



FULLERTON HERITAGE

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The mission of Fullerton Heritage is to foster an appreciation of our city's cultural history and to ensure the preservation of our historic architectural resources and environments.

Harry G. Maxwell's Spanish Colonial Revivals

by *Debora Richey*

When the first settlers arrived in Fullerton in the 1880s, nearly all were transplants from other parts of the country (primarily the East and Midwest), and they brought with them a preference for traditional architectural styles that reminded them of home. Commercial and residential buildings relied on familiar styles, such as Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Beaux Arts, imported from other regions. By 1919, Fullerton's economy was booming and its population of 6,000 residents, which had doubled in three years, became concerned with "indiscriminate building" and a lack of "architectural harmony." Members of the influential Fullerton Chamber of Commerce (then the Board of Trade) decided it was time to deal with what was called a "jumble of architectural styles" and formed a Civic Planning Committee led by Rollin A. Marsden, a Manual Arts teacher at Fullerton Union High School.

Committee members had been impressed with the Spanish Colonial Revival build-

ings designed by Carleton M. Winslow (1876-1946) for the wildly successful 1915 San Diego Panama-California Exposition and invited the celebrated architect to visit Fullerton for a series of lectures.

A major proponent of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture, Winslow gave a series of convincing talks around town on this new style of architecture. With much fanfare from the *Los Angeles Times*, *Fullerton News Tribune*, and *Orange County Tribune*, the Fullerton Chamber of Commerce adopted a resolution on July 19, 1919 to establish the Spanish style as the uniform style for all public and semi-public buildings, making Fuller-



A Maxwell house at 149 West Elm.

ton the first city in California to establish an architectural policy. The result was a series of public buildings in Fullerton—city hall, library, post office, schools, etc.—all designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style.

One of those present at the July 1919 meeting was Harry G. Maxwell (1882-

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Fox Theatre Progress Report

by *Tom Dalton*

As previously mentioned, Fullerton Heritage started the "Save the Fox" project over 10 years ago and several FH members were founding members of the Fullerton Historic Theatre Foundation, which now owns this local treasure.

As you drive by, please notice the new patio and landscaping at the corner of Chapman and Harbor that enhance the Firestone Building and Fox Theatre complex. We expect the patio to be used for outdoor dining and activities once the new Firestone tenants complete their tenant improvements on the inside of the building. Lease negotiations with the prospective tenants are in the final stages and we are hopeful they will be ready to open for business in the fall. Stay tuned! We will announce the name of the new tenants as soon as the lease is signed.

The Foundation has made significant progress obtaining the \$180,000 grant match funds that are required for the \$300,000 grant awarded to the Fox by the California Cultural and Historical Endowment. So far we have received commitments for in-kind labor and supplies totaling \$141,220 from Bivar, Inc., Henry Armenta, and Ejay's Machine Co., Inc. We are extremely grateful to these three companies for their generous support of this important part of our project. But, as you can see by doing the math, we are still about \$40,000 short of our goal. Any donation you can give towards bringing the Fox back to life would be most appreciated. Gifts are tax-deductible.

If you aren't already a Friend of the Foundation, please consider joining and help us keep the momentum going. The website is foxfullerton.org.

Advocacy Issues

by Kate Dalton

Design Review Committee

At the meeting on December 20, 2012 the Design Review Committee (DRC) approved three projects that will add additional dwelling units in the residential preservation zones, two in College Park and one in Jacaranda/Malvern/Brookdale. In the College Park Preservation Zone, projects at 111 N. Yale Ave. and 120 N. Lincoln Ave. were approved unanimously, judged to be of good design and meeting all of the requirements of the Design Guidelines for Residential Preservation Zones. A project at 222 W. Malvern Ave. in the Jacaranda/Malvern/Brookdale Preservation Zone was approved after extensive discussion, concerns from neighbors and request for significant changes in design elements by members of the Committee.

At the DRC meeting on January 24, 2013 the Committee reviewed the project for the addition of seven new townhomes on the site of the historic Livingston House at 117 W. Valencia Ave. As reported in our last newsletter, the new owners of the property have restored the historic home, to the relief of the preservation community. The proposal for the new units has undergone several reviews and many appropriate changes have been made to the original

architectural plans, before being brought before the DRC. The committee heard from neighbors concerned about the mass and scale of the project, as well as those supporting it and engaged in extensive discussion about additional design modifications, requested by Fullerton Heritage, City Staff and the Town architect. The Committee voted 3-1 to approve the project subject to additional design modifications, with the dissenting vote coming from the only architect on the Committee who continued to be concerned about the mass and scale of the design. The project was subsequently reviewed by the Landmarks/Planning Commission on March 13 and approved unanimously following similar discussion regarding scale, mass and design. Fullerton Heritage is generally pleased with the project and commended the new owners for saving and restoring the Livingston House.

The City Council has finally made all appointments to the DRC and after advocacy by Fullerton Heritage, the committee of five now has two architects and a landscape architect, ensuring that review will have the significant advantage of trained professionals.

Addition of Local Landmarks

Fullerton Heritage has been working hard for the past year on the nominations of five new properties to the list of Fullerton Local (continued on page 4)

The Amerige Brothers Real Estate Office Restoration

by Terry Galvin

The response from the business community in support of the project has been substantial and gratifying. Since the City Council approved the project and the agreement with Fullerton Heritage in January, most of the materials and professional participation have been pledged, are in process, or have been completed.

Volunteers for the more mundane work such as scraping, sanding, filling, caulking, priming, and more sanding have been attending Saturday work parties for many weeks and have made substantial progress inside and out.

The following is the list of donations and pledges to date:

- All electrical components and labor by **Fullerton Electric Co.;**
- Wood and related items for interior and exterior repairs/replacements, including a new rear door by **Ganahl Lumber;**
- Paint for priming and final painting by **Behr Process Corp.** and the **Muckenthaler Cultural Center;**
- Cash donation for general purposes by the **Rotary Club of Fullerton;**
- Supplies for scraping, sanding, and painting by **Fullerton Hardware;**
- Reduced pricing for the lighting fixtures and window shades by **Home Depot;**
- Carpentry and wood repair work by **McGarvey Construction Co.;**
- General carpentry and woodwork by **Benchmark Custom Woodworks;**
- General Carpentry work by **Unlimited Remodeling;**
- Fabrication and installation of new Amerige Brothers sign by **Letter Perfect Signs, Inc.;**
- Restoration of window operating components and labor by **Window Restoration and Repair;**
- Interior carpeting by **Rite-Loom Flooring Co.;**



A work-in-progress photo showing the restoration of Fullerton's oldest (1887) commercial structure. Photo by Mike Ritto

- Roof replacement materials and labor by **Fullerton South Rotary.**

A special thank you goes to Jack Franklyn at **Heroes Bar & Grill** for providing meals to many of the work parties.

We are grateful for these donations. Please show your appreciation by considering these donors for your personal and business needs.

President's Corner

by Ernie Kelsey

Greetings Fullerton Heritage Members,

It's hard to believe it's mid-May already. This year is advancing full-steam ahead. Winter is a distant memory, spring is in full flower, and summer is just around the corner!

There certainly has been a lot of activity since our last newsletter. Our involvement with the Fox Fullerton Theatre continues as well as our ongoing advocacy for projects including the Hunt Branch of the Fullerton Public Library. We're also assisting several local homeowners to get their homes listed as a local landmark. These activities are in addition to continuing advocacy issues, city council and commissions outreach and maintaining our website and publications.

What else is happening with Fullerton Heritage you ask? Well, we're very excited about two big events we've been planning for over the last year. First is the Amerige Brothers Realty Office restoration project. Co-Chairs Terry Galvin and Kate Dalton certainly have done a great job getting everyone motivated to get this project completed. We have had several Saturday work parties already with more to come. We still need volunteers to come down and help out, so if you're interested, please contact the FH Hotline at 714-740-3051 and let us know that you want to help. Can't come down? Then you can make a monetary donation, too. Just make your check payable to Fullerton Heritage and note in the comments the donation is for the Amerige Brothers Realty Office restoration. Mail to our PO Box listed in this newsletter. Your kind support of this very special project

will be greatly appreciated.

Save the Date:

Our second big event is our 2013 inaugural historic Home Tour on Saturday, June 8, 2013, from 10:00am – 3:00pm. After almost of year of planning (and ten years discussing), our first Home Tour is right around the corner! The entire

FH Board is excited about showing people the treasures we have in the Brookdale Heights Historic District. This year we'll feature four significant properties that are sure to make your day. If you would like to volunteer for this event, please contact the hotline at 714-740-3051 or tours@fullertonheritage.org. Please see the ad in this newsletter for more information on this exciting event.

Plans are also underway for our 2013 Annual Meeting. This year the meeting will be held on Sunday, June 30, 2013 at the Red Cross Building in Hillcrest Park. Come on down and hear more about the myriad activities Fullerton Heritage has been up to this past year – you'll be glad you did – it'll a fun two hours.

Enjoy your spring everyone and see you at the Home Tour!

Welcome New Members!

Fullerton Heritage extends a warm welcome to our newest members: Jack Doughty, Jr. and Jackie Doughty, Robert and Molly Minor, Patrick Shepard. Welcome aboard!

Board Election

Enclosed is a flyer for FH's Annual Meeting, including a ballot for voting for the 2013-2014 FH Board of Directors slate. Be sure to bring your completed ballot to the meeting, or mail it in.

Maxwell

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1962), who would soon become the first Fullerton builder/developer to completely embrace the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Like many businessmen in Fullerton, Maxwell was a transplant from the Midwest. Born in Ipava, Illinois in 1882, Maxwell had worked for large department stores in Peoria and Chicago before moving to San Francisco. Answering an advertisement for a bookkeeper position at the Stern and Goodman general mercantile store in Fullerton, Maxwell left San Francisco the day before the disastrous April 18, 1906 earthquake. In 1907, Maxwell worked for the Wickersham Implement Company (115-117 W. Commonwealth) as a bookkeeper and office manager, and then from 1911 to 1918, served as auditor and control accountant for the Placentia Orange Growers Association (400 E. Commonwealth). Maxwell began

selling homes in 1914, but in 1919, the State of California began issuing real estate licenses, and Maxwell became a licensed real estate broker, initially partnering with Theron M. Jolly (1891-1980) out of an office in the Pacific Southwest Trust and Savings Bank (101 W. Commonwealth). In 1922, Maxwell formed a real estate partnership with Harry H. Crooke (1867-1948), who would serve as Fullerton mayor from 1926 to 1928. Using the slogan "We sell lots," the two men initially concentrated on selling individual homes and parcels, but by 1923, had turned to the full-scale develop-



520 W. Valley View Dr.

ment of subdivisions (e.g., Cottage Grove, Sunnyside, Rossllyn Park) around the central core of the city. During the 1920s, Fullerton faced a severe housing shortage,

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Maxwell

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and the two men, who were responsible for the construction of hundreds of homes, developed a successful partnership. The two developers parted company in 1925. Maxwell began constructing speculative or "spec" homes around Fullerton with general contractor Mortimer Carroll (1875-1955), and Crooke, in partnership with Harry L. Ustick (1882-1955) and real estate syndicates, continued to develop Fullerton subdivisions (e.g., Airport Acres, Skyline Park).

Maxwell and Mortimer Carroll, owner of Built-Right Homes (204 E. Elm), began constructing homes in Fullerton in 1925, all completed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style of architecture. By the time Maxwell and Carroll ended their partnership in 1929, they had constructed an impressive array of homes around town. The two men quickly developed a building pattern, on occasion building more than one home at the same time on one block. Maxwell would purchase a vacant lot, Carroll would construct the residence, and Maxwell would then advertise and sell the home using his real estate brokers license. The success of Maxwell's homes led other local builders, such as Ernest S. Gregory and Evan J. Herbert, to switch from the Craftsman or "English" cottage styles to Spanish Colonial Revival homes. Unlike post-World War II builders, who constructed identical cookie cutter homes, Maxwell and Carroll con-



528 W. Malvern Ave.

structed no two identical homes. While he used the Spanish Colonial Revival style time and again, Maxwell varied the elements so that each home had a different exterior (see Maxwell photographs). His early homes were one story, with five or six rooms, but over time, the homes became slightly larger and more elaborate, although his homes were always intended for the middle class. One of his final residences (and possibly his last) was at 520 West Valley View Drive, unusual for its 1½-stories. To preserve Maxwell's contribution to Fullerton, the owners of the Valley View residence have applied for local landmark status for their home.

After the 1929 crash, Maxwell acted as a loan agent, covering Orange County for the State Mutual Building and Loan Association of Los Angeles (126 W. Wilshire) for more than 20 years. For 11 years, he served on the Board of Directors for the Fullerton office of the company. Maxwell had married Madge Culmer in 1910, and the couple had four children. Maxwell's son, Harry G. Maxwell,

supporting history and documentation prepared by Fullerton Heritage Board member Debora Richey. The issue was heard by the City Council on April 16 and unanimously approved. We are extremely pleased with the addition of these historic properties to our Local Landmarks list and equally pleased with the enthusiastic support for preservation in Fullerton. We will be ordering and placing Local Landmark plaques on these five new properties, as well as a National Register plaque on the Commonwealth Post Office which was officially listed in the National Register of Historic Places in late 2012 after a long and arduous process.

Jr. (1918-1944), who worked as circulation manager for the *Fullerton Daily News Tribune*, was killed in action in the South Pacific in World War II. Maxwell was elected to the Fullerton City Council in 1934, serving as mayor from 1936 to 1938. While mayor, he served on the water, street, park, and finance committees, and was instrumental in the construction of the baseball field in Amerige Park. An active Kiwanian, Maxwell had a perfect attendance record for 40 years, while also serving as president in 1926, lieutenant-governor of the district in 1929, and secretary from 1947 to 1955. Maxwell remained a resident of Fullerton (123 W. Malvern, 807 S. Highland, 227 W. Malvern) until his death on September 12, 1962 at the age of 80.

Fullerton Heritage 2013 Home Tour

Docents Needed!

Leave your name and number on the Hotline 714-740-3051



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Advocacy

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Landmarks. The nominations include three residences at 701 N. Richman Ave., 247 E. Valencia Ave. and 520 W. Valley View Dr., as well as the historic Firestone Building at 500 N. Harbor (part of the Fox Theatre property) and the Commonwealth Post Office at 202 E. Commonwealth Ave. The Landmarks Commission reviewed our request at its meeting on March 13, 2013 and unanimously recommended approval to the City Council. The Commission noted that they genuinely enjoyed the presentation and reading the