

Save Our Heritage Organisation PRESENTS

Victorious Victorians!

The Revival Tour

March 22 2009





**In every town, city,
neighborhood and community**
within the County of San Diego, our historic
buildings, our cultural heritage, and the history
of our communities are at risk.

SOHO is the leader in the effort to save
endangered places, neighborhoods and cultural
landscapes, and to educate and enable public
involvement in the process. **Join us!**

**Through education, advocacy,
and stewardship** SOHO's mission is to preserve,
promote and support preservation of the architectural, cultural
and historical links and landmarks that contribute to the
community identity, depth and character of our region.

www.SOHOsandiego.org

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Welcome by Alana Coons
House descriptions written by Jaye Furlonger
Photography & design by Sandé Lollis

Heritage Park County Rangers

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and to
County Parks & Recreation • Commission for Arts & Culture



Welcome to Victorious Victorians!

The Revival Tour

Save Our Heritage Organisation (SOHO) has been holding historic tours since 1971. In honor of our 40th Anniversary we are revisiting our very first historic home tour with a couple additional homes added to the line up as well.

And what a home tour we have! The homes on our 40th Anniversary tour are simply spectacular. These homes have been restored with the dedication of personal resources and energies that have ensured the preservation and restoration of the excellence of 19th century American architectural design and San Diego's unique resources of this era.

Late Victorian Americans (1870-90) took the design of their homes very seriously. The Victorians were highly status-conscious, and nothing displayed one's status like the home. Their house was more than a home; it was a statement of their taste, wealth, and education.

During the 1880s when the homes on this tour were built and during a time when San Diego was booming, the dominant Victorian house styles were the Queen Anne and Stick Eastlake, which are also the two styles that dominate this tour.

While both have variations on character defining features, they share some commonalities. Both are characterized by exquisite excess, featuring bay windows, porches (often on multiple stories), balconies, stained glass decoration, roof finials and crestings, inset panels of stone, terra cotta and other materials, cantilevered upper stories, decorative trim, patterned shingles, elaborate brackets, banisters and spindles, even the chimneys on these homes are often wonderfully decorative. They both often boast towers and /or turrets. The houses that you will see today are excellent examples of this exuberance of ornateness.



In addition to all of these decorative elements, the Victorians also painted their homes in colors that enhanced and complimented its design and its surroundings. Colors and tones taken from nature's palette of plants and minerals were generally used. Colors such as brick and terra cotta reds, greens both deep and shades of olive, yellows in many tones of mustards and amber, and all types of earthy browns. Several of the homes on our tour, the Sherman-Gilbert, the Sheldon and the Britt Scripps, and the Temple Beth Israel show how period placement and color show the homes off to their greatest advantage.

**When the past no longer
illuminates the future, the
spirit walks in darkness. -**

Alexis de Tocqueville

The Victorian interior further shows how the aesthetics of design and decorative treatments were considered an art form. With the selection and balance of multiple patterns and use of a full palette of colors; mixing designs, patterns and textures, again taking clues from nature, a room would embrace the full array of shades, colors and variety found in the garden.

The gardens and landscapes surrounding the homes were also an integral piece of the picture. We invite you to linger a bit and enjoy the historic plantings and garden of the Long-Waterman home, stroll the verandah with a light refreshment and reflect upon the singular beauty of San Diego's nineteenth century architectural heritage.

We are thankful that these great ladies still exist and that they can be appreciated some 100 years later. It is because of the private and public endeavors of the stewards who have opened their doors to you today that ensures they will be enjoyed for future generations to come.



Heritage Park

2454 Heritage Park Row • Old Town San Diego

The establishment of Heritage Park was the beginning of significant accomplishment in historic preservation for SOHO. The event was celebrated in 1971 with an “old fashioned Victorian dedication” in which the County of San Diego presented proclamations to the organization’s members for their efforts in creating the 7.8 acre preserve for historically significant buildings threatened with demolition. The County Board of Supervisors provided the land and a budget of \$1.2 million to be used over a 10-year period to help with the relocation and renovation of structures. While moving a historic resource is no longer considered an appropriate method of preservation as it was thirty or more years ago, the beautiful county park now contains six important Victorian era buildings that would all have been lost.

In the spring of 1971, the 1887 Sherman Gilbert House was the first structure saved by SOHO and brought to Heritage Park. The home’s original owner John Sherman was the cousin of General William Tecumseh Sherman. From 1892 to 1965, internationally famous entertainers such as Yehudi Menuhin, Ernestine Schumann-Heink and Arthur Rubinstein performed here at social events held by sisters Bess and Gertrude Gilbert, important local patrons of the arts.

When SOHO saved the Senlis Cottage, the organization was one of the first preservation groups in the nation to understand the historical significance of the average citizen’s home. Built in 1896 for Eugene Senlis, an employee of San Diego pioneer horticulturist Kate Sessions, the cottage is a lovely example of a modest 19th century workingman’s cottage.

San Diego’s first synagogue, the Temple Beth Israel also found a permanent home in Heritage Park. Constructed by the Congregation Beth Israel in 1889, other of the city’s early religious sects also used the temple before building and establishing churches of their own.

Sherman-Gilbert
House



Senlis Cottage



Temple Beth
Israel



Map of Historic Home Tour

- 2501 First Avenue
- 2410 First Avenue
- 406 Maple Street
- 1568 Ninth Avenue
- 1245 Island Avenue

General Tour Rules

- Have courtesy when parking in these residential neighborhoods, do not block driveways
- No photography inside the homes
- Turn off pagers & cell phones
- Do not touch anything in the homes, including doors, drawers or furnishings
- No use of bathrooms



↑ HEADQUARTERS



LAUREL

PACIFIC HWY

PACIFIC HWY

BROAD

MARKET

Timken House, 1888

Comstock & Trotsche

2501 First Avenue

Located on First Avenue in Banker's Hill, the lovingly restored Timken House was constructed for the affluent San Diego businessman Kerry Timken in 1888. The Timkens were a prominent local family involved in real estate and fine art. Their impressive collection of rare old European masterpieces that was originally displayed inside the mansion now hangs at the namesake Timken Museum and at the San Diego Museum of Art located in nearby Balboa Park.

The Timken House was designed by noted architects Comstock and Trotsche who applied Colonial Revival influences to the home's overall Queen Anne style. The massive scale and high-end design represented by the three-story, single-family Timken residence epitomizes the wealth and opulence associated with the boom period of the 1880s. In the years prior to the completion of the transcontinental railroad, San Diego was an isolated, small and dusty frontier town. Finally linked to the rest of the country by rail, it was able to prosper and grow quickly into a sophisticated urban center under the civic leadership of well-to-do families such as the Marstons, Spreckels, Timkens and others. By 1888, the city had approximately 37 miles of trolley tracks, and the new, sparsely populated Uptown section of town provided an ideal suburban park-like setting for members of the privileged classes to build plush mansions away from downtown's hustle and bustle.

Including the landmark Horton Grand Hotel and the Villa Montezuma, architects Comstock and Trotsche catered to the city's elite and designed nearly sixty buildings in San Diego during the firm's short term of operation here in the 1880s. Their clients demanded that their new buildings convey a strong sense of their wealth and social standing. The quality craftsmanship of the Timken House, with its attention to detail and use of luxury materials such



as wheel cut glass, represents this pivotal, transformative period in local history when San Diego was coming into its own as a respectable city, and when, for some well-heeled citizens, the dollar expense of constructing a monument to one's own material successes had apparently few restrictions. Unlike many of these homes, which have been rescued and converted to inns, offices and apartments, the Timken house is relatively rare in that it remains to this day a private, single-family residence.



Long-Waterman Carriage House, 1889

2410 First Avenue

A monument from more elegant times, the National Register listed Long-Waterman House (No. 37 SDRHR) was constructed at the corner of First and Kalmia Streets in 1889. The spacious, three-story, single-family Queen Ann style Victorian residence was designed by famed architect D.B. Benson for John S. Long, owner of the Coronado Fruit Package Company. Long also owned the largest rotary veneer machine in the world and had a profitable business importing exotic woods and manufacturing seamless ten foot long hardwood veneer used in interior fine finishing and furniture and buggy decoration. The spectacular rich wood interior of the home reflects Long's specialty. D.B. Benson is noted for having been the



supervising architect for the County Court House and for the new public school buildings in the late 1880s.

Governor Robert Whitney Waterman, 17th Governor of California, purchased the property from Long for his retirement in January 1891. His residency was brief as he died only a few months later. In 1897 it was bought from Waterman's heirs by Fred R. Hart, a retired gentleman from Vermont whose daughter Florence married Dr. Albert Gilbert in 1908 and inherited the home upon his death in 1937. Dr. Gilbert was a prominent local dentist and a founder and president of the San Diego County Dental Society. Gilbert's sisters, Bess and Gertrude, created the prestigious Amphion Club to bring some of the world's greatest opera singers and musicians to San Diego. Deeply entrenched in local high society, the Gilberts used the First Street mansion to hold many events, parties and meetings. During the first part of the twentieth century, it was a gathering place for some of the most influential people in the entire city.

Built to house the carriages and horses the carriage house associated with the estate was designed to compliment the main residence. The modestly scaled-down utilitarian building has a cottage-like quality but demonstrates typical Victorian design details in its steeply pitched roofs, dominant front-facing gable, decorative cross-gabled top knot, spindle work beneath the gables, and horizontal wood siding. During its restoration, it was moved four feet to the west and four feet to the south in order to gain access to the previously blocked north and west sides. Constructed originally without a foundation, a new foundation had to be built underneath to assist in its preservation and make it suitable for modern adaptive reuse.



Britt Scripps House, 1887

406 Maple Street

The elegant and magnificently detailed Britt-Scripps House (No. 52 SDRHR) is an excellent example of high-style Queen Anne Victorian residential architecture in the Uptown section of San Diego. The building is named after two of San Diego's important pioneers, Judge Eugene W. Britt (1855-1935) and Edward Wyllis

Scripps (1854-1926). Now serving as an inn, it was completed in 1888 as a comfortable, 2,525 square foot single-family home.

The original owner, Eugene Britt, arrived in San Diego in 1887 to form what would become one of Southern California's leading law firms at that time, Hunsaker, Britt and Cosgrove. Among several distinctions including later serving as President of the Los Angeles Bar Association, he was also a member of the Supreme Court Commission from 1892 to 1900. He moved to Los Angeles during the drought of 1896, selling his home to E.W. Scripps, newspaper publisher and half-brother of noted La Jolla philanthropist and city-builder Ellen B. Scripps.

Owner of the United Press, E.W. Scripps' west coast newspaper syndicate included *The San Diego Sun* and some thirty other local city papers. Co-founder of the *Cleveland Penny Press* with Ellen, Scripps moved his family from Ohio to San Diego in 1890 to join his sisters who were already living in California. He purchased the residence from Britt for \$16,000, and occupied it with his wife and children from around 1901 to 1907 while their mansion at Miramar Ranch was being built. Two of his children, Robert P. Scripps and Nackey E. Scripps (Meanley) were born at the house. It remained in the Scripps family and was used as a guesthouse to put up out-of-town relatives until it was sold in 1944.

The lofty three-story home possesses many of the hallmarks of the flamboyant Queen Anne Victorian style. It has a trademark irregular footprint and profile defined by steeply pitched, multiple-gabled wood shingle roofs, dormers, a prominent, vertical tower with a conical roof, projecting bay windows, a wrap-around full front porch, plus two additional porches. The building features many intricate details, from its three ornately designed brick chimneys to the abundant use of fenestration and handcrafted stained glass windows as well as spindle work and other lavish exterior decoration. The luxurious interior retains the original wall plaster, wood doors with original hardware and other woodwork throughout.



Ginty House, 1886

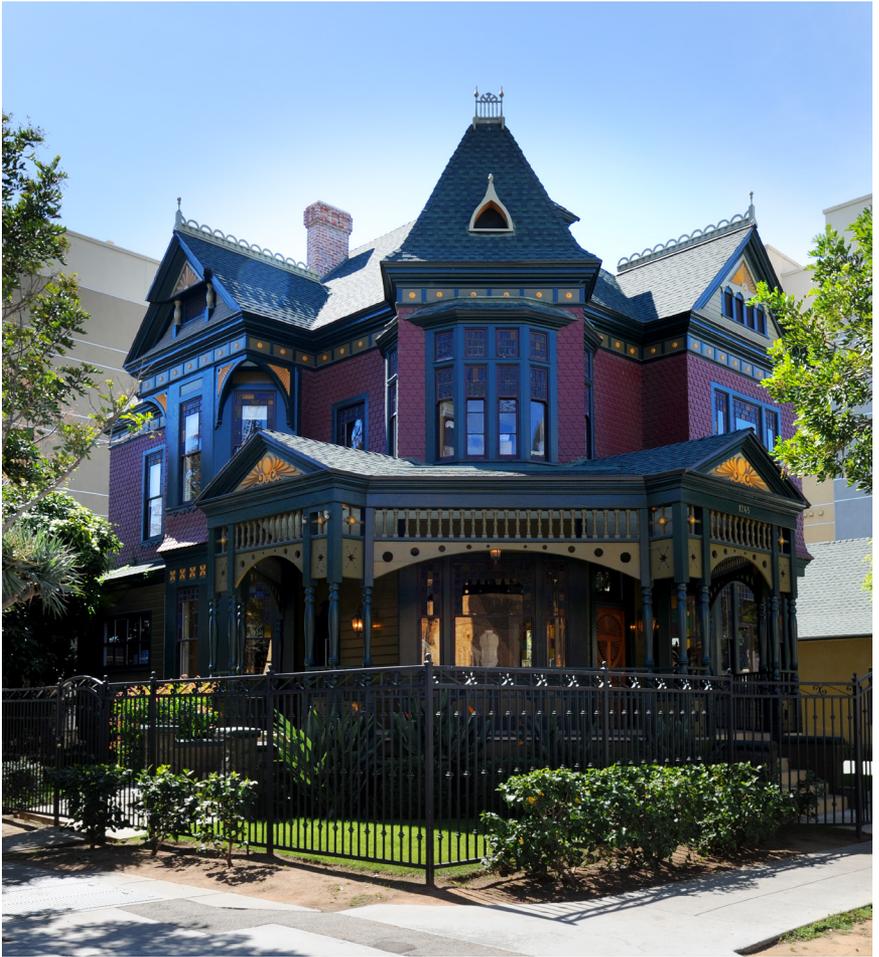
1568 Ninth Avenue

Prestigiously at the highest point in the city on Cortez Hill when built, the 1886 Ginty House was a prominent visual landmark that could be seen from as far away as Coronado. Saved from demolition in 1999 and moved to its present location, the single family residence was initially intended to be the centerpiece in a planned row of upscale houses. It was the first home to be constructed on its block during the booming 1880s, in the midst of San Diego's historic transformation from frontier town to sophisticated young city. The original owner, John Ginty, a businessman and realtor, chose the best site to build in the new and affluent neighborhood emerging just north of downtown.

The Ginty House is in the Stick Eastlake style and represents some of the finest and best architectural design, materials and construction methods used in San Diego at the time. An unusual design feature relates to the builder's original intent to construct closely adjacent houses on both sides. The rear portion of the building is wider than the front so that to avoid looking directly into the neighbors' homes all windows are angled to face forward including those located on the rear rooms.

Barely any expense was spared to construct this home. It was once seriously threatened and fortunately through many efforts it remains today as a beautifully rehabilitated Victorian masterpiece.





Sheldon House, 1886

Comstock & Trotsche

1245 Island Avenue

The Sheldon House was built in 1886 for Dr. F. C. Sheldon by famed master architects Comstock and Trotsche. The high-style grandeur of the former single-family residence acts as a strong visual reminder of the prosperity and wealth of San Diego during the booming



1880s. Originally located on 11th and D Streets and now serving as law offices today, the building was relocated to Island Street in 1913.

The Sheldon House is an exceptional example of the flamboyant Queen Anne style, of which there are few equals of this caliber in all of San Diego. Character defining details on the three-level wood frame structure include an irregular footprint and asymmetrical façade, multiple steeply-pitched gabled roofs, dormers, a prominent wrap-around corner front entry porch, tall vertical bay windows, and abundant decoration in the use of elaborate cutwork shingles, spindle work, ironwork and other typical architectural devices used during the era to create texture and avoid a smooth-walled appearance. Extravagant for even a Victorian home, every window throughout the entire house is crowned with original stained glass.

Sadly, Dr. Sheldon, the original owner, had little time to enjoy the stately mansion he built for his sizeable family of nine children. He died shortly after its completion, and his funeral was the first event ever to be held there. As the story goes, the Sheldons had embarked on a pleasure cruise down the coast of Mexico in celebration of their beautiful new house. Aboard the ship, the family met a young couple on their honeymoon that was sleeping on deck because they were too poor to afford a stateroom. Known for his kind and noble disposition, Dr. Sheldon did not think it was right for the newlyweds to sleep outdoors. He thoughtfully gave them his room, but a storm overtook the vessel and he ended up developing pneumonia and dying as a result of staying out all night in the wind and rain. The grieving Mrs. Sheldon, left without the means to support herself and her large brood upon their return to San Diego, converted their beautiful brand new home into a boarding house. Her desperate venture turned into a lucrative business, however, and she moved the building to its present location in 1913 in order to use her profits to construct a new home on the land originally chosen by her deceased husband.

This event is cosponsored by the County of San Diego Parks & Recreation. Additional financial support is provided by the City of San Diego Commission for Arts & Culture.



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