

Press Release

Valley Voters Organized Toward Empowerment
14622 Ventura Blvd. #424, Sherman Oaks, CA. 91403
Nov.13,2008

Contact: Joe Vitti -President
at javittisr@cs.com www.valleyvote.org

The Valley VOTE Board of Directors has overwhelming approved the following Motion:
**Valley VOTE supports the designation of Griffith Park as a City of Los Angeles
Historic-Cultural Monument.**

Discussion

The heirs of Col. Griffith J. Griffith have prepared an application to have Griffith Park designated a City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument. They were very concerned with recent proposals to commercialize Griffith Park. The Cultural Heritage commission has recently reviewed their application and approved the designation. The Los Angeles City Council will soon be reviewing the matter.

Criteria for eligibility for Historic- Cultural Monument status

Griffith Park is unique on a national level for its extensive natural terrain within a metropolis. The Park meets all four criteria established by the City for eligibility for this honor. It is a place "in which the broad cultural, political, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or community is reflected or exemplified." Donated in 1896, the Park is a local manifestation of 19th Century Andrew Carnegie-style philanthropy and the City Beautiful Movement.

It is "Identified with historic personages or with events in the main currents of national, state, or local history." Among them: Corporal Jose Vicente Feliz, the Comisionado of the Pueblo and first owner, later owner Don Coronel, a Californio and early L.A. mayor, Colonel Griffith J. Griffith, the Park's donor, Commissioner Van Griffith, his son, and frequent visitor Walt Disney, whose model railroad workshop is located in the Park.

It "embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period, style, or method of construction." Spanish Revival, Moderne, and Second Greek Revival buildings, as well as distinctive "Park Style" features created by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and others. The Park is a significant Cultural Landscape, which the National Park Service defines as "a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values."

Los Angeles City parks that are designated Historic-Cultural Monuments are as follows:

No	Name	Address	Adopted
29	Campo De Cahuenga□	3919 Lankershim Bl	11/13/64
34	Barnsdall Art Park	4800 Hollywood Bl.	2/26/65
64	Los Angeles Plaza	Cesar E. Chavez Ave.	4/1/70
100	MacArthur Park	2100 W. 6th Street	5/1/72
579	Wattles Park	1701 Sierra Bonita	5/25/93
601	Gramercy Homestead	2098 W. 24th St.	9/27/94
736	Monterey Trailer Park	6411 Monterey Rd	11/5/02
836	Echo Park	751 N Echo Park Ave	3/1/06

Questions and concerns

The LADWP and the Bureau of Sanitation have expressed concerns that the designation will affect their operations in the park.

The Office of Historic Resources is working closely with the LADWP and Bureau of Sanitation to develop streamlined protocols which will resolve their concerns and define what is and is not subject to review by the Office of Historic Resources.

Will designation prevent compliance with the Americans Disabilities Act (ADA) or with environmental regulations, such as low flow toilets and green building practices?

Designation does not freeze a place in time. The recent restoration and expansion of Griffith Observatory, and the restoration of L.A. City Hall are textbook examples of successful renovations in keeping with ADA and environmental regulations. Both offer updated access, new amenities and environmentally enlightened features while retaining their historic fabric.

Will designation delay maintenance and improvements to Griffith Park?

Routine maintenance is not affected by the designation. Official concerns that when historic elements are involved, the review that ensues will slow processes or increase expense is not shared by supporters. They point out that designation will add a welcome layer of transparency to planning for the Park and that focusing on the historic and cultural aspects of this defining element of our City is both worthwhile and necessary.

Will designation interfere with the Griffith Park Master Plan process?

The Griffith Park Draft Master Plan Working Group has determined that, on the contrary, it will clarify positive goals for the Park and voted as a group to support the designation. The designation is supported by the City of Los Angeles Recreation and Parks Department.

L.A. Organizations in support of Historic-Cultural Monument Status for Griffith Park

The L.A. Conservancy; the Sierra Club Angeles Chapter; the Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council; Friends of O'Melveny Park; 10 Los Angeles City Certified Neighborhood Councils; 15 citizens groups, consisting of homeowners associations and various citizen coalitions; all support Historical-Cultural Monument status for Griffith Park.

Valley VOTE Mission Statement

Valley VOTE, a diverse coalition of San Fernando Valley residents, business people, educators, community activists, and organizations, is committed to exploring and fostering the implementation of programs that empower the people of the San Fernando Valley and the City of Los Angeles, to improve local governance, education and public participation on policy matters.