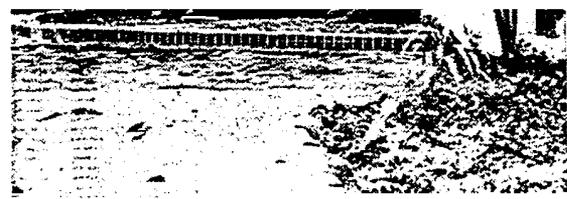


The Battle to Save the Past

MAL TERENCE

Los Angeles Times (1886-Current File); Sep 5, 1965; ProQuest Historical Newspapers Los Angeles Times (1881 - 1985)

pg. WS1



LANDMARK.—Moreton Bay fig tree at 11000 National Blvd. has been selected as a landmark by the Cultural Heritage Board. It was planted nearly 100 years ago by the Smith family on La Ballona Ranch.



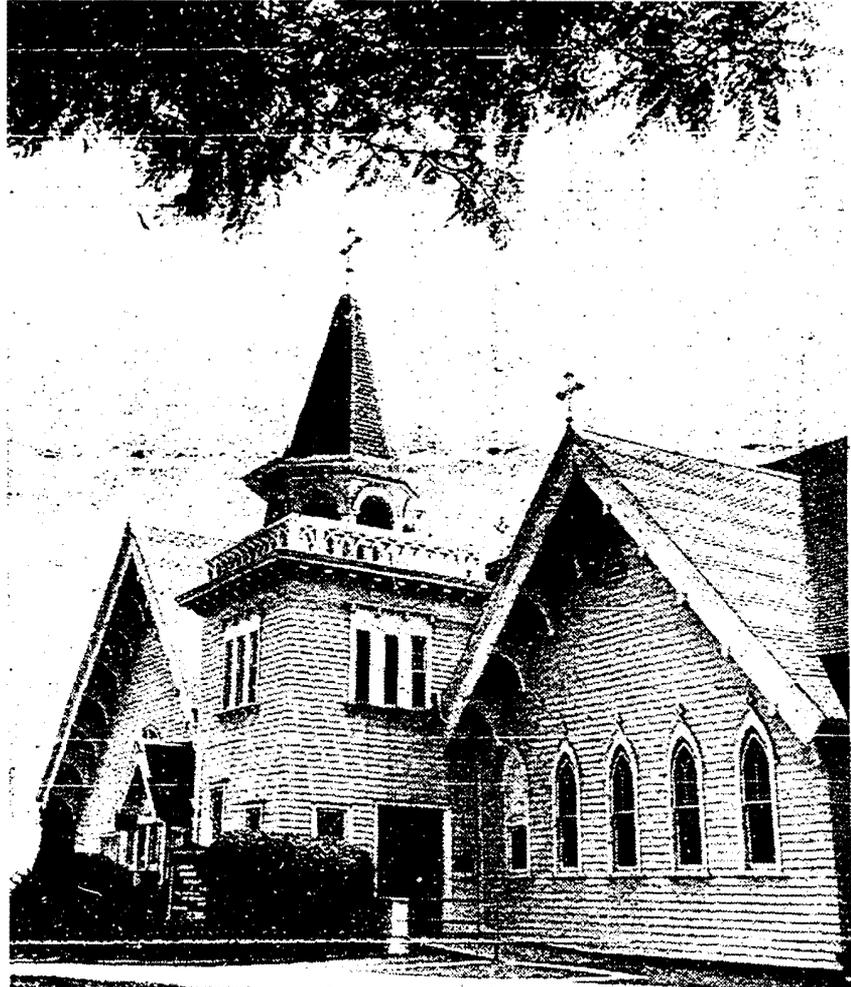
CLASSIC EXAMPLE.—Sam Hurst, dean of the USC school of architecture, is one of group trying to keep Board of Education from selling Dodge House on Kings Road in West Hollywood to highest bidder.

The Battle to Save the Past



EARLY ADOBE.—Mrs. Senaida Sullivan stands on the porch of her home on Shenandoah St. It has been named a West Side monument by the board. It was built by her grandfather Antonio Jose Rocha II (insert) in 1865 and has been occupied since by his family. At right a chapel at the Veterans Administration Center is one of the few remaining examples of shingle-style structures in Los Angeles. It has been recognized as a monument despite being on federal property. It is one of several buildings of this style on property at Sawtelle, Wilshire Blvds.

Times photos



MONUMENTS SELECTED

Landmarks in Danger

BY MAL TERENCE

Times Staff Writer

Los Angeles, with its upthrusting high-rise and burgeoning population, is very much a city of the present and future. Its past often plays a lesser role.

Bulldozers level the city's older neighborhoods to make way for bright, plastered apartment buildings.

Huge earth-moving machines alter hillsides and whole mountain tops into flat subdivision homesites which resemble urban rice paddies.

In 1962, Los Angeles City Council decided that too much of the area's history, which traces back to the Spanish colonists and the Indians before them, was going unnoticed or was being doomed on the drawing board of some condominium planner.

So the council set up a five-member Cultural Heritage Board charged with the responsibility of assisting the Municipal Art Commission in preserving certain historical and cultural monuments.

Monuments Established

Since then, on the West Side, the board has declared two old buildings and a massive landmark tree as monuments and has officially recognized two other West Side sites outside city jurisdiction.

In addition to its right to designate and publicize the sites, the board has the authority to stall off for as long as 360 days any application for a permit to alter or demolish a facility designated as a cultural monument.

The board has used this power to save landmarks in Calabasas and Chatsworth by giving local historical groups enough time to organize and raise money to buy the landmark and preserve it.

At present it is preventing the demolition of the Romulo Pico House in San Fernando while the local historical society tries to raise \$60,000 to buy the site from the YMCA which had planned to sell the structure.

In West Hollywood, an area in the county and out of the board's jurisdiction, the board has strongly opposed a move by the Board of Education to sell its property at 950 Kings Road, the site of Dodge House.

The home was built in 1916 by the late architect Irving John Gill and is widely recognized as a classic early example of modern architecture.

Joins Council

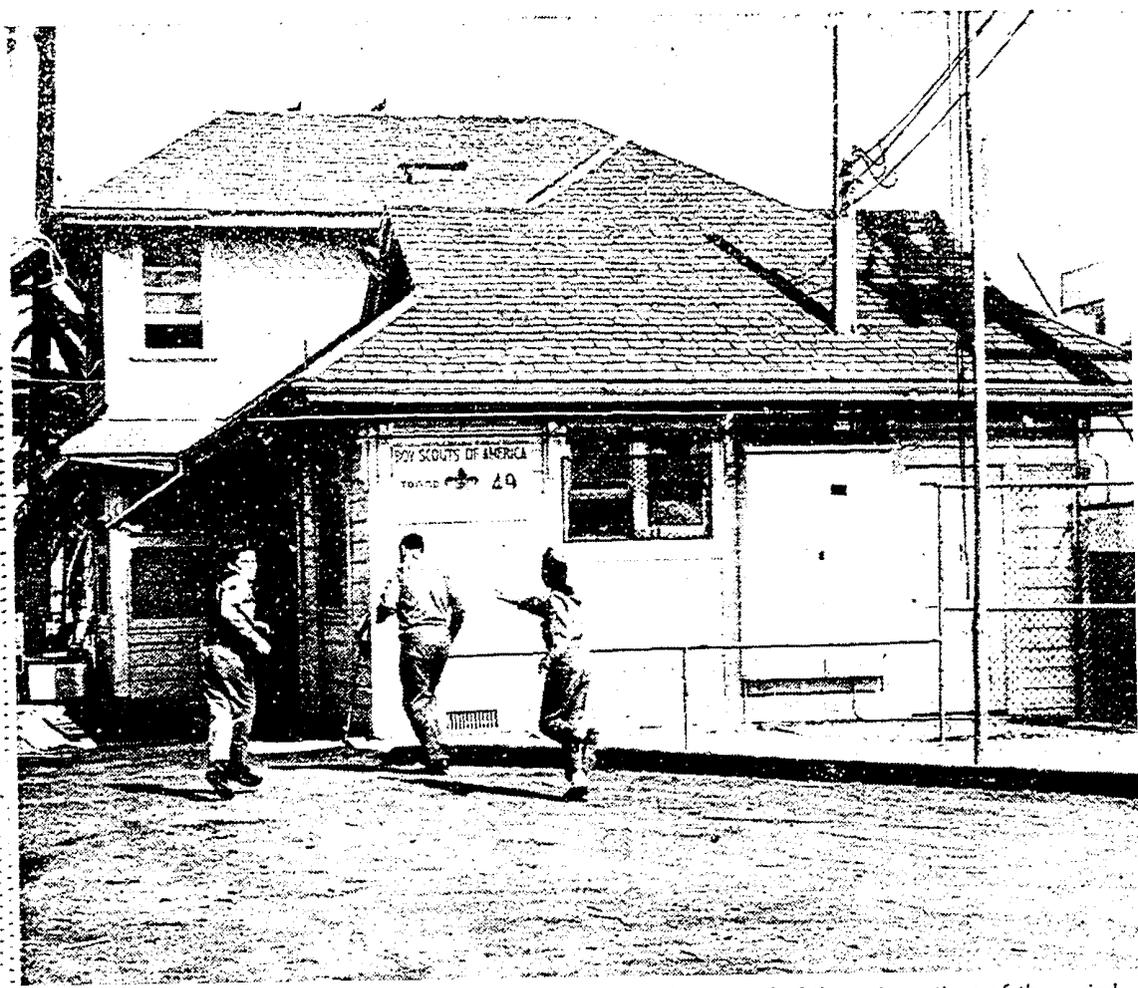
In opposing the auction of the property the Cultural Heritage Board joined forces with Los Angeles City Council, a citizen's committee and the American Institute of Architects.

Dodge House does not qualify for the board's 360-day stay of execution because it is within county, not city, jurisdiction.

Part of the Veterans Administration Center near Wilshire and Sawtelle Blvds. in West Los Angeles is the second West Side landmark recognized by the board despite its location in federal rather than city jurisdiction.

The Chapel Buildings, Domiciliary Building No. 9, the Architects Office Building, the Old Depot Building and the Dr. Hasse Residence Building are the only remaining examples of what the board terms, "the most monumental

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TYPICAL OF PERIOD. -The Southern Pacific Railroad depot in Palms was built in 1888. It is pre-

served as typical of the train stations of the period. Boy Scout Troop 49 uses it as a meeting place. Times photo

HISTORY

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complex of shingle-style structures ever constructed in the Los Angeles area."

A few miles from the VA Center the expansive Moreton Bay Fig Tree is set aside as a landmark.

The tree with a 120-ft. span, at 11000 National Blvd., reportedly was planted by the Smith family in 1875 on a portion of land called La Ballona Ranch.

It is on the property of St. John's Presbyterian Church and each year produces a generous crop of figs.

In nearby Palms the Southern Pacific Railroad depot built in 1888 is preserved as typical of the train stations of the 1880-90 period.

Former Los Angeles Mayor John C. Porter (1929-33) once was a telegrapher in the Palms station at National Blvd. and Vinton Ave. It was abandoned in 1941 and now is the meeting place for Palms Boy Scout Troop 49.

Rocha House, the third official West Side monument, was built in 1865 by Antonio Jose Rocha II on a large portion of Rancho Rincon de los Bueyes.

The house, also in Palms, now is the home of Mrs. Senaida Sullivan, Rocha's granddaughter and immediate past president of the Cultural Heritage Board.

Landed in 1815

Rocha's father was said to be the first foreigner to settle in Los Angeles (1826) after having landed in Monterey from Portugal in 1815.

Rocha II was a justice of the peace of Ballona Township from 1865-73 and built his 1½-story ranch house at what is now 2400 Shendoad St.

The Cultural Heritage Board says it endeavors to make citizens aware of their inspiring history — not because the board recommends living in the past but because the past has a great deal to teach everyone.

"When one has a respect for his heritage, the present has greater meaning — the future, greater promise."