



**Sierra Madre
Historical
Preservation Society
Newsletter**

Spring 2009

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**Sierra Madre's Historic Preservation Ordinance,
... or lack thereof.**

Prior to the last election members of the SMHPS board collaborated with the City Council to clarify ambiguities in the Municipal Code pertaining to building permit fee waivers for historic landmarks. People thought fees were supposed to be waived but the code was not clear on this. So we drafted amendments and the Council directed staff to bring them back with a report. When the report was considered by the present Council they did not like either fee waivers or Mills Act tax breaks and directed staff to come back with a resolution further limiting building permit relief and placing a moratorium on Mills Act contracts.

Building permit fees amount to a small percentage of the cost of renovation. And, as Councilman Watts pointed out, the cost of restoring a historic structure is so much higher than new construction that the waiver is of no practical benefit. That is correct. The waiver is symbolic. It tells the person restoring a historical landmark that we appreciate the effort and want to encourage it. Cutting back the waiver amounts to a symbolic repudiation of historic preservation.

Whether intentionally or through ignorance, the numbers upon which the Council relied in their Mills Act discussion were wrong and grossly inflated the loss of revenue to Sierra Madre.

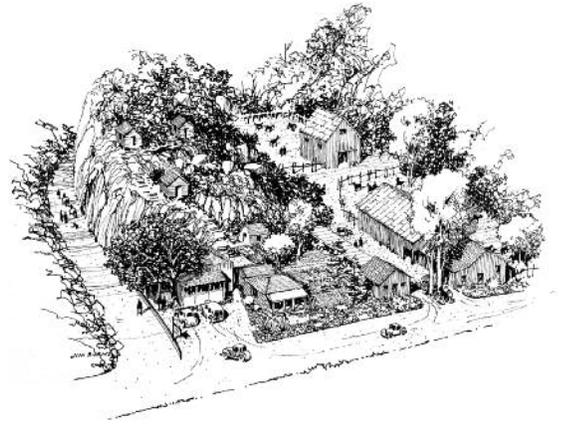
Fortunately, this has come to the attention of the owners of many of Sierra Madre's historic landmarks. They are meeting to discuss how to deal with the Council. They are gathering information and working on ways to develop a strong constituency for historic preservation in the city.

Preservation Report Card

Did you all know that Sierra Madre got a "C" on the 2008 Los Angeles Conservancy preservation report card?

Cities earning a "C" typically have ordinances in place to designate historic landmarks or districts. They can prevent or significantly delay demolition or alteration of landmarks or buildings within historic districts. However, these communities require owner consent for designation, and they may have designated few or no landmarks or districts. These cities often have completed a historic resources survey.

Within our city there are 47 designated landmarks and 16 Mills Act contracts yet Sierra Madre has no dedicated personnel to administer Mills Act and landmark programs. No extensive historic resources survey has ever been completed. There are no designated historic districts. And our preservation ordinances are under attack. We have our work cut out for us. We can make a difference!



Update on the Richardson House and Lizzie's

Here's some info on Lizzie's and the Richardson House:

- The second and final water tank reservoir is close to completion, at which time the fences can come down.
- The sidewalk in front of the Richardson House was damaged during the project. Bruce Inman (Public Works) called and told us it will be repaired forthwith.
- The tree in front of the Richardson House was overgrown. Bob Manthorne and Jay Whitcraft cut back low-hanging branches, but we contacted Danny Osti, who has agreed to trim it further, avoiding interleaved wires.
- The pinball machine at Lizzie's has had two visits by Fred Reich-pinball repair man. There is still a small problem that we can handle manually when each new game is set up. Fred can be called if needed (remember, this machine is over 60 ears old!).
- Group tours for schools, Red Hats, historical societies, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and all interested parties are available: Call Jay Whitcraft, Curator @ 626-355-5987.

President's Message

If you have been thinking about making a contribution to the fund for Sierra Madre's new comprehensive history book, now is the time. The manuscript is completed, edited and is now being indexed and chapter layouts are being worked on. We are still acquiring permissions and licensing for images and we hope to be printing by early summer. What does this mean to you? The time is running short to be acknowledged in the book as a donor or to have a loved one, friend or a family member honored or remembered with a donation in their name. Checks made payable to SMHPS may be sent to P.O. Box 202, Sierra Madre, CA 91025. Please indicate in the memo line of your check the type of donation-In Memory of or In Honor of and the name of the honoree. A list of giving categories and donors is posted on our website www.smhps.org/donors.html, please make sure your name is included!

Lookin' Groovy?

The Sierra Madre Historical Archives is actively seeking photos of Sierra Madre during the 1960s and 1970s. We need images of Sierra Madreans wearing long hair, bell bottoms, polyester suits, mini skirts, platform shoes, etc. Maybe you have snaps of kids riding banana seat bikes, drawing with an etch-a-sketch, or holding a Mrs. Beasley doll? Also missing from the Archives during this era are images of local busi-nesses, park equipment, schools, and events. Any photographic format will do: polaroids, 35 mm slides, or color prints. We'll gladly accept menus, bumper stickers, posters, and community newsletters too. Can you dig it? Call Debbie Henderson at the Library at 626.355.7186 or dhenderson@cityofsierramadre.com with your findings – right on!



enclose your renewal check. If you are not sure when your membership expires, please check your mailing label on this newsletter, as it shows the year your membership expires. Members have asked if more than one year can be paid at a time. YES, you may pay for two or three years at a time and your membership date will reflect the extended renewal time.

Thank you everyone for your membership dues and donations. Thank you to all of our contributing members, patrons, supporters, Archival Preservation Partners. Your combined support helps the Historical Preservation Society keep Lizzie's Trail Inn and The Richardson House in excellent repair and your donations to the Archives help to secure new documents and photos relating to Sierra Madre. Our greatest appreciation and gratitude goes to our Centennial Book Publication supporters.

Membership

Welcome to the new members who have joined the Historical Preservation Society this past year 2008. Thanks to you and our past members for your support. We look forward to seeing all of you at our booths, meetings and programs.

Most of you, your membership renewal dues are due January 1st. The current memberships have expired December 31, 2008. Enclosed in this Newsletter is your renewal envelope. Please fill in the envelope and



Sierra Madre Historical Society lemonade stand at the Art Fair, May 21, 1981. Pictured left to right: Charles Peterson, Marjorie Peterson, Gertrude Gerke, Celeste Morrison, and Norm Morrison



Lemonade and laughs at the 1983 Art Fair. Sierra Madre Historical Society members Elsie Dammeyer, Elva Johnson, Ross Tyree, and Joseph Grippi work our booth.

When Life Gives You Lemons...

Meet the challenge the way the Historical Preservation Society has for many years: Squeeze and Freeze! The Society once again asks the community to squeeze and freeze the juice from lemons and rangpur limes for use in the Society's famous lemonade sold at the Friends of the Library Art Fair May 16th and May 17th. Call Dane at 355-3905 for delivery details. Meanwhile, enjoy these photos from the Sierra Madre Archives jointly owned by the Library and the Historical Society.

