

Windsor Square Annual Meeting - HPOZ Update November 14, 2013

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It's hard to believe that ten years ago we were all in this room at the Ebell starting the arduous task of building consensus throughout our neighborhood on the best way to preserve Windsor Square.

We all know that our neighborhood was a unique oasis in the middle of the city. Most of the 1100 homes still have their original facades. Each block has a distinct scale and all the homes are in proportion to their lots. What we didn't know was how to preserve this architecturally stable community.

For those of you that are new to the neighborhood here's a quick recap:

There are zoning laws to regulate setbacks and height limits – and Building and Safety reviews proposed construction to ensure that it is safe – but nothing in the building permit process ensures that any new construction respects “existing character of the neighborhood”. Ten years ago there was no ‘design review’ process in place.

At the same time, the economy was booming and we started to see alarming construction trends moving towards Windsor Square – for example:



Big House Houses that maxed out the zoning building envelope and had no relationship to the existing scale of the street.



Steel Frame Additions that were out of proportion to the existing structure.



Castle *Or the original architecture was enhanced and completely obscured. (A man's home was his castle in every sense of the word!)*



Demolished *The most alarming situation was when a structure was simply gone; what would replace the original house?*

These images inspired our neighborhood to take action and figure out a way to ensure that the classic architecture and beautiful streetscapes that are a part of the history of Los Angeles – would survive for the next generation of residents.

A special ordinance existed called a **Historic Preservation Overlay Zone**. This ordinance, which was created to protect older architecturally significant neighborhoods, had never been applied to an affluent neighborhood like Windsor Square.

The first step of surveying the 1100 homes in Windsor Square showed that over 85% of the street-facing facades were un-altered from the day they were completed. That was an extraordinary number of what we refer to as “contributing structures,” and more than enough to make Windsor Square eligible for historic district designation.

But even though everyone agreed that something had to be done – just how to do it was a different problem.

Thanks to the tremendous effort of a dedicated team of neighborhood volunteers who organized outreach and went door-to-door documenting people’s support, we ultimately garnered the support of over 700 residents of Windsor Square.

The key was that our HPOZ would be the first in the city to have the Preservation Plan in place at the time of adoption. The limits of review, clear guidelines for new construction, and maintenance guides were written into a Plan that would guide the review process.

The Windsor Square HPOZ would be limited to the review of street-facing facades. Repair and maintenance would be delegated to the planning department, and only the major projects would be sent to the board for review.

Historical Preservation Overlay Zone

144 N NORTON AVE

HPOZ Name:	Windsor Square
Historic Designation:	Contributing Feature
Historic Name:	Residence for Fred W. Evans
Common Name:	None
Year Built:	1921
Architecture:	Dutch Colonial Revival
Architect:	Jones, R. D.
Builder:	Cooper, S. M.
Survey Notes:	Adds to the historic architectural qualities or historic associations for which a property is significant because it was present during the period of significance, and possesses historic integrity reflecting its character at that time.
Structural Alterations:	Appears to be unaltered.
Landscaping:	sycamore tree in yard; raised yard with concrete steps and walkway; Norton/Van Ness streetlight in parkway
Survey Date:	02/06/2002
Mills Act:	This property does not have a Mills Act Contract.

Other Historical Designation

This property is located within a City Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) but does not have any other designations.

Facade Visibility:



Dutch Colonial

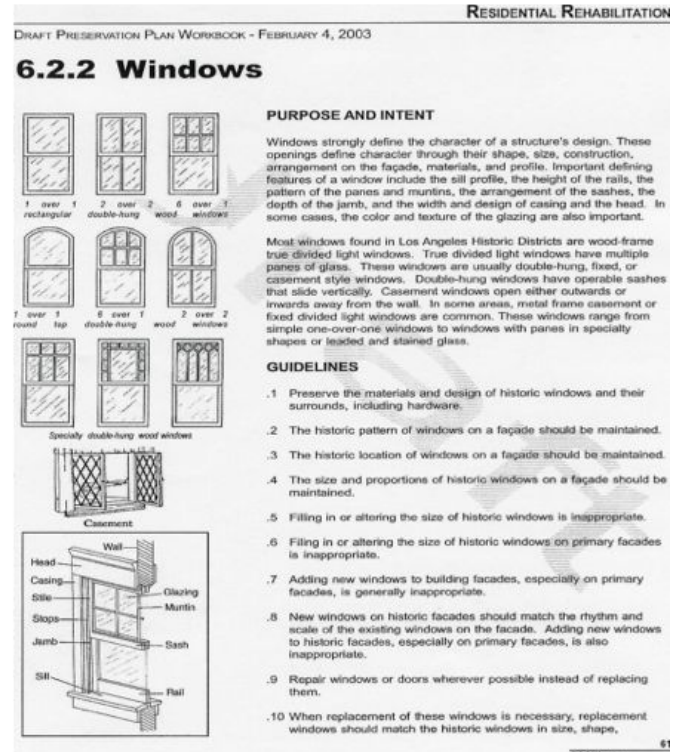
5 Board Members:

- 2 appointed by CD4
- 2 appointed by CHC
- fourth “at-large” person appointed by the 4 Board members.

There are specific skills and experience required. A licensed architect, a residential real estate professional, a long time resident with working knowledge of historic preservation and an at-large person appointed by the 4 board members. Our current ‘at large’ member is a landscape designer who has been helpful with streetscape issues.



Major changes go to the Board, which follows and implements the guidelines to make recommendations to the homeowners.



The guidelines have sections on details, such as windows, that are specific to period revival homes

102 North Beachwood



Before



After

Illustrates how our HPOZ is different—we accept change and want to manage it, not freeze the house in time. We aim to accommodate the needs of the homeowner to adapt the homes to the needs of modern living and sometimes correct previous ill-considered additions while maintaining the architectural integrity of the home.

122 S. Van Ness



Before



After

An example of a true restoration—finding out what was originally there was nearly an archeological expedition. It is true that restoring a home is often more expensive and time consuming than building a new home. However there are incentives like the Mills Act that can help reduce property taxes and offset the cost of a renovation like this house on Van Ness.

123 South Norton *Non-Contributor*



Because non-contributors are not reviewed, is there an opportunity when a property changes owners to make better and more consistent architectural decisions in the renovation? Was the full potential of the property realized in the renovation?

WINDSOR SQUARE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OVERLAY ZONE

Non-Contributor

Location: 123 South Norton Avenue, Los Angeles, CA

Historic Name: Speculative dwelling for The Cooper-Pyle-Clopine Co.

Description: 2 1/2-story, Post-Modern Remodel-style Single Family Residence

Alterations: Original Craftsman house totally obscured by post modern remodel

HPOZ Criterion: NC) Structure lacks integrity as a result of irreversible alterations. It is a non-contributor even though it was built within the HPOZ's period of significance.


Significance: Evaluation Code: NC.

Building Info: Built in 1913;1980s by Cooper-Pyle-Clopine Co. Permit No. 1612, dated 02/05/1913. Originally owned by Cooper-Pyle-Clopine Co. Estimated Cost of Construction \$4,500.

Landscape Features: Raised yard; coral tree in yard; Canary Island palm tree in parkway; Windsor Square iron streetlight in parkway

Survey Date: 2/5/02

Photograph Filename: DCP_1356





Before



Current

Energy conservation is at the forefront of design criteria and one of the greenest things you can do is save an old house. But, are there better locations for the solar panels? Shouldn't their location be considered very early in the process?

Fences, Walls



Fences and walls are exempt from review because they are covered under the long-standing city 42" high fence ordinance. But just regulating height doesn't necessarily ensure that the wall/fence is well-designed, complements the architecture of the house, or respects the existing (sometimes significant) grade of the front yard.

Is it time to provide guidelines and add the review (not *prohibition*, but *review*) of fences and walls in the preservation plan?

Since our plan was written (the first Preservation Plan in the City) the Planning Department developed a Preservation Plan template that has been implemented by the new HPOZs. This template has clarified and simplified language, added additional guidelines and added resources for people who live in and maintain older homes.

We hope to bring our plan into closer alignment with the standards in this plan. In the coming months we hope to work with City Planning to update and revise our plan. We will seek input from the community in this process and look forward to hearing your comments and ideas on how best to continue to preserve Windsor Square. Thank you.

