



River Park Review

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www.riverparksacramento.net
www.groups.yahoo.com/group/rpna

House Remodeling Gets A Closer Look

Design review for River Park?

Does River Park need a city design review process for new construction and for exterior home remodeling? Are some home remodeling and room additions a cause for alarm?

Escalating home prices, long commutes and Southern California type sprawl are modern day motivators that draw people to purchase homes in older urban neighborhoods. These neighborhoods have the charm of distinctive and varied house styles, mature shade trees, diverse age groups and, hopefully, shorter commutes and with public transit.

However, the older homes have smaller closets, kitchens and bedrooms, fewer bathrooms and usually no family room. Only one thing to do, remodel and add-on. But, how big an addition? Should you add a second story? What architectural style?

These are questions, followed by decisions that can enhance the neighborhood or cause disruption and tensions with neighbors. There are differing opinions on what is detrimental to a neighborhood.

City Councilman Steve Cohn has been working with East Sacramento homeowners to develop a

► Remodeling, p.2

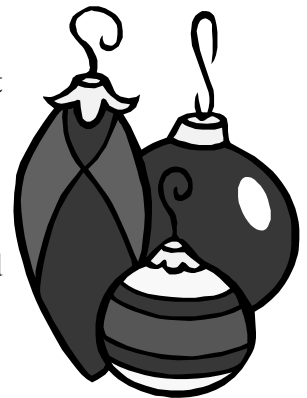
Holiday Decorating Contest

Santa, reindeer, elves, lights and decorations for all.

The River Park Neighborhood Association's Annual Holiday Decorating Contest is now open. This is that time of year when you can fully exercise your creative ideas in holiday lights, sculptural constructions and whatever else you fancy. And, best of all, besides delighting your neighbors, you will be eligible to win a prize.

Judging will take place on December 19 and 20 between 5:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. and will assess creativity, theme and overall display. Prizes are \$100, \$50 and \$25. Winners will be posted at the Javalicious Café on December 21.

To be eligible for the prizes, you must declare your intention to participate. Please call Emily Kapic at 457-4750 or e-mail emilykapic@yahoo.com and leave your name, phone number and address.



UPCOMING RIVER PARK EVENTS

Holiday Decorating Contest

Enter Now

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Remodeling

► From p.1

set of exterior remodeling and new construction guidelines. River Park has not, as yet, experienced the same level of design contention that has occurred in East Sacramento. However, as the pace of remodeling continues to grow, this could become an issue for River Park.

City staff currently is considering a proposal for design review guidelines focused on the mass or volume of a remodel project rather than architectural style. This would involve a design review process that sets thresholds on the mass of building projects.

If a remodel proposal does not meet certain thresholds, then a more formal and contextual review would take place to consider how the proposed project fits the context of the neighborhood.

The city also is looking to develop “pattern” books to assist in determining appropriate aesthetic guidelines related to particular architectural styles prevalent in a neighborhood.

Design review can be a rather contentious proc-

ess and needs careful development and procedural steps. Many cities require homeowners to formally notify their neighbors regarding exterior remodeling plans to insure that privacy and sight lines are mitigated and resolved. Historic neighborhoods can have very strict architectural and aesthetic requirements.


(See also, *An Appeal For Design Review by River Park resident David Weightman*, page 4.)

Glen Hall Park Lighting Improvements Needed

RPNA is working with the city Parks Department to assess possible additional lighting for Glen Hall Park. Consideration for the additional lighting includes extending the street lighting along the park side of Sandburg Drive and installing motion detector lighting in the parking lot.

The objective is to help stem the increase in nighttime drinking, parties and vandalism that occur in the park.

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Update On River Park And Sacramento City November General Meeting addressed many issues

Sacramento City Mayor Heather Fargo spoke at the River Park general meeting Saturday, November 4 and discussed many questions from the audience at the Fremont Presbyterian Church Community Life Center.

-Flood protection: The American River levees along River Park have been raised and strengthened and are in very good condition. The most important consideration now is evacuation planning in the event of an unforeseen levee break. City evacuation planning, therefore, is focused on anticipating an emergency in enough time to alert residents so they can leave the area before they need to be rescued. Evacuation is preferable to rescuing.

-Sidewalk maintenance: About fifteen years ago the city shifted sidewalk maintenance to homeowners. This was done as a budget balancing effort to work with existing city funding.

-Building design review: Design review for new construction and extensive remodeling is a difficult neighborhood issue, particularly in the older city neighborhoods. The city currently is studying establish-



Sacramento City Mayor Heather Fargo spoke to the River Park neighborhood general meeting in November.

ing some review standards. The goal is to meet the needs of both the homeowner who plans a home addition and the needs of nearby neighbors.

Mayor Fargo also answered questions about light rail extensions and installation of water meters. A light rail extension downtown to the Amtrak station is expected to be operational in December. In scheduling water meter installations, priority is given to neighborhoods which are in the greatest need for general water main upgrades. Currently there is no set schedule for River Park.

Parking Woes

Is there no end to student parking in River Park?

Residents on the streets adjoining the Carlson and Sandburg entrance to River Park have seen a steady increase in the number of Sacramento State

students parking in front of their homes during the day and consequently reducing parking for visitors and themselves.

The increase in student parking is the result of construction on campus that has temporarily eliminated many campus parking spaces. This has added to the intense search for student parking.

However, beginning in January 2007, River Park will see some relief when the campus opens a new 3043 space parking structure. The parking structure is opening six months ahead of its original schedule.



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An Appeal For Design Review

By David Weightman

My purpose in writing this article is to express strong advocacy for a design review process in River Park for exterior-related residential construction.

I moved to Sacramento in 1990, have owned two different houses; one in East Sacramento and my current house in River Park. In both cases, nearby property owners engaged in construction by either adding to an existing home or building a new home on their existing lots.

When construction occurs next to your property, your property rights are likely to be affected positively or negatively. The outcome depends upon how your privacy and view is impacted, the style and size of the home being built in relation to what is predominant in the existing neighborhood and choices made regarding landscaping on the property.

In an ideal situation, the building owner would meet with adjacent neighbors prior to completion of the design phase. Concerns that could potentially involve losses or damage to neighbor rights could be addressed at that time.

This is the core idea of design review. Currently there is no such requirement and I believe we need it. I am all for people adding to existing homes or constructing new homes as long as there is a balance between the building owner's rights and the rights of property owners that are impacted by those decisions.

I believe that design review would help create that balance where currently there is none.

Traffic, Speeding At Caleb Greenwood

Crossing guards suggested

Speeding cars and inconsiderate drivers continue to be a concern of many River Park residents. Many of these incidents occur along Carlson Drive, particularly near Caleb Greenwood School when parents are bringing children to school or picking them up after school.

Ted Miller; the new principal at Caleb Greenwood and a River Park resident, routinely encourages parents in his weekly parent newsletters, to slow down, obey traffic laws, be safe and be courteous.

A recent open Internet discussion on the River Park rplist@riverparklist.com, a neighborhood Internet bulletin board, suggested reestablishing a volunteer River Park school-crossing-guard program. Neal Graham, who lives across the street from Caleb Greenwood, noted that his late wife Susan had been a major supporter of the volunteer program. Neal also was active in donating supplies, signs and vests for the crossing guards.

It appeared from the Internet discussion that there might be support for a new volunteer crossing-guard program at the school during the morning when school begins and in the afternoon when school lets out.



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Night Herons 2007

By Jeff Harris

Most River Park residents are aware that we were successful in reducing the nesting populations of night herons and snowy egrets in 2006. By my unscientific observation, I believe that we decreased the number of nests and fledglings by 90%. That is far better than expected and it is due to four factors:

- 1- Residents with large Ash and Zelcova trees absorbed the cost of having their trees trimmed professionally before the nesting season began.
- 2-City of Sacramento Tree Services provided a tremendous service by removing nests late in the season, but before eggs were actually laid.
- 3-Councilman Steve Cohn's office provided funding for Tree Services' efforts.
- 4-Neighborhood volunteers were diligent in using lights and noise to discourage adult birds from constructing nests.

We have the RPNA, Sue Brown (from Councilman Cohn's office), Joe Benassini (from City of Sacramento Tree Services), and many River Park volunteers to thank for the success.

Although most of the birds were discouraged from nesting last year, there were some birds that were able to build nests on Callister Avenue and Carlson Drive. Those birds and their fledglings, will return in 2007.

These migratory waterfowl arrive in March and

commence their nest building soon thereafter. Continuing our program to discourage them will be essential if we are to stem a new buildup of the bird population.

Therefore, once the leaves are down this winter, last year's nests need to be removed from the trees.

If you have a large tree that has not yet been pruned, it is advisable that you do so. Fallen Leaf Tree Service and Davy Tree both have done good work in this regard. They know how to trim to discourage nest building while maintaining the form and health of the tree.

City of Sacramento Tree Services will assist us again, as their workload permits. We will have about a one-month period when the area of Callister and Carlson will need to be patrolled with lights and noise to discourage nesting.

It appears to be reasonable, that if we repeat our efforts in 2007, it will be peaceful and quiet in 2008.

If you have questions about this effort, please direct them to me, Jeff Harris, at 455-0996 or e-mail to cadence@surewest.net.



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In Brief:

River Park Mothers' Club

The River Park Mothers' Club will host two events in December: 1) an Ornament Exchange at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, December 14 including collecting book donations for the Children's Receiving Home and canned food donations for the Sacramento Food Bank; and 2) a Family Holiday Party, 10:30 a.m., Saturday, December 16.

The Mothers' Club is open to both current mothers and expectant mothers who live in River Park. For additional information about the Mothers' Club, you may call their information line at 325-8765.

Doggie Bags

During your morning or evening walk or jog through River Park, have you wondered about those small plastic bags tucked into the street collection of grass and garden clippings? Well, they contain dog doo-doo, also known called poop, droppings and whatever.

It is very considerate that dog owners have picked up after their pets, but the little bags need to be deposited at home in the owner's garbage can. The bags are not biodegradable and should not be mixed with the garden clippings, and their contents breed flies.

Photography Show

The Eclectic Photography of Ron Musser, A Collection of Life's Moments! will be displayed at the Javalicious Café during December.

There will be a reception 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday, December 9. Small bites will be provided and coffee drinks, beer and wine will be available for purchase.

Ron Musser is a long time River Park resident and photographer.

Membership

There are 480 River Park households that are members of the River Park Neighborhood Association. Are you one of them?

Membership helps preserve and enhance the River Park neighborhood. Just \$10 year.

Handyman License Verification

Handyman licenses are issued by counties and are called Special Business Licenses (sbl #). You can verify a handyman's license for Sacramento County at www.efbn.saccountry.net or by calling 916-874-8813.

A license for a building contractor can be verified by contacting the Contractors State License Board at www.cslb.ca.gov.

Halloween Vandalism

Halloween saw an increase in vandalism. Several residents reported pumpkins stolen from their front porches. Many pumpkins were found broken and smashed in streets and on front lawns.

Sacramento State Library

The River Park Neighborhood Association is pleased to announce that the Sacramento State library is open to the public and you do not need to be a student to check out books or other library materials.

To check out library items you must purchase a library card. A library card costs \$25. You can find out more about Sacramento State by visiting them at 2000 State University Dr. East, calling 278-5679, or visiting the library online at library.csus.edu/.

The Glorious Sounds of Christmas

Experience the glorious sounds of Christmas from the Baroque to the contemporary in the Fremont Presbyterian Church's spectacularly decorated sanctuary.

The 80-voice Fremont Choir and Orchestra will present a festive Christmas concert featuring Pergolesi's "Magnificat" and Pinkham's "Christmas Cantata," along with several Christmas Carol favorites. Childcare will be provided for ages infant to five years.

Free admission, Fremont Presbyterian Church, 7 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, December 16 and 17.

December Blood Drive

The River Park community blood drive is scheduled for 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Sunday, December 3. The bloodmobile will be parked across from Caleb Greenwood School at 5458 Carlson Drive.

2006 RPNA Contacts/Membership information

RPNA membership is on a calendar year. If you would like to check or renew your membership, call Alanna Butterworth at 457-6445 or e-mail alannab@surewest.net. If you would like to become a member, send \$10 (per household) to RPNA, PO Box 19866, Sacramento, CA 95819. Make check payable to RPNA.

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