



**NATIONAL TRUST**  
for HISTORIC PRESERVATION™

# WESTERN PRESERVATION NEWS

A Newsletter from the National Trust's Western Office

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## Statewide Partners

Alaska Association for Historic Preservation

Arizona Preservation Foundation  
California Preservation Foundation

Historic Hawaii Foundation

Washington Trust for Historic Preservation

## Statewide Initiative

Preservation Idaho

Preserve Nevada

Historic Preservation League of Oregon

## Local Partners

Los Angeles Conservancy

Preservation Idaho

Historic Seattle

## Major Preservation Victory in Santa Monica!



In March, Santa Monica voters rejected by a 53-47 percent margin Proposition A, which would have required written owner consent to designate single-family residences as historic, and required all owners in a historic district to agree in writing to the designation. "I'm thrilled," said Bea Nemlaha, spokesperson for the committee organized to defeat Prop A. "It shows that all segments of the community came together to affirm our love of the city we all call home and to protect the character of that city."

Proponents of Prop A charged that the City of Santa Monica Council policy of referring demolition permits for buildings 40 years and older to the Landmarks Commission historic resources inventory was a threat to property owners; and that historic designation prevented owners from making changes to their homes and "devastated" property values, resulting in virtually a "taking." In fact, the current process balances both the historical and architectural significance of the property with an owner's position. The existing ordinance, created in 1976 following the effort to save the endangered Santa Monica Pier, has resulted in the designation of only 16 homes in one small residential historic district.

Proposition A would have destroyed that balance and placed all decision-making powers in the hands of the owner. If the owner is a developer, even the most significant properties could be demolished immediately with no consideration of the loss of the community's heritage or of alternatives to demolition.

Prop A became the sole issue in a mail-in election and preservationists quickly rallied to defeat it, forming a political action committee called Save Our Neighborhoods. The National Trust Western Office was an early supporter of Save Our Neighborhoods, providing a contribution of \$5,000 to support the campaign. In addition, the Western Office made a joint fundraising appeal with the Los Angeles Conservancy and the California Preservation

Foundation to our members in Santa Monica. Save Our Neighborhoods hired a professional campaign manager and made an enormous volunteer-supported effort, in a few months, to raise funds and get a positive message about historic preservation out to voters. A key component of the campaign was a letter from Western Office Director Holly Fiala sent by Save Our Neighborhoods to thousands of Santa Monica households explaining the threat posed by Prop A to historic neighborhoods. While the preservation effort could not match the financial muscle of the Prop A campaign (we were outspent \$234,000 to \$78,000), our message clearly resonated with Santa Monicans: the final vote count showed 9,913 ballots cast against Proposition A and 8,649 votes in favor of the initiative.

Save Our Neighborhoods found that voter education was the key to victory. Once voters found out that landmark designation was a highly selective process, that there was a public process with public hearings, that properties were designated which were important to the history and heritage of the entire community, and that designation neither restricted owners' abilities to make changes nor diminished property values, voters supported the No on A campaign.



While an exhausting effort for those involved, the campaign to defeat Prop A had some positive effects. It spurred the creation of a new advocacy group called the Santa Monica Conservancy, and challenged the City and preservationists to work harder at developing a strong incentives package for property owners. Prop A was seen as a referendum on historic preservation and its value for communities. Its defeat demonstrates that when the ability to preserve a community's heritage is threatened, people rally and unify to protect their rights to preserve their older neighborhoods and historic places.

### Two ways to keep up with the Western Office!

Join our mailing list by sending an email to [wro@nthp.org](mailto:wro@nthp.org) or visit the National Trust's website at: [http://www.nationaltrust.org/about\\_the\\_trust/western.html](http://www.nationaltrust.org/about_the_trust/western.html)

## Grants from the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund



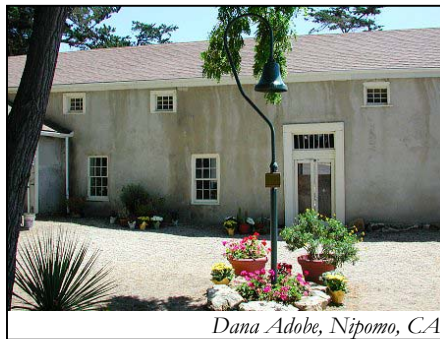
*The Fox Oakland Theater, Oakland, CA*

Twenty-six preservation programs and historic sites nationwide have received grants from the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors and the Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation. A total of 95 applicants requested over \$621,000. In the Western Region, two Mitchell Grants were awarded.

**Friends of the Oakland Fox, Inc (FOOF), Oakland CA** received a \$5000 grant to prepare plans and specifications needed for the restoration and animation of two statues of Hindu deities in the interior of the **Fox Oakland Theater (1928, NR, State)**. The Fox is one of the Bay Area's best surviving examples of an early 20th century movie palace, especially of the exotic type that became popular in the 1920s. Vacant for more than thirty years, the theater is owned by the City of Oakland, which, with support from FOOF, has been working towards the restoration and reuse of the theater. Work to date includes: replacing the deteriorated roof; removing and restoring the marquee and blade sign; preparing a master plan study of five reuse options; and securing a \$350,000 California Heritage Fund grant for the resto-

ration of the façade. The restored Hindu deities have the potential to attract visitors to the unused theater and generate interest in and support for its restoration as well as bring foot traffic to Oakland's Uptown District and help in the revitalization of the neighborhood.

**Dana Adobe Nipomo Amigos, Nipomo, CA** were awarded a \$2,600 grant to conduct the wallpaper, plaster, paint and wood analysis of the **Dana Adobe (c.1839, NR, State & Local, SAT)**. The analysis is a logical follow-up to the Condition Assessment/Preservation Plan that was funded by a PSF grant in 1999 and will help assure the accurate restoration of the Dana Adobe, one of California's most historically significant rural residences. Its architect, Captain W. G. Dana of Boston, played an important role in the histories of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties. The Adobe, located on the route of the old Camino Real, was for many years the only stopping place for travelers between the San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara missions. The house architecturally blends features of the California adobe with those of the New England frame house, just as life at Casa de Dana was a blend of Hispanic and American cultures.



*Dana Adobe, Nipomo, CA*

## California's Williamson Act

California Governor Gray Davis's May revision of his proposed 2004 State Budget includes full funding of the **Williamson Act** subvention program. His draft budget had eliminated state funding for the program, which has saved 19 million acres of agricultural land from loss to sprawl since its inception in 1965. While a final budget needs legislative approval, this is a major victory for preservationists and open space advocates. The Williamson Act offers an innovative approach to agricultural land protection by building an interrelated set of property tax, land use and conservation measures in a single policy package. Under the Act, an agricultural landowner can enter into a contract with a county, agreeing to restrict use of his land to agriculture for a term of not less than 10 years. The Act also requires the county to establish an agricultural preserve (i.e.: exclusive ag. zoning) and base the property tax assessment on the land's ability to produce agri-

cultural income. The subvention program reimburses counties for lost tax revenues.

**Thank you to everyone who responded to our action alert and contacted the governor and urged him to restore the funding.**

A recent book, **Sento at Sixth and Main**, explores the heritage of West Coast Japanese American communities by documenting surviving examples of its impact on the built environment. The book combines in-depth research on historic places, personal memories, and striking vintage photographs to showcase once-familiar parts of Japanese American life such as bathhouses, community halls, lumber camps, temples, and schools. Focusing on ten places located in Washington and California, the book also calls attention to the many Japanese American landmarks awaiting further study and protection.

**Sento at Sixth and Main: Preserving Landmarks of Japanese American Heritage**, Gail Dubrow with Donna

## APPROACHING DEADLINES

Applications are now available for the **Emerging Preservation Leaders (EPL) Scholarship Program**. The program makes available limited scholarships to help preservationists from diverse, racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds attend our **National Preservation Conference, September 30—October 5, 2003 in Denver, Colorado**. To obtain an application go to [http://www.nthpconference.org/PDFFiles/EPL\\_Application2003.pdf](http://www.nthpconference.org/PDFFiles/EPL_Application2003.pdf) or email to [scholarships@nthp.org](mailto:scholarships@nthp.org). **Deadline: June 1, 2003.**

Applications for the National Trust's **Preservation Services Fund Grants** are being accepted until **June 1, 2003**. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the Western Office prior to submitting an application.** For additional information regarding these grants contact Anne Gailliot, Field Representative, [anne\\_gailliot@nthp.org](mailto:anne_gailliot@nthp.org)

**"New Frontiers in Preservation"** National Preservation Conference 2003 September 30 - October 5, 2003, Denver, Colorado. The preliminary program and on-line registration will be available from **June 1, 2003**. Go to <http://www.nthpconference.org/> to register and to learn more about the conference. Deadline for early-bird registration rates is **July 31, 2003**. Early registration fees make it economical for you to attend. By registering before July 31, you can save up to \$175. Those registered prior to September 25 will save up to \$115 off the on-site registration rate.

**Graves**, 2002, Seattle Arts Commission, distributed by University of Washington Press.

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