888-842-2442, or log onto [www.gardenconservancy.com](http://www.gardenconservancy.com). Additional local Open Days: Saturday, May 8 in the West Los Angeles area and Sunday, May 16 in Pasadena, San Marino and Arcadia.

**The Open Days needs volunteers for all three days.** If you'd like to volunteer in West Adams please contact Jennifer Charnofsky at 323-734-7391 or [jcharnofsky@earthlink.net](mailto:jcharnofsky@earthlink.net). If you'd like to volunteer in West L.A., Pasadena or, on April 25 in Larchmont or the Hollywood Hills, please e-mail Judy Horton, [jmhorton@earthlink.net](mailto:jmhorton@earthlink.net).

## In Memoriam:

### **Fredric Frisbie, Early Gay Rights Advocate**

*by Jim Childs*

The University Park community mourns the loss of another one of its senior statesmen. Neighbors were saddened at the passing of Fredric Frisbie, who made his home here for over fifty years. His death was a surprise to all for in spite of his 96 years he was still vigorous and mentally alert.

Mr. Frisbie, as he preferred to be called by his neighbors, came west from Brooklyn in 1932. He was settled permanently in University Park in 1967 when he purchased the old Connell Carriage House at 634 West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, which he formerly rented.

The distinctive two-story Victorian brick structure with its elaborate slate roof became a focal gathering place for a lifestyle far different than the other residential buildings which together with this home comprise the Chester Place National Register Eligible Historic District. Mr. Frisbie was an early advocate for the Gay and Lesbian Rights movement and a leader of the Mattachine Society and co-developer of ONE Incorporated. He was active as both artist and writer for ONE Magazine using the nom de plume, George Mortenson.

Mr. Frisbie was a professional industrial designer and engineer. He was also a very talented artist. The Connell Carriage House served as both studio and home which he shared for a great many years with his wife, Louisa, a Puerto Rican transvestite. Their soirees with the gay rights movement's leaders included Don Legg, Eve Ellory, Dan Slater, Harry Hay, Tony Reyes, Martin Block and Geraldine Jackson.

Mr. Frisbie was also instrumental in the merging of the Jim Kepner Archives and the ONE Library and its installation at 909 West Adams Boulevard in conjunction with the University of Southern California. This facility, formally a USC fraternity house, is now the destination of scholars worldwide. Academic researchers, journalists, lawyers, students and others use the diverse resources of books, periodicals, and artifacts on homosexuality.

For those interested check your Internet search engine for Fred Frisbie and also see "Notes on the Founding of ONE Magazine" posted by C. Todd White 11/4/03. ●

*(Editor's Note: On February 18, the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission officially took the nomination of the Michael Connell Carriage House under consideration for inclusion as a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. It already is designated as a contributing structure to the Chester Place National Register Eligible Historic District, and is listed on the California Register.)*

## Hidden Gems of Los Angeles: Tour Explores L.A.'s Historic Preservation Overlay Zones

Architecture buffs can experience five of Los Angeles' Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZs), tour one house in each neighborhood, and discover why HPOZs are sweeping our city during the third annual "At Home with History" tour on Sunday, April 18, presented by the Los Angeles Conservancy, the HPOZ Alliance, and the featured HPOZs.

As a city of neighborhoods, Los Angeles boasts a constantly expanding array of Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZs) – historic districts designated by the City of Los Angeles. HPOZs play a key role in maintaining the unique character of L.A.'s vastly diverse communities and enhancing the quality of life for residents. As the HPOZ movement continues to sweep the city, it's bringing to light remarkable residential enclaves that are often overlooked.

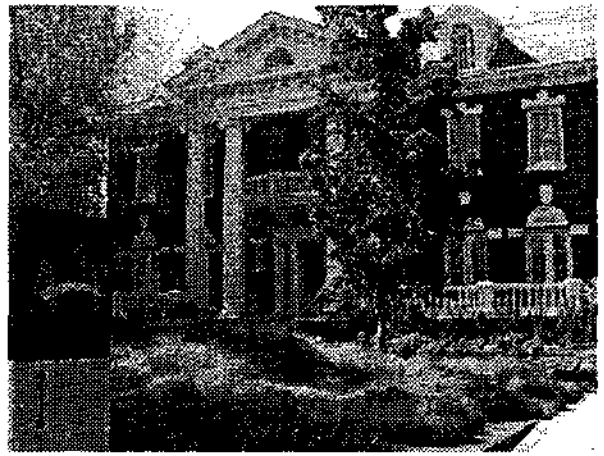
During this self-driving neighborhood and house tour, the public will have the chance to explore five of these historic communities. The Los Angeles Conservancy is proud to present this tour in partnership with the HPOZ Alliance and each of the featured HPOZs, two of which are in the Historic West Adams District. Guests on this self-driving tour can visit as many of the five neighborhoods as they'd like, at their own pace. Each stop will feature a tour of a representative house in the HPOZ, as well as "neighborhood ambassadors," area residents available to discuss what it's like to live in the neighborhood. Guests will receive a detailed tour map and guide, as well as a booklet describing all of the city's existing HPOZs.

*This year's tour highlights five HPOZs that rank among L.A.'s best-kept secrets:*

- University Park in the Historic West Adams District, was developed as one of L.A.'s first suburbs in the 1880s. It is filled with landmarks and diverse architectural styles. The featured house is a Victorian Italianate residence, one of the oldest homes in the area. The original owner, Henry Martz, constructed at least half a dozen residences in the neighborhood, of which three are designated Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monuments.
- West Adams Terrace, the city's newest HPOZ, also in the West Adams District, is a trove of significant buildings that reflect L.A.'s architectural evolution. The featured house is the 1910 Adam-Georgian Revival Britt Mansion that now serves as headquarters and a museum for the Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles.
- Melrose Hill illustrates why Los Angeles is known as the "bungalow capital of the world" – this small community was developed largely between 1911 and 1926, at the height of the style's popularity. Built in 1920, the featured home includes details handcrafted by the original owner, Douglas Donaldson, a leader of Southern California's Arts & Crafts Movement.
- Spaulding Square, a charming neighborhood of modest Period Revival homes built between 1916 and 1926, has a history closely tied to the development of Hollywood, the entertainment industry, and the regional transportation system (the Red Cars). The featured home is a 1917 Colonial Revival.
- Whitley Heights, an enclave of Spanish Colonial Revival homes developed between 1918 and 1928, reflects the ambiance of a Mediterranean village. Tucked in the lush hills near the Hollywood Bowl, this community once housed such Hollywood elite as Gloria Swanson (during the filming of Sunset Boulevard), Rudolph Valentino, and Judy Garland.

Tour hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tour tickets cost \$30 for the general public and \$25 for Conservancy members. Advance reservations are essential. To order tickets, visit the Conservancy's website at [www.laconservancy.org](http://www.laconservancy.org) or call the Ticket Hotline at 213-430-4219.

The Los Angeles Conservancy, established in 1978, has become the largest membership-based local historic preservation organization in the country, and is dedicated to recognizing, preserving, and revitalizing the historic architectural and cultural resources of Los Angeles County. The HPOZ Alliance was created four years ago by members of the existing HPOZs who realized the value of speaking with one voice in order to participate more effectively in the legislation and enforcement of the city's HPOZ Ordinance, and to partner with the city in the preservation of our irreplaceable historic districts. ●



*The Britt Mansion in the West Adams Terrace HPOZ will be on the tour.*

## Step Out to Chinatown

WAHA invites you on a guided walking tour of Historic Chinatown on Saturday morning, March 13. We'll visit the two Victorian residences which house the Chinese Heritage and Visitor's Center and the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, as well as many other landmarks of old and new Chinatown, including the Castelar School (est. 1882), Tin Hou Temple, the Wishing Well, Phoenix Bakery (est. 1938), and Pacific Alliance Medical Center (founded 1868).

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Golden Dragon Restaurant (DON'T BE LATE!), 960 North Broadway. The cost is \$5 per person, and we do require reservations. Contact SeEly Caldwell, 323-291-7484 or cell, 213-700-1129.

After the walking tour, which will take about 1.5 hours, we'll arrange a no-host lunch - please do let SeEly know if you'll be at the table, so she can make reservations.

# Inside WAHA

## Board Elections Are Just Around the Corner

by Jacqueline Sharps

My goodness, how time flies. We are already into the first quarter of the New Year. Many of us have just gotten around to putting the Holiday stuff away while others (no names mentioned) are deciding what to pack for that fabulous cruise, oops, crossing in April.

It is indeed time to start thinking about what position you are interested in committing to for the April elections. There are many. We need new Board members with fresh, upbeat, in the know ideas. This community was founded by the best volunteers in the nation, and now is the time for new members and those of you who haven't volunteered in years to come forward. You need not spend an extraordinary amount of time doing tasks, but you must be committed.

We don't have many requirements: a love of old houses, an enthusiasm for community activities, and membership in WAHA for at least six months. Generally speaking, Board members must commit to attend all WAHA Board meetings (usually held the fourth Thursday of each month) and also will be given specific responsibilities for certain of WAHA's events and social functions, on a rotating basis.

WAHA always needs expertise in fundraising, zoning issues, and preservation. But if you have a program you'd like to initiate, please don't hesitate discuss your ideas with us.

If you are interested in serving on the Board, submit your candidate statement (a short paragraph, 100 - 200 words or so) to Vice President and Publications Committee Chair, Jean Frost (jfrost@aftra.com), by Sunday, March 14. Candidate Statements will be published in the April newsletter.

Please call me or any one of our terrific Board members to see how to can get involved. (Our phone numbers are in the column to the right). We really need you. ●

## WAHA Membership Renewal

It's that time of year again! The WAHA Membership Committee is sending individualized invoices with return envelopes in mid-March, for WAHA membership renewal for the 2004 - 2005 membership year.

Memberships in West Adams Heritage Association go from April to April every year. New WAHA Membership Cards will be mailed out in mass at the end of April, when the current membership cards expire. Typically if you don't renew the membership, you are taken off the Newsletter mailing list and the May or June WAHA Matters newsletter is the last one you receive.

New memberships taken out late in 2003, or in the beginning of 2004, are not due for renewal until next year. So if you are new members and you didn't get a renewal notice, your membership is current until the end of April/beginning of May, 2005.

If you have any questions about the status of your WAHA membership you can contact John Kurtz, Director of Membership, 323-732-2990.

Thanks in advance for your support, your early renewal and most of all your check. ●

We support preservation of the West Adams community's architectural heritage and beautification activities, and seek to educate Los Angeles' citizens and others about cultural heritage and restoration techniques.



2263 S. Harvard Boulevard  
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www.neighborhoodlink.com/la/westadams

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Harold Greenberg, <i>Legal Advisor</i>	323-732-9536
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### WAHA COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND STANDING MEETINGS

All WAHA members are encouraged to join a committee.  
(All committee meetings begin at 7 pm on the days noted below.)

#### Community Relations

Meets the second Tuesday of each month -  
Contact Jennifer Charnofsky if you'd like to get  
involved with this activity 323-734-7391

#### Historic Preservation

Chair: Jean Frost 213-748-1656

#### Zoning & Planning

Chair: Eric Bronson, 323-737-1163 and Thomas Florio,  
213-749-8464. Meets third Mondays at City Living  
Realty 2316 1/2 South Union

#### Newsletter

Chair: Laura Meyers 323-737-6146.  
Meets second Mondays

#### Publications

Director: Jean Frost 213-748-1656

#### Holiday Tour

Chair: Jacqueline Sharps 323-766-8842

#### Membership

Chair: John Kurtz 323-732-2990.  
Meets Wednesday before the WAHA Board Meeting

#### By-Laws

Thomas Florio 213-749-8464

#### Web Site

Thomas Florio 213-749-8464

#### Programs and Events

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The WAHA Board meets on the fourth Thursday of  
each month. Contact Jacqueline Sharps for location.

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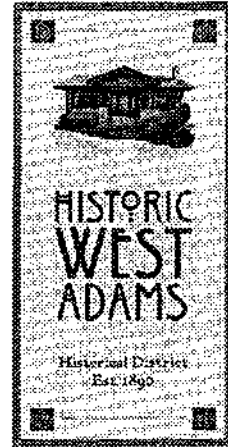
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Thank you for your support and enjoy!

Please allow three to six weeks for delivery. The remaining \$75.00 will be due upon delivery. Please include your name, address and phone number with all correspondence.

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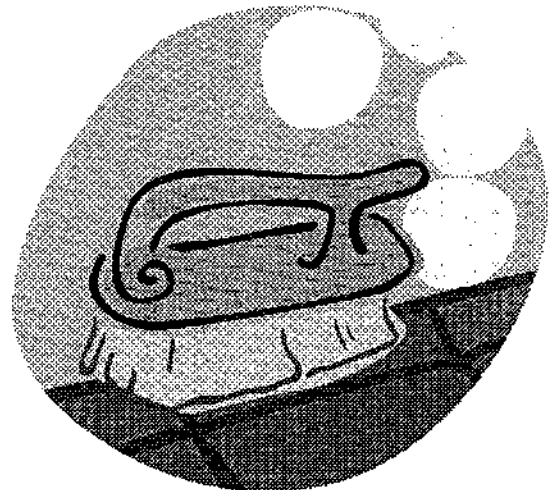
# Around the House

## Resources by Suzie Henderson

This month I have good news for those of you who are looking for someone reliable to clean your house. Nancy Senter recommends Myra Revas. She has been happy with her work for many years and now you, too, can enjoy the benefits of having Myra make your house sparkle. She has several days available and is willing to work evenings, as well. Call today to discuss your needs. Myra Revas 323 662-7531.

I have a request. Does anyone know a source for antique armoire hinges or a fabricator that can duplicate my post and hole type hinge? Liz does not carry them. The post on my hinge was worn enough that the door fell off and the beveled mirror shattered. My WAHA Resource Guide has provided a great mirror source, but I can't replace that until the hinge problem is solved.

Speaking of the Resource Guide, a new one will be prepared soon. Now is the time to send in your resources, so they can be included in this column and the new Guide. I can be reached at Westadamsgoddess@aol.com. I am looking forward to hearing from you soon. ●



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**AVAILABLE:**  
**West Adams Avenues Romantic Spanish** - Eclectic artist compound in West Adams' newest HPOZ. Spacious 1920s duplex used as single family home plus detached art studio/guest house. 4 BD, 2.75 BA. 2535 4th Avenue - David Raposa - Asking \$715,000

**IN ESCROW:**  
**Western Heights Craftsman** w/ pool and spa - 2211 West 21st St. - David Raposa (Seller) - Asking \$725,000  
**Elegant Spanish in Wilshire Park** - 945 3rd Avenue - 14 offers, \$70,000 over list price - David Raposa (Seller)  
**USC area early "Stick Style" Victorian** - David Raposa (Buyer)  
**Jefferson Park Bungalow** - 30th Street - David Raposa (Buyer)  
**Out of Area Residence** - Nick Mercado (Seller)

**SOLD:**  
**Lafayette Square Mediterranean** - Restored Estate with pool and spa - 1668 Virginia Rd, \$908,000 - David Raposa (Buyer) - Welcome, Steven Brucciani!  
**Great Hollywood Hills Condo** - Nick Mercado (Seller)

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# South Seas House Wins Preservation Award

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center and public-use facility," according to the award description. "The project's successful completion represents the owner's extraordinary commitment to historic preservation and a long-standing commitment and effort by local citizenry and community groups to save this highly visible local landmark."

The South Seas House's renovation "is notable for the cooperation of city agencies and neighborhood residents, whose grassroots efforts preserved a unique architectural monument," it added.

Kudos to architect Michele McDonough, who shepherded the design and construction project through its ups and downs; the City of Los Angeles Recreation and Parks Department, the South Seas House owner; former 10th District Council member Nate Holden and former Council staff members Sylvia Lacey, Stacey Anthony, and Mike Hernandez, among many whose efforts to secure funding and support literally saved the structure; West Adams Heritage Association, whose ongoing advocacy kept the pressure on to save the South Seas House; and of course the many, MANY, community members who worked tirelessly for 13 years to make this dream a reality.

Among the community members who deserve special recognition for their efforts to save the South Seas House are: Karen Haas, Robert Leary, Corinné Pleger, Laura Meyers, John Kurtz, Carol Isadore, David Raposa, Rory Cunningham, Wally Matsuura, Peggy King, John Deaven, Linda Scribner, Denise Fairchild, Terry Bible—and so many others too numerous to list.

As a result of their love for this architectural gem, the South Seas House now serves the community as a meeting place and, soon, a classroom teaching neighborhood residents computer skills, digital photography and video. ●



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## GIGANTIC "USED STUFF" SALE!!

On Saturday, March 20,  
between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., over 25 homes in  
Lafayette Square will simultaneously hold the  
Square's annual "used stuff" sale.  
There will be antique furniture,  
vintage clothing, shoes, household items, toys,  
sports equipment, books, dishes, records,  
tapes and much more.

Lafayette Square is located between Venice  
and Washington Boulevards, just off  
Crenshaw. Enter the Square at St. Charles  
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hope to see you there!

Lunch & Dinner, Sunday Brunch

### THE TWO NINE the 29th street cafe

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## Around the Blocks:

### ANNA—Adams Normandie Neighborhood Association

The ANNA block club has had a very busy time since its last appearance in these pages last year. Marianne Muellerlelie, ANNA's "founding mother," stepped down from the presidency after 14 years, and was succeeded by (relative) newcomer Roberta Quiroz. The other devoted officers, Jim Jansen (vice president), Marco Flores (secretary), and Don Henderson (treasurer), continue to serve.

We also lost long-time member Paul Hulse, who died in September after a long illness. Among Paul's contributions to ANNA was his hosting and maintenance of the ANNA Web site, which will now be redesigned and relocated. In addition, members Michael Turner, Dean Williams, Heather Abji, Travis Emery, and Rob Berry all left the area. On the plus side, all the new owners of their houses have joined ANNA, as have four new families from houses where the previous owners had never participated in ANNA.

We worked closely throughout 2003 with the LAPD and the newly formed North Area Neighborhood Development Council, as well as our neighbors in the Budlong/Juliet/Catalina (BJC) and Van Buren block clubs. The result of all this cooperation has been significant decreases in gang-related drug dealing and prostitution in the area, with corresponding improvements in the quality of life for those living near problem properties. We will be continuing this effort in 2004.

One of our most successful joint efforts was an expanded National Night Out Against Crime event, organized by BJC President Yvette Jones, that combined the presence — and voices! — of all three block clubs to make a greater impact on a larger area. We also continued to maintain our pedestrian walkway, El Paseo, and held all of our annual events and efforts:

- Member appreciation night with bowling and dinner at Mid-City Lanes
- Financial support of the Norwood Elementary School's annual Health and Peace Family Festival
- A movie at one of downtown's great movie palaces with the Los Angeles Conservancy's Last Remaining Seats series
- A Halloween party for local children at Dave and Alison Clark's
- The annual ANNA yard sale, which relocated from the south side of W. 25th Street to the north side
- Donation of Thanksgiving turkeys and other food to needy local families
- Holiday baking for local police officers and firefighters

For more information about ANNA, please contact Roberta Quiroz at 323-737-2297 or at [vrquiroz@aol.com](mailto:vrquiroz@aol.com). ●

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## A West Adams

# Art Festival

For those of you with an eye for art, we are looking to establish a standing committee to oversee the design and implementation of an Arlington Heights Outdoor Art Festival. The festival will take place along the Washington Boulevard Commercial Corridor, between Crenshaw and Arlington. We'd like to create an annual Art Festival that will coexist with all businesses and residents, and which will contribute to the wonderful atmosphere that already exists in our Historic West Adams community.

Whether you have working knowledge of art shows, or just a desire to help, we need you. If you'd like to become involved, please contact either Steve Rowe at 323-733-9600 ([rowesb@aol.com](mailto:rowesb@aol.com)) or Melody Jackson at 323-737-4849 ([islandhousegallery@sbcglobal.net](mailto:islandhousegallery@sbcglobal.net)). Thank-you. ●

## Notice:

We are searching for those homeowners who hired Castle Construction after the 1994 Northridge Quake to retrofit their foundations. Castle had pledged a \$200 donation per West Adams house that was retrofitted to the South Seas House Fund. Was your house one of these? If so, please contact Corinne Pleger, 323-954-3100. The work would have been done after FEMA announced its retrofit subsidies, in late 1994 or thereafter.



# Miracle from Menlo Avenue

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despite the efforts of WAHA and other preservation organizations.

Tom Florio and Eric Bronson in particular worked diligently for many months trying to orchestrate relocation for some of the homes. As one after another prospective developers passed on the relocation project, time became a critical factor for the site would be cleared no later than January 19, 2004. An agreement was however brokered by WAHA and LAUSD that allowed for the salvage of some historic fabric materials as the homes began to be torn down.

Only one developer, John Joseph Ramos, committed to pursuing a move-off plan. He acquired the ownership option on five Victorian Cottages and a splendid 2 1/2-story Queen Anne. Unfortunately his dreams of relocating the big house to Rancho Cucamonga literally went up in smoke. The San Bernardino wildfires and their aftermath made it impossible to complete any of the complicated bureaucratic processing necessary for such a move. It appeared that all six buildings would soon meet the same destiny as the other historic homes.

However, on the evening of November 18th during a University Park HPOZ Board meeting, fate intervened. After the Board approved his routine re-roofing and exterior painting for 1036 West 22nd Street, the contractor, William Torres, mentioned that the owner, Jorge Melendez (Rigo's Tacos), also owned the adjacent vacant lot and was planning on building a new four-plex. The Board made several suggestions including the possibility of a historic structure move-on. Torres was unfamiliar with historic move-on infill housing and the discussion grew. The dialogue was later expanded with an on-site meeting during which Melendez realized the unique opportunity and committed to the concept.

Their first step was to return to the UP/HPOZ Board in December to secure an approval for the project, which was given unanimously. Torres then embarked on a Herculean journey to complete in six short weeks what would normally take up to six months to do. With the cooperation of John Joseph Ramos, CD #1 Staff, the UP/HPOZ Board, and the gracious patience of Kip Drabek of LAUSD, timeframes were truncated, wheels greased; hurdles circumvented and the Byzantine world of permits, fees, bonding, insurance, environmental compliance, travel routing, wire-drops, and new-site preparation was brought to heel. As the January 19 deadline approached LAUSD generously agreed to a stay and the new date for the move-off was extended for an additional month to secure final sign-offs.

Starting at midnight one night in February, the hundred-year-old Victorian was scheduled to roll west along Washington to Western over the freeway then south to Adams, then east to Hoover, north to 22nd Street, and then east on 22nd to its new home at 1042. This curious route, to go from the 1500 block of 20th Street to the 1000 block of 22nd Street, is because of Santa Monica Freeway, which otherwise was impassable.

The house will now sit next to another Victorian Cottage at 1036, similar in style, scale and massing, and on a block face with six other contributing historic structures. That this historic house will have a new life and give generations the opportunity experience a unique streetscape is only part of the story. Rescuing historic housing for move-on infill in historic neighborhoods has been a fundamental goal of both the University Park HPOZ Board and the Adams-Normandie 4321 Project Area Committee, which preceded the Board. The recycling of our finite historic resources and relocating them in an area where other historic structures have been lost over time is a classic win-win scenario. ●

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