

6/21/86
Good turnout for house and walking tour

By Anne Marie Wozniak

Approximately 250 people took a nostalgic trip back through time during the second annual house and walking tour sponsored by the Highland Park Heritage Trust. The tour was just one of the many events that was offered during the recent Highland Park Cultural Festival.

Emphasized on the tour was the manner in which Californians tend to mix and mingle different varieties of architecture. This tendency was pointed out in many of the structures along the tour route.

The tour began with the history of the Highland Park American Legion Post No. 206. The structure began as Telephone Exchange in 1912 and after much fundraising was acquired as a clubhouse for the Post in 1934.

HISTORIC HOUSES

The first house toured was described as a typical example of the kind of home that would have been built by the middle class midwesterner in the early 1900's. It was described as a Colonial Revival of near textbook proportions with the exception of the overhanging eaves of the roof which were more associated with the craftsman design.

Another house that was toured was built for Warren L. Clapp in 1909. Though it was originally constructed as a single family dwelling, and is such today, it was at one time converted into a duplex. The house could almost be described as a "Country Queen Anne" in that it is

almost devoid of the ornate eastlake influence. It totally lacks any of the usual scroll work and gingerbread, though it has a prominent turret and a wrap-around porch with an embellished railing. Another unusual feature which is generally not associated with the Queen Anne design was the presence of Tuscan Columns on the front porch.

Also on the tour was the home owned by the Stagg family until 1904. Edward Hauts Stagg was involved in goldmining in Randsbury, California in the early 20th Century. He later served as a deputy county assessor for the County of Los Angeles in the 1920's. He also owned several adjacent lots in the area and had four houses built, two of which were constructed for his married daughters. An ornamental steel rail fence had once surrounded all five lots and part of that fence still remains in front of 5600 and 5608 Monte Vista Ave.

Two of the houses that he had constructed were given inside tours. A first floor tour of the one remaining house built for his daughter revealed coved ceilings and extensive use of dark woods. Also of note were the leaded glass windows. A unique feature of the other house that was toured was a built-in china cabinet placed against a stained glass window which allowed sunlight in from the outside.

One important fact that the tour guides tried to get across was that stuccoing a wooden house does not make it look more modern. In fact, it

merely ends up looking like an old house whose charm and character, in many instances, has been hidden. Also, stuccoing does not completely negate the need to paint. As with any structure, maintenance is a constant factor.

Another mistaken idea is that stucco will prevent the deterioration of the wood underneath. Stucco can actually hasten deterioration for it does not allow the wood to breathe.

Another common misconception is that stucco is an ideal insulator. It is less expensive and more efficient to insulate your attic, for a well insulated attic will keep a home cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

A house that was originally stuccoed, such as a Spanish Colonial, is meant to be that way.

According to the the tour guide, "turning a house originally designed with wooden siding into a supposedly 'modern stucco house' is trying to make it into something it wasn't meant to be."

COLORFUL RESIDENTS

There were also several colorful figures among the early dwellers on the tour route. Among these were Charles Hiram Randall who served as municipal park commissioner, state assemblyman, and finally as a United States congressman from 1915 to 1921. David C. Welty lived in the area from 1915 through the mid 1920's and was one of the publishers of the Highland Park News Herald. Edwin O. Faulkner was listed as a president and vice president of sev-

eral oil companies, and was the vice president of Santa Fe Land Improvement Company.

Subdivider Margaretta T. T. Baker had her home on what is now the All Saints preschool playground at 5604 Ash Street. Harriet Hamblin, the widow of subdivider H. M. Hamblin, also lived in the area for a few years. There were also several doctors in the area. Dr. Elmina Cook, a widow, had her office on Pasadena Avenue (Figueroa Street) before moving her office into her home on Avenue 56. The office door where patients entered can still be seen from inside the home.

MASON BUILDING

The last tour stop was at the Mason Building. This structure, formerly known as the Highland Park Masonic Temple, was designed by Elmore R. Jeffery, who was also responsible for designing a number of high schools including the original Franklin High building.

The lodge room has an 18 foot ceiling and is richly panelled in cherrywood. Included among its architectural features is a second story arched balcony/arcade, and a decorative cornice. Its architectural details include decorative concrete, window surrounds, ornamental concrete brackets and ironwork. The 25,000 square foot building has been brought up to seismic code by using five different methods of earthquake reinforcement. In the process the building was also restored to its 1923 appearance.