

2016 Governor's Historic Preservation Awards

Project: **Preservation Resource Center at the Shotgun House**

Santa Monica's beaches and coastal climate have long attracted visitors and would-be residents. During the late 1800s, simple cottages, including many "shotgun" houses, were built near the beach in the Ocean Park neighborhood. Over the years, many of these structures were significantly altered or moved inland. The preservation and adaptive reuse of Santa Monica's last intact Shotgun House is the result of a lengthy grassroots effort, beginning in 1998, by the local neighborhood organization, a nearby church, and neighbors and supporters from throughout the region who sought to prevent demolition of the century-old house and find a way to give it a new lease on life. The City of Santa Monica eventually took ownership of the abandoned structure. In 2007 the nonprofit Santa Monica Conservancy successfully bid for and negotiated a renewable 20-year lease with the City to rehabilitate the house and transform it into a Preservation Resource Center.

Shotgun houses are one room wide and two to four rooms deep, with the rooms connected by aligned doorways without a hall. This shotgun house of simple board and batten construction is believed to have been built around 1898 based on Sanborn maps and other research. After a feasibility study that interviewed local residents, the Board of the Conservancy launched a capital campaign for the rehabilitation of the house, program expansion and professional staffing. More than \$1 million was raised from over 170 individuals and organizations and six foundations. The project also was supported by 35 in-kind donations of labor, paint, building and landscape materials, etc. as well as services by local construction-related businesses. Community involvement remained strong throughout the many years it took to relocate and rehabilitate the house and was further demonstrated by the 250 attendees at the Grand Opening in January 2016.

The PRC provides residents and visitors of all ages with practical, user-friendly information about historic resources in Santa Monica and the methods and benefits of preservation, and serves as a teaching model for adaptive reuse of a historic building. Although the interior has been modernized with insulated sheetrock walls and new furniture and systems, visitors gain insight into how the house was constructed through open panels in the walls that reveal salvaged wallpaper and the redwood boards from the original single wall construction. Interpretive signage throughout the house describes historic preservation principles, the history and design of this and other shotgun houses, and Ocean Park history. Building owners and real estate professionals can gain assistance with how to apply for landmark status and how to identify and apply for financial incentives. The PRC also provides headquarters for the Santa Monica Conservancy which had previously operated from members' offices and homes. The central location enables more effective programming and advocacy. In addition to meeting the City of Santa Monica's strict sustainability requirements, the project team set a goal to provide an environmental model for adaptive reuse. As a result, the Shotgun House is projected to achieve LEED GOLD certification.