



Front Porch



2:00 a.m. June 14, 2009

MXD830 a community winner

An innovative live-work project for artists in Golden Hill has won the second annual Community Vision Award from the San Diego Architectural Foundation.

Called “mxd830” (for mixed use at 830 25th St.) and completed last month, the \$1.5 million project by architects Mike Burnett and Craig Abenilla includes their FoundationForForm office; two two-bedroom apartments that they rent out to artists; and several other studio spaces rented to other artists, currently including a tattoo artist, abstract painter, Sony illustrator, car designer and sign maker.

“We believe this project infuses a new focal vibe for the Golden Hill community,” said architect Gordon Carrier, chairman of the award committee.

The award carries with it a \$25,000 cash prize from the county government to the Greater Golden Hill Community Development Corp. for use in beautifying the historic neighborhood immediately east of downtown.

The vision award program, begun at the urging of county Supervisor Ron Roberts, a former architect who sat on the award committee, recognizes collaborations between developers and the surrounding community.

Burnett and Abenilla, along with an investment partner from Point Loma, bought the property in 2007 and worked with Golden Hill residents to fashion what they hope will be a model infill project for artists. Burnett earned his bachelor's and master's degree from Woodbury University's local architectural program, where architect-developer courses are taught.

“This is a first launch,” Burnett said. “Woodbury is trying to create a hotbed for architects to come together and learn to take the next step,” Burnett said.

Abenilla, who earned his architectural degree from the Rhode Island School of Design, had designed the home for the Point Loma investor. She bought the land and all three took out a construction loan to complete the building.

Other finalists in the award program were the 30th and Ivy Shopkeeper project, nominated by Coalition on 30th and developed by Amelia LLC; Community @ Martin Building + Flats, nominated by Uptown Partnership LLC and developed by L.W.P. Group; and Solara, nominated by the Poway Redevelopment Agency and developed by Community HousingWorks.

– *ROGER SHOWLEY*

Train to tomorrow

Brian Mooney, Del Mar's interim planning director, and local urban designer Howard Blackson joined a unique brainstorming session last week aboard a historic rail car on the way to Denver.