



LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY NEWS



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The 1960 former Lytton Savings Building (now Chase Bank) at Sunset and Crescent Heights Boulevards is threatened with demolition. The Conservancy believes that the new development proposed for the site can and should incorporate this building. Photo by Hunter Kerhart.

The Latest Efforts to Curb Mansionization

by *Adrian Scott Fine*

The Conservancy and our many neighborhood supporters continue our ongoing efforts to stem the rampant teardown and mansionization trend that threatens community character. At risk are older and historic neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles and the region that are adversely affected by needless demolition, as well as new residential development that is incompatible and out of scale.

In June, the Conservancy submitted its latest comments on the City's proposed draft code amendment to the Baseline Mansionization and Hillside Ordinances (BMO/BHO). As we have since the beginning of this process, we urged the City to take the strongest possible measures to address long-standing failures in these policies.

The City initially passed the BMO in 2008 and the BHO in 2011. Yet a few provisions in the baseline ordinance, including exemptions and design bonuses, actually encouraged the out-of-scale homes it was meant to prevent.

In 2014, Los Angeles City Councilmember Paul Koretz introduced a motion directing the Department of City Planning to address the shortcomings in the BMO/BHO by re-evaluating exemptions, removing bonuses, and reducing the allowable size of new residential construction.

The City introduced the first revisions to the BMO/HMO in October 2015 and the

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Should Starchitecture Trump History?

by *Cindy Olnick*

Los Angeles is blessed with great architecture by world-renowned figures, from Frank Lloyd Wright to Frank Gehry. Yet the bulk of our built environment was designed by lesser-known architects, including Kurt W. Meyer of the firm Hagman & Meyer. An important work by Meyer, the 1960 former Lytton Savings Building (now Chase) at Sunset and Crescent Heights Boulevards, could fall to the wrecking ball in favor of a new design by Gehry. This outcome would be shortsighted and entirely unnecessary.

As you may know from previous issues of *Conservancy News*, developer Townscape Partners seeks to demolish the Lytton Savings Building and replace it with 249 apartment and condo units and more than 65,000 square feet of commercial retail and restaurant space. The current proposal includes two buildings ranging from three to fifteen stories.

The Conservancy is not opposed to a mixed-use project at this location. Yet we firmly believe that the development can and should incorporate the existing historic building, like many other projects have done quite successfully. A viable preservation solution for the site exists that would blend historic and new construction into a dynamic project. There is no need to lose this irreplaceable part of our history.

We've been working to prevent this needless demolition since the project was first proposed in 2013. Throughout the environmental review process, we have urged the City to fully evaluate preservation alternatives that incorporate the Lytton Savings Building.

After initially meeting with the Conservancy, the developer was in fact moving toward reusing the building. Yet by August 2015, Townscape had unveiled Gehry's new design for the site. The new design attempts to address some neighborhood concerns over the proposed

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Los Angeles Conservancy
523 W. Sixth Street, Suite 826
Los Angeles, California 90014
(213) 623-2489 Fax: (213) 623-3909
laconservancy.org

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.

New Member Services Make It Easier Than Ever to Support Our Work

We're thrilled to announce a new membership system designed to make it easier than ever for you to support the Conservancy and help preserve the historic places you love.

Launched in March, the new system was funded by grants from the Ahmanson Foundation, the Donaldson Trust, and the Walter J. and Holly O. Thomson Foundation.

Monthly Memberships

Now you can "set it and forget it" with automatic monthly membership payments, via credit card or automatic withdrawal from your bank account. With monthly payments of as low as \$5, you can tailor your membership to your budget. You can also choose the exact date of your monthly payment to meet your needs.

In addition to convenience, monthly membership payments give the Conservancy a stable, consistent source of support for our advocacy and educational work throughout the year. Even the smallest monthly amounts add up over time to make a real impact.

If you convert your annual membership to monthly, the monthly membership will remain "pending" until your annual membership expires. You'll be charged your first monthly payment when you make the change, but your second payment won't take place until the second month after monthly membership begins.

New Renewal Options

If you'd rather keep your annual membership, you can now renew it automatically each year or choose to receive email notices instead of paper notices.

Auto-renewal will automatically process a credit-card charge or bank account withdrawal on your membership expiration date. You'll receive an email reminder a month beforehand.

If you don't opt for auto-renewal, you can choose to receive an email notice instead of the current paper renewal notices you receive by U.S. mail. When it's time to renew, you'll receive an email with a link to your website account, where you can renew your membership (or increase your support!) quickly and easily.

If you don't yet have a website account, you can create one by clicking "Sign in" at the top of any page at laconservancy.org, then "Create new account."

If you sign into your account but don't see your membership information, please contact us to connect your account with your membership record.

My Membership

Speaking of your website account: You now have a new section of your account called My Membership. It's a one-stop shop for managing your membership. You can use it to renew, change from annual to monthly, change your renewal preference, or change your newsletter preference (paper mail or digital PDF). You can make these changes at any time.

Your account also includes a new feature in the Stored Cards section: you can now add or update credit card or bank account information at any time. And of course, you have the same handy features as before, including updating your contact information and subscribing to emails such as monthly E-News and periodic Action Alerts.

Help Us Reach Our Goal

We have a goal of welcoming 120 monthly members by the end of 2016 (we had more than sixty as of press time). If you think monthly membership might be right for you, please consider converting your annual membership to monthly. If you have any questions at all about monthly membership, please contact us at member@laconservancy.org or (213) 623-2489. Thank you for your support!

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.

Neighborhood Preservation Funding Restored

On April 20, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti submitted a proposed budget for the City's 2016-17 fiscal year. The proposed budget omitted funding requested by the Department of City Planning for two Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) planner positions.

These roles are responsible for shepherding the creation and maintenance of six new proposed HPOZs and neighborhoods seeking relief from teardowns and mansionization. Without funding for these crucial planning positions, the preservation of these historic neighborhoods would have been jeopardized.

The Conservancy and many neighborhood advocates leapt into action, with efforts including a Conservancy Action Alert that generated around 100 letters to the City, urging the restoration of this funding in the budget. This marks the third year in a row that the Conservancy has successfully advocated for this funding and staff positions through the City's budget process. We want to thank Councilmember Paul Koretz, who on April 28 introduced an amendment to the City budget calling for the restoration of this funding.

The City Council unanimously voted in support of the \$8.76-billion budget, and Mayor Garcetti signed the final budget on June 2.

With this neighborhood preservation funding restored, six proposed HPOZs will continue to move forward: Carthay Square, El Sereno Berkshire Craftsman District, Holmby-Westwood, Miracle Mile, Oxford Square, and Sunset Square.

These proposed HPOZs are expected to go before the City Planning Commission this fall and then to City Council in early 2017. The new districts are intended to go into effect before the City's Interim Control Ordinance (ICO) for these neighborhoods expires in March 2017. Without the restoration

of funding for these key positions, the work and progress made to date would have been halted as of July 1, 2016.

For more than thirty-five years, the Conservancy has worked to protect older and historic neighborhoods in Los Angeles through the creation of HPOZs.

We've seen firsthand how HPOZs build community, enhance quality of life, fuel reinvestment, increase property values, help owners maintain and improve their homes, and offer tax savings through the Mills Act.

Thank you to all who called and sent emails in support of funding for these crucial staff positions. Your efforts made all the difference!

Historic Broadway Sign District

Earlier this year, the City of L.A. approved the Historic Broadway Sign District Ordinance, establishing new regulations for signs on historic Broadway.

The Conservancy has a long-standing interest in Broadway: our first Last Remaining Seats series in 1987 took place entirely in Broadway's historic theatres, in 1999 we launched our Broadway Initiative to bring attention to this street's historic resources, and we've participated in the Bringing Back Broadway initiative since its launch in 2008.

As a result of this commitment, we were invited to serve in a multi-year working group tasked with creating comprehensive regulations for signs on this historic street. The Historic Broadway Sign District working group was led by the Office of Councilmember José Huizar through Bringing Back Broadway, with support from the Department of City Planning. In addition to the Conservancy, participants included the City's Office of Historic Resources and other Broadway stakeholders.

New sign ordinances often generate controversy and opposition. Yet the Historic Broadway Sign District is unique, as businesses and building owners alike were part of the process from the start and ultimately supported the effort. One aspect that sets this ordinance apart is a financial incentive provi-



Eye-catching signs such as the Palace Theatre's marquee contribute to Broadway's historic character. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

sion that rewards owners who reinvest in, and activate, their historic buildings.

Many eye-catching signs light up Broadway, including the Orpheum Theatre's open panel roof sign, large blade signs such as the one on the Los Angeles Theatre, and glowing theatre marquees. These types of signs contribute significantly to Broadway's historic character. Yet they were not allowed under previous regulations, leading to the proliferation of incompatible signs.

The Historic Broadway Sign District regulates the types, designs, and placement of all signs on Broadway. These provisions were created with historic signage conditions in mind, to help new signs fit in with the existing character and complement, rather than detract from, historic buildings.

The Historic Broadway Sign District represents a multi-year, community-wide effort to develop an innovative approach to both regulating and incentivizing well-designed signage along one of the city's most historic commercial streets.

The Broadway Historic Theatre and Commercial District in downtown Los Angeles was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. It is the first and largest historic theatre district in the United States, with a dozen theatres in a seven-block stretch.

In June, the Historic Broadway Sign District received an Award of Merit for Planning Best Practices from the Los Angeles chapter of the American Planning Association. We hope this initiative serves as a model for other areas of downtown, throughout Greater Los Angeles, and across the country.

New Prices for Walking Tours

To keep pace with administrative costs, we're raising the prices of our regular walking tours for the first time in over a decade. Starting July 1, individual ticket prices for our regularly scheduled downtown walking tours will be as follows:

- Conservancy members: \$10 (up to four people at this price)
- Non-members: \$15
- Youth (17 and under): \$10

With nearly three hours of exploration with skilled volunteer docents, this is still one of the best deals in town. For tour details and reservations, visit laconservancy.org/tours.

We also have new pricing for private group tours and student tours:

- Regularly scheduled days and times: \$180, twelve people minimum, additional people \$15 each (non-members) or \$10 each (members)
- Specially arranged days and times: \$240, twelve people minimum, additional people \$20 each (non-members) or \$10 each (members)
- Student group tours (grades 3-12): \$120, twelve students minimum, additional students \$10 each

Learn more about our student group tours on the opposite page. We hope to see you on a tour soon!

Explore Downtown on a Summer Evening Tour

by Annie Laskey

It's summertime, and that means warm weather, beautiful evenings, and the Conservancy's summer evening tours!

On Wednesday and Thursday evenings from July 20 through September 1, the Conservancy will offer special versions of some of our Saturday tours, as well as a rare opportunity to tour City Hall.

Our Wednesday tours of Art Deco, Past Meets Present, and City Hall start at 5:30 p.m. and last about 1-3/4 hours, perfect for 7:30 p.m. dinner reservations downtown. On Thursdays, we will offer our Modern by Moonlight tour, which starts at 7:00 p.m.

The Art Deco and Past Meets Present tours are slightly shorter versions of regularly scheduled tours offered on Saturday mornings. Art Deco focuses on the exuberant architectural style prevalent in the late 1920s. Past Meets Present (formerly Downtown Renaissance) explores the old financial district on Spring Street, now home to lofts, galleries, and cafes.



Tourgoers visiting the rotunda at City Hall. Our summer evening tours on August 17, 24, and 31 are the only times we will tour City Hall this year. Photo by Jessica Hodgdon/L.A. Conservancy.

On August 17, 24, and 31, we will tour one of the most recognizable buildings in Los Angeles: City Hall. Since it opened in 1928, City Hall has been an iconic part of the downtown skyline. These three summer dates are the only time the Conservancy will tour this remarkable building this year. The tour includes a visit to the 27th-floor observation deck (subject to availability). Special thanks to our partner Project Restore for making this opportunity possible.

On Thursdays from July 21 through September 1, the Conservancy will host the popular Modern by Moonlight tour. In a

Summer Evening Tour Schedule

Art Deco

Wednesdays, July 20 and August 3
5:30 p.m.
1-3/4 hours

Past Meets Present: Reinventing Downtown's Old Financial District

Wednesdays, July 27 and August 10
5:30 p.m.
1-3/4 hours

City Hall

Wednesdays, August 17, 24, and 31
5:30 p.m.
1-3/4 hours

Modern by Moonlight

Thursdays, July 21 – September 1
7 p.m.
2 hours

nighttime twist on the Modern Skyline tour, Modern by Moonlight shows the skyscrapers and plazas of Bunker Hill in the soft glow of summer twilight.

This two-hour tour starts at 7:00 p.m. to capture the magic of early evening downtown. The lights in and around the Bunker Hill area will be sure to captivate you. The tour ends at the BonaVista Lounge at the top of the 1978 Bonaventure Hotel for no-host cocktails, dining, and spectacular nighttime views.

All tours are \$10 for Los Angeles Conservancy members and children 17 and under; \$15 for the general public. Reservations are required. Space is limited, so reserve now! Visit laconservancy.org/tours or call (213) 623-2489.



Our Modern by Moonlight tour ends at the BonaVista Lounge, the Bonaventure Hotel's revolving bar. Photo by Douglas Hill.

We Love Student Groups! Dedicated Walking Tours for Young People

by Sarah Lann

This fall, the Conservancy will begin offering tailor-made downtown walking tours for groups of 3rd through 12th graders from schools and other youth organizations.

These interactive, engaging weekday walking tours will support California's Common Core State Standards in history and social studies—as well as highlight important lessons about the preservation of historic sites.

Teachers and other group organizers can select from three tours: Historic Downtown, Union Station, and Modern Skyline. These tours will make historic L.A. come alive in a tangible, understandable, and exciting way for student participants.

While the Conservancy has a strong reputation for the walking tours we offer to the general public, many don't know about the less visible efforts the education department makes on behalf of young people. Every year, along with our flagship outreach program working with underserved middle schoolers through HOLA (Heart of Los Angeles), a few highly trained docents lead a handful of walking tours specifically for students. The time has come to make this opportunity available to more student groups than ever before: we're excited to roll out our new weekday Student Walking Tour program this September.

Student Walking Tours last approximately 90 minutes and cost \$10 per student. If you're interested in scheduling a Student Walking Tour, underwriting the costs of a Student Walking Tour, or learning more about the program, please visit laconservancy.org/student-tours.



Photo by Jacqueline Lee.

Welcome, New Board Members!

On July 1, we welcomed five new members to the Conservancy's Board of Directors:

- **Corinna Cherian** – Senior Vice President, Senior Counsel and Assistant Secretary at City National Bank; lives in the Hancock Park Historic Preservation Overlay Zone
- **David Cocke S.E.** – Founder and President of Structural Focus, an engineering firm with an emphasis on historic preservation
- **Anna Jacobson, LEED AP BD+C** – Senior Preconstruction Manager at Morley Builders
- **Diane Keaton** – Academy Award-winning actress, author, and producer with a passion for historic preservation; returns to the board after two previous terms
- **Eric Needleman** – Principal at The Spirited Group, a developer of bars and restaurants, many of which are in historic places

We also have new board officers:

- Chairman – **Wesley Phoa, PhD**
- Treasurer – **Alice Carr**
- Secretary – **Mike Deasy**
- Advocacy Committee Chair – **James Camp**
- Development Committee Chair – **Maxine Greenspan**

The Conservancy's Governance and Board Relations Committee nominated these new board members to the full board for approval. The board also confirmed seven members returning for their second three-year term: Alice Carr; Maxine Greenspan; David C. Martin, FAIA; Andy Meyers; Stacy Paek; Jan Westman; and Raymond Wu.

For their outstanding service, we offer our deepest thanks to outgoing board members Linda Bruckheimer, Hernan Hernandez, Rita Morales Patton, Theresa Meyers, and Susan Strauss.

Thank You, Conservancy Volunteers!

In March, we held our annual volunteer recognition party at the beautiful Los Angeles Theatre. The volunteer recognition party is a small way for us to thank our 246 volunteers for donating their time and expertise during the past year. We also present awards to volunteers who have done exceptional work and those who have reached a milestone in their volunteer service. Our 2016 Volunteer Awards are listed below.

Thank you to all of our dedicated volunteers! We couldn't do what we do without your hard work and support.

2016 Volunteer Awards

35 Years of Service

Gordon Johnson; Steve Partida

30 Years of Service

Rory Cunningham;
Tom O'Connor

25 Years of Service

Donald Weggeman

20 Years of Service

Alex Garcia; Stanley Sheff;
Jan Westman

Special Recognition Awards

Robin Bowers; Douglas Hill;
Gary Leonard; Stephen Russo;
Steven Smith; Larry Underhill



Volunteers in the lobby of the Los Angeles Theatre at our March 20 volunteer recognition party. Photo courtesy Larry Underhill.

MANSIONIZATION*continued from page 1*

second update in April 2016. The revisions did remove some key loopholes in the ordinances, yet we believe that more tweaks are needed in order to fully protect L.A.'s neighborhoods. For instance, concern over attached, front-loaded garages remains a major point of contention for both the Conservancy and neighborhood advocates.

Twenty neighborhoods are now protected with an Interim Control Ordinance (ICO), with another five soon to follow. By March 2017, these neighborhoods will receive new Single Family Zone designation as part of the City's rollout of its new zoning code. The rest of L.A.'s neighborhoods, however, will continue to experience teardowns and mansionization at a rapid rate. The amendments to the BMO/BHO need to provide important safeguards not to just the currently affected neighborhoods but to all neighborhoods.

The amendments also apply only to new construction and to single-family residential neighborhoods (with an R1 Zone classification). To provide broader protection, the City needs to introduce more tools that can be implemented quickly to foster the conservation of existing homes, such as neighborhood conservation overlay districts. The City should also address neighborhoods with a mix of single and multi-family housing that are not zoned R1, currently leaving them exposed and vulnerable.

The ordinance revisions are slated to go to the City Planning Commission in July. We will keep you posted on this and other efforts to protect the character of our communities.



Older and historic neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles and the region are at risk from the rampant teardown and mansionization trend. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

MODERN BANK *continued from page 1*

project, yet it fails to respond to many others, including the building's demolition.

State law (the California Environmental Quality Act, or CEQA) requires public entities to fully evaluate alternatives to demolishing historic places. While the environmental review for the Townscape project has evaluated two distinct preservation alternatives, it has provided no substantial evidence or analysis demonstrating why the adaptive reuse of Lytton Savings would be infeasible.

The project is now in the final stages of environmental review and is slated for the City Planning Commission's agenda on July 28. Many thanks to those of you who have attended previous hearings and/or written to the City in support of preserving this important building.

Saving Savings and Loans

With its dramatic, folded-plate concrete roof and glass-walled banking floor, the Lytton Savings Building was a striking departure from traditional bank design when it opened in 1960. As financial institutions nationwide recognized the need for progressive banking methods after World War II, architects responded by radically reinventing the bank's form.

Lytton Savings exemplified these national postwar banking trends through its Modern architectural design, transparency, and integrated art. It is one of Los Angeles' earliest remaining examples of this transformative shift in bank design.

The interior features a monumental, 8-by-50-foot screen of *dalle de verre* (faceted glass) and concrete. The work was the first commercial commission for acclaimed artist-craftsman Roger Darricarrere. He later



Lytton Savings' dramatic, folded-plate concrete roof was a striking departure from traditional bank design when it was constructed in 1960. Photo by Hunter Kerhart.

designed the monumental skylight for the Columbia Savings Building (Irving Shapiro, 1965) at Wilshire Boulevard and La Brea Avenue.

Despite an intensive preservation effort, the Columbia Savings Building was demolished in 2010 after, among other hurdles, elected officials claimed they "just didn't get" the architecture. Columbia Savings was replaced by the massive Wilshire La Brea mixed-use project—though, like Lytton Savings, it too could have been integrated into the new development.

Notably, the Lytton Savings Building stands on the former site of the Garden of Allah. The storied Hollywood inn surrounded by villas was purchased by Lytton Savings in 1959 and razed to make way for the firm's new home office. While this history does not negate Lytton Savings' significance, it highlights one of the challenges in saving more recent landmarks with complicated pasts.

How You Can Help

We need your help in sending a strong message to the City and the developer that needlessly demolishing the Lytton Savings Building is unacceptable. It is a perfectly good—and historically significant—building that can and should continue serving the community as part of the new project.

Please take a moment to email Los Angeles City Councilmember David Ryu—especially if you live in his Council District (4)—and urge him to press for a preservation-based solution.

David Ryu: cd4.issues@lacity.org and councilmember.ryu@lacity.org

Please also email William Lamborn in the Department of City Planning: william.lamborn@lacity.org

To help us track progress on this issue, please copy afine@laconservancy.org on your emails. Thank you!

MARCH 26 / MAY 26

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Los Angeles Conservancy would like to acknowledge the generous contributions of our new Supporting members, and the new and renewing members of our Sustaining, Benefactor, and Cornerstone groups.

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MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

MEMBER PROFILE: CHRIS JERVEY

by Liz Leshin

"I moved to Los Angeles from the Bay Area about eleven years ago, and it's a much bigger community, with so much diversity



in culture and architecture," says Chris Jervy, a Conservancy member since 2008. He looked for a preservation organization to support and was happy to find the Los Angeles Conservancy, which he felt was "judicious and a very worthy cause."

Chris says, "What engages me personally is the shared sense of purpose and power as a group, that before we rip down buildings willy nilly in the name of the future, we take a cautious approach not to tear down buildings that have defined our sense of place."

Chris and his wife Kathy are among the Conservancy's first members to transition from annual membership to our new monthly membership program. Why? "It's hugely convenient and it was so easy to do. I don't need any help being convinced that I should support the Conservancy year to year," he says, adding, "If you truly care about the cause and the organization, then the real benefit of monthly giving is to minimize the extra work that the Conservancy has to do to remind you to give. Let the Conservancy go do the work that's really important."

Thanks, Chris and Kathy! We couldn't have said it better ourselves.

CONSERVANCY WALKING TOURS

New Prices as of July 1, 2016: Tours cost \$10 for Conservancy members and youth 17 or younger; \$15 for the general public. See page 4 for details.

Most tours require reservations. We accept walk-ins on some tours, subject to availability.

For details and reservations, visit laconservancy.org/tours. Questions? Contact us at info@laconservancy.org or (213) 623-2489.

WALKING TOURS

Angelino Heights
Art Deco
Biltmore Hotel
Broadway Historic Theatre &
Commercial District
Historic Downtown
Modern Skyline
Past Meets Present: Reinventing
Downtown's Old Financial District
Union Station

Youth, family, and group tours available by special arrangement. For details, visit laconservancy.org/tours or contact us at info@laconservancy.org or (213) 623-2489.



Los Angeles Conservancy
523 West Sixth Street, Suite 826
Los Angeles, California 90014
laconservancy.org

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For the latest updates and hundreds of historic places to explore, visit laconservancy.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Photo by Annie Laskey/L.A. Conservancy.

SUMMER SUNSET TOURS
Wednesday evenings, 5:30 p.m.
July 20 - August 31

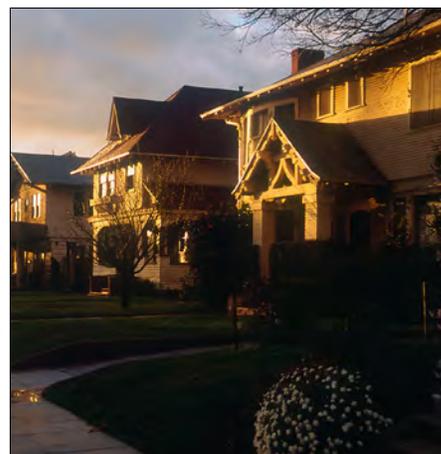
Join us for special Art Deco, Past Meets Present, and City Hall tours this summer! This is the only time of year we offer City Hall tours, so reserve early. Details on page 4.



Photo by Douglas Hill.

MODERN BY MOONLIGHT TOURS
Thursday evenings, 7 p.m.
July 21 - September 1

In this twist on our Modern Skyline tour, you can explore Bunker Hill's Modern skyscrapers and plazas in the glow of summer twilight. The tour ends at the revolving BonaVista Lounge. Details on page 4.



West Adams Terrace. Photo by Larry Underhill.

SAVE THE DATE: L.A. HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS CONFERENCE
Saturday, October 15

Celebrate historic neighborhoods and learn about the latest topics and tools in neighborhood conservation. Co-hosted by the Conservancy and the City of L.A. Details at laconservancy.org/neighborhoods.