For the twenty-eighth year, SOHO honors National Historic Preservation Month by recognizing the people behind outstanding preservation projects throughout San Diego County completed in the previous year. SOHO’s People in Preservation Awards are the region’s most prestigious historic preservation honors.

1. Benjamin A. Cueva

Greenest Building - Recycling History

For eight decades, four buildings of two distinctly different styles stood side by side, becoming a historic cluster on a notable intersection in Escondido. They became the property of the Escondido Elementary School District, where they were neglected and eventually obstructed plans to expand the Central Elementary School’s sports fields. School officials offered to sell the four buildings – a two-story Moderne-style house with a porthole window and three Spanish Revival-style bungalows – to anyone who would move them. While preservationists prefer that buildings are preserved on site, relocation and rehabilitation are better than demolition. Mr. Cueva moved all four homes to two adjoining lots his family owned seven blocks away. Nearly two years later, six families moved in to the renovated and attractively painted cluster of houses. The owner not only provided affordable housing and a sense of community to the families, he also chose the greenest path. He could have built new homes, but instead recognized the higher value of re-use.

2. Kim & Joe Grant

Gift to the Street - Residential Restoration

An Arts & Crafts bungalow in South Park was built in 1916 with a river rock chimney and piers, beamed ceilings and useful built-ins. Through the years it also had acquired four layers of composition shingles on the roof, peeling paint, bars on the windows, windows nailed shut, rotted floors and cracked plaster. The front and back yards were a jumble of weeds. Present owners Joe and Kim Grant saw great potential in this house and began a multi-year restoration. The house required a new roof, new plumbing and wiring, and new paint using a historic paint palette inside and out. They restored the wood windows, reusing the historic glass. A 1940s hodge-podge kitchen was remodeled and includes custom cabinets built to match an original cabinet door and drawer. They restored the original bathroom, installing a claw foot tub from a neighbor and a castoff sink from another historic home. The couple added a master bedroom that blends into the house and landscaped with mostly native plants and tall grasses to save water.

3. Councilman Todd Gloria

Public Policy Leadership

One member of the San Diego City Council consistently stands up for historic preservation and policies that protect historic resources. He has also worked to direct resources to Balboa Park, one of our greatest historic treasures, and supports the removal of cars from the Plaza de Panama, which would restore that area to its historic use as a pedestrian plaza. Soon after Councilman Todd Gloria was elected in 2009, he championed neighborhood efforts of the Between Heights group to oppose the proposed expansion of Our Lady of Peace Academy, which would have demolished historic houses. His leadership was crucial to the City Council’s decision to deny the academy a development permit. In addition, he was the only Councilmember to join with SOHO in support of historic designation of the Remington Rand Company Building at 926 C Street. He has also worked with city staff to finalize designation of the Burlingame Historic District and has pressed for the timely processing of the David O. Dryden Historic District in North Park.

4. Marcy & Jeffrey Krinsk

Preserving the House that Jack Built

One of San Diego’s finest examples of Modernist residential design was commissioned by the late Robert O. Peterson, founder of the Jack in the Box restaurant chain. He hired Russell Forester, the late architect and artist who also designed the earliest Jack in the Box hamburger stands. The 1965 estate on 1.7 acres overlooking San Diego Bay in Point Loma consists of a main house and multiple guest houses. The main house’s split-level plan conforms to the naturally sloping lot. The majority of the buildings feature Asian pagoda-style roofs and walls of glass supported by redwood post-and-beam construction, while redwood decks and catwalks connect various elements. An immense amoeba-shaped koi pond, cascading water features and reflecting pools amid mature trees reinforce a strong connection with nature. Jeffrey and Marcy Krinsk purchased the estate in 2001 from Peterson’s widow, Maureen O’Connor, the first female mayor of San Diego. By then, the deteriorating buildings were in desperate need of a major restoration. Largely unaware of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, they intuitively followed the spirit of these guidelines. If it were not for the owners’ commitment to preserving a masterpiece of Modernist architecture, this estate in its rundown condition could have been lost.

5. Sue & David Gillingham

Adaptive Reuse

For decades, a 1906 boarding house known as Greycourt stood abandoned and deteriorating in the heart of Coronado after being run as a flop house for many years. New owners purchased the property in 2005 and began a four-year journey that would transform what was once an eyesore of the community into a luxury bed and breakfast inn with 21st-century conveniences while maintaining its historic character. Inside the Arts & Crafts-style building, makeshift plywood partitions, broken fixtures, and a bathroom that had been squeezed into a corner of the parlor came out. A new breakfast veranda was added to the back of the building, looking onto a courtyard and reflecting pool. The inn’s entry veranda, parlor, and dining room were restored on the first floor, with six guest rooms above. The new owners constructed a companion building housing eleven guest suites, each with its own private porch. The new building is sympathetic to the historic structure in scale, materials and details, but it does not replicate it. The expanded inn is now called the 1906 Lodge.

6. Heart of Kensington

People in the Trenches

As Kensington celebrates its centennial this year, one community group stands out as a protector and promoter of this nearly intact neighborhood, which is a vibrant reminder of how the romantic Spanish Revival-style originated in Balboa Park, and then swept the nation. There are so many historic properties, street lights and cobblestone boundary pillars along Kensington’s curved streets that the Heart of Kensington group has nominated part of it to be designated a city of San Diego historic district. This dedicated group also organizes an annual home tour to showcase landmarked homes in various styles. The historic, neon Kensington sign that spanned Adams Avenue was removed months ago, but will be replaced in kind, thanks to its defenders, including the Heart of Kensington. Even older are stately palm and pepper trees and ornamental street lamp posts not found anywhere else in San Diego. Through a newsletter, personal testimony and organized presentations, this group has stood up for the community to ensure that Kensington’s historic character century-old streetscapes remain the driving force in any renewal projects.

7. Mark Koll & the City of San Diego Engineering & Capital Projects

Bridge to the Past

A unique bridge built in 1931 across Maple Canyon in San Diego needed seismic retrofitting, a public safety issue that can spell disaster for historic structures. But this steel-truss arch bridge that spans picturesque parkland is a city historic landmark and deemed eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The only bridge of its kind in the city, it has intricate ornamental railing and metal work. Its steel members, smothered in dull gray lead paint, were corroding and it had been paved with an overlay of asphalt cement. The design team had the benefit of the original bridge plans, which ensured accuracy in the restoration and replacement parts. Experts determined the original paint color – mannered gold – and used it to repaint the entire bridge. Seven new light poles were custom fabricated, based on the details in the plans, and mounted in the original locations. Recreating the lighting is not only historically accurate and visually attractive but enhances the safety of bridge traffic.

8. Reverend John J. Bombaro, PhD, of Grace Lutheran Church

Stewardship

Grace Lutheran Church takes great pride in its heritage and architecture has reached out to the preservation community, offering free meeting space to the Neighborhood Historic Preservation Coalition and the University Heights Historical Society. When it came time to restore the exterior of its 1930 church building, the pastor and congregation followed the Secretary of the Interior’s standards. They are being honored for continuing this work with the restoration and renovation of the parsonage. In past years it had been converted to office and storage use. The parsonage is once again home to the pastor and his family and the pastor’s study is back in its original place in the church. The historic stained-glass windows were repaired and new drought-tolerant landscaping emphasizing native plants was installed.

9. Lynne Newell Christenson, PhD

Outstanding Public Service

Lynne led a long, influential career in history, archaeology and preservation in San Diego County. She became coordinator of the South Coastal Information Center at San Diego State University and chaired the city of San Diego’s Historical Resources Board. She also was the first president of the San Diego Archaeological Center, which she helped found. In 2001, she became the first full-time County of San Diego Historian, a position within the Department of Parks and Recreation. She greatly expanded the historian duties and was responsible for the identification and management of historic structures and archeological sites, educational outreach and the development of interpretive programs. Whether dressing in period attire for Rancho Guajome’s 150th celebration, arranging for a sagging adobe wall to be repaired, or instructing park rangers in the fine points of CEQA, she spent as much time in the field as in her office. Sadly for us, this dynamo retired in March and has moved to Ohio.

10. Allison & John Lane

Sensitive Renovation

Owners of the 1928 Esther B. Morrison/Henry Barkey House in La Jolla, the Lanes restored and rehabilitated this Monterey-style home with great care. Additions – a new kitchen, new bedrooms, a family room and study – are harmonious with the historic house. The original living and dining room were renovated. Extensive measures were taken to reinforce prominent design features, such as the front balcony, and to fabricate windows and doors for the addition that match the originals. A Batchelder tile hearth and original staircase with an iron railing were restored. Because a landscape is an important historic feature to a home, mature trees were also preserved when the yard was relandscaped.