

West Adams Matters

UPDATE: National Register Landmark W. T. Bishop Mansion Gutting by Laura Meyers

Last month we reported that one of West Adams' most visible landmarks, the 1898 William T. Bishop Residence located at 1342 West Adams Blvd., had been gutted without permits and was pending an approval for conversion into multiple apartments - so many apartments that the owner/developer simply cannot build them without making major alterations to the historic exterior as well as completely demolishing all the character-defining interior features. Unfortunately, we do not have any good news yet to report about this situation.



The Office of Historic Resources did issue an approval for the change of use into apartments, and WAHA immediately appealed (the text of the appeal is reprinted at the end of this article). The owners have now also applied for two more entitlements: a subdivision case (Lot Line Adjustment) and also a retroactive "Early Work Demolition Permit," apparently in an attempt to make legal the illegal gutting. Neither of these applications have been approved, but they do demonstrate the strategy of the owner to attempt to segment the project rather than providing City officials a full legal project description.

(continued on page 8)

March Comes in Like A Lion with Two WAHA Events Saturday, March 9: Tour the Oscar Costumes at FIDM Sunday, March 17: It's the Luck O' the Irish – WAHA's St. Patrick's Day Potluck

Please join WAHA's own costume designer extraordinaire Rory Cunningham and fellow West Adams residents for an afternoon with Oscar -- Oscar costumes at the FIDM Museum, that is. Along with a fun and informative tour, those who wish are invited afterwards for cocktails and dinner (no host) at a nearby venue. The exhibit itself is free. Full story on page 4.

And, please join us at our first potluck of the year, a St. Patrick's Day celebration on Sunday, March 17, 4-7 p.m. at the home of Sally Turner, 2280 W. 21st St. in Western Heights.

WAHA will provide drinks and some corned beef. Wear something green and bring a potluck dish to share.

Costumes from film Lincoln (right) and other Oscar-nominated movies are on view at FIDM.



"Flyover" Threat to St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, and Nearby Landmarks

by Laura Meyers and Jean Frost

They say there is no rest for the weary – and WAHA's Preservation Committee certainly is "weary," with many historic preservation issues currently on our plate. Now there is one more: On February 27, one day before the end of a brief official public comment period, WAHA was surprised to learn of a Cal-Trans "flyover proposal" for an elevated HOV lanes bridge from the 110 Freeway that would affect one of West Adams's most significant and sensitive historic neighborhoods, the Adams-Figueroa intersection.

That confluence of history has a wide array of designated historic resources including, but not limited to: St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, St. Vincent's Cathedral, the Automobile Club of Southern California, the Chester Place Historic District, the Woolen Mills Zanja, and the Stimson Mansion. A massive elevated bridge would have incompatible massing and scale adjacent to this distinguished roster of resources, looming over these historical sites and almost certainly having major negative impacts on St. John's. Indeed, St. John's is very concerned; we have included the church's letter on page13.

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WAHA's Spring Events!

WAHA has a full, FUN roster of upcoming events, including Membership meetings/potlucks, WAHA Steps Out social activities, the annual June Tour, and, of course, heritage and historic preservation events. Please review the Calendar of Events published on page 15. Highlights of events in March and April (described in more detail on the following pages) include:

• Wearing o' the Green -- WAHA invites you to a St. Paddy's Day Potluck on March 17 (page 1)

• Oscar Costumes -- tour FIDM's annual exhibit of the best of the Silver Screen costumes (page 6)

• L.A. Heritage Day -- WAHA is participating in the 5th annual conclave of heritage organizations at the El Pueblo Monument (page 5) ●

WAHA Spring Historic Homes & Architecture Tour: Sat, June 1

WAHA will be celebrating its 30th Anniversary Year beginning later this Spring. You'll hear more about our plans for commemorating this milestone event as WAHA plans a number of celebratory events. But please do mark your calendar now for WAHA's annual Spring Homes & Architecture Tour on Saturday, June 1, when we will showcase landmark properties that represent 120 years of West Adams and its environs' cultural heritage and diversity.

In WAHA's first two decades, the organization focused primarily on the architecture of the Victorian and Craftsman eras, and on homes built by the civic leaders of those eras. But for the past decade WAHA has turned its attention increasingly to honoring more than a century of citizens, including the waves of immigrant populations and diverse racial heritage who moved into (and, in many case, then from) the West Adams District.

Throughout the 20th century, West Adams became home to groups of immigrants from Greece, Poland, Armenia, Hungary, Estonia, Wales, Korea (the first wave of Korean immigrants arrived here more than 100 years ago), and Japan, among the distinctive national groups who settled in this community, erected buildings, and helped transform West Adams' cultural landscape. West Adams was also home to a sizeable Jewish population for many years, including an enclave of Sephardic Jews. And, of course, the Historic West Adams District became known as "The Westside" to generations of African Americans who also look to Central Avenue as "The Eastside."

WAHA won a Governor's Preservation Award for our Evening Strolls programs, which built on the idea that we should acknowledge and honor the many, many people whose combined stories create the wonderful quilt that is the history of our community.

We are still in the initial stages of planning the tour (<u>do you want to help</u>?), but we will specifically focus on individual historic properties – many of them designated landmarks – that each reflect one or more diverse cultures as part of the buildings' respective histories. It will, of course, be a self-guided driving (and biking) tour.

A tour as complex as this will need a dedicated core organizing committee to plan all of the logistics, and many volunteers on the day of the tour. If you would like to help organize this important event, please contact tours@westadams_heritage.org. It will be very important to have new ideas and new helping hands for this event; please consider adding yourself to that roster!

Preservation Committee Updates:

Some good news: the Stewart Farmhouse was offically approved by the City Council as Los Angeles's newest Historic Cultural Monument in late February. And, on February 5, the South Los Angeles Area Planning Commission found in favor of the Planning Department, neighbors and WAHA, and turned down the applicant's request to build new buildings and conduct mortuary services at the historic Chapel of the Pines.

On February 11, WAHA also attended the Oak Norwood Housing project ZAA (Zoning Administrator Adjustment) hearing after reviewing the proposal for 29 residential units with 74 underground parking spaces (32 residential and 40 non-residential teacher parking spaces). Located on Oak Street, 20th Street and 21st Street, within the University Park HPOZ, WAHA is concerned that the proposal conform to the University Park Preservation Plan (which requires conformance to historic patterns of development including prevailing massing, scale and setback), as well as the mixed usage of the parking. At the hearing, the examiner deemed the submitted drawings incomplete and he continued the hearing until a later date, to be determined. He had some questions whether the adjustment being sought was the proper request and he suggested they meet with Building and Safety. He did take testimony from the applicant and those who attended both in support and against but the "official" hearing will take place at a subsequent time when there is more clarity in both the submitted plans and the required entitlements. So there is an opportunity for WAHA and WAHA members to attend and make further comment.

President's Message by John Patterson

I am pleased to welcome our Preservation Chair, Jean Frost, back to Los Angeles. We look forward to her active leadership in the coming months as West Adams confronts some very serious challenges. A few of these contentious issues were outlined in great detail in last month's newsletter, and I would encourage as many WAHA members as possible to step forward to assist the Preservation Committee in these endeavors. As is so often the case, too many tasks fall on the shoulders of far too few volunteers. In order for us to provide adequate attention to the threats to our historic neighborhood, please consider joining WAHA's Preservation Committee!!

We're gearing up for a busy spring. We'll be launching a major WAHA Membership drive in April, with the goal of issuing an updated Membership Directory by mid-summer, just as soon as everyone has had a chance to renew. I'm looking forward to seeing you all at the March 17th potluck. Be sure to invite your "non-WAHA-member neighbors" to accompany you. Then in April, we'll have our Annual Membership Meeting and Board Elections – please consider joining us. I would be very pleased to have at least two or three new points of view on our Board of Directors team.

I hope everybody took note of the VERY full calendar of events that were laid out in the February issue. (Page 15 is a "MUST SAVE" to display on your refrigerator or bulletin board.) We're going to start promoting all of our events on WAHA's newly-relaunched Facebook page. If you're a fan of Facebook, you're going to want to "like us!" so you can stay informed of all of the WAHA happenings in your neighborhood.

A substantial upgrade of the WAHA website is also in the works. I would encourage all of our members to submit suggests of what you would like to see included on these pages. We are anticipating a significantly greater focus on WAHA's preservation advocacy efforts, in addition to an expanded level of valuable helpful content, like local Block Club meetings and hearings on the Community Plans that will impact the future of Historic West Adams. Any suggestions of what you would like to see on your WAHA website, please be sure to forward those ideas to me. WAHA is an all-volunteer organization, and we would greatly appreciate your assistance in any and all of these efforts!

John Patterson may be reached by e-mail at President@WestAdamsHeritage.org

WAHA Board Candidates Sought

WAHA is looking for a few good men and women. Our annual Board of Directors election is in April, and we need candidates to step up. As always, we need board members with fresh, upbeat, enthusiastic ideas. This community was founded by the best volunteers in the nation, and now is the time for members (you!) to come forward. You need not spend an extraordinary amount of time doing tasks, but you must be committed to WAHA's goals of providing both member and community service, and its historic preservation mission of advocacy. Generally speaking, board members are expected to attend all WAHA board meetings (usually held the fourth Thursday of each month), help with WAHA's fundraising efforts, and share in the responsibility for WAHA's events, committees, advocacy, and social functions. We don't have many requirements: a love of old houses and other historic buildings, an enthusiasm for community activities, membership in WAHA for at least six months, and a desire to preserve and improve our neighborhoods. WAHA always needs expertise in fundraising, zoning issues, and historic preservation. But if you have a program you'd like to initiate, those ideas are welcome, too.

If you'd like to run for the board, please submit a brief (100-word) candidate's statement introducing yourself to the membership. We will run these statements in the April WAHA Matters newsletter. Submission deadline is Monday, March 18. Please e-mail your statement to president@westadamsheritage.org. If you miss this deadline but decide to run for the Board, that's OK (but your name will not be on the ballot), since all Board candidates will present themselves at the election meeting in a very short (one- to two-minute) speech. If you have not submitted a candidate's statement to the newsletter, you are required to be present at the election itself to run for the board.

If you'd like to learn more about the requirements (and benefits) of serving on the WAHA board, please contact WAHA President John Patterson, at president@westadamsheritage.org. ●

WAHA Relaunches Facebook Page by Lisa Schoening

The newly-relaunched WAHA Facebook page is up and open for business at www.facebook.com/WestAdamsHeritageAssociation. We're encouraging everyone - WAHA members and friends - to come "Like" us there and share our posts! And you don't need to be part of Facebook to see the page: just click on the link and you'll be able to see the pictures and read the posts.

The new page will be a place to see what WAHA is up to, read about what's going on in the neighborhood and even find recommendations for local restaurants and other businesses. But to make all this happen we need your help: if you've taken pictures at a WAHA event, documented your own efforts to renovate your house or replant your garden, if you've got a local business whose work you'd like to share or a community event you'd like to promote, send it to us! We're particularly interested in sharing historic photos, especially if you have "now and then" views of your house or your block.

We d also like to hear from the block clubs and preservation groups: if there's a meeting you'd like to publicize or a preservation alert you need to share, send us a brief message with the key details and we'll help get the word out. And if your group or business has its own Facebook page, please send us the link so we can like you back.

To send us material for posting, you can contact the page administrators directly via Facebook message or e-mail us with



photos/links/event details at facebook@westadamsheritage.org. With photos, please include any relevant details (including the name of the photographer) and whether or not you'd like to be tagged in the picture when it's posted.

We hope to see you all there! •

igwedgeAHA Matters

Updating West Adams' Landmarks of African American History

In 2011, WAHA undertook a project to research and publish a "brochure" honoring the achievements of African Americans who had called West Adams home. The resulting 44-page publication, *West Adams' Landmarks of African American History*, contains photos and brief biographies of more than 70 prominent individuals who lived and worked in the West Adams District, along with descriptions of many buildings of historical importance to the African American community.

Inside its pages are stories of the religious and civic institutions that play significant roles in West Adams' (and Los Angeles') black heritage, and profiles of civil rights leaders, entertainers, sports figures, wartime heroes, and trailblazers in their fields, including Los Angeles' first African American school principal, the first black graduate of Caltech, the first African American to lead a major U.S. symphony, and the first African American composer in the United States to have a symphony performed by a major symphony orchestra, the first black judge west of the



WAHA

Mississippi, trailblazing black journalists, jazz virtuosos, rhythm & blues legends, and many other black songwriters, composers, arrangers, and musicians, an innovative black businesswoman who established a national fast-food chain, California's first black librarian, and the black property owners who successfully challenged racial covenants, taking their cases to the Supreme Court, among many others.

West Adams' Landmarks of African American History has proven to be an important, and popular, publication. Indeed, we are nearly sold out, and as a result we are beginning to plan a second edition. Along with a few needed corrections, we would love to add stories we missed.

And, we'd like **your** help. The first edition had contributions from two dozen West Adams neighbors and friends, who culled through their personal records and memory banks to suggest historic personages to include in the publication. This time, we want to add anyone and/or any place that was overlooked. We are looking for people who were first in their field, pioneers in an industry, inspirations to children (or adults), fighters for civil rights and social justice, and anyone who played a role in local, state or federal African American history AND who have a home, building or site in the greater West Adams District associated with them. (The general boundaries are the 110 Freeway on the east, Exposition on the south, Olympic on the north and West Boulevard to the west.)

If you know of any trailblazing African American personages meeting the above description who lived in West Adams (and who are not included in the current edition), please contact Laura Meyers, editor, at news@westadamsheritage.com.





igwedgeAHA Matters

L.A. Heritage Day Celebrates Southland's Colorful History

500 Years of Fascinating Facts and Objects on Display at Free Event

Sunday, April 14, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m., Pico House, El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, 424 North Main Street (Downtown)

Learn the myriad stories about the Los Angeles region's over 500 years of recorded history on April 14, when the L.A. Heritage Alliance hosts its Fifth Annual L.A. Heritage Day in partnership with El Pueblo Historical Monument. Share this history through tours, five museums, presentations, giveaways, food, and other activities. More than 50 historical-focused organizations, including West Adams Heritage Association (WAHA), will have booths at the event.

This year's L.A. Heritage Day will take place inside the historic Pico House at El Pueblo Historic Monument (http://elpueblo.lacity.org/), adjacent to Olvera Street and across the street from Union Station in downtown Los Angeles. Located at the corner of Main and Arcadia streets, just off the Plaza, the Pico House was originally a luxury hotel built by Pío Pico, the last Mexican governor of California.



"In an area sometimes perceived as having no 'real' history, L.A. Heritage Day is an opportunity for people to learn about and enjoy the fascinating people, places, and events that have shaped Southern California," said Cindy Olnick, spokesperson for the Los Angeles Conservancy. "It's also a chance to learn about the incredible variety of local preservation groups, museums, libraries, and historical societies serving people today throughout Los Angeles County."

El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument is the birthplace of L.A., the original site of the early pueblo where the city was founded in 1781. Be sure to schedule enough time to also tour Olvera Street, Avila Adobe, Chinese American Museum, the Plaza Firehouse Museum, and the new América Tropical Interpretive Center, dedicated to the life and legacy of David Alfaro Siqueiros and his mural, "América Tropical."

Admission is free. More information is available at www.laheritagealliance.org. Don't forget to stop by the WAHA table and say "hello." \bullet



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IN ESCROW

Mid-City Spanish — 4921 West 21st St. *Adam Janeiro, buyer's agent*

Unique Adams-Normandie 3-Story Colonial Revival — David Raposa, seller's agent

Leimert Park 1930s Spanish — Rare huge lot on sought-after tree-lined block of 2-story homes — David Raposa, seller's agent

SOLD

Arlington Heights Condos — Mediterranean Gem, rich with historical detail and lush native garden. Two separate units! *David Raposa, seller's agent*

Our agents live and work in Historic West Adams David Raposa Suzanne Henderson, Adam Janeiro, Darby Bayliss, Carlton Joseph, Jane Harrington

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21st Annual Art of Motion Picture Costume Design

WAHA Steps Out: Saturday, March 9, 2:30 p.m.

Exhibit is on view through April 27

FIDM, the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising, 919 S. Grand Ave. (Downtown L.A.)

Please join WAHA's own costume designer extraordinaire Rory Cunningham and fellow West Adams residents for an afternoon with Oscar -- Oscar costumes at the FIDM Museum, that is.

Get a close-up view of the costumer's art, and view designer Jacqueline Durran's Academy Award-winning costumes for Anna Karenina at the 21st annual Art of Motion Picture Costume Design exhibition at the FIDM Museum. Also showcased are the beautiful and elaborate garments from her fellow Oscar nominees for the films *Les Misérables* (costumes by Paco Delgado), *Lincoln* (costumes

by Joanna Johnston), *Mirror Mirror* (costumes by Eiko Ishioka), and *Snow White and the Huntsman* (costumes by Colleen Atwood).

Since its inception in 1992 and coinciding with the awards season, the Art of Motion Picture Costume Design exhibition at the FIDM Museum honors the incredible work of costume designers in the film industry – and not just the Oscar nominees. The 2013 exhibition features an array of more than 100 costumes, period to contemporary, from twenty films, including A Royal Affair, Argo, Django Unchained, Hitchcock, Skyfall, and other films. The exhibition also showcases Mark Bridges' work for *The Artist*, the winner of last year's Academy Award for costume design. In addition, the exhibit features the police uniforms used in *End of Watch*, the dress worn by Jennifer Lawrence when her character volunteers herself for duty in *The Hunger Games*, and a purple ensemble Whitney Houston wore in her last film, *Sparkle*.

As always, we look forward to a fun and informative tour. Meet in front of the exhibition, in the park area at 2:30 p.m. Admission is free. Those who wish are invited afterwards for cocktails and dinner (no host) at a nearby venue.

(Parking is available under the FIDM building, but if you are joining the group for the later cocktails and dinner, you will need to park in a different lot, as the FIDM lot will close.) ●

Costume Designers Nominated for Best Costume Oscars:

Anna Karenina -- Jacqueline Durran Les Misérables -- Paco Degado Lincoln -- Joanna Johnston Mirror Mirror -- Eiko Ishioka Snow White and the Huntsman -- Colleen Atwood





Costumes nominated for the 2013 Oscars:

Left, Top to Bottom: Les Misérables; Anna Karenina

Right, Top to Bottom: Mirror, Mirror; Lincoln.

Top of page: Snow White and the Huntsman







S tepping Out

Festival of Books Saturday and Sunday, April 20 and 21 University of Southern California campus

The Los Angeles Times Festival of Books, the largest book festival in the country, returns to the USC campus in April. Free to the public, this annual event brings people who create books together with the people who love to read them. Meet authors and publishers, hear readings and celebrate the diverse ethnic and cultural communities of Los Angeles through the city's biggest annual literary event. Great for all ages! ●



Women Win the Vote

Thursday, March 21 7 p.m.

Rancho Los Cerritos Historic Site, 4600 Virginia Road (Long Beach)

Historic Rancho Los Cerritos is sponsoring "The Notable Women in Western History" lecture series, which continues on Thursday, March 21, when Filmmaker Martha Wheelock will show her documentary *California Women Win the Vote* and talk about this important historic moment. Wheelock s film dramatizes the suffrage campaign that won women the right to vote in California, nine years before the 19th Amendment. The California campaign galvanized women throughout the country, and the tactics and spirit of these women continue to inspire citizen activism in our modern democratic society. \$7/\$5 for members; RSVP by calling (562) 570-1755. http://www.rancholoscerritos.org ●

Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles World Thinking Day "Tasting Bee" Saturday, March 16

10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Foshay Learning Center, 3751 S. Harvard Blvd. (at 37th Place, north of Exposition, east of Western Avenue)

Taste delicious world cuisine provided by local Girls Scouts, including West Adams Troop 3725 Daisies and Brownies, who will be participating with a Thailand booth. FREE admission -- ONLY 50¢ per taste! All proceeds go to local Girl Scout troops. (If you have a chance, check out the school's newly renovated 1925 auditorium.) ●



Preservation Matters

Bishop Residence Update

continued from page 1

Designed by Sumner Hunt and Theodore Eisen and erected by William Threlkeld Bishop in 1898, the mansion became part of the Roger Williams Baptist Church complex starting in the late 1920s, after the Bishop family moved to Bel Air. (The Gothic Revival church sanctuary building located at 1326 West Adams Blvd was erected in 1934, and at that time the two buildings were connected by means of a cloister walkway, and the mansion was at that time plastered to match the sanctuary. The entire complex is a federal historic resource.)

It remains unclear and perplexing to WAHA just WHY the City's staff – which reportedly is trained in such evaluations – would not understand that enclosing historical features, changing windows and window fenestrations (adding a total of 14 doors and windows), adding dormers and thus changing the roofline, adding exterior stairs, nclosing porches to be rooms, and other major exterior changes is exactly what is not allowable under the Guidelines. Staff states that the proposed changes were reviewed utilizing HPOZ guidelines, but we all know that the addition of dormers, the removal of historical windows, the addition o new windows and fenestrations (window openings) and the enclosures of porches are exactly what the City says creates a "Non-Contributor" in an historic district – so WAHA questions why would the City approve such changes on an already-designated historic resource?

Lastly, we remind everyone that the developer has commenced work absent any approved permits and this project appears to be far more complex than may have been originally understood. After WAHA and West Adams activists have been working for so many years for the preservation of West Adams' historic resources, non-permitted changes to this Eisen and Hunt Chateauesque building cannot be tolerated.





Interior of the William T. Bishop Residence, gutted without building permits (photos taken in late February 2013)

WAHA's appeal follows below.

Appeal of Case No. DIR-2012-3128-COA-SPP and related Case No. ENV-2012-3129-CE

1342 West Adams Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90007

PROJECT DESCRIPTION -- Director's approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness and a Project Compliance Permit; and a Categorical Exemption from CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act), for: "The conversion of two structures from office and Sunday School use to residential use; rehabilitation and restoration of exterior of both structures; addition of new dormers and exterior deck/stairs to primary structure; addition of 184 square feet to second story of accessory structure; and landscaping, gate and other site work on the property."

February 14, 2013

Dear Administrators:

I am appealing this entire decision, along with all related determinations and findings, on behalf of West Adams Heritage Association (WAHA). After working for 30 years to conserve and protect the designated and identified historic resources in the West Adams District – including quite specifically the subject site – West Adams Heritage Association and I, personally, are aggrieved parties in this case, which if not appealed would permit the permanent alteration and demolition of designated historic resources. This justification letter will describe the points at issue and why we believe the decision-maker erred or abused discretion in this matter.

Planning Department staff failed to review this project in the context of its status as an Historic Resource individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places (ID No. US-87000139, NPS-87000139-9999, dated 02/12/1987) and as well as an Historic Resource that contributes to a National Register Historic District (also 1987). Staff also failed to inform the North University Park Design Review Board of the property's status as designated on the National Register.

Of critical importance is the "Cloister," which connects two important designated historic resources (the subject property, the William T. Bishop Residence at 1342 West Adams Blvd., and the Roger Williams Baptist Church, located at 1326 West Adams Blvd., all under the same current ownership). It has a prominent façade on Adams Boulevard, a designated scenic highway. However, buried in the Project's plans and also buried in the Findings – and not revealed in any public notice or project description – is the plan to remove/demolish this historic structure.

In addition, Staff incorrectly made Findings that the project as presented meets Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. It does not (see more detail below).

* The Project Description (copied above) fails to indicate that a part of the Project is the Demolition of the Gothic Revival "Cloister," an approximately 100-foot-long structure that is also historically-designated. Public notices of the public hearing also failed to include the proposed demolition in the Project Description, a violation of the Brown Act (agendas from September 12 and November 19, 2012 attached).

Relative to this demolition, Staff also failed to require that the Applicant comply with LAMC Section 12.20.3, Subsection K ,5 (a), (b), (c), and (d), which specifically states: "No Certificate of Appropriateness shall be issued to demolish, remove or relocate any building, structure, Landscaping, Natural Feature or Lot within a Preservation Zone that is designated as a Contributing Element and the application shall be denied unless the Owner can demonstrate to the Area Planning Commission that the Owner would be deprived of all economically viable use of the property."

This Subsection goes on to describe, in detail, the manner in which an Applicant is to evaluate a proposed demolition of a historic resource. No such evaluation has taken place. The granting of the COA is in direct violation of this section of the HPOZ Ordinance, and although the subject site is within the North University Park Specific Plan (NUPSP), the North University Park Specific Plan Subsection 2E requires that "A change in the occupancy, construction, alteration, relocation or removal of a building, natural feature or site, or any combination thereof with the Plan Area shall comply with Section 12.20.3, Subsections F through N of the LAMC (Historic Preservation Overlay Zone Ordinance)." Subsection K and each of its requirements falls within "F through N." Thus this demolition of the Cloister structure does not meet the criteria in the NUPSP.

* Staff made a gross error in Finding C, relative to LAMC 12.20.3.K.4(c), Standard #4, "Most properties change over time; those changes which have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved."

The Staff Finding indicates that although "significant changes occurred in 1933-1934" (e.g., the construction of the Roger Williams Baptist Church sanctuary, the construction of the Gothic Revival Cloister, and the alteration of the original 1898 William T. Bishop residence with the addition of exterior plaster to match these two structures), and that "although these alterations are now historic due to their age," it was not necessary to retain these architectural features because the new project (change the building to an 8-unit apartment building) "removes" the current "relationship to the church." First of all, that is not a proper finding; the Cloister structure in particular may or may not need to have a current religious use to be historic. Second, there is no evidence in this record that the Bishop Residence has not taken on an added historical significance for its association with a religious organization. Third, the entire group of these buildings along Adams Boulevard are designated on the National Register as they appear today, linked in style and material. WAHA believes that residence did acquire a secondary significance when it became the home of the Roger Williams Baptist Church in the late 1920s, and certainly in 1933-34 when it was altered as part of the larger (also historic) complex. In any case, there no factual evidence in the Determination or its Findings to the contrary.

Moreover, since the William T. Bishop Residence was listed on the National Register in 1987 with its stucco cladding, that is how it is designated.

* The Project does not meet the requirements of LAMC 11.5.7.C.2, which relies on LAMC Section 12.20.3, Subsection K, "Certificate of Appropriateness for Contributing Elements," which requires a Finding under 4(b): "Whether the Project protects and preserves the Historic and architectural qualities and the physical characteristics which make the building, structure, landscape, or Natural Feature a Contributing Element of the Preservation Zone" because it does not preserve all of the Historic and architectural qualities which make the...structure...a Contributing Element of the Preservation Zone because the Project demolishes (and thus eliminates) the Cloister, which is a pre-1941



Contributing Element of the Preservation Zone.

* The Project does not meet the requirements of the NUPSP Subsection 2F which notes the purpose of a Certificate of Appropriateness is "to assure that any change made to a Facade of an existing, relocated or new building or structure is compatible with the architectural Styles which existed in the Plan Area prior to January 1, 1941 and to encourage the rehabilitation or retention of architecturally unique structures." Although the Bishop Residence is proposed for a renovation that would change its exterior to be wood shingles, which may be (or may not be; there is no evidence in the file) the correct size, shape and material, this Subsection would specifically also require the "rehabilitation or retention of architecturally unique structures" like the Cloister, which was built prior to January 1, 1941. Any structure that is listed on the National Register is deemed to be "unique" by City of Los Angeles' practice and procedure relative to historic resources.

(continued on page 10)

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Preservation Matters

Bishop Residence Appeal

continued from page 9

Moreover, Staff has stated in its Determination that the "removal of non-original elements, along with the overall restoration of the facades of the buildings, brings the buildings back to their original historic appearance." We have not seen a photograph or drawing of the original 1898 exterior façade, either in the file or from WAHA's own recent research. So that affirmative statement cannot be made. In any case, the Project would introduce 14 non-original windows and doors into the Bishop Residence, which means it will not be returning the structure to its original appearance. The (visible) rear of the original porte cochere is being enclosed for HVAC and the remaining portion is shown as a "patio," while the original driveway is being relocated away from the porte cochere. The plans indicate that "pilasters" on the original front porch/ parlor/sunroom are being removed, but based on other evidence it is possible that the actual original 1898 columns may either be enclosed by these pilasters or in any case should be replicated; more research needs to be done. There are other additions and changes to the original exterior shown in the provided architectural plans, enough so that these changes are neither minor nor would they in sum bring this building back to its original appearance.

Again, WAHA disputes the assertive statement by Staff that the project is consistent with the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.

* Standard No. 1: "A property shall be used for its historic purpose, or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment." However, this Project proposes many changes (not minimal changes) to the defining characteristics of the building.

The Applicant proposes putting eight (8) apartments into an original 2-story house. To do so, Applicant will be removing the two-story grand entry reception hall (visible to passersby on the street), adding a floor, and putting housing units in the attic and the basement, triggering the necessity to add MANY windows and dormers on the (visible) rear of the house. Note that the Bishop Residence is on a corner and thus its "rear" is highly visible from Menlo Avenue, and its eastern elevation is visible from Adams Boulevard. Staff writes that the change of use "does not result in a significant impact to the character-defining features." However, the plans indicate not just the addition of new windows, but the change of what seemingly are windows or French doors, perhaps with leaded glass (it is unclear on the plans) into solid panel doors. And obviously the removal of the Cloister will then reveal the new exterior stairs and railing (which would not be visible from Adams Boulevard if covered by the Cloister walkway.)

* Standards #5 and #6 refer to the preservation of features and/or construction techniques, and the repair of deteriorated historic features, with the notation that if new/replacement features are required due to deterioration that the replacement features shall match the original in "design, color, texture, and other visual qualities, and, where possible, materials." There is nothing evident in the Determination Letter or Findings that would indicate that the original shingles were made of cedar (versus the more likely material, redwood); that the original shingles had a particular size, shape, dimensions (not discussed), or what color where they originally stained or painted (which would be evident on the reportedly discovered shingles extant under the concrete/plaster of 1934.)

Overall, Staff has made an assumption in its review of this proposal that the construction, in 1933-1934, of the Roger Williams Baptist Church and of the Cloister, and the alteration of the Bishop Residence to match these other two architectural elements, was not important, and that there was no historical significance to the 80-plus years that the Bishop Residence served a role in this religious institution. There is no evidence referenced in the Determination Letter and Findings that the later changes did not have significance, only that for some reason it now seems preferable to revert the Bishop Residence to its original form – whatever that may have been, but which is not completely supported in this document.

In any case, all three structures are designated historical resources listed on the National Register as Contributors to a District and, in the case of the Bishop Residence, individually as well. This is the highest possible level of listing/designation – much higher than being identified as a contributor to a specific plan with a historic preservation component – and the City of Los Angeles, a Certified Local Government, is obligated to evaluate all three structures within that prism. This means that no changes should be approved (versus "some" or "many" changes) that would alter the original appearance of the Bishop Residence, whatever that was. And no demolition should be approved for the Cloister.

WAHA also specifically appeals the Finding E, that the proposed project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15300, Class 31. Section 15300, Class 31 would not include the change of use to eight (8) housing units; the creation of eight units is not exempt from CEQA (although it may have easily mitigated impacts, or none at all; it would still require a ND or MND.) Moreover, Applicant has apparently made it clear that the owners intend to re-subdivide the multiple parcels so as to separate the Bishop Residence from



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the Roger Williams Baptist Church to the east, which is an entitlement project that does not permit the phasing in of environmental assessments and/or clearances (one project, one review). At the same time, Applicant is removing 100% of parking from the existing church sanctuary building (circa 40 parking spaces) by utilizing them for the new apartments use. And, IMPORTANTLY, the proposed demolition of a designated historic resource (the Cloister) requires an EIR. For all of these reasons, therefore I must appeal the Finding that this project is categorically exempt as insufficient and not legally defensible.

In conclusion, WAHA feels that the Department of City Planning, its Office of Historic Resources and its HPOZ unit erred and may have abused discretion because Staff:

• failed to evaluate the property based on its listing in the National Register; and

• may have failed to even recognize that it was listed despite the City's own ZIMAS records which make it quite clear; and

• failed to inform the NUPSP Design Review Board (DRB) of the property's National Register status; and

• failed to understand that major proposed changes to the exterior would NOT meet Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilition. In fact, many of the proposed changes to the interior are visible from the exterior of the building; and

• failed to properly inform the public of the proposed demolition of the Cloister, a designated historic resource; and

• issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for that demolition (as part of the project), even though that is not allowed in the NUPSP without evidence of financial feasibility and approval of the APC; and

• improperly failed to evaluate any environmental impacts of this multiphased project.

It remains unclear and perplexing to WAHA just WHY the City's staff – which reportedly is trained in such evaluations – would not understand that enclosing historical features, changing windows and window fenestrations, adding dormers and thus changing the roofline, adding exterior stairs, and other major exterior changes is exactly what is not allowable under the Guidelines. ● Submitted by: Laura Meyers

Preservation Matters

HOV Flyover Threatens St. John's

continued from page 1

As longtime stakeholders, WAHA was shocked that the notice did not reach many of the interested parties – included basically NONE of the organizations, including WAHA, who had commented on the previous iteration of this project many years ago – and we requested that the notice for the "NOP" be more widely circulated and the comment deadline be extended. The good news is that Cal-Trans agreed to also consider comments from WAHA members and others through Friday, March 8 (see contact information below).

When this project was first proposed 22 years ago (with various iterations) at a public meeting on May 8, 1990, extensive research done at that time by Cal-Trans and its consultant, architectural historian Diane Kane, eventually determined the design of the 110 Freeway exit should not be constructed with a flyover, which was at least one of the alternatives proposed at the time. A flyover bridge was considered to have major significant effects that could not be mitigated.

If anything, since that time the awareness of the significance of the historic area and its resources has increased rather than decreased since the time of the documents previously prepared and referenced above. However, it appears that at this point Cal-Trans is only considering one thing: that the traffic generated by having an HOV lanes offramp/terminus at Adams Boulevard has created a lot of traffic.

In any case, WAHA hopes this project does not proceed from here. However, if Cal-Trans pursues the next step -- an environmental assessment, then among the pertinent factors that should be considered include:

- The impacts of cutting off communities by introducing elevations that create barriers
- The impacts of light and shade on the buildings, neighborhoods, cultural settings, and environment

• The negative impact and degradation of the environment by proposing elevated structures and how they impact the quality of life of people and communities

• The acknowledged and prescribed goals of the south community plan regarding scale, size and compatible development that protects existing communities

• The need for adequate transportation alternatives to the automobile in an urban environment

• The fact that a publicly-funded "My Figueroa" project to bring new pedestrian amenities, and dedicated and separated (safe) bicycle lanes, to this exact location is in the works

• The need for green space in the area

• Analysis of the cumulative impacts from years of less than adequate traffic mitigation for the many projects in the area and its surroundings (Staples Center, Gateway, the Lorenzo Development, the Galen Center, University Village, the Figueroa Corridor Plan Amendment, and many others)

- Analysis of alternatives including a no project alternative and an underground alternative
- Understanding the character defining features of both the historic resources and of the neighborhoods
- Evaluating the impacts to Adams Boulevard as a designated scenic highway

This Cal-Trans project conflicts with the adopted environmental plans and goals of the historical community in which it is located. This is an idea whose time has passed as we see the need for public transportation and creation of a livable city. WAHA looks forward to working with Cal-Trans in furtherance of community goals in finding suitable and environmentally sensitive ways to mitigate congestion while preventing serious and irreparable environmental harm to the Historic West Adams District. If you desire to write a comment letter, send it to arrive no later than March 8 to:

Mr. Garrett Damrath, Senior Environmental Planner Ms. Allison Morrow Division of Environmental Planning Cal-Trans District 7 100 South Main Street Los Angeles, CA 90012 Via email: Allison_Morrow@DOT.CA.GOV

And reference:

Notice of Preparation ("NOP") - Draft initial Study, interstate 110 Transit-way Connector Project (110 HOV/HOT off ramp to Figueroa Way, Los Angeles, CA) ●

> If the HOV Flyover bridge is approved, it would tower over St. John's eastern elevation (left side of photograph) and continue to Figueroa



St. John's CATHEDRAL

514 West Adams Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90007 + 213.747.6285 • www.stjohnsla.org

February 8, 2013 Mr. Garrett Damrath, Senior Environmental Planner Division of Environmental Planning, Caltrans District 7 100 South Main Street, MS 16 A Los Angeles California 90012

RE: Notice of Preparation - Draft Initial Study, Interstate 110 Transit-way Connector Project (110 HOVIHOT off ramp to Figueroa Way, Los Angeles, CA)

Dear Mr. Damrath,

The purpose of this letter is to express strong opposition to the project outlined in the above referenced NOP received by St. John's Cathedral on January 24,2013. As we understand, the project proposes a "flyover" be constructed connecting the current northern terminus of the 1-110 transit-way overhead to Figueroa Way eventually merging onto northbound Figueroa Street in downtown Los Angeles.

As depicted on one site plan (see attached) the proposed flyover appears to cut directly across the northeast comer of our property, St. John's Episcopal Cathedral located at 514 West Adams Boulevard. We were sent another plan (also attached) making it confusing to know which plan you propose. Both of these plans as currently envisioned are untenable.

As you may be aware, St. John's Episcopal Church has been on this block since 1890 and has continuously served as an Episcopal parish church since that time. Our current building was first dedicated in February 1925. In 2008, St. Johns was dedicated as the Pro-Cathedral for the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles. Further, the sanctuary and church offices are listed on the Secretary of the Interior National Register of Historic Places (since 2doo). This designation recognizes St John's Cathedral as an historical, cultural and architectural landmark of significance. Additionally, the comer of Figueroa and Adams is the site of three Los Angeles Historic landmarks - St. John's, the Automobile Club Building and St. Vincent's Church.

The eastern portion of our property, presently improved as a surface parking lot, bears no resemblance to our active plan of development of the property. Recently we contracted with an architectural firm and have developed a Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) for the entire cathedral block bounded by Adams on the north, Flower on the east, 27th Street on the south and Figueroa and on the west as the spiritual center for all of the Episcopal churches of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles. For example, our approved master plan calls for a multi-level structure all along the Flower Street frontage, including a bell tower on the comer of Adams and Flower.

The Caltrans proposed flyover ramp would not only degrade the beauty of our historic building, it would result in an unacceptable level of noise, vibration, and environmental pollution directly affecting our property and environs. Moreover the project would destroy sightlines and cast shadows diminishing sunlight on our property. The proximity of the proposed flyover to our Church where hundreds of people gather throughout the week for worship services, members gather for special events from our entire six county Diocese of Los Angeles, and other community events are held would be unacceptable.

Our active and vibrant congregation serves vital missions to the surrounding community, feeding poor and homeless citizens from this location. The preservation and expansion of that mission is dependent upon the maintenance of our environmental quality and health. Furthermore, this project intensifies the existing barrier created by the 110 Freeway between the university community on the one side and the poorer neighborhood to the east, and the redirection of significant additional traffic to Figueroa would present a danger to the children who attend St. Vincent's Elementary School.

We respectfully request that you or a Caltrans representative meet with the Deans, Vestry (Governing Board) And other representatives and consultants of St. John's Cathedral at the earliest possible time to provide the specifics of this proposed project and record our feedback.

We urge Caltrans to immediately explore other options to accomplish its goal and wish to advise you the Cathedral Church, the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles and its many friends will use all available resources to block this project.

Cordially, St. John's Episcopal Church

The Very Rev. Cn. Mark R. Kowalewski, Ph.D., Dean and Rector The Very Rev. Cn. Daniel G. Ade, Dean and Rector Senior Warden Carol Nicholas Junior Warden Fernando Valdes

Cc: Bishop Bruno, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Councilperson Jan Perry, Cathy Toya Lee, Fr. David Nations, Supervisor Gloria Molina, Carol Schatts, West Adams Heritage Association, Nancy Ibrahim, Kristina Raspe, St. John's Well Child Clinic, Marcello Vavalo, Fran Inman

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Los Angeles, CA 90018

Please DO NOT include my name, address, e-mail, or telephone in the WAHA membership directory.

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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.



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WAHA's 2013 Calendar for History Buffs and Preservation Advocates

MARCH Oscar Nominated Costumes at FIDM Saturday, March 9 (Story, page 6)

Wearing O' the Green St. Patrick's Day WAHA Member Potluck *Sunday, March 17* (Story, page 4)

APRIL

Heritage Day at El Pueblo Sunday, April 14

WAHA Elections Saturday, April 20 (Story, page 3)

CycLAvia cycles through West Adams *Sunday, April 21*

Venice Boulevard will be closed; Mid-City Neighborhood Council (MINC) is planning a celebration.

MAY

WAHA Preservation Brunch Sunday, May 5 MAY (continued) WAHA Board Retreat Saturday, May 18

Newcomers Dessert Thursday, May 23

JUNE

WAHA's Annual Spring Historic Homes & Architecture Tour *Saturday, June 1*

JULY Patriotic 4th of July Picnic

SEPTEMBER

Living History Tour at Angelus Rosedale Cemetery Saturday, September 28 Actors portray, in costume and at graveside, a half dozen of

the historic personages buried at this landmark cemetery.

DECEMBER

Holiday Historic Homes Tour & Progressive Dinner *Saturday and Sunday, December 7-8*

Calendar

Upcoming Events

MARCH

St. Paddy's Day in West Adams — Sunday, March 17:

WAHA is wearing the Green at a St. Patrick's



Day Potluck, to be held at Sally Turner's home in Western Heights (2280 West 21st Street, 4-7 p.m.) WAHA wil provide drinks and some cornd beef. Please bring a dish to share, and wear something green.

APRIL L.A. Heritage Day — Sunday, April 13 (see story, page):

WAHA Elections— Saturday, April 20 (see story, page 3):

WAHA's 2013 Calendar of Events is on page 15.

Art of Motion Picture Costume Design Exhibit

WAHA Steps Out: Saturday, March 9, 2:30 p.m. FIDM, 919 S. Grand Ave. (Downtown L.A.)

Please join WAHA's own costume designer extraordinaire Rory Cunningham and fellow West Adams residents for an afternoon with Oscar -- Oscar costumes at the FIDM Museum, that is. Along with a fun and

informative tour, those who wish are invited afterwards for cocktails and dinner (no host) at a nearby venue. The exhibit itself is free.

Keira Knightley in one of the costumes from the Oscar-winning "Anna Karenina." Costumes from all five Oscar-nominated films are on view at the FIDM exhibit.



WAHA....Creating Our Future by Preserving Our Past

The WAHA Matters Newsletter is a publication of the West Adams Heritage Association. Members and supporters of WAHA are invited to submit articles to the Newsletter. Letters will be published subject to space constraints and will be cut for length if necessary. Articles will be published subject to acceptance by the editors of the WAHA Board. Advertising is subject to the approval of the publishers. Although the Association appreciates its many fine advertisers, the Association does not accept responsibility for claims made by advertisers. Services and products are not tested and appearance of advertising does not imply, nor does it constitute, endorsement by the West Adams Heritage Association. Copyright 2013. All rights for graphic and written material appearing in the newsletter are reserved. Contact Director of Publications for permission.

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West Adams Heritage Association 2263 South Harvard Boulevard Historic West Adams Los Angeles, California 90018

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