



LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY NEWS



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Even icons of Google architecture like Norms La Cienega still face demolition threats. Photo by Hunter Kerhart.

(Still) Saving Googie

by Cindy Olnick

In 1984, the Conservancy created a Fifties Task Force (now the Modern Committee) to fight the rapid destruction of important Modern architecture throughout L.A. County. The final straw was the loss of two beloved Googie coffee shops, Tiny Naylor's at Sunset Boulevard and La Brea Avenue (Douglas Honnold, 1949) and Ships Westwood (Martin Stern, Jr., 1958). More than thirty years later, Googie architecture has come of age and gained widespread appreciation. Yet the number of examples has dwindled, and they still face threats of demolition and excessive alteration.

Exhibit A: Norms La Cienega (Armet & Davis, 1957) at 470 North La Cienega Boulevard. For nearly sixty years, the restaurant has been the flagship location of the Norms restaurant chain and an icon of Mid-Century Modernism. It exemplifies the Googie architectural style, named for the (now-demolished) Sunset Boulevard coffee shop Googie's (John Lautner, 1949).

Gaga for Googie

With a boldness and exuberance epitomizing the postwar optimism of its time, Googie architecture encompassed not just coffee shops but car washes, drive-ins, bowling alleys, motels, and more. Its soaring geometric forms and neon signs caught the eye of passing motorists. Walls of glass, integrated planters and outdoor areas, and gleaming new materials heralded a bright new age and helped to bring high-quality modernism to the masses.

The term "Googie" was co-opted as a derogatory reference to a style that some people considered brash, outlandish, or silly. In 1985, architect and historian Alan Hess published the seminal book *Googie: Fifties Coffee Shop Architecture*, which turned the term on its head and fostered a newfound respect for one of Southern California's signature styles. His

Please see GOOGIE on page 6

Landmark THIS! Workshop

by Laura Dominguez

This July, the Conservancy will revive our popular **Landmark THIS! workshop** with two public trainings in Los Angeles and West Hollywood. The program, which first launched in 2006, aims to empower individuals to successfully nominate important places in their communities for historic designation.

On **Saturday, July 18**, we will partner with the City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources to offer a workshop specifically geared toward nominating buildings or sites with cultural significance for Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) status. While hundreds of buildings have been designated locally for their rich architectural heritage, far fewer historic places have been formally recognized for their cultural associations, including connections to ethnic and LGBT communities, women, and arts and literary movements.

This hands-on, interactive session will walk participants through researching and writing an effective nomination and navigating the political process, using local sites as examples. The training will take place at the Church of the Epiphany (HCM #807), 2808 Altura Street in Lincoln Heights.

Space for the workshop is limited to **thirty-five people**, and we encourage those with an active interest in completing a local landmark nomination to register. Admission for the workshop is \$15, which includes materials and refreshments.

We are pleased to kick off the workshop with a special presentation from Dr. Laura

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The Los Angeles Conservancy is a nonprofit membership organization that works through education and advocacy to recognize, preserve, and revitalize the historic architectural and cultural resources of Los Angeles County.

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Major funding for the Los Angeles Conservancy's programs is provided by the LaFetra Foundation.

Thank You for Voting on Bylaws

Many thanks to all the Conservancy members who voted in May on our board election and bylaw amendments.

We received a very strong response, a total of 744 votes. Among these votes, 96 percent were in favor of adopting the amended and restated bylaws. The vote passed, and the amended and restated bylaws became effective on May 22, 2015.

The Conservancy updated the bylaws to keep pace with changes in nonprofit governance. We had last updated the bylaws in 1990, and most of the new changes simply brought them up to current standards and best practices for nonprofits. For a summary of the amendments and PDFs of the full bylaws, please visit laconservancy.org/bylaws.

Welcome Jessica Ro, Membership Assistant

We are happy to welcome Jessica Ro to the Conservancy staff as our new membership assistant. A native of Diamond Bar, Jessica is a recent graduate of UC Berkeley, where she double majored in political science and media studies. She is excited to join the Conservancy because, she says, she is passionate about “preserving historic Los Angeles landmarks that ultimately give life to the city.”

Jessica previously worked as an intern at both Time for Change Foundation in San Bernardino and Women’s Action to Gain Economic Security (WAGES) in the Bay Area. This previous nonprofit experience will certainly be helpful in her new role at the Conservancy. Please join us in welcoming Jessica to the Conservancy team.



Sara Roberts Leaves Conservancy Staff

After nearly one year as the Conservancy’s membership assistant, Sara Roberts left the staff in May to move to New York City. We appreciate Sara’s hard work and dedication during her time with the Conservancy, and we wish her all the best in her upcoming adventures.

Hashtag Roundup

Instagram and Twitter users can use hashtags to connect with the Conservancy and join in the conversation about preservation in Los Angeles County. Search for the following hashtags to see what others have to say, and add to the conversation by tagging your own photos and tweets.

- **#walkDTLA**: official hashtag of the Conservancy’s Walking Tour Program (learn more about our walking tour Instagram contests on page 4)
- **#LAsStoryhood**: celebrate L.A.’s unique neighborhoods by sharing photos of the places and qualities that make each neighborhood special (learn more at laconservancy.org/lastoryhood)
- **#LastRemainingSeats**: official hashtag of our annual series of classic films in historic theatres (learn more at laconservancy.org/last-remaining-seats)
- **#TwitPicFri**: every Friday, the Conservancy tweets photos of historic places across Los Angeles County

Don’t forget to follow the Conservancy – we’re [@laconservancy](https://twitter.com/laconservancy) on both Instagram and Twitter.

Preservation Issues

by Laura Dominguez, Adrian Scott Fine, Manuel A. Huerta, and Marcello Vavala

For more information about these and other preservation issues, please visit laconservancy.org/important-issues.

Parker Center

Efforts to designate Parker Center in Downtown L.A.'s Civic Center as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) were set back due to a timing and procedural error. At the Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee meeting on May 5, Councilmember José Huizar, whose district includes Parker Center, encouraged the Cultural Heritage Commission and Department of City Planning to resubmit the nomination.

In addition, Councilmember Huizar presented a motion directing City staff to study a new alternative for the Los Angeles Street Civic Building Project, the proposed project that currently calls for Parker Center's demolition. The new alternative would preserve Parker Center's eight-story tower and construct a new adjacent tower taller than the one analyzed in the project's Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The motion also instructed staff to investigate the feasibility of initiating an update to the Civic Center Master Plan, which was last updated in 1997.

The City's Bureau of Engineering is currently pressing for the project that would demolish and replace Parker Center, the historic former headquarters of the LAPD. The Cultural Heritage Commission initiated the HCM nomination in November 2014 and voted unanimously in January 2015 to recommend the building's designation to the City Council. The Conservancy is working closely with all parties to press for an alternative that retains and reuses Parker Center.

The Factory

Faring Capital, the owner of the historic building locally known as The Factory, has proposed redeveloping the site between Robertson Boulevard and La Peer Drive in West Hollywood. The proposed mixed-use project would include a 251-room hotel, plus restaurant and retail space. The proposal currently calls for the demolition of The Factory



Downtown L.A.'s Parker Center, threatened with demolition despite its critical role in the history of policing and Los Angeles. Photo by Hunter Kerhart.

building at 661 North Robertson Boulevard.

Constructed in 1929 as the manufacturing headquarters of the Mitchell Camera Company, the building played an important role in the rise of the motion picture industry before World War II. Following a brief stint as an A-list nightclub, the building became a thriving discotheque in 1975. Known as Studio One, the glamorous dance club catered to West Hollywood's LGBT community and remained in operation until 1988.

The Conservancy submitted comments on the project's Notice of Preparation in January, urging the City to identify The Factory as a historic resource and consider a range of preservation alternatives in the draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). We and local activists are pressing for a sensitive design that allows for new development on the site while reusing the historic building in ways that meet the project objectives.

As this newsletter went to press, the National Trust for Historic Preservation announced the inclusion of The Factory on its 2015 list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places.

Oakhurst Drive Potential Historic District

The newly formed neighborhood advocacy group Concerned Citizens of Beverly

Hills/Beverly Grove filed a lawsuit in May challenging the City of Los Angeles' failure to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The lawsuit relates to the City's approval of a 31-unit condominium project without preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to evaluate project impacts and consider preservation alternatives.

The project calls for the demolition of three historic apartment buildings at 332-336 N. Oakhurst Drive, along the eastern border of Beverly Hills. The buildings were identified as contributors to a National Register-eligible potential historic district. Two of the buildings were designed by pioneering female architect Edith Northman. The lawsuit follows an earlier appeal of the project's approval, which was supported by the Conservancy but denied by the City of Los Angeles.

The properties are located in two jurisdictions. A third of the site, including street frontage and facades, is in the City of Beverly Hills, while the other two-thirds are within the City of Los Angeles. The City of Los Angeles is serving as the lead agency for the proposed project. The City of L.A. evaluated the project through a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), maintaining that the structures are not historic. Yet substantial evidence identifies them as potential historic resources and obligates the City to prepare an EIR as mandated under CEQA.

#WALKDTLA INSTAGRAM CONTESTS

by Jessica Hodgdon

Attention Instagram users: As part of the Conservancy's year-long celebration of the thirty-fifth anniversary of our Walking Tour Program, we're holding monthly Instagram contests on two of our favorite walking tours.

Downtown Renaissance and Modern Skyline explore the "book-ends" of downtown's history—its early beginnings and more recent past. You can take one or both tours every Saturday through September 2015. With so many tour offerings, you have plenty of opportunities to enter and win!

To enter the contest:

- Take the Downtown Renaissance and/or Modern Skyline walking tours
- Post your photos on Instagram and tag them #walkDTLA & #DowntownRen OR #walkDTLA & #ModernSkyline
- Tag as many photos as you like – there is no limit on entries

Contest winners:

- Winning photos will be chosen by public vote on Facebook
- There will be one winner selected per tour, per month, through September
- We'll announce the winners on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter
- Winners will receive a pair of passes to attend another walking tour of their choice

To see photos from our walking tours, search #walkDTLA on Instagram, and be sure to follow the Conservancy @laconservancy!

Learn more at laconservancy.org/tours/instagram.

Explore Historic Downtown at Sunset

by Annie Laskey



The Conservancy is offering extended dates of our popular Modern by Moonlight tour this summer. Photo by Douglas Hill.

Summer is here, and with it, the Conservancy's evening walking tours. This popular series features shorter versions of two regular walking tours (Art Deco and Downtown Renaissance), plus our crowd-pleasing nighttime twist on our Modern Skyline tour called Modern by Moonlight.

Art Deco is synonymous with the Jazz Age. Rich materials, vibrant colors, and classic geometric design are hallmarks of this style. Los Angeles was booming during Deco's heyday in the late 1920s and early 1930s, giving downtown a remarkable collection of buildings from this period.

Downtown Renaissance explores Spring Street, known in the early twentieth century as the Wall Street of the West. This National Register Historic District boasts dozens of elaborate Beaux-Arts and Art Deco buildings—including a number of landmarks designed by the great John Parkinson. All but deserted by the 1970s, the area has seen an exceptional revival as the epicenter of the downtown residential loft-housing boom.

Modern by Moonlight shows the skyscrapers and plazas of Bunker Hill in the soft glow of the summer twilight. On those nights without a full moon, the lights in and around the Bunker Hill area more than make up for it.

The tour ends at the Bona Vista Lounge at the top of the 1978 Bonaventure Hotel for no-

host cocktails, dining, and spectacular nighttime views. As part of the ongoing celebration of the thirty-fifth anniversary of our Walking Tour Program, we're offering extended dates for our Modern by Moonlight tour, with two months' worth of tours!

All tours are \$5 for Conservancy members and youth 12 and under; \$10 for the general public; reservations are required. Space is limited, so reserve now! Visit laconservancy.org/tours or call (213) 623-2489.

Summer Evening Tour Schedule

Art Deco

Wednesdays, August 5 and 19

5:30 p.m.

1-3/4 hours

Downtown Renaissance

Wednesdays, August 12 and 26

5:30 p.m.

1-3/4 hours

Modern by Moonlight

Thursdays, July 9 – September 3

7 p.m.

2 hours

Tour Union Station with the Family Sundays in July

by Annie Laskey

As part of our thirty-fifth walking tour anniversary celebration, we'll offer a kid-centric version of our popular Union Station tour each Sunday morning in July. This hour-long tour tells the story of Union Station through its beautiful shapes and colors, exploring the design of the building and how it relates to Los Angeles history. And it costs only \$3.50 for anyone 17 or younger!

Opened in 1939, Union Station was the last great railroad station built in the U.S. Its architecture blends the romance of Los Angeles' Spanish and Mexican past with the geometric designs of the machine age. Brightly patterned tiles, smooth marble floors, grand arches, and fifty-foot-high painted ceilings make the building a treasure trove of color, texture, and shape.

Union Station turned out to be the last of its kind, as train travel began to lose popularity in the 1940s. After decades of decline, this marvelous building has come to life again as a commuter hub for trains, light rail, and buses. Once again, tens of thousands of people course through the building every day.

The Union Station Youth and Family tour takes place every Sunday in July (July 5, 12, 19, and 26). It starts at 11 a.m. and lasts about an hour. Please note that the tour does not include boarding a train.

Space is limited; reservations are required. The tours cost only \$3.50 for people 17 and younger, \$5 for adult members of the Conservancy, and \$10 for adult non-members.

We designed the Union Station Youth and Family tour for young guests; we suggest it for children ages 5 and up. Please register for this tour only if you bring young people between the ages of 5 and 17. We offer tours of Union Station designed for adults every Saturday.

For reservations, visit laconservancy.org/tours or call (213) 623-2489.



Explore Union Station in July on this special family-friendly tour! Photo by Larry Underhill.

Explore with Google Field Trip

by Jessica Hodgdon

Have you ever walked by a historic place and wondered who designed it, when it was built, or something else about its history? Now, for hundreds of places throughout L.A. County, you can learn straight from the Conservancy using Google's Field Trip app.

More than 600 historic places from our website now appear in Google Field Trip. The app runs in the background on your phone, and it will automatically notify you when you're near a point of interest. You can learn more about the interesting places you encounter, whether you're exploring a new part of town or your own neighborhood.

You can also use the app to see a map of nearby sites. Touching one of the icons on the map brings up a "card" with information about the site. You can filter your map results by category to see places related to History, Art & Museums, Architecture, and more. The Conservancy's listings appear in the History category.

Google Field Trip is available for both Android and iOS, and you can customize your notifications by category and frequency.

To download the app, visit fieldtripper.com or find it in the iTunes App Store or Google Play Store. Many thanks to Niantic Labs at Google for making this project possible.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE: LESLIE LAMBERT

by Bruce Scottow

"It's not just a story about the buildings—it's a story about the people inside them."

—Leslie Lambert

With a long career in local urban redevelopment, Leslie Lambert is no stranger to our region's built environment. But



it was a Lower East Side tenement tour in Manhattan that brought her to the Los Angeles Conservancy. The tenement tour's docent spoke not only of the neighborhood buildings, but of families who lived, worked, and played within them.

"I want to do that," thought Leslie. "I want to give a tour like that."

That was in 2012. Within a year, Leslie had joined the Conservancy's docent training class, quickly becoming one of our most active Walking Tour docents. The list of tours Leslie gives is growing, including Union Station and the Broadway Theatre and Commercial District. Regardless of the tour, you can be sure she weaves a quilt of "people stories" that travel well beyond the brick, concrete, and steel.

Leslie retired in 2011 from the former Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles. She remains active in the community, including participating in Santa Monica Forward, an organization that promotes positive dialogue on the growth of the city in which she and her husband have lived for thirty-six years.

She loves to travel, and she includes her recent journey to Cuba, organized by the Conservancy, as one of her most memorable trips.

WORKSHOP

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Pulido, a professor of American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California. Dr. Pulido is the co-author of *A People's Guide to Los Angeles* (2012), which documents more than one hundred historic and contemporary places throughout the region that are essential to telling the story of race, class, gender, and sexuality in Los Angeles.

The lecture portion of the event will take place from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Dr. Pulido's talk will be free and open to the public and will end at 10:30 a.m.

On **Saturday, July 25**, we will host our first-ever Landmark THIS! workshop in West Hollywood in partnership with the City of West Hollywood's Historic Preservation Commission and the West Hollywood Preservation Alliance. The training will focus on the nomination and designation of a broad range of historic places in the city. Additional information, including time and location, is available on our website, and please note that space is similarly limited.

To register for either or both workshops, or the free lecture with Dr. Laura Pulido, please visit laconservancy.org/upcoming-events.



Sanctuary of the Church of the Epiphany. This Lincoln Heights church was designated as a Historic-Cultural Monument in 2005. It will host both the free lecture by Dr. Laura Pulido and the Landmark THIS! workshop on Saturday, July 18. Photo by Friar's Balsam/Flickr.

GOOGIE continued from page 1

scholarly research and analysis made the case for Googie as not kitsch or curiosity, but good architecture that solved practical problems and was inseparable from its time, place, and people.

Despite decades of preservation advocacy and the renaissance of Mid-Century Modernism, important examples of Googie architecture are now few and far between, making it more crucial than ever to save what we still have.

In 2013, the Conservancy and our Modern Committee successfully nominated Johnie's Coffee Shop (Armet & Davis, 1956) as a local landmark (Historic-Cultural Monument, or HCM). The designation will help protect the beloved building at Wilshire Boulevard and Fairfax Avenue as Metro proceeds with plans for a Wilshire/Fairfax station as part of the Purple Line Subway Extension Project.

Saving Norms

The Norms restaurant chain dates back to 1949, when Norman Roybark opened the first location at Sunset and Vine. The business remained in the family for three generations and was sold in late 2014. The Roybark family sold the restaurant business and the property to two separate entities. According to a statement from the family, "the new owners were carefully selected to protect the legacy of Norms."

As a proactive measure, in December 2014, the Conservancy and our Modern Committee nominated Norms La Cienega for designation as an HCM. Perhaps the best remaining intact example of Googie coffee shop architecture, Norms was nominated for its association with the renowned architectural firm of Armet & Davis, its pioneering Googie design, and its enduring significance in Los Angeles' postwar landscape. By requiring that the City's Office of Historic Resources review any plans for demolition or substantial alteration, local landmark designation offers the strongest level of protection for historic places in the City of Los Angeles.

On January 5, as the HCM nomination was pending, the new owner of the Norms property (not the restaurant chain) applied for, and received, a permit to demolish the building. The Conservancy's announcement of the demolition permit fueled an unprec-

edented public outcry, reaching more than 600,000 people on Facebook and generating international press coverage.

The new owner maintains that they have no plans to demolish the building. Yet they have not vacated their demolition permit, despite nearly 3,000 signatures on the Conservancy's online petition urging them to do so.

In March, City Councilmember Paul Koretz (whose district includes Norms La Cienega) held a press conference at the restaurant. He was joined by Linda Dishman, the Conservancy's executive director; *Mad Men* creator Matthew Weiner and actor James Darren, longtime Norms customers; Mike Colonna, president of Norms Restaurants; and Norms staff and regulars. It was a great outpouring of support for Norms and the community it has fostered for generations.

In May 2015, the Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously to designate Norms as an HCM. During the meeting, Councilmember Koretz praised the Googie icon as "a home away from home for many people" and the kind of place that is "not just culturally significant, but culturally uniting."

We applaud Koretz's continued leadership on this issue and support for preserving this highly significant building. The Conservancy has been meeting with the new property owner and their architect to explore options for redeveloping the property while keeping Norms intact. We appreciate being part of the process, but we still have a long way to go to ensure the long-term preservation of this beloved landmark.

How You Can Help

If you haven't already, please visit the Norms La Cienega issue page of our website at laconservancy.org, where you can sign our online petition urging the new property owner to vacate the active demolition permit. You can also subscribe to the Conservancy's Action Alert emails for the latest updates and calls to action on Norms and other issues. Simply visit the Newsletter page on our website or edit your website user account if you have one.

With your help, we can protect this Googie icon and make preservation the norm in Greater Los Angeles.

MARCH 26 / JUNE 11

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

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MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

THANK YOU TO OUR 2015 PRESERVATION AWARD LUNCHEON SPONSORS

On May 7, we held our annual Preservation Awards Luncheon at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel. Congratulations to all of our award recipients, and thank you to our sponsors!

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CONSERVANCY WALKING TOURS

Tours are \$5 for Conservancy members and children twelve and under; \$10 for the general public. Walk-ins accepted on Art Deco, Downtown Renaissance, Historic Downtown, and Modern Skyline. All others require reservations.

For details and reservations, visit laconservancy.org. Questions? Call the Conservancy office at (213) 623-2489.

CONSERVANCY WALKING TOURS

Angelino Heights

First Saturday of every month, 10 a.m.

Art Deco

Every Saturday, 10 a.m.

Biltmore Hotel

Every Sunday, 2 p.m.

Broadway Historic Theatre & Commercial District

Every Saturday, 10 a.m.

Downtown Renaissance

Additional offerings: Every Saturday, 10 a.m., through September 26

Historic Downtown

Every Saturday, 10 a.m.

Modern Skyline

Additional offerings: Every Saturday, 2 p.m., through September 26

Union Station

Every Saturday, 10 a.m.

Youth, family, and group tours by arrangement; call (213) 623-2489 for information.



Los Angeles Conservancy

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For the latest information about issues and events, visit laconservancy.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Courtesy City of L.A., Office of Historic Resources.



Downtown Renaissance. Photo by Larry Underhill.



Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

LANDMARK THIS! WORKSHOP

Church of the Epiphany
Saturday, July 18

Learn how to nominate buildings or sites as local landmarks at this interactive workshop by the Conservancy and the City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources. See page 1 for details.

SUMMER EVENING TOURS

Art Deco, Downtown Renaissance, and Modern by Moonlight

Our popular summer evening tour series is back! Join us as we explore downtown on Wednesday and Thursday evenings throughout July and August. See page 4 for details.

COMING SOON

Member September

To thank you for being a member of the Conservancy, we will have free walking tour offers for members throughout September. Look for details in the September/October newsletter.