

# THE SIGNAL

San Buenaventura Conservancy

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## The Wagon Wheel Motel Update

BY STAFF

On March 26th, 2007, the Ventura County Cultural Heritage Board, acting as the Oxnard Cultural Heritage Board weighed in on the mid-century Wagon Wheel Motel at the junction of Highway 1 and 101 in Oxnard. By unanimous vote, the seven member board recommended landmark designation of the motel buildings,



Wagon Wheel Located at the junction of Hwy 1 and Hwy 101 in Oxnard.

office, and restaurant buildings, to the Oxnard City Council. The Oxnard City Council as the lead agency, will vote to determine if the Motel and buildings (on approximately 1.5 acres) become a local Oxnard City Landmark. Landmark designation of the site could require preservation of the structures and/or more significant mitigations under CEQA. A project EIR on the 62 acre area (including the Wagon Wheel Motel) is due in fall 2007.

For updated information, please visit 'www.wikipedia.org' on line, search Wagon Wheel. ■■■

## Developer Blues

### Centex vs Palm+Poli vs Elks – Different Approaches Reap Different Results

BY STAFF

Imagine yourself a developer in our little town. You've purchased a nice piece of property, containing a building or two. You visit the City to get the skinny on the property. You leave the City, under the impression you have a green light to proceed with a conceptual design. You hire various professionals to meet this end goal and begin the long process of developing your project through the city gauntlet (a couple of years), and things seem to be going ok. Its now the 11th hour of your project, and city staff says "Oh, we need to run it by HPC" as the final stop. You to go to Historic Preservation Committee (HPC), thinking this is just routine, etc., only to be completely derailed. Those few buildings on the lot turn out to be a point of contention because they may be historic. You are now told you must redesign your project to incorporate these buildings or find another way to drastically lessen the impact that demolition will have, as litigation may await you if you don't.

How would you feel? Like committing hari-kari?

The message that San Buenaventura Conservancy (SBC) and HPC are trying to get across and implement is the **priority of process** so the above scenario NEVER happens.

To clarify our roles – HPC is the City Council appointed committee made up of Ventura citizens. They are not paid. Their goal is to oversee, protect and provide input regarding our historic resources. SBC is a non-profit membership organization that promotes and monitors preservation in Ventura and surrounding areas (mission statement on page 4). An SBC representative attends every HPC meeting. SBC follows projects and speaks on behalf of preservation issues to City Council, Planning Commission, and Design Review Committee.

Our point is: The developer should be directed by the City to HPC at the onset of their project. Any and every development project that may have issues with potential or designated historic resources on all levels, needs HPC input

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# Did you know...

# President's Notes

## CITY OF VENTURA

- **Historic Preservation Committee (HPC)** meets every 4th Monday of the month at 4 p.m., Santa Cruz Room/City Hall.
- **Planning Commission** meets the 1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m., Council Chambers/City Hall.
- **Design Review Committee (DRC)** meets the 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month at 4 p.m., Council Chambers/City Hall.
- **City Council** meets every Monday at 7 p.m., Council Chambers/City Hall. [www.ci.ventura.ca.us](http://www.ci.ventura.ca.us) for agendas and minutes.

## VENTURA COMMUNITY COUNCILS

- **Westside Community Council** – for meeting times and locations, please visit website at: [www.wccventura.org](http://www.wccventura.org).
- **Downtown Ventura Organization** please visit website for meeting times. [www.downtownventura.org](http://www.downtownventura.org).
- **Midtown Community Council** meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7 p.m., Cooper Hall/65 S. MacMillan Ave. [www.midtownventura.org](http://www.midtownventura.org).
- **East Ventura Community Council** meets the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7 p.m., 1st Assembly of God Church/346 N. Kimball Road, Room E-3. More info – 647-5422.

## CITY OF CAMARILLO

- **City Council** meets the 2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month at City Hall. [www.ci.camarillo.ca.us](http://www.ci.camarillo.ca.us).

## CITY OF FILLMORE

- **City Council** meets the 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m., City Hall. [www.fillmoreca.com](http://www.fillmoreca.com).

## CITY OF OXNARD

- **City Council** meets generally 3 Tuesdays per month at 5:30 p.m., please visit their website for exact dates. [www.ci.oxnard.ca.us](http://www.ci.oxnard.ca.us).

## CITY OF SANTA PAULA

- **City Council** meets the 1st & 3rd Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m., City Hall. [www.ci.santa-paula.ca.us](http://www.ci.santa-paula.ca.us).

BY CYNTHIA THOMPSON

### • Midtown Tour Event

Relive the days of crew cuts and poodle skirts with the upcoming Mid-Century Home Tour, Saturday, April 21st from 10 to 3 pm, with a reception at the home of Pat Jump from 4 to 6 pm. The Midtown Community Council is celebrating their 10th anniversary and the 100th anniversary of the incorporation of the Midtown area to the city of Ventura. There will be 6 Post World War II and modern style homes built from 1945 to 1960. One of the homes on the tour will be the residence of Bob and Janet Addison, which was designed by famed architect, Carl Maston. Tickets are \$10 each – which include the tour and reception – and can be purchased at the SideCar Restaurant at 3029 E. Main Street or call 653.5088. Self-guided tour maps will be available at the SideCar the day of the event. At 3:30 pm, artist Kathy McGuire, will be on hand to dedicate the new Hobson Heights signs. For further information, contact Dan Long at 653-6573. SBC is a sponsor of this event.

### • Historic Preservation Training

The Historic Preservation training sessions offered by Historic Resources Group, Inc., and the City of Ventura, concluded in January and were extremely informative. Principal Christy J. McAvoy led the sessions. The subjects ranged from examining our city's own preservation programs to detailed discussions about determining what is historic, application of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, laws and regulations, financial incentives, and where to go to find resources for help and funding. The classes were open to the public, city staff, commissioners, and Council and were attended by representatives from each sector. Videotaped by the city, they will be available for future reference. Historic Resources Group, Inc. has been hired by the city to conduct the Phase I (Downtown Core) and Phase II (entire Downtown Specific Plan) historic resource inventory, which updates the historic survey completed in 1983.

### • Annual Membership Meeting

Elizabeth Topping came to life in the room dedicated to her name at the Foster Library at the SBC Annual Membership Meeting on January 10th. Living history performer (and SBC Board Member) Suzanne Lawrence "channeled" Ms. Topping as she told the story of how the library system in Ventura evolved and grew. Rare archival images borrowed from the original E. P. Foster library were presented to the audience as Ms. Lawrence narrated. This performance is part of a repertoire of many historically significant women in Ventura's history that are available for events through the SBC. The meeting was well attended and highlighted the accomplishments of the year, outlined goals, and concluded with the election of Board Members for 2007.

### • Valentine House Member Event

The spirit of Harry S. Valentine was alive and well on the evening of February 28th at the Valentine House Members Only Event. You could almost feel the presence of post Council meetings in the old billiard room of the home from the early 1900s. Patagonia textile designer, Lynne Siodmak, shared her home and meticulous restoration of this grand – and only – Oriental Craftsman in Ventura. SBC members enjoyed good company, good food, and the timeless quality of restored details like an original, revolving Murphy bed in the parlor. It was a special gift to our members and a generous display from Lynne. Stay tuned for more members events in the future.

### • New Downtown Signage

And last but not least, a new sign graces the exit of California Street, Downtown Ventura. From my research at the Pierpont, I have newspaper articles dating back to the 60s with the building of the freeway expressing the "urgent" need for signage from the 101 that would let travelers know the town of Ventura exists. Kudo's to the property owners, Jeff Becker and Willem Jonker, who erected this wonderful vintage-style sign for all to enjoy when they arrive to town. ☺

# ...now you do!

Get involved!

# History + Art

BY STAFF

The following is a reprint of the letter sent to the city regarding a bold new concept marrying historic preservation and the arts.

March 16, 2007

Mayor Morehouse, City Councilmembers  
Subject: Downtown Historical Preservation and The Arts

The San Buenaventura Conservancy (SBC) respectfully requests that the City Council thoroughly explore and analyze the adaptive re-use of our historical building resources as cultural and arts-related venues. We urge you to consider this prior to committing to city resources to any new construction.

Adaptive re-use represents the best use of city resources. Buildings such as the landmark Ventura Theater complex, the Elks Lodge, the Main Street Garage on Chestnut and the original E.P. Foster Library, are incredible architectural resources that cannot be replicated and are an important part of what makes our city unique. Imagine a series of venues housing great art in structures that are themselves a tourist draw!

Feasibility is, of course, a concern. But these buildings are already in place and do not typically require expensive new parking. Re-use is also considered the ultimate in "green" design.

Numerous resources are available to make this a reality. Just as there was \$1 million available for the Olivas Adobe once it was properly positioned, there are funds and resources that are available for historic theaters. Successful public/private partnerships renovated historic theaters in cities including Santa Barbara, Culver City and Hollywood. New market tax credits – available only to landmarks – contributed \$10 million toward the recent renovation of the Granada Theater in Santa Barbara. These credits are set to expire in 2008, so time is of the essence.

Groups such as the League of Historic American Theaters and the National Trust for Historic Preservation provide experience and expertise. Architectural firms have offered to donate time and expertise. A number of investors have expressed interest but need city leadership.

Is the "AuthentiCity" theme for the Downtown Specific Plan a community-wide commitment to putting our resources toward keeping Ventura unique or just an empty catch-phrase?

Sincerely,  
The SBC Board of Directors  
cc: City Manager Mr. Rick Cole ☺

# Developer Blues

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

in the beginning and not the end, to avoid costly consequences.

SBC is eager to partner with developers in assisting new construction projects with existing historic resources so that they are thoughtfully integrated.

SBC does not wish to freeze the town in antiquity, but is seeking a dialog with every developer from the onset of each project. This will insure that Ventura's historic character is retained alongside new growth if done according to guidelines that are easily understood and accessible to everyone.

Three recent projects – two recently approved – illustrate this point:

**Case 1** – The Centex Project, located at 2686 North Ventura Avenue, Ventura.

This is the site of the Pioneer Willet Ranch established 1874, where four generations of Willets have lived and farmed the property until the present day. Centex has spent the past four years in development, spending hundreds of thousands of dollars. This project came to HPC for its first time on February 26th, 2007, with plans of complete demolition of all structures. However, the professional historic evaluation of the property clearly stated that the land and all the existing structures appear to be eligible as a City Landmark. Both the HPC and the SBC made it very clear to the developer that, in this 11th hour, their plans for demolition of the structures is not acceptable. Back to the drawing board and more money. This project does not have final approval.

**Case 2** – The Palm + Poli Project, located at 73 N. Palm Street, Ventura.

This project was recently approved, but only after years of wrangling. At first, the developer planned to move the city designated landmark Hartman House off of the property, only to be told NO. The project was then redesigned to retain and incorporate the Hartman House. The redesigned project failed because of incompatibility issues. The second redesigned project also failed because the Secretary of Interior Standards were not implemented to address the incompatibility issues. The final redesign was just approved by Council on March 26, 2007.

During all these redesigns, the HPC saw the project in its first incarnation, as did the SBC. Input was given by both bodies, and mostly followed only in its final redesign. Had SBC and HPC been included in all of the redesign steps, this project may have proceeded more quickly with fewer redesigns and less expense.

**Case 3** - The Lodge (aka the Elks Lodge), 11 South Ash Street, Ventura.

The Elks project is a classic example of how well the process can work and did work. SBC and HPC were consulted at the very onset of this project. This project was designed with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards as the guideline. SBC and HPC were included in all design steps, and the project has sailed through all City processes with flying colors. It could almost be the Planning Departments Poster Child. It also has full SBC support.

The newly adopted Downtown Specific Plan will help us move in this direction by requiring that projects adjacent to historic resources must be reviewed by HPC. Another important tool is that the General Plan states that all projects involving properties over 40 years old need to be reviewed for historic significance.

We are making progress. ☺

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## 2007 San Buenaventura Conservancy's Goals

### Highest Priority

– Defining a political position and policy based on preservation law as a guideline for discourse in the public and private sector regarding pending and future issues.

### Education and Outreach

– Conduct workshops on preservation topics and develop culturally themed events.

### Round-The-Clock

– Attend public meetings (HPC/Planning/DRC/Council) regarding preservation issues.

### Photographic Archives

– To continue to build a comprehensive photographic library.

## Board of Directors

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## Appointees

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Sherry Schafer

Newsletter Editor | [sherry@west.net](mailto:sherry@west.net)

Stephen Schafer

Archivist | [schaf@west.net](mailto:schaf@west.net)

# 2007 Town Calendar

- 01/08 · County Historic Board Meeting
- 01/10 · SBC General Meeting
- 01/22 · Historic Preservation Committee Meeting
- 02/12 · County Historic Board Meeting
- 02/07 · SBC Board Meeting
- 02/26 · Historic Preservation Committee Meeting
- 03/12 · County Historic Board Meeting
- 03/14 · SBC Board Meeting
- 03/19 · Downtown Specific Plan Adoption @ City Council
- 03/26 · Historic Preservation Committee Meeting
- 04/09 · County Historic Board Meeting
- 04/11 · SBC Board Meeting
- 04/21 · Midtown Mid-Century Tour / 10 to 3
- 04/23 · Historic Preservation Committee Meeting
- 05/3-6 · CPF Conference "Hollywood Goes Preservation"
- 05/11 · Charles Phoenix /Ford Amphitheatre, Hollywood

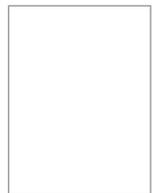
## Mission Statement

The San Buenaventura Conservancy is a non-profit membership organization that works through advocacy and outreach to recognize, preserve and revitalize the irreplaceable historic, architectural and cultural resources of San Buenaventura and surrounding areas. We seek to increase public awareness of, and participation in, local preservation issues, and disseminate information useful in the preservation of the structures and neighborhoods of San Buenaventura.



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