

2013 GOVERNOR'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

The Whittier Conservancy



The restored façade of the California Domestic Water Company in Whittier

The Whittier Conservancy was organized following the 1987 Whittier Narrows Earthquake. The Conservancy's all-volunteer membership organized to save the historic Uptown district of Whittier, which had suffered damage from the earthquake and was in danger of losing its historic character to incompatible development. That effort was the beginning of the Conservancy's more than two decades of community activism, informing the public and local officials about the need to respect and honor historic structures, neighborhood integrity, and the natural environment.

The Conservancy was a leader in the overhaul of the City of Whittier's General Plan, prompting the city to form a Historic Resources Commission and draft a strong Historic Resources Ordinance. This stabilized the neighborhoods affected by the earthquake, and spurred a renaissance in home renovation in the area that has had a positive impact on quality of life, property values, and neighborhood self-esteem. The Conservancy also helped to create historic districts, leading to the preservation of some of the city's most significant historic structures and homes.

In the 1990s, the Conservancy expanded its mission to include the area's natural resources, successfully preserving the Whittier and Puente hills as the historic backdrop of the original Quaker settlement and the setting that defines the city.

Recent years have seen the Conservancy secure grants that funded several community projects, including a structural assessment of Earlham Hall on the Whittier College campus, and a rest station on the Greenway Trail. Most notably, and recently, the Whittier Conservancy prevented the demolition of

the historic California Domestic Water building. The 1934 Art Deco building was beautifully restored per the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

Today the Whittier Conservancy remains a grass-roots organization, valued by the community as a leader in preserving the region's cultural heritage.

Learn more about the mission and work of the Whittier Conservancy:

<http://www.whittierconservancy.org/>