

The Village Green

Highlights

A Quarterly Publication of the Village Green Owners' Association

Fall 2006

Modifying Your Unit

Are you familiar with the guidelines?

About to remodel your bathroom? Thinking about changing the layout of your kitchen? Wondering if the CC&Rs allow you to replace your exterior door? Before you make any changes to your unit, it's important to stop and take some time to review the Village Green's design modification request process. The process will help ensure that you are compliant with the CC&Rs and the VGOA's Architectural Guidelines. If you're unsure if you need to engage in this process, aren't sure how to interpret the guidelines, or have questions, there are knowledgeable residents who can help you. This article summarizes remodeling guidelines and the basic process for getting approval.

It is essential that owners follow the Association guidelines when modifying their unit. These guidelines are laid out in the *Village Green Handbook*, which was provided to you during escrow when you purchased your unit. Copies are available in the office. Owners who make unauthorized modifications may be subject to fines and will be liable if there is any resulting damage to other owners' or Association property.

What Kind of Changes Require Approval?

The CC&Rs tell us what modifications

we can make to our units:

"Nothing may be done in, on or to the complex, the common areas, or any association property, which will impair or change the structural or architectural integrity of the buildings or landscape without prior written consent of the Board. Permits must be obtained by the owner for all major changes, which must conform to the City of Los Angeles building codes. Owners cannot change walls, windows and door locations or make other substantial changes to the buildings.

"Because the Village Green is a condominium property, individuals own only the interior air space up to the paint and finished surfaces of the walls, ceilings, floors and doors of the unit. Everything else, including the insides of walls, is Association or "common property", as are areas for "exclusive use" such as balconies and patios (whether open or enclosed). The guidelines described in the Village Green Handbook detail all of the policies and procedures which have been established to ensure the safety of all residents, preserve the architectural integrity of the Village Green, and protect property values for everyone's benefit."

—VG CC&Rs (emphasis added)

Generally, any change to the architectural structure of the buildings, whether inside or outside your unit,

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Summer Concerts: Smashing Success!

A Smashing Success!! That's the best way to describe our summer concerts. The Billy Mitchell Band returned to the Green for a repeat performance on Sunday, June 25th. We had a large turnout, from young, to "not so young," enjoying the afternoon. Mitchell, one of LA's longtime premiere musicians and jazz educators, once again brought a very talented, professional group. We hope to see them again.

Labor Day brought The Keisha Potter Quartet to the Green. Though young and petite, she had no trouble blowing her saxophone. The crowd

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<http://villagegreenla.net>

FROM THE GARDEN GURUS....

Water, Water—\$\$\$—Do Not Waste!

Many newcomers to Village Green are not aware that we have two sources of water here. Irrigation for the common areas comes from an on-site well. This water comes to us, therefore, at a low cost. The water in our units, however, comes from the city and is very expensive. This is why we are asked not to hose down patios, wash cars, or use excessive water on our patios and plants.

Even if you don't do these things, your patio may still be wasting water. If your patio is a raised deck, or is made completely of cement pavers, there is no way for water to percolate through to the soil and benefit the surrounding plants. Since the soil at the Green has a high clay content, it absorbs water very slowly. It is thus necessary to apply enough water to stand and soak in for a period of time. As you know, we usually run on empty regarding rainfall here in Southern California, so any method of catching and saving this precious resource is helpful. A more environmentally friendly configuration for our patios is to return them to their historic 1940s appearance by removing the cement that fills the gaps between the large pavers, and planting drought-tolerant ground covers in between them. That way, when it rains, or when you water, the water can seep through to the soil, rather than running off into the drains. More pictures of the original pavers can be seen in the Clubhouse. More information and ideas for green-friendly patio treatments can be found on the Web site www.raingardens.org.



Patio pavers originally had grass planted in between, allowing water to seep into the ground between them. Photo courtesy Cornell University Archives.

Free Mulch from the City

Mulching your patio beds is another great way to maintain moisture. Mulching also reduces weeds and improves the soil. We have a free source of mulch in our neighborhood. The city of Los Angeles is giving away free mulch in their storage lot at 6000 W. Jefferson (between Victor Cable and the French Laundry). The price is right—free!! The entrance gate is on the south side of the street, just past the “Y” where Rodeo and Jefferson meet. Bring your own lawn or leaf bag. Shovels are available there.

If you are not familiar with mulching, try this simple procedure: Water the area and remove any weeds. Add mulch to a depth of 2–3 inches and water again. Shortly, you will find yourself spending more time reading in the patio than weeding and watering!

Caring for Our Birds

As many of you are aware, birds are one of our most precious resources in the Green. Well-known Los Angeles Audobon Society birder Richard Barth updates the list of birds that can be seen here every year. The VG office has an updated list that can be yours for the asking (last updated March, 2006). Richard notes that it is not necessary to give our birds extra food. He says the Green provides enough food sources for the birds year-round without adding extra birdseed. It is actually healthier for them to eat natural food sources than to eat birdseed left in patios. When they feed in our patios, they are more prone to disease, as they tend to congregate together in ways they ordinarily would not. Rest assured that there is plenty of food for them without going that extra step. Go to www.americanbirding.org for more information on birding, and to find activities and groups in our neighborhood.

Volunteer Opportunities for the Fall

Take a quick jaunt to see what can be done with TLC for a formerly sick, Giant Whitefly-infested hibiscus, cared for by volunteer Joan Nester in Court. 3. The plant is on the outside of the patio between 5228 1/2 and 5230. It's terrific what pruning, watering, mulching and attention can do. You too can save a plant!! For information on how to give a plant new life, call Joan at 295-0950.

The main rose garden always needs weeding. We will continue with invasive sword fern removal in the months of October and November. Contact Laurie (295-9209) or Lorrie (293-6657) for more information.

Summer Concerts *continued from page 1*

enjoyed the diversity of her band—from jazz to blues and even a little R&B. More residents are enjoying these events with their family and friends. We look forward to our 2007 season.

Upcoming Events

Halloween Party—Saturday, October 28, 4:00–6:00 p.m.

Holiday Dance (with a DJ)—Saturday, December 9, 7:00–10:00 p.m.



The Kiesha Potter Quartet, left, entertained Village Green residents on the main green on Labor Day.

Sewer Odors: Who are you going to call?

Have you noticed a repugnant smell as you are driving on Rodeo across La Cienga? It is very possible that the source of the smell is coming from the sewers along Rodeo. Do you know who you should call to report the problem?—call the city at 311.

Residents can call the report center at 311 because of a successful lawsuit filed in 1994 by the Santa Monica Baykeeper and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on behalf of the Baldwin Hills/Crenshaw Homeowners Coalition regarding the sewer odors and spills impacting our communities. Village Green has been an active member of the coalition and was very involved in the lawsuit.

Another result of the lawsuit was a court order requiring the forma-

tion of the Odor Control Advisory Board, which includes representatives of the coalition and the Department of Public Works. One of the primary responsibilities of the Advisory Board is to ensure that the City of Los Angeles remains diligent in its efforts to control the sewer odors and spills in our community.

On July 10th, VG Board members Reba Glover, Nat Hutton, Pauline Carroll and Barbara Washington participated in a meeting held by the Odor Control Advisory Board. Valerie Shaw, Commissioner of Public Works, and former resident of Village Green, also participated.

Representatives from the Bureaus of Engineering and Sanitation provided an overview of progress on the Odor Master Plan. The

meeting gave VG Board members insight into current efforts by the Department of Works to control the problem of sewer odors.

The Odor Control Advisory Board meets monthly at the Baha'i Center at 5750 Rodeo Road. VG Director Deborah Harris is the representative for Village Green. Ms. Harris was actively involved with the coalition's lawsuit and her knowledge and experience will be very beneficial.

Please visit the City's sewer information Web site at www.lasewers.org to learn more about the Odor Control Advisory Board.

—Barbara Washington

Modifying Your Unit

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requires approval by the Board. Owners are responsible for ensuring that they comply with these rules, and are also responsible for obtaining any city permits. If you're not sure what to do, please ask before proceeding without approval. The VG manager can often tell you right away if you need to get approval. The office can also refer you the Design Review Committee (DRC) chair, who can help you determine if you need approval. It can't hurt to ask, will give you peace of mind that you are in compliance with Association regulations, and can also protect you from future liability in case of a any problem with your modifications.

Not sure if your modifications will require a city permit? Your contractor, plumber or electrician can help you, or check the LA Department of Building and Safety Web site: http://www.ladbs.org/Permits/permit_required.html.

How to Request Architectural Changes

If you do need to obtain Board approval, and even if you're not sure, fill out a *Request for Design Modification* form, available in your *Village Green Handbook* or from the VG office. Members of the DRC can help you complete the form and advise you on what kinds of changes are likely to be approved or not. You're also free to bring your proposals to a DRC meeting.

After submitting the request form with any necessary documentation, the DRC reviews it and makes recommendations to the Board. Many requests can be approved immediately. For example, things like adding a security door, making cosmetic changes to a bathroom or kitchen, and adding an awning all have pre-established specifications that can be immediately approved. More complicated or unusual requests may require time for the committee to investigate.

What If I Don't Get Approval?

If your request is denied, the Board will send a written explanation detailing the reasons why. The DRC and the manager can work with you to find options for modifying your plans so that they will be accepted.

Violation of architectural regulations may incur a fine and open you to future liability—even after your unit is sold—if the violation causes damage to any other resident's property or harms someone. A *Modification Waiver* must be signed for modifications not approved by the Board, and for which the Association is not responsible. The waiver is filed with the city and recorded on the unit's deed at time of sale, which relieves the Board of liability.

If you aren't sure whether your plans to remodel need approval, it is best to contact the manager. The office can also put you in contact with the Design Review Committee chair, who may be able to work with you to ensure personal satisfaction of your remodel project without compromising the Association's regulations.

—Steven Keylon, Design Review Committee

A Trip to the Salsa Festival Saturday, July 29, 2006

All aboard! Fifty people traveled to Union Station and took advantage of the scenic and panoramic ride on the "Pacific Surfliner" to Oxnard. Board Directors Cynthia Singleton and Pauline Carroll and their guests joined the group.



Happy smiling members dined at the various food courts to enjoy the traditional Latin, Cuban, Asian and American cuisine. Thirst was quenched with various drinks, including margaritas and sno-cones. Not only did everyone enjoy the fresh air, but members also swayed to the continuous, international rhythms of Salsa and Latin jazz bands. Everyone patronized the festival marketplace. The "red/green traditional pepper" necklace was the souvenir of the day. After a full day of good company, good food, and loads of Latin hospitality, we boarded the motor coach for home.

This "Sizzling Hot Festival" trip will be repeated next year. Join us!

Buses leave on a monthly basis for interesting and exciting trips. Check the bulletin board outside the clubhouse door for upcoming trips.

—Priscilla Browner,
Social Recreation Committee Chair

About the Recent Tree Activity

The scale of our property and the variety and size of our trees qualifies Village Green as an “urban forest.” As in all forests, our trees occasionally get sick and die, and others, having lived a full life, pass on.

To maintain the overall health and vigor of our trees, the Village Green Owners’ Association contracts with a registered consulting arborist, Jan Scow, to periodically survey the condition of our urban forest and make recommendations to keep us green. Some of you may remember Jan from when he lived at Village Green himself.

Lately, residents have witnessed considerable tree activity around the Green. Two distinct tasks have been undertaken. The VG Board, our manager, the Tree Committee, and the arborist have coordinated a systematic removal of dead, dying and otherwise hazardous trees and scheduled comprehensive and regular tree pruning. One crew has been contracted to remove the considerable backlog of dead and dying trees, while another is removing dead limbs and thinning extra foliage, which can burden the trees and cause major limb failure. While these actions may appear rather drastic, expert pruning actually preserves a tree’s long-term health.



To maintain an accurate historical record commensurate with National Historic Landmark standards, the Tree Committee has been faithfully documenting these activities. Prior to removal, each tree is plotted, photographed, and its height and girth estimated. These records will facilitate historically accurate and timely tree replanting so the that the Village Green can maintain the landscape characteristics we all admire and enjoy.

—Gordon Brooks, Tree Committee Chair

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I love Village Green and have made it my home since 1989.

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The Fall Foliage Tour is Coming

Saturday, November 4, 2006, 10. a.m.

Have you noticed a change? That something seems different? Maybe you've felt that the days and nights are cooler. Or perhaps the sun setting earlier, giving us less hours of sunlight?

Here in the Village Green, Autumn means it's time for the annual Fall Foliage Tour. This is a great opportunity to get out and take an invigorating walk around the Green. We are truly blessed here with a magnificent urban forest. We have such a wide variety of plants and trees, which makes our property a mini arboretum. The grounds contain a large number of species.

The changes in both the weather and the sunlight will cause a spectacular change in the foliage of the deciduous plants and trees, while the evergreens will stay green. Get ready for some beautiful red, yellow, orange, and green foliage. The tour is timed for the peak of Autumn, so there will be a lot to see.

The tour will take place on **Saturday November 4, 2006**. We will meet at the Clubhouse at 10 a.m and tour for approximately two hours. Wear comfortable and supportive walking shoes. If it is raining, the tour will go on as scheduled. Bring an umbrella and waterproof footwear.

The tours of the past have all been fun and informative, and this year looks to be the same. We look forward to seeing you there.

—Jeffrey Mintz



Jeffrey Mintz leads Fall Foliage Tour, 2004

Wanted: VG Board Members

The election is in February.
There will be 5 open spots.

Take the chance to get involved.

Nominations due in December.

ADVERTISE IN HIGHLIGHTS

How to Submit

Please submit ads by e-mail to
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Deadline

March 15, June 15, September 15,
and December 15—for publication
in the first week of the following
month.

Fees

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Monthly Newsletter – September 2006

Published by the Court Council Committee

Notes from the Board

*Approved Board meeting minutes are posted on the board by the Clubhouse door.
Board meetings are held the fourth Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. in the Clubhouse.*

On September 19th, Governor Schwarzenegger signed into law emergency clean-up legislation that clarifies a number of problems associated with the adoption of HOA's "Election Procedures." This legislation takes effect immediately. As a result, the information you received in your September statement regarding the election rules will have to be revised to address these changes. You will be receiving information regarding the revised Election Procedures from Ross Morgan in your November statement.

If you have not already done so, please make sure you return the completed homeowner/tenant information form you received in your October assessment statement from Ross Morgan. The Association has not updated our homeowner records since 2001. It is very important that we have current information on all residents. The information will be updated in Ross Morgan's system, which will eliminate the need for our office to retain paper records. Additionally, it will afford the VG office staff an opportunity to streamline some of the current manual processes, which will allow time to focus on other critical duties.

Notes from the Manager

As reported by Robert Bonfiglio, Property Manager

New Projects: A supplier of window (casement) handles has been located in Maryland and will be sent handles for correct match and pricing; Ramco will install 10 Outdoor Lights in the next several weeks.
Current Projects: The next phase of Tree Pruning will begin in 4 to 6 weeks; Work on Garage Courts 2, 3, 15 renovation continues, Re-Pipe Project in Ct. 11 will begin on Oct. 2 and Ct. 13 on Oct. 25, Well Pump will be installed the week of Oct. 4th and a video of the well will take place before installation. Painting Project continues on Bldg. 22 and Bldg. 20. Bldg 2 and 73 are next and will be the last bldgs to painted this year. Phase 4 of the Landscaping Project will begin next week, which will involve significant trimming of the shrubbery at VG. A reminder notice regarding the pruning will be sent to homeowners before the work begins.

Incident Reports

Aug 26—a resident in Ct. 13 reported his car vandalized. LAPD was notified.

Sept 14—graffiti was reported in Ct. 3. The Property Manager took photos and Allied/Barton notified LAPD.

Sept 17—Security officers observed graffiti on a patio door in Ct. 9. Maintenance removed the graffiti and LAPD was notified.

Sept 20—graffiti was reported in Ct. 1. The graffiti was removed by Maintenance and LAPD was again notified.

Committee News and Reports

Court Council—58 dead trees have been removed and trimming of trees is moving forward. Planting of flowers in front of the Clubhouse will be complete in a few weeks. The revised draft of the VG Handbook is with legal counsel for final review. Issues and concerns discussed: the new Election Rules, teenagers reported creating a disturbance in Ct. 17, and recommendation to contact the office when your bldg is scheduled for painting to discuss plans for protecting the bushes. With the holidays approaching, this is a perfect time for court reps to plan a “Know Your Neighbor” celebration. Marjorie Ellis and Priscilla Browner had a successful “Know Your Neighbor” party for Ct. 2. The VG Directory will be updated in 2007.

Cultural Landscape Report Committee—CLR Inventory: Garden Cts. 15 and 16 have been completed except for photographing of 5 sections. The need for a more comprehensive Plant ID Chart was raised. It was suggested that Fred Wilson photograph questionable plants for ID later. CAD Input: Sara Loe displayed 3 large plans with bldgs. and plant locations around bldgs. and lawns from Winans, Barlow and our inventory data. Holly Kane and Sara Loe presented a slide show of VG photos from the Schulman Archives to show the changes in the original landscape and plants over time.

Design Review Committee—No new modification requests. Christian Daniels and Steven Keylon reported a good meeting with the owners of the next bldgs. to be painted. Members will review Architectural Guidelines before the next BOD meeting. Committee is almost finished with matching the size, colors and finish on new tile.

Grant Ad Hoc Committee—The Mural Project: the survey was discussed and informing residents on the web site and in *Highlights*. The Mills Act: Committee discussed a two track approach: 1. Continue looking for a legal contract that the association does not have to sign. 2. Contact new owners to see how much support there is. A letter was sent to the Sanitation Dept. asking if VG could apply for the Cistern Project (Prop O) since VG is privately owned.

Landscape Committee—Clubhouse planting started Sept. 14th. Committee hopes to complete the Clubhouse patio plant renovation plans this month. Watering and removal of weeds and volunteer trees in the common area beds is still a problem. The soil is heavily compacted and needs tiling and mulch as well as water. The Clubhouse rose garden has been

mulched and the central rose garden needs similar attention. Samples of new synthetic grass were presented and pros and cons of each type was discussed. Central rose garden dead-heading will be done the third Sunday from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. since members are not able to work on Saturday mornings.

Parking Ad Hoc Committee (Pauline Carroll, Nat Hutton, Barbara Washington)—Sept. 16th hearing was cancelled. Next hearing will be Oct. 14th.

Village Green Committees

Committee	Meeting Time	Chair
Budget & Finance	2nd Thursday, 6:30 p.m.	Alice Haggerty
Clubhouse	Thursdays	
Court Council	1st Wed, 7:00 p.m.	Kathryn Carr
Communications	3rd Wed, 7:00 p.m.	Susan Edwards
Cultural Affairs	1st Wed, 5:00 p.m.	Molly O'Brien
Cultural Landscape	4th Monday, 7:00 p.m.	Ted Lumpkin
Design Review	1st Monday, 7:30p.m	Kathleen Louw/ Francie Moore
Grants	3rd Wed, 8:00p.m.	Susan Edwards
Landscape	2nd Monday, 7:30 p.m.	Lorraine Secor
National Landmark	2nd Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.	Robert Nicolais
Safety	2nd Wed, 6:30 p.m.	Drew Furedi/ Caroline Streeter
Social Recreation	Thursdays, 11:30- 3:00	Pricilla Browner
Trees	3rd Monday, 7:30 p.m.	Gordon Brooks

Safety Committee —Three Security bids were forwarded to the Assistant Manager and Board President for review. Committee discussed placing security cameras on the grounds. Monies are available to National Historic Landmarks to place security cameras on their premises. Neighborhood Watch: there is consensus that NW point people should officially agree to certain responsibilities.

Tree Committee—The Committee requested BOD approval for additional funding for supplemental manual watering by landscape company. The quality of current pruning was directly appraised by the Committee by examining the Shasta Ash trees pruned on the south and southwest side of central VG. The work was judged acceptable. Revised language for the policy on approval and removal of patio trees for the VG Owners Handbook was submitted.

Village Green *Highlights* is the community newsletter of the Village Green Owners' Association, incorporated August 8, 1973. We make every attempt to ensure the accuracy of all information. However, we are not responsible for errors, omissions, or inaccuracies in this publication. The editor reserves the right to edit articles and letters for tone, clarity and length. Opinions expressed in *Highlights* do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Board of Directors or the Management. Please submit submissions or comments to the editor at vghighlights@yahoo.com, or to the office.