



# Floral Park News

## Special Edition

AUGUST 2008

HISTORIC DISTRICT EDITION ONE

email: [historicinfo@floral-park.com](mailto:historicinfo@floral-park.com)

### Is Floral Park a Historic District? Actually, No! Would You Like It To Be? Read on . . .



#### Some Past "Near Misses" Did you know . . .

- A recent buyer wanted to purchase the former Fluor property at 1920 Heliotrope Drive and divide it into three lots?
- At one time the City wanted to double the light poles on Flower and make the lights the harsh, pink mercury-vapor streetlights?
- The City previously considered installing a traffic light at Flower and Santa Clara?
- Our concrete streets add historic character and value to the neighborhood and should not be replaced with asphalt?

#### Floral Park to Seek "National Register Historic District" Listing

by Janelle McLoughlin & Julie Humphreys

The Floral Park Neighborhood Association works actively to preserve the character and beauty of the neighborhood and to provide a sense of tradition and community to its residents. Fifty-five individual homes in the neighborhood are currently listed on the Santa Ana Historic Register. Yet, while many of us refer to our neighborhood as "historic Floral Park," in fact, it has no formal historic district designation.

At this time, the FPNA Board of Directors believes historic district designation is a good, logical step in preserving and enhancing the charm and desirable nature of our neighborhood. Others, including local architectural historians, agree. The City of Santa Ana has also expressed active interest in supporting a Floral Park Historic District.

That is where you, the residents of Floral Park, come in. As the primary beneficiaries of such status, you have an important say in the creation of the historic district now being proposed. The following questions and answers are designed to provide key information about what a historic district is and, equally important, what one isn't, so we can all make an informed decision. *(See Frequently Asked Questions - Page 3)*

# Floral Park ... Forever

by Bob White, Ross Street resident since 1991

As we, the neighbors and residents of Floral Park, ponder the pros and cons of the proposed "Historic District," I thought I would offer what may be a different perspective. The "Frequently Asked Questions" does a terrific job of answering most questions from a technical standpoint, as well as addressing some of the most common questions relative to "property rights" issues. My perspective is from the "let's not take for granted" this precious place we all call home.

As I read a draft copy of the FAQ, beyond all the great clarification noted, what really got my attention was the paragraph that refers to some "near misses" that have occurred in the recent past ... occurrences that would have compromised the character and quality of our beautiful neighborhood. The great potential of the "Historic District" designation is the ability to protect and preserve the character and uniqueness that makes our neighborhood so special. Without this layer of protection, the character of this place is at risk and vulnerable to visible change over time.

For those of us fortunate enough to live here, we call Floral Park "home." To the professional world of community development and design, Floral Park is a "model," or "precedent" ... an example of what new neighborhoods should aspire to be. I know this because I've spent the last 24 years of my professional career in architecture and community design making neighborhoods. Just about every project I have been a part of across the country starts with a set of goals and criteria to make a "great neighborhood." Without exception, these goals emulate just about every element we experience every day as residents of Floral Park. The character of our streets, the mature trees, neighbors walking and enjoying time outdoors, the "scale" of our homes, the sense of privacy, the variation in architectural character and style, and homes that fit "comfortably" in their gracious lots. I fondly recall the

many tours I have coordinated bringing some of the most respected professionals from around the country to see our special place. Floral Park is ALWAYS an inspiration. With each visit, special elements and details are brought to my attention that I've missed even after living here for the past 17 years.



I sadly admit that in just about every case, the final results of these "new neighborhoods" fall short of the "precedents" we tried so desperately to follow, mostly because the economic model has changed so dramatically over the decades. This is another reason why we need to protect our precious place, because we're not likely to see another

"Floral Park" in the modern world of development and community making. Although many people find Irvine to be a wonderful place to live, we have all seen how dramatically different the aesthetics are in comparison to Floral Park. Irvine, as just one example, generally falls into the category of "cookie cutter" homes, neighborhood streets full of garage doors, streets that lack canopy trees that span the street ... not because time hasn't allowed the trees to grow, but because there is no allocated area in the street design to allow for trees to exist. And in general, houses that are "too big for the tiny lots."

So what does all this have to do with Floral Park, or specifically, to our proposed designation of a "Historic District?" The "Historic District" designation will insure the character of our special place will remain intact and not be vulnerable to the "re-gentrification" that has plagued other wonderful Southern California neighborhoods of similar eras to that of Floral Park. As these "authentic" and "traditional" neighborhoods become the target of "developers," we could be at risk of our authentic 1920's cottages being

*Cont'd page 7...*

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### **Q Why would Floral Park want to be listed as a National Register Historic District?**

*A Floral Park is already an area of local historic significance. Historic buildings are tangible links with the past. They help give a community a sense of identity, stability and orientation. It will help the neighborhood preserve the aesthetic value and character that attracted us to the neighborhood in the first place, and give it the recognition and distinction it deserves. Floral Park is a unique neighborhood within Orange County which simply cannot be recreated. While new developments may try to copy many design and architectural aspects of these homes, we have the originals and there are only 630 of them!*

### **Q What is a National Register Historic District?**

*A A National Register historic district is a concentration of historic buildings, structures, sites, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. Not every home in a historic district needs to have particular historical architectural, engineering or cultural distinction, but the collection as a whole must have significance in at least one of these areas. The City of Santa Ana currently has two National Register Districts: Downtown Santa Ana (listed in 1984) and French Park (1999).*



### **Q What is the National Register of Historic Places?**

*A The "Historic District" designation would be an official recognition of that fact by the City of Santa Ana and the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support efforts to protect our historic and archeological resources. The National Register is maintained by the National Park Service. Most historic districts locally and across the nation use the same basic criteria, a combination of the following factors: the history of the neighborhood; the identity of the people who settled the neighborhood (did they play a special role in the city's development, etc.); the age, type, and quality of the structures in the neighborhood; and the extent to which the original structures still exist.*

### **Q What will this cost me?**

*A No individual homeowner will be charged anything for this process! With the final approval from the general membership, the FPNA has offered to underwrite a portion of the costs of mailing, newsletters, visual surveys, reports, pictures, application and the education of the general neighborhood.*

### **Q Will this help me apply for the Mills Act?**

*A When the neighborhood files for application for Historic District designation, the level of information needed is similar to what a homeowner needs when they apply for the Mills Act. This is an added bonus, since visual surveys and reports will be conducted on each home as part of the Historic District process, so the individual homeowner will not have to repeat these surveys at their own expense. In addition, if Floral Park is designated a Historic District, the homes that might not have qualified for the Mills Act could come under the umbrella of the Historic District and make applying and getting granted a contract under the Mills Act easier for the individual homeowner.*

### **Q Will I be prevented from remodeling or adding on to my home?**

*A Not at all! It is recognized that historic properties adapt and change over time; this process is designed to*

*Cont'd page 5 . . .*

# Floral Park: Orange County's Best Kept Secret

by Richard Chiarini - Santa Ana Business Owner & Resident 30 Years  
1920 N. Heliotrope Drive

"In order to preserve one's past; we must embrace their future..." a motto that has undoubtedly been repeated in various ways throughout history. And here I stand today proudly emphasizing those sentiments with regard to the community in which I reside: Floral Park, Santa Ana.

It is safe to say that there are differences between a house and a home. The most significant being a home comes with stories, shared times with friends and family, comfort and tranquility.

When I drive down our tree-lined streets on my way home from work, I not only see the parts of our neighborhood that make us a whole - I also feel and hear them. There are the cool evening breezes that drift along with the sounds of children playing and neighbors chatting. It is evident we are proud to be on the other side of the spectrum. Meaning, our houses are homes because we collectively maintain the desire to live in and take care of a neighborhood we are proud of. Isn't this the greatest aspect of becoming a true historical district?



Each one of our homes comes with its own collected history. If my home on Heliotrope could write its autobiography, it would tell tales of its former owners, the Scripps family, who created a newspaper we know as the Orange County Register. It would write about the Fluor family, leaders in the Republican Party. The dinners, parties and gatherings that they had with guests that were not only entertaining, but historically significant in their own right: Presidents Nixon,

Reagan, and Eisenhower, to name a few.

Yes, my home will tell you that it is one of the many to already be designated as a historic structure within Floral Park and also a beneficiary. It will also tell you with the utmost sincerity and longing that it wishes for all our neighbors and their homes to join in to keep the revitalization of Floral Park and Santa Ana going strong for genera-

tions to come. Our homes' autobiographies are not yet complete. They have new generations with stories left to write. When we become the Historic District of Floral Park we can guarantee their continuing legacies in Santa Ana.

## Floral Park Historic Preservation Committee

Mark McLoughlin, Chair - Riverside Dr.  
Janelle McLoughlin - Riverside Dr.  
Blair O'Callaghan - Ross St.  
Wally McCloud - North Park Blvd.  
Richard Chiarini - Heliotrope Dr.  
Phil Chinn - Flower St.  
Jennifer Faiz - Riverside Dr.

Kenny Schmidt - Flower St.  
Ramin Faiz - Riverside Dr.  
Julie Humphreys - Ross St.  
Bob White - Ross St.  
Mike Urtel - Flower St.  
Rob Johnson - Ross St.  
Gary Humphreys - Ross St.

Ann Berkery - Heliotrope Dr.  
Betsy Benton - Santa Clara Ave.  
David-Michael Madigan - Riverside Dr.  
Edwin Power - Greenleaf St.  
Eric Renezeder - Riverside Dr.  
Sandy DeAngelis - Victoria Dr.  
Lea Pascoe - Bonnie Brae

### How Can I Join the Committee? How Can I Help? Where Do I Learn More?

Get involved with the FPNA Historic Preservation Committee!

Email us at [historicinfo@floral-park.com](mailto:historicinfo@floral-park.com)

Visit [www.floral-park.com](http://www.floral-park.com)

insure that such adaptations do not seriously damage their historic character. This benefits not only the property owner, but all neighbors within the Historic District. Properties listed on the Historic Register are subject to the Secretary of the Interior [SOI] Standards for Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration and Reconstruction of Historic Buildings, but interpretation and application of these guidelines is administered through local governments, which, in Santa Ana, is through the Historic Resources Commission. These guidelines apply to exterior modifications only, and "modification" does not include painting.



### **Q Will Historic District designation take away my property rights?**

*A No. To the contrary, a historic district helps protect your property rights. Part of your property's value is based on the character and quality of the neighborhood. Historic District status would help safeguard against inappropriate development that could negatively affect your property's value. These established guidelines should discourage construction of "spec" homes and "McMansions" that are out of character with the style, size, and quality of the existing property. It will not keep you from selling your property to anyone you like, nor will it keep you from remodeling or otherwise improving your property. By sending a message that you care about the character of the neighborhood, you invite the type of buyers who appreciate these homes. In short, historic district designation is one of the best investments the FPNA can make.*

### **Q How does historic district listing affect my home?**

*A In all likelihood, being listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Floral Park Historic District will not affect your day-to-day living. No additional restrictions will be placed on you or the use of your home, and unless you choose to open the home for the Floral Park Home Tour in the spring, nobody is going to inspect your property beyond the public sidewalk. For many homeowners life will continue as it always has, with no change in a standard of living (beyond the possibility for making a lot more money in resale sometime down the road). For others, the benefits will include an easier application process for the Mills Act, a voluntary program that helps stabilize and revitalize entire streetscapes throughout California. But for all homeowners in the district, there is a pride and sense of place, knowing that your very special neighborhood will now be acknowledged with the national recognition it so richly deserves.*



### **Q I've heard horror stories of rigid neighborhood design review boards in other places. How will this be different?**

*A Historic districts are what the neighbors decide they will be. The Floral Park Neighborhood Association is not proposing additional restrictions or limitations for the area. If other areas have design review boards or additional restrictions, it is because at one time the neighbors voted for those rules. This is not the case for Floral Park. All major exterior modifications are already subject to Santa Ana's local building codes and this will not change. Historic District*

Cont'd page 6 ...

designation will simply add an overlay review to assure that the proposed modification is not inconsistent with the existing historical, cultural or architectural values of the property. And as with any Building Dept. or Planning Commission decision, the city code provides for a public appeal process to the City Council of decisions by the Historic Resources Commission. Essentially, such SOI guidelines include the following:

- Owners may make compatible use of a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural or architectural values.
- New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.



### **Q How does this differ from a Mills Act designation?**

A The Mills Act is a separate program administered by the State of California and is an important preservation incentive program by granting property tax relief for homeowners of qualified historic properties. Mills Act is State legislation that allows cities to enter into voluntary 10-year agreements with individual property owners. The property owner promises to maintain their historic home and make

specific improvements to the property during that time. In exchange, that agreement is forwarded to the County Tax Assessor's office, where the tax base on the home is recalculated. Most Floral Park property owners who have entered into Mills Act contracts have seen significant reductions in their property taxes. The benefits of any tax reduction transfers to new owners of the property.

The inclusion of a home within the boundaries of a National Historic District may assist in the evaluation of a property for purposes of a Mills Act designation, though this does not guarantee qualification. Check Santa Ana's website for Historic Preservation Incentives for more information on Mills Act contracts.

### **Q What are the boundaries for the proposed Floral Park Historic District?**

A The proposed district comprises the existing residential properties within the boundaries of Floral Park, as well as the Flower Street Bridge. (See illustration on page 7)

### **Q What is the process for Historic District registration and how long will this take?**

A The process includes an application to the city's Historic Preservation Committee (HPC), review and brief visual survey of homes within the neighborhood, short reports, and pictures; neighborhood meetings and majority approval; research of public records of historic homes; final submission to HPC, submission to the State Office of Historic Preservation; submission to the federal commission. The FPNA plans to outsource some of this process to an architectural historian to complete the inventory of homes in Floral park and complete the application to place the neighborhood on the National Register. It will take the architectural historian team about a year to complete the inventory. The information will then go to the City of Santa Ana, and they will send it to the State Historic Preservation Office, where our application will be reviewed for the National Register listing. This can be a few more months, but we anticipate it will likely take approximately two years to complete the overall process.



# Floral Park's boundaries as defined in the FPNA Bylaws:

- South: Up to, and including, the north side of 17th Street
- North: Riverside Drive
- West: Both sides of Flower Street
- East: Up to, and including, Broadway on the West side.



*Floral Park Forever Cont'd ...*

replaced by modern-style houses with 4-car garages that over time would change the overall quality and character of Floral Park. There are several examples throughout the wonderful neighborhoods of Los Angeles, Pasadena, San Marino, Claremont, the beach communities, etc. where the “McMansion” has invaded these great places and changed them forever.

As the current City of Santa Ana zoning would allow, we are all at risk of having that charming 1800 square foot Tudor style bungalow we’ve enjoyed as our neighbor replaced by a “spec-built” 4000 square foot “Tuscan Villa” complete with its fake rubble stone, vinyl windows, and concrete tile roof because it’s on a “larger-than-average-size lot,” “in the heart of Orange County” and in the “charming historic district of Floral Park!” You can almost picture the real estate ad, can’t you? From my perspective, the “Historic District” isn’t an issue of limiting property rights, as much as encouraging “preservation” and being responsible to what is right for our neighborhood as a whole. As we’ve read from the FAQ, we will not be handcuffed should we decide to enhance or expand our homes, but will be held to a standard that is for the good of our neighborhood and its long-term value and character.

Please join me with an open mind as the leadership of our neighborhood continues in their quest to preserve our special place we proudly call “HOME.”

## Additional Benefits:

Studies show improved property values in recognized Historic Districts.

- It helps ensure the preservation of the historic properties in the area.
- It actively helps preserve the character and beauty of the neighborhood.
- It is easier to be eligible for Mills Act property tax reduction.



# “Floral Park Historic District”

... has a nice ring to it, don't you think?

With FPNA approval, a committee of neighbors has been formed with the directive to research, review and report to the entire neighborhood on the feasibility of designating Floral Park as a Historic District. Two meetings have been scheduled for neighbors to meet to discuss the process and get more facts and information. Both of these meetings will follow identical agendas, giving neighbors the opportunity to choose either date that works best for them.

If you'd like more information and facts, please join us to learn more!



**Sunday, August 24th from 3 - 6 p.m.**

Home of Richard & Jeanette Chiarini  
1920 N. Heliotrope Drive



**Sunday, Sept. 14th from 3 - 6 p.m.**

Home of Wally McCloud & Denny Patterson  
2310 North Park Blvd.

(Adults Only, Please)

If you need assistance in attending, please call Betsy Benton at (714) 973-7959