

THE  
*Preservation Conversation*

MAY 2019 VOL 27 NO 5

MOHPG.ORG

"PRESERVING MONROVIA'S ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE"

"MONROVIA HAS NO SALOONS"

Today if you want to visit Old Town Monrovia and have an alcoholic beverage, there are any number of choices where you can obtain one – restaurant, market, liquor store, and now even the local movie theater. But once upon a time in Monrovia, such a quest would have been impossible. For you see, the early Monrovia pioneers were for the most part militant prohibitionists and didn't want alcohol to be an easily obtainable commodity in their town. One indication of their leanings is that within months of the town's beginning (May 17, 1886), there were already three churches (the Congregationalists, the Methodists, and the Baptists) and more would soon follow. In addition, a Woman's Christian Temperance Union had been organized.

So when a saloon opened up on Myrtle Avenue, no less, right in the heart of their downtown, it got the residents' dander up. What to do about it, they pondered. It must be closed down, of course. But as it turned out, they weren't legally entitled to do that. Only cities that were incorporated had that power. So the obvious solution was to see that Monrovia became incorporated.

By November 7, 1887, more than one hundred qualified electors had signed a petition to incorporate and an election to decide the matter was held on December 8, 1887. The final vote was 109-1 in favor of incorporation. It was never learned who the one dissenting voter was although a reasonable person might conclude that the saloon owner was a likely candidate. After the election was concluded, Deputy Marshal Olgesby went to the saloon and said to the bartender, "We-all have incorporated and we-all don't want you here. This place is closed – now."

In the April, 1904 election, voters reaffirmed 172-95 that hotels should not be allowed to serve liquor

**MONROVIA HAS**

- No saloons.
- Perfect drainage — mud practically unknown.
- Most equable climate in Southern California.
- Least fogs, least winds.
- 20 miles of petrolithic pavement.
- City hall of solid granite.
- Two national banks.
- Two savings banks.
- Population 5500 (1915).
- Daily newspaper, two weekly newspapers.
- Telephone system, 800 subscribers. (Sunset and Home telephone systems combined—one charge for both services)
- Gas and electricity.
- Good road boulevards to all points.
- Many scenic drives.
- Santa Fe and Southern Pacific railroads.
- Pacific Electric interurban trolley.
- High class, modern hotel.
- Apartment and rooming houses.
- 10 cent local automobile service.
- Western Union and Postal telegraph.
- Fire apparatus and system of fire hydrants.
- Two motion picture theaters.
- All leading fraternal societies.
- Active Chamber of Commerce.

**HOW TO REACH MONROVIA.**

**BY TROLLEY.**  
Take Monrovia or Gladwin car at Pacific Electric Depot, Sixth & Main Streets, Los Angeles.

**BY AUTO.**  
Go to Pasadena then east on Colorado St. then east along the Foot Hill Boulevard.

A further indicator of the early residents' attitude towards "the drink" comes from this early pamphlet extolling the town's virtues. Number 1 on the list? "No saloons"  
Image Courtesy of Pam Barkas

to their guests. Then in the fall of 1906 the same question was put before voters, this time whether or not to allow hotels with fifty or more rooms to serve liquor to their guests. Once again the measure was substantially defeated.

It doesn't appear that there were any more votes taken on the liquor question until the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was passed in 1920 prohibiting alcohol in all states. That prohibition remained in effect until 1933 when the 21st Amendment was ratified.

# MONROVIA HISTORIC PRESERVATION GROUP

Newsletter - May 2019  
Volume 27 Number 5

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Monrovia Historic Preservation Group  
P.O. Box 734  
Monrovia, CA 91017

## MISSION

The Monrovia Historic Preservation Group (MOHPG) seeks to preserve Monrovia's architectural heritage through **advocacy and actions that promote historic preservation.**

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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■ ■ ■

## NON-BOARD POSITIONS

### Legal Adviser

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### Emails

John Zuk

The MOHPG Board of Directors meets the first Sunday of each month except August at 10 a.m. All members are welcome to attend. Contact Jim Wigton or any board member for meeting location.

MOHPG is a 501(c)(3) non-profit California corporation. Donations and membership dues may be tax deductible; consult your tax adviser.

■ ■ ■

## NEWSLETTER

### Staff

Jim Wigton  
Susie Ling

The MOHPG newsletter staff welcomes article submissions and letters from our members for publication in the newsletter. All submissions are subject to editing.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*by Jim Wigton*

## MURAL BROCHURE

At the end of March I delivered about 225 tri-folds describing the history of the Four Bears post office mural to the Monrovia Library. The idea for providing information about the history of the mural that now hangs in the library came from Ralph Walker of KGEM. KGEM solicited the ads that paid for the printing of the color brochure.

So if you are interested in knowing the story behind how the mural came to be hung in the library, pick up one of the brochures the next time you visit the library. They should be at the desk in the adult wing, just under where the mural hangs.

## WELCOME RICH!

The MOHPG Board welcomed its newest member on April 7 by selecting Rich Andrews to an open Member-At-Large position. Rich is a local realtor and has



prior board experience that should enable him to seamlessly fit into board functioning.

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## FOR SALE BABY GRAND PIANO

MOHPG was recently gifted a baby grand piano, and we are selling it with the entire proceeds benefiting the group. The piano measures 4'8" wide, 4'9" long, and 39" high. It has ivory keys and comes with a bench.

There is no damage to the piano. A recent (12/21/18) appraisal has been conducted and is available to anyone who is interested.

The buyer is responsible for moving the piano (It is located on Hillcrest Boulevard).

**Price: \$2,000**

If you would like to see the piano, contact Dan Ryan at [danryan@historicpreservationservices.net](mailto:danryan@historicpreservationservices.net).



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## HPC REPORT - MARCH 27, 2019

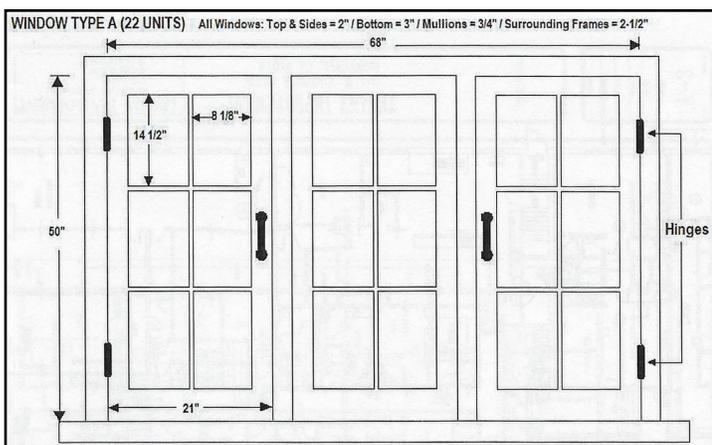
The Historic Preservation Commission met on Wednesday, March 27, at 7:30 pm with a full agenda, unlike the sparse program for the last couple of months. All seven commissioners were present, and the minutes from the last meeting were approved.

There were six items taken up at the meeting, none of which generated much discussion.

**Historic Landmark Request** for 143 N. Lincoln Place. The home is a 1925 Tudor Revival style, single-story residence. The structure retains most of its original integrity with only some minor alterations. The owners also applied for a Mills Act contract.

**Approved 7-0.**

**Certificate of Appropriateness** for the Aztec Hotel, 311 W. Foothill Blvd. The owner was requesting to replace the windows of the hotel guestrooms. This action to replace the windows has been long overdue and a subcommittee of the HPC worked with the



owner to insure that the new wood windows are of a design appropriate for the hotel.

Because most of the legwork was done before the meeting, there was little discussion. **Approved 7-0.**

**Determination of Historical Significance** for 501 Ranchito Road. This home is a Minimal Ranch style house built in 1950. The single story house had lost much of its original integrity so was deemed not to have architectural or known historic value.

**Approved with a status code of 6Z, 6-0 (one recusal).**

**Determination of Historical Significance** for the houses at 511 and 511½ E. Lemon Avenue. There were two residential units on the property. The primary residence was constructed in 1905 with the other structure built behind it in 1957. The primary residence has been substantially altered and does not retain integrity; same for the second building.

**Approved with a status code of 6Z, 7-0** (although

a demolition is now planned).

**Determination of Historical Significance** for 920 W. Colorado Blvd. The single-story Minimal Traditional home and garage were built in 1946. The house has been altered with window removals and stucco alterations and does not have architectural or known historic value.

**Approved 7-0 with a status code of 6Z.**

**Determination of Historical Significance** for the home at 1018 Norumbega Drive. This Ranch style home with an attached two-car garage was built in 1950. It was built off a private driveway and is not visible from the street. There have been significant exterior alterations to the wall finishes and windows, with the windows having been replaced with vinyl units. Little exterior elements remain, and the home was deemed not to have architectural or known historic value. The owners are not planning to demolish but to remodel the home.

**Approved with a status code of 6Z, 6-0 (one recusal).**

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**Hal Leavens**

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**Nancy McGrain**

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**Wendy Gruber**

**Rich & Joyce Rickenbrode**

For information on how YOU can become a member at the Heritage Circle or Supporter levels, go to the MOHPG website [www.mojpg.org](http://www.mojpg.org) and look under Membership.

## EARLY MONROVIA: A NEW BOOK

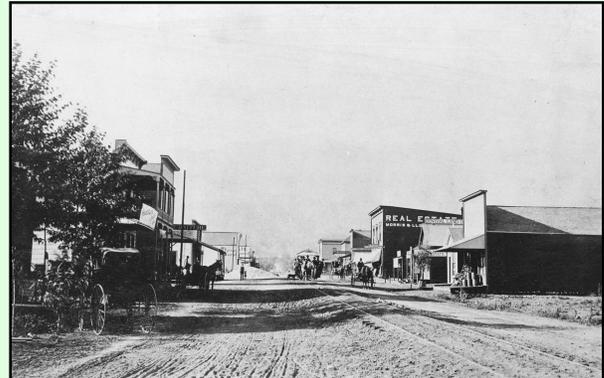
by Sandy Burud, Legacy Project

When the Monrovia Legacy Project team finished putting online the 6,000 photographs and papers that were our two City Historians' collections, the next logical step was to put them together to tell the story of Monrovia's beginnings. That's what we've done. Our new book *Early Monrovia: The beginnings of the town that became the "Gem of the Foothills"* is 100-pages of photographs -- the people, businesses, clubs, homes, schools, government, trolleys and railroads, and of course the parades.

The photographs come almost entirely from the Legacy Project's collection. They show how the town came into being – what drove its creation and growth, what it looked like, who the real “movers and shakers” were and what they thought most important (no saloons and great schools). You'll find surprises. Did you know we had a solar heating company a hundred years ago and a Young Ladies College? You'll see buildings that are still with us, and others that are sadly gone. You'll get a window into the spirit of the place and a new sense of how what it was shaped what it is.

*Early Monrovia* can be purchased around town – at City Hall, at the Library's Friends bookstore, at Dollmakers' Kattywompus (412 S. Myrtle) and from the Monrovia Historical Society (website: [monroviahistoricalsociety.org](http://monroviahistoricalsociety.org) phone: 626 675-8323 or email: [monroviahistoricalsociety1896@gmail.com](mailto:monroviahistoricalsociety1896@gmail.com)).

The cost is \$30. It will also be available to purchase at the Anderson House at 215 E. Lime on the day of the MOHPG Historic Homes Tour, May 5<sup>th</sup> and at the Information Booth during the Monrovia Days Festival May 18-19<sup>th</sup>.



Early Monrovia

The beginnings of the town that became the "Gem of the Foothills"

## LANDMARK LIST GROWS BY ONE

The City Council officially added another building to the list of Historic Landmarks on Tuesday, April 16 at a regularly scheduled city council meeting. The home at 143 Lincoln Place, a 1925 Tudor Revival, thus becomes the city's 147th landmark (The first landmark was approved on June 4, 1996). The property was also granted a Mills Act contract, a designation that provides significant property tax savings for the owner. The concept behind the Mills Act is that the savings would then be used to improve and maintain the property. Under the contract a property must be earthquake retrofitted and pass an electrical safety inspection.

The application for landmark status for this home was presented to the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) on March 27. The home met Criteria #4 which states that a property must embody “...**one or more distinctive characteristics of style, type, period, design, materials, or craftsmanship.**” (Note: A property needs only meet one of the seven criteria for landmarking.) The staff report by the city recommended approval of the application, and the HPC concurred. Final approval must be made by the City Council for the designation to become official.

Landmarking a home does not guarantee the ultimate protection that it will never be torn down (No structure can receive that assurance, not even properties on the National Register of Historic Places) but it becomes much more difficult to do so.

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*The newest addition to the list of Historic Landmarks in Monrovia is this 1925 Tudor Revival, located at 143 Lincoln Place. The house was officially designated by the City Council on Tuesday, April 16 as Historic Landmark #147.*

## A VISIT TO A ROUTE 66 ICON

MOHPG members got their first look at the inside of the iconic gas station on South Shamrock on the evening of April 25. Over 30 members and city officials attended as the current owner, Debbie Smith, gave them a guided tour of the facility and a short history of the ownership. For most everyone, it was their first opportunity to look inside, and ideas floated



around about what the future might hold for the station which was built in 1927. It sat alongside the original path of Route 66 through Monrovia. Debbie will be placing the gas station on the market sometime in the future, and the hope is that a new owner sensitive to the station's history will be found.

Several of those in attendance had memories of the gas station going way back. HPC member Sergio Jimenez remembers buying items at the store that was part of the gas station when he was a youngster. MOHPG co-founder Bruce Carter had his car worked on in the auto shop and remembers conversations with then-owner Dale Smith.

Debbie Smith (right) who owns the vintage gas station on Shamrock provides visitors with background information on the history of the station.

## HPC MEETING - APRIL 24, 2019

The Historic Preservation Commission met on Wednesday, April 24, with two items on the agenda. Five of the seven commissioners were present.

**Historic Landmark Application** for 501-509 West Foothill Boulevard. The commercial building at the corner of Mayflower was completed in 1924. The current owners are in the process of restoring both the inside and outside of the building. The city staff report concluded that the building met three of the seven criteria for landmarking (Only one criteria needs to be met).

Criteria 4—Embodies one or more distinctive characteristics of style, type, period, design, materials, detail, or craftsmanship.

Criteria 5—It has a unique location or physical characteristics or represents an established and familiar visual feature of neighborhood, community, or the City of Monrovia.

Criteria 6—It incorporates elements that help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the City.

**Approved 5-0.** The City Council needs to confirm



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this recommendation for it to become official.

**Determination of Historic Significance** for the home located at 356 North Primrose Avenue. The owners plan on an extensive remodel which triggered this review as the house is more than 50 years old (built in 1949). Staff determined that the property does not have architectural or known historic value that meets the criteria for local landmark status and is not a contributor to a potential historic district.

**Approved 5-0 by voice vote to assign a status code of 6Z** (which would allow the remodel).

## BOARD MEETING APRIL 7, 2019

The MOHPG Board of Directors met on Sunday, April 7, and all members were present. Minutes from January, February, and March were approved without changes. The first order of business was to vote Rich Andrews to a vacant Member-At-Large board position and that was done unanimously. The board now has 11 members with one vacancy. One member - Michael Kaplan - was present as a guest.

### Membership

Helen Falco reported that current membership now stands at 205 households. New members include **Larry & DeEte Albinski** and **Brandon & Tracie Bateson**, both having their homes on tour in May. Also added was **Sue Lamb**.

### Treasurer's Report

Alan Morse emailed statements to board members prior to the meeting. A CD that came due in February had been closed and the funds placed in the checking account. A motion was passed to open a one-year, \$25,000 CD at Barclay's Bank.

### Programs

Lee Schamadan updated the board on upcoming events - a visit to the Shamrock gas station on Thursday, April 25, at 6 pm; a cemetery tour led by Steve Baker on Sunday, June 23, at 1 pm. The board also authorized a \$100 donation to the Azusa Historical Society for providing docents at the Durrell House at the conclusion of the Metro Art Tour on March 16.

### Tour Report

Janie Gallandat summarized the status of the tour up to this point. Among the items shared: to date 50 tickets have been ordered through PayPal (last year at this time it was 19); the tour brochure will be sent to the printers on April 15; ads for the tour brochure have totaled \$2700; vendors and the porta-potty will be located at 447 W. Hillcrest; tickets have been delivered to the three selling locations in town; sticky mats will be used at all houses except one. The board will consider for next year whether to raise tick-

et prices and whether to mail tickets that are ordered on PayPal.

### Old Business

The baby grand piano donated to MOHPG by Dan Ryan will be sold—asking price \$2000. An email has already been sent to members. The mural brochure has been printed and has been delivered to the Monrovia Public Library.

### New Business

President Jim Wigton did a slideshow presentation for the Kiwanis on March 28. It covered the early history of Monrovia. Information on the tour was included in the April 2019 issue of *Monrovia Living*. A page on MOHPG has been submitted for the summer issue of *Monrovia Today*. A decision was made to get rid of most of the red bins in the MOHPG room at the museum as they are taking up room and are not being used. A notice from family members of the owner living at 265 N Alta Vista was shared with the board. City code enforcement is taking action on the home which has been in a state of disrepair for many years.

### Correspondence

Among the inquiries coming in to MOHPG through the website over the last month—a question about the home tour, an owner wanting to landmark 119 Melrose and seeking information, a question about a grandfather's name on the original design plans for Monrovia High School, a phone call from the Azusa Historical Society regarding our past Metro Art Tour in March, someone wanted to know when 329 Melrose would be on tour next, a question about a PayPal tour ticket order, and four questions from the Sierra Madre Historical Society (they are planning their own tour).

### Adjournment

The next board meeting will be held on April 28 because the tour will take place on our normal meeting date. So there will be no board meeting in May, and the June meeting will be held on June 2. Members are invited to attend any board meeting.



**Michael M. Clearman**  
ATTORNEY AT LAW

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Address Correction Requested

**CALENDAR**  
OF MOHPG AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

<b>May - Local, State, National Preservation Month</b>		
5	Sun	37th MOHPG Historic Homes Tour, 10 am to 4 pm
12	Sun	Mothers' Day
27	Mon	Memorial Day
<b>June</b>		
2	Sun	MOHPG Board meeting, 10 am. Members welcome to attend.
5	Wed	Last day of school for Monrovia Unified School District
16	Sun	Fathers' Day
23	Sun	Live Oak Cemetery Walk with Steve Baker, 1 pm
<b>July</b>		
4	Thurs	Independence Day
27	Sat	Annual MOHPG Potluck Meeting, 5:30 pm
<b>September</b>		
14	Sat	3rd Annual Earthquake Workshop, 11 am to 2 pm (RSVPs required, starting in August). Margaret Vinci of Cal Tech will again be the featured speaker.