



ALTADENA HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

ADVOCACY & PRESERVATION

Spring/Summer
2017



A brand new house on East Woodbury maintains an Altadena tradition.

- Photo: Steve King

New Kid on the Block

By Trish Pengra

The house can't help but get noticed. Other homes on the leafy Altadena street are a typical eclectic mix of one- and two-story cottages, a Craftsman, an A-frame, bungalows, and a few ranch homes. And then this: stark white, an angled façade and breathtaking cantilever, ultra-contemporary, definitely a dwelling for a new century. A house that stood on that lot for nearly a hundred years was demolished so this could be built, and it has caused some muttering in the neighborhood.

As an architectural preservation organization, we need to ask ourselves: When is it okay – or even a good thing – to demolish an old house to build a new one?

Elisa and Eric Callow had restored a Lloyd

Wright house in La Cañada, but were ready to downsize. Elisa had fond memories of the friendly Altadena neighborhood where she raised her daughter in a little Spanish revival house on Holliston. The couple found a 1922 cottage on East Woodbury with lots of curb appeal, a new roof and fresh coat of paint, on a good-sized, gently sloping lot. They intended to do a full remodel, but as they considered restoration options, inspections turned up a litany of structural issues, not to mention asbestos. Restoration was going to be lengthy, extremely expensive, and unlikely to turn the peculiar warren of rooms into the home they wanted. Neighbors recalled that no one had ever remained in the house for more than a year or two, as was evident from the wild variations in style and

Continued on page 4

Upcoming Events

2017 Golden Poppy!

May 21, 3-6 pm

Green Man Lodge
3511 Lincoln Ave.

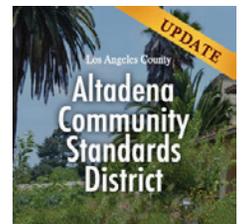
Reservations:
altadenaheritage@gmail.com



CSD Hearing

May 23, 9:30 am

Kenneth Hahn
Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Suite 3818
Los Angeles, CA90012



Message from the Chair

Linda World

More than 20 inches of rain have fallen since Altadena Heritage's annual membership meeting and holiday party December 4, when Rob Bruce and Greg Gill opened their beautifully restored Craftsman home. They lit fireplaces indoors and out to keep more than 150 of us warm — I can't thank them enough for their hospitality. Thanks, too, to all the members who attended, making it more holiday party than annual meeting. We are especially grateful to the dozen who volunteered to help sign-in and set-up, making everything run smoothly and giving board directors more time than usual to enjoy the party.

All that rain has made for a glorious spring, leading us up to our annual Golden Poppy Awards and Garden Party Sunday, May 21st. This year we will meet at Green Man Lodge, a rustic property tucked away high above Lincoln Avenue, hand-built in the 1940s and 1950s by designer-woodcarver, Louis Steinhauser as his family home. It has been called "a masterpiece of residential folk-art" and our Golden Poppy hosts, members Cal Smith and Daniel Singer, named it Green Man Lodge. Some members might remember we met there 10 years ago — we are delighted to revisit, especially since our hosts will kindly open most of their home as well as the garden!

We've had a busy winter. In February, our new County Supervisor, Kathryn Barger, found an hour to tour Altadena with former board chair Michele Zack and myself, and to visit some AH community projects. She and Sussy Nemer, whom we're happy is continuing as Field Deputy for our area, joined us at Café de Leche for a walk to Triangle Park and then down El Molino to the Moreton Bay Fig that was a Big Tree winner at the 2015 Golden Poppy Awards. A new parking lot that includes 27 public spaces will be built in front of the tree, which will be protected. From there, Supervisor Barger offered to do the driving as we visited five AHAs! (Altadena Heritage Areas!): North Garfield, Norwic Village, Highview Park Planned Homes, Equestrian Block, and Old Marengo Park. We had fun seeing Altadena with her at the wheel of the huge, high-riding, Denali hybrid SUV she inherited from Supervisor Antonovich, and chatting about past and prospective Altadena Heritage projects.



As a bonus, Supervisor Barger agreed to lead one of our Third Thursday events at the Community Center. This is scheduled for September 21 at 7pm.

Our biggest project in 2017 is the upgrading of Altadena Triangle Park, at the corner of Lake Avenue and Altadena Drive. The ceremonial groundbreaking last October with outgoing Supervisor Antonovich finally turned into real construction in March. Thanks to partner, Amigos de los Rios and its president, Claire Robinson, for project-managing this County-funded, waterwise, and walkable improvement to a central public space where Altadenans will enjoy mountain views, community history, and perhaps a picnic.

Permitting issues and County requirements not anticipated (redoing sidewalk handicap ramps and upgrading electrical are just two) pushed up costs, so we are leading a fundraising campaign to save planned amenities that will cost more money than we have. AH primed the pump by donating \$5,000 to this effort. Our thanks to all members who responded to our request for contributions, which at press time totals \$2,805!

It's not too late to support this tax-deductible community cause by mailing a donation or giving online at amigosdelosrios.org. We also thank all the local businesses, institutions, and service organizations who have chipped in (see story, facing page).

I'm sure you will enjoy your latest Altadena Heritage Newsletter. We follow up on local filming that was the theme of the last issue, and new member Trish Pengra takes up the provocative question, *what is Altadena's heritage?* in a cover story about the ultra-modern home built in her neighborhood by two other new AH members, Elisa and Eric Callow.

I hope to see you on Sunday, May 21 to celebrate all of Altadena's glorious gardens, particularly the 2017 winners of this year's Golden Poppy Awards who will briefly tell the stories of the gardens they created that "give to the street" and beautify our neighborhoods.

Otherwise, it's the usual good food and drink, music, and conviviality that members expect from Altadena Heritage events.

AH Hosts "Landmark THIS!" Workshop

On February 4th more than 70 people attended **Landmark THIS!**, at the Altadena Community Center, an event that Altadena Heritage hosted with the Los Angeles Conservancy and the County Dept. of Regional Planning's Historic Preservation Office. Members of the Conservancy and a representative from the County Historic Preservation Office defined criteria to be considered worthy of landmark status, and

walked the audience through the process for applying under the County's new Historic Preservation Act, passed in 2015.

Anyone interested in applying for landmark status may contact Marcello Vavala at the Los Angeles Conservancy (213) 430-4217, mvavala@laconservancy.org, or Dean Edwards at dedwards@planning.lacounty.gov.

Altadena-centric Park will be new “Town Triangle”

by Michele Zack

The earth is moving on the corner of Lake Avenue and Altadena Drive. Great scoops of it are being rearranged to create a more usable and pedestrian-friendly civic plaza-park that will soon become Altadena’s “town triangle!”

Paths (handicapped accessible) and level places are being created where tables and seating will invite meeting up and conversation, while preserving the big pine trees. A small pergola will be oriented to awesome views of the San Gabriels, and drainage will all be percolated on site. New plantings will be drought tolerant, though some lawn will be retained beneath the pines.

Altadena Heritage teamed up with another local non-profit, Amigos de los Rios, to make this project happen for Altadena. We have been generously supported by our Supervisor’s office in obtaining Proposition A funding, which will cover most of the costs of building the park — but not all. We are appealing to members, businesses, other organizations, and everyone who lives here to pitch in to help complete the work. We need your help with planting, tables, boulders for a storm-water retaining swale, historic interpretive signage, and other Altadena-centric touches — this park is all about place and will not be confused with any other park.

Steve Salinas of Steve’s Bike Shop on Mariposa is donating his design and fabrication talents to hand-craft the two bike racks; Waldorf school is donating \$700 to pay for one, and to install both of them.

Beyond our very significant in-kind contributions, your organization, Altadena Heritage, has contributed \$5,000 toward the effort. The new Aldi’s is providing \$2,000 to cover some trees and historical interpretive signs. Heritage member Margi Mostue gave \$500 which she’s putting toward the mountain viewing pergola, where she looks forward to sitting when she waits for the bus. Saint Mark’s school is chipping in \$500, and students will help us plant. The Altadena Town Council has also donated \$500. Many AH members responded promptly to our email appeal, and we are grateful to each and every one — THANK YOU! Your generosity has already generated almost \$3000!

We exist to make things better around here; improving this under-used park provides a unique opportunity to show Altadena Heritage spirit. It is part of a vision to create a civic core, anchored by the Community Center, Sheriff’s and Fire Stations, and businesses around Lake and Mariposa. Coming soon are public parking spaces in a new lot on El Molino Avenue to be shared with the Sheriff and Fire stations; these will help energize the commercial aspect of this core.

Please give to this great civic cause if you haven’t already! You may send in a check to Amigos de los Rios (write “AH Triangle” in memo line) at 908 E. Altadena Drive, Altadena, CA 91001. Or donate online at amigosdelosrios.org where ALTADENA TRIANGLE DONATIONS appears on the welcome page, top right. The sponsorship form is also there; if you are an AH member, we have already sent this to you via email.

Make Altadena Triangle YOUR park by helping to finish it!



Workers begin laying arroyo stone curbs in the Triangle.

Town Council Election – June 10

June 6

Early voting

June 1 @ 7 pm

Candidate Forum at Community Center, Sponsored by Neighbors for Building a Better Altadena

May 16 @ 7 pm

Candidates speak at Town Council Meeting

Polling place information - altadenatowncouncil.org



Front entrance viewed from the entry courtyard.

- Photo Steve King

New Kid... *Continued from front page.*

the uneven craftsmanship of past interior modifications, some done to code, others not. It dawned on the Callows that they had purchased a bad house, forcing a difficult decision. After checking that it was not considered historic or otherwise protected, they applied for a permit to raze it and built a new home.

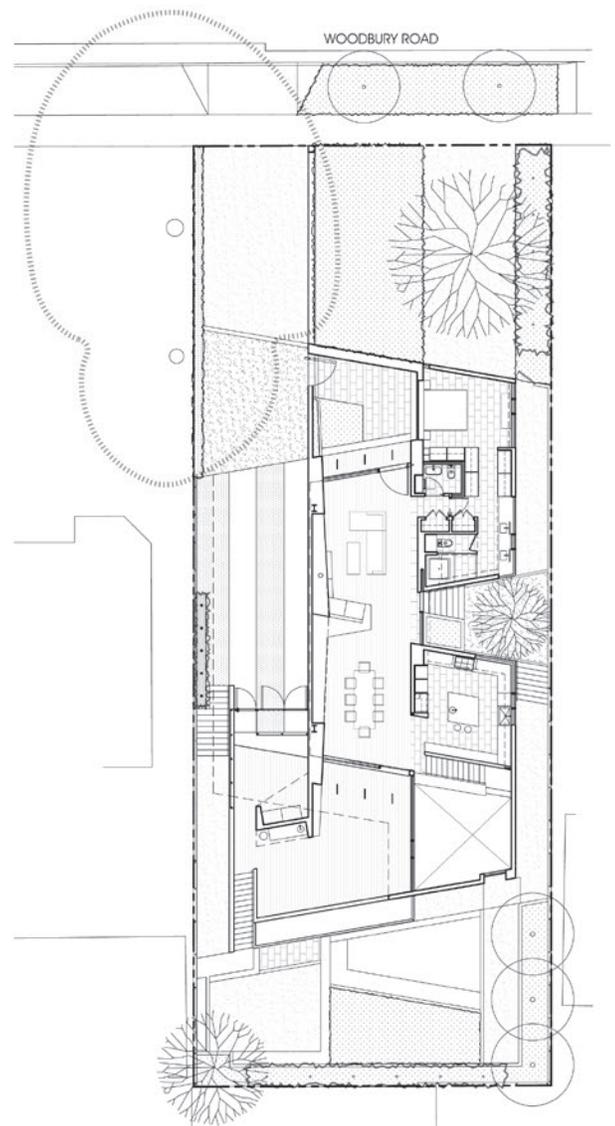
For the design, the Callows turned to the architect who had helped them restore their La Cañada house, Rick Corsini of Corsini Stark Architects. They asked for an open floor plan to accommodate their “puttering” and to entertain friends and family in a style of simple beauty. The home should have access to ample outdoor space, and be in scale with



Elisa and Eric Callow

other homes on the street. The Callows referenced the designs of LA modernists Gregory Ain, Rudolph Schindler, and John Lautner, architects who Corsini considered part of his own design foundation.

From the street, the home’s most distinctive feature is a dramatically angled cantilevered roof, discretely lit at night to give the house a soft glow. Entry is through a small courtyard that provides privacy from the street, allowing the front wall to be all glass. Inside, Corsini used alternating angled walls and roof lines to open up sightlines, allowing fluid movement within the house and out to exterior spaces. Light brought in from the courtyard and the clerestory windows under the cantilever allow for soft, even interior illumination during the day. The continuity of white walls and ceiling from inside to out enable light to reflect and diffuse, imparting a sense of expansiveness within a modestly sized interior. Simply put, the interior is thrilling.



Corsini gave Elisa, a serious cook, a kitchen full of light with a generous island, a wall of cabinets for pantry and storage, and windows where others would have hung over-counter cabinets.

With close neighbors on both sides, the architect included a small courtyard on one side to open up the center of the home to light and green. Eric, a member of the Theodore Payne Foundation's board of directors, will fill both front and back yards with California native shrubs and trees

Construction took a long time, building a great sense of anticipation among neighbors. Some, unaware of the former cottage's considerable problems, are upset that it was demolished. Others who favor early- to mid-20th century styles are not fans of the home's ultra-modern design. The Callows were criticized on a neighborhood blog, and have had to listen to harsh critiques. Soon after they moved in, the couple hosted the dessert portion of a block party dinner to give neighbors an opportunity to tour the home. Even now, when they see neighbors stop on the sidewalk to study the house, they often invite them inside to get the full effect.

Not everyone is going to like this house, but it's specious to say it doesn't fit in. In 1999, Heritage's first AHA! (Altadena Heritage Area!) was awarded to a single block of Garfield Avenue which featured representatives of every style in town. In a neighborhood already home to a half dozen architectural styles, the Callow home adds one more.

Furthermore, the Callow residence continues an Altadena tradition of cutting-edge architecture. Myron Hunt's Zane Gray house, one of the earliest reinforced concrete residences, Gregory Ain's post-WWII Park Planned homes, the 1950s Saul Bass house (Case Study house #20), and our Altadena Library by Boyd Georgi (1965) are just four examples.



A generous rear deck above study and guest rooms

- Photo: Steve King

We Altadenans often describe ourselves as eclectic, deriving ideas, style and taste from a broad and diverse range of sources. With the Callows now at home on East Woodbury, we have another way of building from which to draw inspiration as we continue to be a home for those looking both to the past and far into the future.

And, finally, it's hard to see replacing a bad old problem house with a 21st century home designed for modern living as anything but positive.



Panoramic view of the open-plan living area. Kitchen is on the right.

- Photo: Steve King

ATC Filming Committee Holds Town Hall Meeting

The recently formed Filming Committee of the Altadena Town Council held a Town Hall meeting at the Community Center on February 28, giving Altadenans an opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns about filming issues in our town. A panel of County officials and others responsible for approving and enforcing filming permits included representatives from FilmLA, Altadena Sheriffs, Highway Patrol, Department of Public Works, as well as a location manager and a filming host. Two members of Supervisor Barger's staff and the Executive VP of FilmLA sat in the audience. (FilmLA is a private non-profit organization that supervises and coordinates on-location filming in the LA area.)

At least a 140 Altadenans turned out; most came to express concerns, and most stayed the full two hours. With the decision makers there, the gathering had an air of significance.

Following presentations by panelists, Filming Committee chair Anne Chomyn opened the floor for discussion. While some attendees expressed views supportive of filming, most focused on gripes, including crew parking on area streets, early arrival of film vehicles, generator noise, noxious fumes, safety issues, lazy law officers, overuse of certain neighborhoods and a lack of transparency into the film permitting process.

In response to complaints about crew-and-cast parking, Sergeant Waterman of the Sheriff's Department explained that on-set deputies address parking complaints by working with location managers. When someone suggested that parking violations would stop if officers issued citations, Waterman explained that film permit violations are not covered by the California Vehicle Code so cannot be ticketed.

Several attendees described incidents when safety concerns and permit violations were brought to the attention of an officer who refused to intervene. CHP Officer Cardoza seemed genuinely surprised at this, and made an emphatic appeal to the audience, "Contact me when this happens. I can't do anything if I don't know about it," a sentiment reiterated by Sergeant Waterman.

It soon became apparent that County officials have only one enforcement tool: permit cancellation. This draconian action is seldom exercised, so enforcement is left up to each film company. Thus panelists repeatedly offered the same unsatisfying advice: "Contact the location manager or FilmLA and they will work with the crew to resolve any permit

violations." At this, several in the room stood up, vehement that this approach is ineffective. While a few reported that FilmLA had helped, most said that such appeals were useless. "No one seems to be in charge. There is no accountability."

Questions were raised about FilmLA's "community surveys" solicited from neighbors prior to a permit being issued. What triggers a survey and why are some people surveyed and others not? Several said it seemed their responses were ignored and that the surveys "made no difference."

FilmLA's Josh Mingo replied that surveys are required when the production entails special circumstances such as stopping traffic, pyrotechnics, or filming past regular hours (7am-10pm). Surveys are collected by the production companies and then handed over to FilmLA. If a survey shows that neighbors have concerns, FilmLA will try to work out an adjustment with the production company. When neighbors strongly object, a permit may be denied. Mingo acknowledged the process is flawed, but emphasized that FilmLA places considerable importance on community surveys.

Many in the audience offered ideas for improvement. One participant, who had hosted many shoots, suggested that the filming host share responsibility in resolving problems. Another noted that location managers don't have sufficient authority to solve problems and suggested taking concerns directly to the First Assistant Director in charge of the set. Several recommended that the person in charge wear a high-visibility vest so he or she can be identified. Others asked FilmLA to make permit data publicly available to provide greater transparency and build trust in the County's commitment to neighborhoods as well as toward film companies.

Since much of the discussion was loud, contentious, and led by those wishing to express grievances, it seems likely that many with a positive view of filming were not heard. On balance, however, the meeting was constructive. Several panelists said they had a much better idea of Altadena's concerns, and encouraged anyone with questions or issues to contact them.

At the close of the meeting, Chairwoman Chomyn said the committee will evaluate community comments and determine next steps.

ATC Filming Contacts

FilmLA

Josh Mingo
Director, Permit Operations
213 977-8607
jmingo@filmla.com

Arturo Pina
Community Outreach Liaison
213-977-8642
apina@filmla.com

DPW- Public Works

Gregory Graham
626 458 4917
ggraham@dpw.lacounty.gov

County Sheriffs

Wayne Waterman
626 296 2104
cell: 818 359 4748
wpwaterm@lasd.org

CHP- Media Relations

Kristi Cardoza
213 703 2070
kcardoza@film.ca.gov

Town Council Filming Committee

Anne Chomyn
Jennifer Lee
Pat Sutherlen
Kenny Meyer
altadenafilmingcommittee@gmail.com

New and Downtown!



Church Topped Off

Steeple jacks recently installed a new cross atop the dome of Altadena Community Church on Altadena Drive, just east of Lake. Tim Gregory, building biographer and a founding member of Altadena Heritage, tells us that old photos were researched to reproduce the original cross, which rotted out and blew down about 30 years ago. The new one is steel and should see us through the next century or two.



Aldi opens on Lake and Calaveras

The long-anticipated opening of the new Aldi Store saw Altadenans lining up around the block on opening day, April 6th. Members of the Town Council and Aldi executives and managers celebrated with a ribbon cutting and a few short speeches. Then the crowds streamed in and checked out Altadena's newest grocery store, whose importance has been magnified by the recent closing of Ralphs next door.



More room to sit at Café de Leche!

Owners Anya and Matt Schodorf of our newest coffee shop, Café de Leche, welcomed friends to the opening of a new patio behind their North Lake shop on April 7th. The limited seating capacity of the shop's interior and small Lake Ave-facing seating area has now been greatly expanded. The hip and airy design, realized in wood, with several large planters, offers both intimate corners for conversation and a large table for communal gabfests. It's a quieter, contained space compared to the outside front seating — but no mountain view!

Newsletter Editor:
Editorial Committee:

Mark Goldschmidt
Michele Zack
Linda World

If you would like to contribute contact
altadenaheritage@gmail.com



Altadena Heritage
730 E. Altadena Dr.
Altadena, CA 91001-2351

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PASADENA, CA
PERMIT NO. 90

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Golden Poppy Celebration

May 21, 3-6 pm - This year's Spring Garden Party will be held at Green Man Lodge, the rusticated home of Louis Steinhauser. Current owners Daniel Singer and Cal Smith will tell us about their home, its designer, and their role in expanding upon its "Green Man" theme during our program, which begins at four o'clock. Golden Poppy Garden winners will also share the stories of their gardens. Before and after, guests may wander the grounds, see interior rooms featuring Steinhauser's carvings, and enjoy Altadena Heritage's bounteous groaning board, libations, and live music. \$10 members, \$20 non-members.

RSVP's are required: altadenaheritage@gmail.com, or call 626/798-9687 (also for handicapped parking). Please wear sensible shoes, outdoor stairway is rustic.



BECOME A MEMBER

Choose one:

- New member Renewing member

Type of membership:

- \$25: Individual \$35: Household \$15: Full-time student
 \$15: Senior individual (65 and over) \$100: Patron
 \$30: Senior Household

Are you interested in volunteering?

- Yes! Contact me. Not at this time.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Make check payable to **Altadena Heritage** and mail to:

730 E. Altadena Dr., Altadena, CA 91001

Or: www.altadenaheritage.org/membership-payment