

# FULLERTON HERITAGE

Spring ❁ Volume 18 ❁ Number 2 ❁ May 2012

*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.*

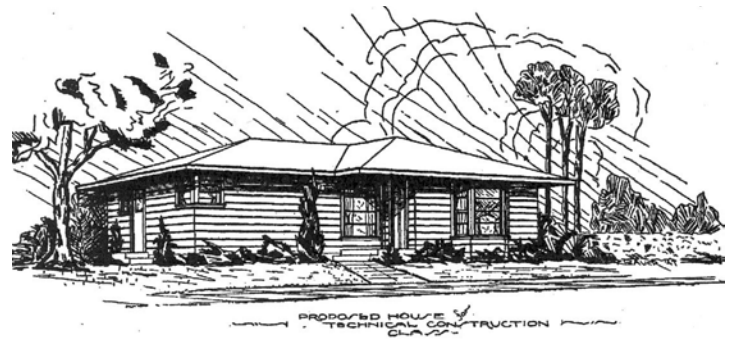
## The Homes That Fullerton College Built

by *Debra Richey*

**B**eginning in 1946, Fullerton College students enrolled in the building trades program began to build houses, on the north side of campus, which were then sold to the highest bidder. On average, each new dwelling took about two to three semesters to complete. The residential projects provided students with a chance to learn all aspects of construction while also offering affordable homes to lucky members of the community. The brainchild of instructor C. Robert McCormick, the housing projects represented thousands of hours of work involving student architects, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, plasterers, painters, and interior decorators. A longtime Fullerton resident, McCormick had played football with Richard M. Nixon while both attended Fullerton Union High School, and briefly dated Pat Ryan (later Pat Nixon) while both were members of the Nightwalkers Club, a Fullerton College drama group. After graduating from Fullerton College, McCormick completed his higher education at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), taught at a junior high school, and then returned to Fullerton College in 1937 eager to teach technical education courses. He was to remain an instructor at Fullerton College for the next thirty-eight years. Over the course of his teaching career, McCormick was honored by the Building and Contractors Association of Orange County and other groups for his work in the development of school programs for the building construction industry. After McCormick's sudden death in February 1975, supervision of the building projects was passed to Robert W. Petri.

When the houses were completed, they

were opened up for public inspection, with thousands of potential buyers previewing each newly constructed dwelling on the northern part of the campus. In May 1960, the decision was made to showcase the just-completed three-bedroom home by displaying it at the Orangefair Avenue Shopping Center at Orangethorpe and Harbor Boulevard. Under the direction of the Fullerton Police Department, the 1,200 square-foot home moved through the downtown streets of



*Architectural sketch of the 1947 student-built home*

Fullerton. Over 10,000 visitors examined the home's many features: a raked gable, crushed red-rock roof, a clerestory window above the living and family rooms, exposed-  
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## Fox Theatre Update

by *Tom Dalton*

As you may recall, Fullerton Heritage started the "Save the Fox" project over 10 years ago and several of our members were founding members of the Fullerton Historic Theatre Foundation, which now owns the theatre. I hope you've had a chance to follow the Fox Theatre restoration over the years and have noticed the progress recently made on the Firestone Building and the Tea Room. In the Theatre itself the demolition work is complete and the seismic retrofit is just about finished for the entire complex. New plaster and paint are being applied to the Firestone Building, Tea Room, and Theatre this month and the scaffolding is now in place so that the new fire sprinkler

system can be installed in the Theatre. The re-roofing of the complex is complete and the new sub-flooring for the stage is also done. We expect to have the Firestone Building ready to lease by the end of June. The Fullerton Historic Theatre Foundation is planning another "Hollywood in Fullerton" event later this year to celebrate the successes made so far and to help raise donations for the continued restoration of the Theatre. Be watching for the announcement and please plan to attend. If you aren't already a Friend of the Fox Fullerton Theatre please consider joining and help us keep the momentum going. The Foundation's website is [foxfullerton.org](http://foxfullerton.org).

# Advocacy Issues

by Kate Dalton

## Redevelopment Design Review Committee (RDRC)

On November 3, 2011 the RDRC reviewed a proposal to demolish a small second unit and build a new larger unit on the back of the property at 320 N. Balcolm Ave. in the College Park Preservation Zone. The project required extensive review and modifications to comply with the Design Guidelines and with significant input from Fullerton Heritage, the RDRC approved the final design. The Landmarks Commission approved the plan including the requested demolition at its meeting on December 14, 2011.

On January 12, 2012 the RDRC reviewed plans by the owner of Rutabagorz Restaurant to demolish structures on the rear of his properties at 211-213 N. Pomona Ave. in the historic downtown. The proposal to construct a small mixed-use development consisting of two offices and five apartment units was unanimously approved. The three-story building, although contemporary in nature, has design features and materials that complement the existing historic buildings. The project required an extensive historic resource evaluation because of the request to demolish the older structures at the rear of the property. In addition, the original building at the front of the 211 N. Pomona property, Rutabagorz Restaurant, is a local landmark, recognized as the site of the birth of the preservation movement in Fullerton. In 1974 the owners and local citizenry launched a campaign to convince Pacific Telephone not to buy the property and demolish the building for its expansion. This success highlighted the desire to protect properties important to the community and sparked interest in identifying and preserving the City's landmark properties. Fullerton's first Historic Building Survey was completed and adopted in 1979 (and updated in 2001) and Fullerton Heritage was subsequently founded in 1991 to ensure the continued progress of preservation in our historic city.

With the dissolution of the Fullerton Redevelopment Agency, discussions are underway about the future of the RDRC. Fullerton Heritage has written a position letter in support of the need for some type of design review process and is communicating with City staff as they study this issue and make recommendations for the future.

## Livingston House

One of the few remaining grove houses, constructed by Fullerton's pioneering families is in peril. The Livingston House was built in 1908 at 419 S. Spadra Road (Harbor Blvd.) and moved to its current location at 117 W. Valencia Ave. in 1925. The house, listed as a significant property / potential local landmark in the Historic Building Survey, has not been maintained in recent years and the family now needs to sell the property as-is. Given its location and state of disrepair, it may be difficult to find a buyer interested in

renovating the house, making it likely that the owners will request a permit for demolition. We have met with the owners, real estate agent and the City in an effort to save the house. The most recent news is that there is a prospective buyer that claims to be interested in saving the house and building several more residential units on the large lot. We will continue to monitor the issue.

## General Plan Update

After considerable delay, the adoption of The Fullerton Plan (General Plan Update) has been in the public review stage for the past several weeks and the Planning Commission held a public hearing on Wednesday April 18 to review the draft plan and make recommendations to the City Council. The Commission unanimously voted to recommend approval of all of the components presented.

City Council held a public hearing to review The Fullerton Plan on Tuesday May 1, and unanimously approved the plan.

As previously reported, Fullerton Heritage has been very involved in this process for the past couple of years and was instrumental in the inclusion of a separate Historic Element in the proposed plan.

## Amerige Brothers Real Estate Office

As reported in our last newsletter's feature article, the historic Amerige Brothers Real Estate Office is being restored as part of the new Community Center project on Commonwealth Ave. next to Amerige Park. The building is now on its new permanent foundation and is ready for further exterior restoration by the City, followed by interior restoration and landscape design and installation by Fullerton Heritage in partnership with Fullerton Beautiful and the City. Our next step will be meeting with the City staff and the project managers to clarify the scope of the work and timelines for proceeding with the restoration. We expect to involve as many volunteers as possible in this project. We will update you as soon as we have firm needs.

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## Fullerton Rotary Donation Supports Plaque Project

As it has done for the past 15 years, the Rotary Club of Fullerton has again honored the work of Fullerton Heritage by supporting our plaquing project. The Rotary's generous \$500 donation will be used to purchase and install bronze plaques on our Local Landmark and National Register buildings. Sincere thanks to the Rotary Club of Fullerton for their continued support and to Fullerton Heritage member Rick Crane for his sponsorship.

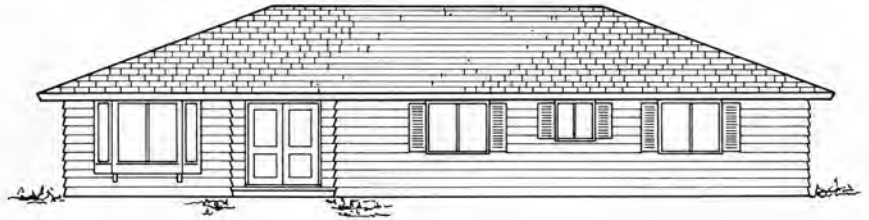
## Homes

(continued from page 1)

plank ceilings with dropped soffits concealing indirect lighting throughout the house, wall-to-wall carpeting, and an AM-FM Musical Call intercom system. When campus space became tight in the 1970s, the homes were constructed on Berkeley Avenue east of Lemon Avenue, adjacent to the North Orange County Community College District headquarters (1000 N. Lemon).

The first homes constructed by Fullerton College students enrolled in Construction 66A (Construction Shop) - initially only a dozen - were small, two-bedroom, one-bath dwellings with little architectural style. The first home built in 1946, a tract-like dwelling of only 672-square-feet, was a prefabricated building fitted together like a jigsaw puzzle after completion of preassembly work in the College's shops. Each section of the house, including the floor, walls, roof and front porch, was built on jigs in the assembly shop before outside final assembly work began. When finished, the home had no plumbing or paint, and only a few electrical fixtures, all of which the new owner was expected to provide. As the program continued, building techniques became more advanced and architectural styles changed in Southern California, resulting in newly completed homes built in more modern styles. The exterior of the 1956 "Bermuda-styled" dwelling, painted in desert colors, featured redwood, crushed brick red rock roofing, and a long porch with fancy wrought iron work crafted by Fullerton College metalworking students. The 1966 project was an all-electric Polynesian-styled home that contained a family room, tiled entry hall, full access wardrobes, acoustical ceilings, and tiled kitchen and bathrooms. By the 1980s, over 200 students from eight College classes participated in building three-bedroom Ranch-styled homes. In a sign of the times, added effort was made to make the 1978 home "energy conscious" with insulation and double-paned windows. Garages were added in the 1970s, and interested bidders were required to bid on the home and garage separately. To facilitate each project, student builders worked with Fullerton City inspectors who completed thorough inspections free of charge.

Initially, the completed houses were first offered to World War II veterans enrolled in the building trades program, then construction technology students, and then if no student could afford to purchase the dwelling, it was auctioned off to the highest bidder. Eventually though, the homes were sold solely to the highest bidder in a public auction. The winning bidder had the obligation of moving the building off-campus. One lucky Fullerton College student, Glenn Kadelbech, was able to purchase the 1954 two-bedroom home for \$4,500 when his name was drawn out of a hat at a Board of Trustees meeting. Kadelbech moved the home he had helped construct to a lot in Anaheim. Money received from the sales of the



*Layout of the Design '78 student built home*

homes was used to purchase materials that would go into another house to be built by a new crew of students.

Over the decades, most of the student-built homes were relocated to cities other than Fullerton, including Anaheim, Chino, Cypress, Elsinore, Orange, Placentia, Santa Ana, and Yorba Linda. A lack of available lots and snooty neighbors proved to be prohibitive factors for owners who wanted to move their newly-purchased home to a Fullerton location. In 1950, Fullerton resident Clarke N. Simms, a defense contractor, purchased the newly-completed house but found relocation impossible when neighborhoods objected to moving a student-built house onto an available lot. Simms and his wife were stopped on the street and received numerous calls at home from Fullerton residents objecting to his plans. The couple eventually relocated the home, built to FHA specifications, to another town. Later in 1978, a young couple, Lisa Charles and Bob Davis, purchased the student-built house for \$42,515, intending to use the dwelling as their first home after their marriage. When the couple could find no available lot in Fullerton, new bids were taken. The Design '78 home was eventually sold to David Knowles, an Orange Coast College instructor, and the three-bedroom, two-bath Ranch-styled home was moved to 1572 North Oranewood in Anaheim. Because of the difficulty in finding lots for the houses, the bid procedure was altered so that bidders were required to put up \$2,000 instead of \$500, with the funds lost or forfeited if a buyer reneged.

In 1980, faculty members in the Construction Technology Department decided it would be preferable to construct the homes on vacant lots in Fullerton. Using a federally-funded program

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# ALERT! Historic Architectural Features at Risk

by Bob Linnell and Kate Dalton

Fullerton Heritage has become increasingly concerned about the loss of historic architectural features from homes, particularly in the residential preservation zones. For example, in many instances the removal or replacement of windows is being done on weekends or in the dead of night without the benefit of permits, and therefore, without any review for historic compatibility. While the very best approach to historic architectural design elements is to maintain or repair the original, occasionally replacement is needed. When window replacement is appropriate, the type and design of a new window are critical to the integrity of the historic home and subsequently, the entire historic neighborhood.



Pictured above is an example of a recent instance in the Jacaranda-Malvern-Brookdale Preservation Zone that demonstrates the importance of this issue. The window on the left was installed without a city permit, and therefore, without the benefit of architectural review by staff. The window is clearly inappropriate for this historic home and is indeed prohibited by the City's Design Guidelines. Had the owners obtained the necessary permit, they would have either repaired the existing historic window, if at all possible, or replaced it with one that would have honored the period and design of the house and complemented the remaining historic windows, as seen on the right in the photo.

A Fullerton Heritage member noticed this recent window change and called the City's Community Preservation Hotline to inquire about the work. Reportedly, City staff immediately did an inspection and will be meeting with the owners to discuss the situation. We are hopeful that this will happen less and less as property owners

understand the need to obtain permits for this type of work.

We are working with City staff on this issue and have drafted a letter to be sent from the City to window vendors reminding them of the permit requirement. We have also designed an informational flyer available in the Community Development Department on this subject and hope to soon design and distribute a more specific informational flyer for residences in the preservation zones.

Permits are required for the change-out of all windows regardless of the age or style of the house, but we are particularly concerned about the integrity of historic homes and buildings. Please help us encourage homeowners to follow the City's permitting process. Refer to the flyer in this edition of the newsletter for details on how you can help Fullerton Heritage promote best practices in renovation.

## Why replace windows when their retention is better!

There is much research to support the wisdom of retaining original wood windows, both in terms of energy efficiency and environmental impact. If you have old wood windows, they are almost always repairable. If you need help on how to do it yourself or for professionals to do it for you, contact the Fullerton Heritage hotline or visit our Resource Guide on our website. Repairing the originals, even by professional craftsmen, is often more cost effective than modern day replacements, and definitely more historically appropriate. That's why it's a stated recommendation in the City's Design Guidelines for Residential Preservation Zones.

## Homes

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along with City of Fullerton funding, the College students built a four-unit housing project for low- and moderate-income families at the corner of Lemon Avenue and Walnut Way, adjacent to the train station: 260, 262, 266, and 268 Walnut Way. Similarly styled, each house had its own detached garage. All Fullerton College had to pay for were the materials used by the classes working on the project. Instructor Geoffrey Smith's Landscaping Construction 168

class prepared the grounds surrounding the houses and put in a sprinkler system as well. Tony Ortez, an automotive repair student at Golden West College, his wife, and three small children were the first to move into one of the units. Redevelopment Agency staff members were so pleased with the Walnut Way units that Fullerton College embarked on a five-year Dorothy Lane Housing Project. A joint effort between construction students and the City's Redevelopment Agency, five affordable houses were built on surplus

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## President's Corner

by Tom Dalton

Please note the announcement of our Annual Meeting that will be held on July 8. We will have an excellent speaker, Diane Oestreich, who will be discussing her recent book on the history of Fullerton High School. I know several of you are FHS grads so this should be especially interesting for you. Additionally, we will have a presentation on this year's preservation accomplishments as well as our financial report and preservation awards to worthy members of our community. So, please plan to attend and show your support for the fine volunteers who work so hard to make Fullerton Heritage such an excellent preservation organization.

On March 15<sup>th</sup> I had the pleasure of attending the first-ever North Orange County Heritage Festival and Conference. The idea for the event came from Zoot Valasco and his staff at the Muckenthaler Cultural Center, who served as hosts. Several preservation groups and historical societies representing Fullerton, Brea, Santa Ana, Anaheim and other cities in north OC participated in the one-day event and were treated to a most interesting and valuable presentation by Mr. Valasco dealing with a variety of strategies for increasing membership of organizations and board development. Representatives from Fullerton College were also there to announce the centennial celebration they will be putting on throughout 2013. After the meeting booths were set up in the courtyard where the participating orga-

nizations could show off their stuff and talk with other like-minded people. Zoot and the Muckenthaler staff are to be commended for creating the event and for their excellent hospitality. We're proud to have been a sponsor of this event and are pleased to have the Muckenthaler Cultural

Center as a Fullerton Heritage member.

This will be my last *President's Corner* column. After sixteen years as President of Fullerton Heritage I think it's time to hand over the gavel. We have several members on our Board who have the skills and passion necessary to do the job well and I know one of them will step up to fill the role. It has been a pleasure and an honor to be President of this fine organization and I would like to stay on its Board for as long as I can make a contribution. I'm certain there is still a considerable amount our organization can do to help make our historic city one we can continue to proudly call home and I want to be a part of that effort. Thank you very much for your support and vote of confidence over the years.

## Welcome New Members!

Fullerton Heritage extends a warm welcome to our newest members: Charolette Chamberlain, Dixie Chamberlain, Christine Heusser, Linda C. Henke, Charle Jones, Maria Kulikoff, Joan Mears, Gina & Joe Rabow, and Melinda & Chip Rathmell. Welcome!

## Homes

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land owned by the City: 2008 and 2012 Dorothy Lane, and 2039, 2047, and 2053 East Fern Avenue. Each home took a year to complete, with about fifty students working nine hours a week from September to June exclusively on construction of each dwelling. The money spent on materials, along with the cost of the land, was reimbursed by the Redevelopment Agency. After the construction costs were totaled, the selling price of the homes (\$84,000 to \$90,000) was determined. At the time, comparable homes in the area were selling for \$150,000. To qualify for the lottery, applicants had to be Fullerton residents, have an annual income of less than \$35,000 (later raised to \$39,200), not own any other real estate,



*Courtesy of the Fullerton College Library*

and agree to live in the home for at least five years before selling it. Potential buyers were required to submit a \$1,000 deposit that was refunded if they did not win the drawing. Drawings took place at a Fullerton City Council meeting. The three-bedroom, two-bath homes included such amenities as carpeting, built-ins, a fireplace, natural wood cabinets, roll-out shelves in fully-equipped kitchens, double garages, and block-wall fencing. Located adjacent to Troy High School, the five student-built homes still look much like they did when they were first constructed.

In addition to constructing homes, Fullerton College students branched out in the 1970s, working on projects other than homes. In 1972, Fullerton College students constructed a new activity/community building in Lemon Park. The 2,000-square-foot building had 26 doors, giving students ample practice in

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## FULLERTON HERITAGE MEMBERS: WE NEED YOUR ASSISTANCE!



The Community Preservation hotline is (714) 773-5704.

The Code Enforcement Officer is Kirke Warren. Call him at (714) 773-5799 or email at [Kirkew@ci.fullerton.ca.us](mailto:Kirkew@ci.fullerton.ca.us).

If you see a remodel of a residence in your neighborhood where the removal or replacement of windows is taking place, please report the work on the City of Fullerton's Community Preservation hotline or the City's code enforcement officer (see telephone numbers, below).

### WINDOW REPLACEMENT REQUIRES A PERMIT

A permit is required regardless of whether the work is merely a change-out of existing windows or when it involves a reframing of the opening for a larger or smaller window size.

The permit is to ensure compliance with adopted building code safety and energy requirements and in some cases to confirm that the proposed window change-out is an appropriate design for the existing residence or commercial building.

There is a nominal fee for a permit for this type of work.

However, if a change-out of existing windows is done prior to the issuance of a permit, the City may charge a penalty in addition to the permit fee and could require the removal and replacement if incorrect windows are installed.

## Homes

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finished carpentry work, along with an opportunity to improve their skills in such areas as blueprint reading, fabrication, use of new materials, roof cutting, and new techniques in fastening. Other projects included the Fullerton Tennis Center, the La Habra Girl Scout Pavilion in 1974, refurbishment of the Fullerton Museum Center, and roof replacement on the 1900 Eastlake-styled Dr. George Clark House (Heritage House), located on the grounds of the Arboretum on the CSU Fullerton campus.

After completion of the homes in the Dorothy Lane Housing Project, the building projects began to fade out as faculty members retired and vacant land became difficult to find. By 1986, the building program was phased out at Fullerton College. Additional information on the student-built homes can be found in the Local History Room of the Fullerton Public Library.



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