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Correspondence to:
the Robert McDougall Art Gallery PO Box 2626 Christchurch
Phone (03) 3650 915 Fax (03) 3653 942 UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

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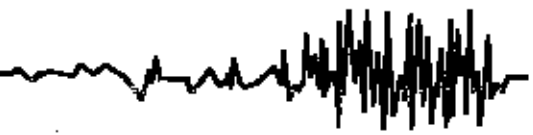
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NEWS LETTER

No11 FEB 1996

Earthquakes



Guest Editor: Emma Vial

Robert Appel - Canterbury Regional Council
Lynn Campbell - Robert McDougall Art Gallery
Andreas Eng - Canterbury University
Rosemary O'Neill - Canterbury Public Library
Tony Seltwood - RNZAF Museum
Lynda Wallace - Historic Places Trust
Sasha Stollman - Canterbury Museum
Tim Vial - Canterbury Museum

AFTER *the*



Southern California got an early wake up call on January 17, 1994, as the most destructive earthquake in the history of Los Angeles struck at 4:31 *am*. The 6.7-magnitude earthquake crushed lives, destroyed highways, turned parking structures into rubble, and brought the contents of buildings crashing to the floor. A 5.9-magnitude aftershock rumbled through the city just a minute after the quake, and millions of people fled into the streets in those predawn hours.

The Northridge earthquake was centred in the San Fernando Valley, northwest of downtown Los Angeles. Destruction was not limited to epicentre, and communication 20 or more miles away experienced severe damage. Fifty-seven people lost their lives, thousands were injured, and thousands more were left homeless.

Remarkably, Southern California museums suffered little damage to collections through this devastation. Over the past decade, museums have upgraded protection with a variety of techniques, from isolator bases - mechanical devices that can absorb up to 80 percent of ground movement while allowing objects remain relatively still - to adhesive wax and bubble wrap.

Unfortunately, historic structures throughout Southern California were not as secure. More than five hundred officially designated landmarks and other historically or architecturally significant buildings were damaged, with an estimated repair cost of more than \$250 million. Damaged historic structures included the Los Angeles City Hall, the Andres Pico Adobe, and the Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood.

In the first few days after January 17, several preservation organisations formed a consortium to save threatened buildings. Ultimately named Historic Preservation Partners for Earthquake Response, the group included the Los Angeles

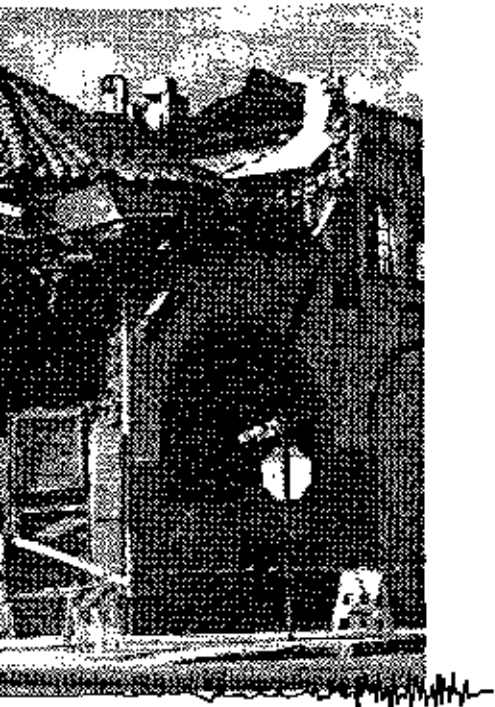
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
Taken from a story written by J.

Conservancy, the California Office of Historic Preservation, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Getty Conservation Institute.

For most of the Partners, this involvement was an extension of their ongoing efforts in planning for disasters and disaster response. In the mid - 1980s, for example, the GCI initiated a series of meetings on disaster preparedness that brought together directors of cultural institutions and disaster experts. These meetings played a part in sensitizing the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to the value of cultural property and brought about a shift in FEMA policy with regard to conservation.

The National Trust has been particularly active in disaster response. "The first time the national trust really responded to a disaster was Hurricane Hugo in late 1989, and then the Loma Prieta earthquake," says Peter Brink, a vice president with the National Trust. "The key to our quick response this time was the support from the Getty Conservation Institute. They provided key staff people who made the difference."

Within two weeks of the quake, the consortium developed a low-interest loan program with First Interstate Bank of California to offer



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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN LOS ANGELES

John Hinrichs for GCI Newsletter

immediate funds to stabilize historic buildings. Owners of historic properties could borrow up to \$20,000, with an interest rate of no higher than 4 percent for the first year. The funds were available for architectural and engineering services and the cost of materials and labour necessary to stabilize buildings.

To encourage property owners to participate, a project manager and program staff, hired with support from the GCI, began coordinating technical assistance teams. Working with property owners, the teams - composed of architects, structural engineers, and preservation specialists - assessed damage to buildings and offered suggestions on how to stabilize and rehabilitate historic structures.

Soon the effort expanded. "The first few days after a disaster strikes are key to setting a tone for preservation," says Linda Dishman, executive director of the Los Angeles Conservancy. In order to respond fully to the earthquake, "it was extremely important to identify the historic structures that were damaged."

The Partners project developed a computer program to pinpoint historic buildings damaged in the quake. The survey of buildings inspected by City of Los Angeles officials - which grew

from 12,000 structures after the first day to more than 80,000 one month later - was electronically compared against the state of California Inventory of Historic Properties - more than 8,000 structures in Los Angeles alone. This created a computer-generated list of 171 significant structures in Los Angeles that sustained damage from the earthquake - 58 buildings posted unsafe by city inspectors and 113 buildings with limited entry.

Using the initial work of the technical assistance teams and the preliminary estimates of damage generated by computer and field survey, the consortium developed a more comprehensive response plan. Other organizations and agencies, including the National Park Service and the California Preservation Foundation, joined the response project.

In February, \$5 million was allocated to the Partners from the emergency earthquake disaster relief package approved by Congress and signed into law by President Bill Clinton. With Funding now on its way, the program staff, sharing offices with the Los Angeles Conservancy, was expanded from a project manager and two assistants to include three field directors, a grants administrator, and an administrative assistant.

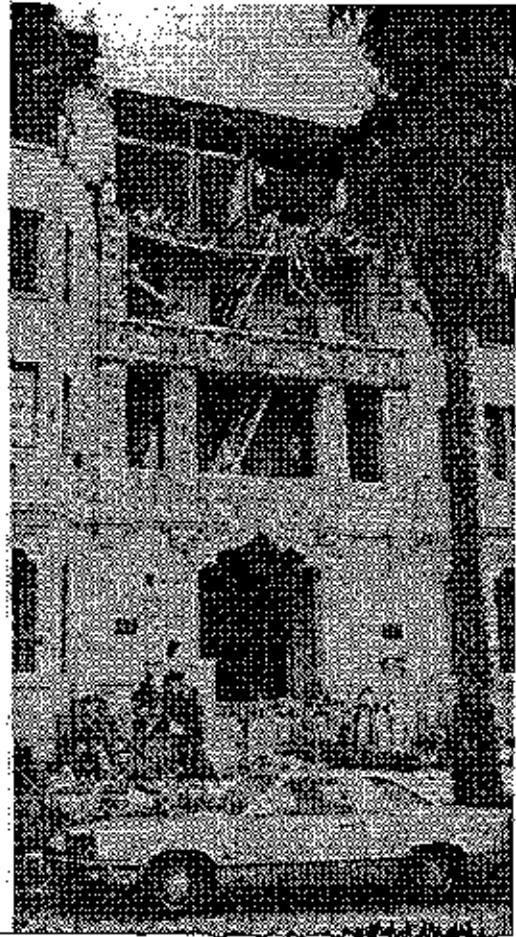
Based on the federal funding, the Partners have established two grant programs to assist in restoration efforts. Technical assistance grants - varying in amounts up to \$10,000 per recipient - are available to organisations, cities, and property owners of historic structures for feasibility studies, architectural and engineering services including structural analysis, and historic preservation reports. The grants can also fund community or district economic recovery assessment.

More than \$3 million is available to provide funding for repair and restoration of buildings in the National Register of Historic Places or structures

determined eligible for inclusion in the register. It is envisioned that the bulk of this money will be distributed in small awards to assist as many historic buildings as possible.

Mr. Brink considers the team effort demonstrated by the Partners to be "a real breakthrough." Ms. Dishman agrees. "The Partners program is exciting because we are pooling our resources in a way that provides more services to people who need help," she says.

Jane Slate Siena, Head of Institutional Relations at the Getty Conservation Institute, sees the partnership as a model for what is still necessary at a national level. "To deal with a local catastrophe, we've created a working partnership of cultural heritage groups that includes the private sector and government, local and national organisations," she explains. "But this won't be the last disaster. We need to develop a strong partnership nationally so that future emergencies, wherever they occur, will be confronted with a focused and coordinated response."



Don't wait until the Earthquake hits enrol in the earthquake workshop April 22nd / 23rd April 1996 at Wigram Museum - Contact Lynn Campbell McDougall Art Gallery Tel: 3650915 Fax: 3650942

John Hinrichs, a Hollywood-based writer who specializes in arts, culture, and politics, is the communications consultant for Historic Preservation Partners for Earthquake Response.