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The North Spring Street Viaduct spans several city blocks in addition to the L.A. River. It is pictured above at the 1700 block of N. Spring Street, next to Farmlab, a local community organization. Photo by Wendy Gilmartin.

North Spring Street Viaduct Faces the 'Guillotine'

by Mike Buhler

The City of Los Angeles' Bureau of Engineering (BOE) continues to move forward with planned seismic and safety upgrades of several historic bridges spanning the Los Angeles River. After years of inactivity, the proposed widening of the 1929 North Spring Street Viaduct, a city Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM), is suddenly on the fast track for approval. The widening project would have a devastating impact on the bridge, stripping its historic ornamentation and eliminating its landmark eligibility.

Construction on the North Spring Street Viaduct began in 1927, seventeen years after the completion of the adjacent North Main Street Bridge (HCM #901) and North Broadway Bridge (HCM #907). Designed by John C. Shaw, the crossing was built to relieve traffic along the North Broadway Bridge. Its design was intended to complement the classical motif of these two earlier works, linking the three spans as a thematic sub-group that connects Lincoln Heights to downtown Los Angeles.

The reinforced concrete viaduct rests on three large vertical piers forming two elegant arch spans. The deck features a sculpted concrete railing with incised rounded arches between decorative lamp posts, each topped by an octagonal-shaped lantern. The road bed was widened in 1939 with the removal of the southern sidewalk. In 1992, along with retrofitting, extensive repairs were made to the viaduct's distinctive balusters, electroliers, and railings.

Although environmental review for the proposed widening project started nearly four years ago, the BOE didn't release the draft environmental impact report (EIR) until March 2010. Less than three weeks after the close of the public comment period, the city issued a hastily prepared final EIR in May.

Please see *SPRING STREET VIADUCT* on page 6

Conservancy Nominates Self Help Graphics & Art Building to CA Register

by Karina Muñiz

The future is uncertain for the home of Self Help Graphics & Art (SHG&A), a thriving cultural center for Chicana/o art in the heart of unincorporated East Los Angeles.

Founded by local artists and community activist Sister Karen Boccacero, a Franciscan nun committed to social change, SHG&A has become the leading visual arts cultural center in East Los Angeles, garnering national and international recognition.

In 1979, SHG&A moved into a 1927 commercial building at 3802 East Cesar Chavez Avenue. The organization has fostered local artistic talent there for more than thirty years. In 1987, artist Eduardo Oropeza (1947-2003) began to adorn the building with embedded ceramic pieces and mosaics, transforming a relatively modest facade into a community icon.

In 2008, the Los Angeles Archdiocese abruptly sold the building to Piedmont Investment Co.; less than two years later, the property is once again on the market. Despite its undeniable significance as both a cultural hub and a unique fusion of art and architecture, the building is not designated as a historic landmark. It is particularly vulnerable because unincorporated Los Angeles County has no program in place to protect historic resources.

In May, the Conservancy submitted a letter to the property's listing agent detailing the history of the building and its potential eligibility as a historic resource. With a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Conservancy

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Thanks to the Getty Research Institute for access to the Julius Shulman photography archive.

In Memoriam: Richard Dorman, FAIA (1922-2010)

Noted architect Richard Dorman passed away on April 3 at the age of 87. A native of Los Angeles who had lived in Santa Fe, New Mexico since 1975, Dorman helped shape the mid-century modern landscape of Los Angeles, from homes for wealthy clients to commercial and industrial buildings.

After flying thirty-five missions over the Pacific as a World War II B24 pilot, Dorman used the GI Bill to attend the University of Southern California School of Architecture. Upon graduation in 1951, he was invited to join the design department at Welton Becket and Associates. He served as assistant chief designer until 1956, when he left to start his own firm.



Photo courtesy of Grant Dorman.

Dorman designed a number of homes in Trousdale Estates and the 1961 Irving Stone Residence in Beverly Hills, which was demolished in 2008. Other local works include the Ivory Tower Restaurant in Santa Monica (demolished), which won an AIA Honor Award in 1961; the Airport Office Building (1961) in Westchester; Los Angeles International Design Center (1962) at 8899 Beverly Boulevard; Malibu United Methodist Church (1965); and the Beverly Hills National Bank Building (1965) at 143 South Barrington Place in Brentwood, which was featured in *Architectural Record* in 1967.

In September 1962, Dorman appeared on the cover of “The Take-Over Generation,” a LIFE magazine special issue. He was thirty-nine years old at the time and was president of two firms, had nearly sixty projects in the works, and had won ten national awards. “Nothing moves fast enough for Richard L. Dorman, Los Angeles architect and designer,” read his profile, which quoted Dorman as saying, “I want to upgrade everything.”

Dorman moved to Santa Fe in 1975, where he continued to practice architecture while pursuing a great interest in narrow gauge trains and railroads; he wrote thirteen books on the subject. His obituary in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* called him “a man passionate about family, friends, church, architecture, trains, and life.”

Thank You, Elysha!

We’ve been fortunate to have intern Elysha Dory in the Conservancy office over the past few months. Last year, she received the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Mildred Colodny Diversity Scholarship, which provides financial assistance and experiential learning opportunities to individuals preparing for careers in historic preservation. As part of the scholarship, which is awarded to only one person each year, Elysha was required to complete an internship. Luckily for the Conservancy, she found a home here.

Over the course of the semester, Elysha worked on a variety of projects, including a narrative map of historic sites related to women’s history in Los Angeles County. Having completed her graduate studies in historic preservation at the USC School of Architecture, Elysha is now writing her thesis to finish her degree. Thank you, Elysha, for all of your hard work!

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CORRECTION: The May/June issue mistated that Jackie K. Park chaired the Board of Directors Nominating Committee. Maura M. Johnson served as committee chair.

Preservation Issues in the News

by Mike Buhler, Flora Chou, Karina Muñiz, and Marcello Vavala

Moore House

Designed by noted local architect Lloyd Wright (1890-1978) and completed in 1959, the highly intact Moore House in Palos Verdes Estates is threatened with demolition. Wright was the son of Frank Lloyd Wright and had a distinguished career that spanned over six decades.

Located at 504 Paseo del Mar, the home is one of only five structures designed by Wright on the peninsula, including the Wayfarer's Chapel (1951, with later additions) and the Bird of Paradise House (1965) in nearby Rancho Palos Verdes.

A striking example of modernism in Palos Verdes Estates, the Moore House features dramatically angled roof overhangs, an innovative layout, and expansive windows to take advantage of ocean views. Wright's design was nearly rejected at the time by the city, whose design guidelines favor Spanish Colonial Revival architecture.

The notice of preparation (NOP) of an environmental impact report (EIR) for a replacement project was released in May. The Conservancy and **280 supporters** submitted comments urging the city to consider a reuse alternative that would expand the Moore House through a sensitively scaled addition to meet the property owners' desire for more space. The NOP finds the Moore House eligible for historic designation.

The City of Palos Verdes Estates has no historic preservation ordinance, and local landmark designation is not available to help protect the house. The city received an F on the Conservancy's 2003 and 2008 countywide Preservation Report Cards. Because the Moore House has absolutely no local protection, public outcry is essential to prevent its demolition. Many thanks to everyone who submitted comments to the City of Palos Verdes Estates urging the home's preservation.

For the latest news on this issue, join the Conservancy's Preservation Action Alert e-mail list at laconservancy.org ("Sign Up for E-News").

Barry Building

The landmarked Barry Building is again targeted for demolition, in the third and latest revision of the Brentwood Town Green project proposed by owner Charles T. Munger. The NOP for the project was released in April, and the Conservancy again submitted comments urging the inclusion of alternatives in the EIR that adaptively reuse the Barry Building. The EIR is expected in early September.



The Moore House, completed in 1959, is one of Lloyd Wright's most significant postwar residential designs. Photo by Jennifer Clark.

Located at 11973 San Vicente Boulevard in Brentwood, the Barry Building was designed by Los Angeles architect Milton Caughey (1911-1958) and completed in 1951. The distinctive and highly intact building is arranged around a central courtyard with integrated landscaping and two gracefully curved concrete staircases. A notable feature of the building's design is the integration of louvers that shield south- and west-facing office windows from the sun's heat and glare.

The revised project would contain over 73,000 square feet of floor area in three new buildings. As in prior versions, the current proposal entails demolition of the Barry Building, despite its status as Historic-Cultural Monument #887.

Ironically, the new project proposes to replace the Barry Building with a new structure of nearly identical layout—a two-story building with retail spaces arranged around a central courtyard. These very qualities make the Barry Building an excellent candidate for adaptive reuse.

Arroyo Seco Parkway

In March, the Conservancy received numerous calls from Highland Park residents alarmed by proposed demolition work on the historic Arroyo Seco Parkway, including the removal of the center median curb along a six-mile stretch.

The parkway, now the 110 Freeway between Pasadena and downtown L.A., was the first grade-separated, limited-access, high-speed divided road

in the urban western United States. Built between 1938 and 1953, the parkway was the first stretch of what would be Los Angeles' metropolitan freeway system. It has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Although the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) invited local preservation groups to review the project nearly three years ago, the proposal at that time left the original center median curb in place, replacing only the metal median barrier. Caltrans now seems unwilling to recognize the center median curb as a character-defining feature, even though it dates to the parkway's construction and was documented in a 1999 Historic American Engineering Record survey.

In April, the Conservancy submitted a letter to the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), Caltrans, and others, objecting to the proposed project and seeking immediate intervention to halt construction. Objections were also filed by Assemblymember Anthony Portantino, Highland Park Heritage Trust, Pasadena Heritage, and the California Preservation Foundation. In May, the OHP issued a letter expressing concern over the loss of historic integrity that would result from the project, particularly the removal of the center curb.

Despite the overwhelming opposition, Caltrans removed a 400-foot section of the center median curb between May 21 and May 23, prompting another round of protests to halt construction. At press time, demolition activity had resumed after a short delay.



Image courtesy of Universal Pictures.

“Nanny McPhee Returns” Sneak Preview Screening at Orpheum

On **Sunday, August 15 at 2 p.m.**, be among the first to enjoy Universal Pictures’ *Nanny McPhee Returns* before its U.S. premiere! The Conservancy will present a special matinee screening of the next chapter of the hilarious and heartwarming fable that has enchanted children around the world. The screening takes place at the beautifully restored Orpheum Theatre at 842 S. Broadway in downtown Los Angeles.

Starring Emma Thompson, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Rhys Ifans, and Maggie Smith, the film is sure to delight both kids and adults. Many thanks to Rodney Kemerer, Lindsay Doran, Steve Needleman, and Universal Pictures for their assistance.

The 1926 Orpheum Theatre on Broadway was the fourth and final home of the famed Orpheum vaudeville circuit in Los Angeles. Designed by G. Albert Lansburgh, the theatre features a grand interior with gold-leaf decoration, silk wall panels, and enormous chandeliers.

Admission is \$10 for adults and \$8 for kids twelve and under. Tickets are available at laconservancy.org. All proceeds benefit the Conservancy.

Free Salas Brothers Concert August 21

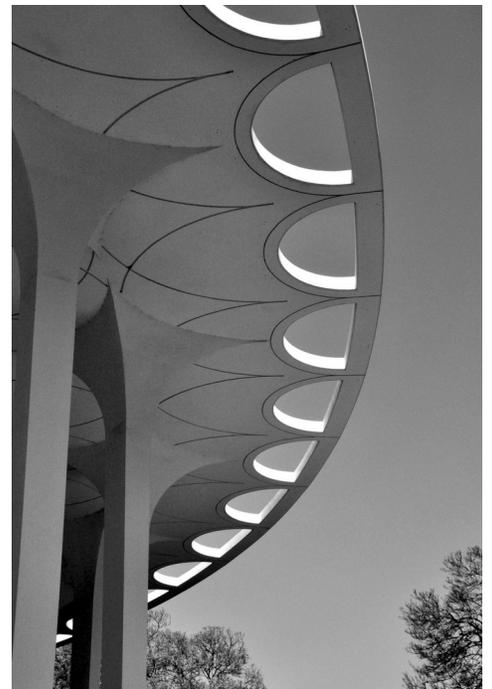
Help us celebrate the conclusion of our “Sixties Turn 50” program with a bang—of the drums! On **Saturday, August 21**, the Conservancy will partner with Levitt Pavilions to present the Salas Brothers in concert at the Levitt Pavilion MacArthur Park.

Rudy and Steve Salas, the Salas Brothers, started their career in the 1960s, playing a blend of rock, pop, jazz, rhythm and blues, and salsa. The duo was one of the seminal groups creating the then-burgeoning East Los Angeles sound. The brothers regularly performed at the CYO Building in East L.A., now Self Help Graphics & Art, a current preservation issue for the Conservancy (see cover story). They went on to form the popular 1980s Latin funk band, Tierra.

Located just west of downtown Los Angeles, MacArthur Park is one of the oldest and most popular parks in L.A. Levitt Pavilions is a national nonprofit organization that inspires and strengthens communities through live music experiences.

The performance starts at 7:30 p.m. and is free to the public. Grab a blanket, a picnic basket, and a bunch of friends, and join us for a fun summer evening in the park!

For more details, visit laconservancy.org or levittla.org.



Congratulations to our “Sixties Turn 50” Photo Contest winners! Taking the Grand Prize in the Adult Amateur category is Sheharazad Fleming, for her photo (left) of El Monte’s Crown Savings and Loan Association Building (architect unknown, 1962). The Grand Prize in the High School category goes to Kayla Shapiro, for her photo (right) of Beckman Auditorium (Edward Durrell Stone, 1963) on the Caltech campus in Pasadena.

Thanks for Sharing Your Vision!

As part of “The Sixties Turn 50,” the Conservancy and our Modern Committee hosted a 1960s architectural photography contest. After reviewing the excellent submissions, we’re proud to announce our Grand Prize winners in the Adult Amateur and High School categories, Sheharazad Fleming of Silver Lake and Kayla Shapiro of Santa Monica High School!

Both winners received a Diana Mini camera, courtesy of Lomography, as well as a one-year membership to the Conservancy. Runners-up received a gift certificate to Bel-Air Camera in Westwood Village. You can see all the contest photos in the “Sixties Turn 50” Flickr pool at laconservancy.org/sixties.

Thanks to everyone who entered the contest, and to our judges, architectural photographer and longtime Conservancy volunteer **Larry Underhill**, Modern Committee Chair **Regina O’Brien**, and the Conservancy’s director of communications, **Cindy Olnick**. We truly have some talented photographers among us, and we hope you had as good a time sharing your vision as we’ve had looking at your pictures!

Summer Evening Tours Start July 21

Summer has come, and with it the Conservancy's popular "Downtown at Sunset" walking tours—slightly shorter versions of our regular tours. In addition to three of our standard Saturday tours (Art Deco, Downtown's Modern Skyline, and Union Station), we will also offer two tours that are no longer on our regular schedule: Little Tokyo and City Hall.

These special tours will take place on Wednesday evenings from July 21 through August 25. Tours start at 5:30 p.m. and last approximately 1-3/4 hours.

Art Deco highlights the architecture and ornamentation of buildings from the 1920s and '30s, featuring rich materials and classic geometric design.

City Hall explores the fascinating history and architecture of Los Angeles' great 1928 civic building.

Downtown's Modern Skyline explores the architecture and development of the Central Business District and Bunker Hill.

Little Tokyo travels through the cultural and historic heart of the Japanese community in Los Angeles, once the largest in the United States.

Union Station offers an in-depth look at this iconic L.A. landmark, the last great railway station built in America.

Tours are \$5 for Conservancy members and children 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.

SCHEDULE

July 21	Little Tokyo, Art Deco
July 28	City Hall, Modern Skyline
August 4	Little Tokyo, Union Station
August 11	City Hall, Art Deco
August 18	Little Tokyo, Modern Skyline
August 25	City Hall, Union Station



Los Angeles City Hall, site of one of our "Downtown at Sunset" walking tours.
Photo courtesy BigOrangeLandmarks.com.

Million Dollar Cleanup



In April 2010, members of the Historic Theatres Committee participated in a cleanup project at the 1918 Million Dollar Theatre on Broadway in downtown L.A. Thank you to the following volunteers for all their hard work: Scott Benson (pictured at right), Robin Bowers, Cheryl Brier, Kelly Estrella, Christopher McDonald, Michael Moran, Jan Wilson Morris, Rita O'Connor, and Lanna Pian (pictured at left). Photos courtesy of Scott Benson.

Volunteer Profile: JAMIE CHALFANT

by *Connie Humberger*

In the summer of 2001, the Conservancy received a phone call from a young man who expressed an interest in volunteering in the office. JAMIE CHALFANT worked through the summer helping to organize the Conservancy's library, photo collections, and news clippings. He was friendly, mature, and a steady worker.



At the end of the summer, while being interviewed for the Conservancy newsletter, Jamie was asked about school. Much to our surprise, this young man, whom we were sure was in high school, replied, "I just completed the seventh grade at Harvard-Westlake School."

Jamie attributes his very early interest in architecture to living in a 1921 Colonial Revival house in the Windsor Square Historic Preservation Overlay Zone, and helping his family with "do it yourself" restoration projects.

Jamie continued volunteering for the Conservancy over the summers, working on office projects and at Last Remaining Seats. In the spring and fall, he volunteered on our special tours, in addition to playing football and concentrating on his studies at Harvard-Westlake.

In what seemed like the bat of an eye, Jamie was graduating from high school and off to USC. He continued to volunteer when he had the time, in addition to extracurricular activities, research projects, and loyal attendance at football games.

Guess what? Now it's 2010, four more years have gone by, and Jamie just received his bachelor's degree in biomedical engineering with a minor in history. He plans to enter UC-San Diego Medical School this fall.

All of us on the Conservancy staff are very proud of you, Jamie. It has been a pleasure seeing you grow into adulthood. We wish you all the best and thank you for your longtime involvement with the Conservancy.

Donors Celebrate Opening of Last Remaining Seats



(Top) Christina Marquez-Hounanian of the Valley Economic Alliance and Darnell Tyler of Series Sponsor NBC Universal. (Bottom) Conservancy Executive Director Linda Dishman with Radomir Samardzic, Antoinette Samardzic, and Chantal Dinnage of Series Star Sponsor the Hollywood Foreign Press Association. Photos by Gary Leonard.

The Conservancy's 24th annual Last Remaining Seats film series kicked off May 26 with a sold-out screening of 1967's *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* at the Los Angeles Theatre in downtown L.A.

The evening was hosted by Matthew Weiner, creator and executive producer of the award-winning TV drama *Mad Men*. He interviewed the film's stars, Robert Morse and Michele Lee, who thrilled the packed audience before the screening.

Last Remaining Seats sponsors, along with Conservancy Benefactor and Cornerstone members, were invited to a reception at the nearby Broadway Bar, with food provided by Cole's, Originators of the French Dip.

We offer special thanks to VIP Reception Sponsor Bank of America Merrill Lynch and Evening Sponsor 213 Ventures.

SPRING STREET VIADUCT continued from page 1

The project was on an extraordinarily accelerated timeline, with the BOE rushing to receive final City Council approval by June in order to keep state matching funds that will soon expire. This deadline has since been extended to August without jeopardizing the potential funding. The project would be funded primarily through the federal Highway Bridge Program, augmented by state and local funds provided through Proposition 1B and Proposition C.

The primary justification for the project is to upgrade the bridge to meet "major highway standards" and add pedestrian lanes in both directions. The current four-lane bridge would be widened by approximately twenty feet on each side to accommodate new eight-foot-wide sidewalks, five-foot-wide shoulders, and a center median with left-turn lanes at each end. Traffic capacity would remain the same.

The Conservancy's initial comments on the project, submitted in October 2006, sought detailed consideration of an alternative that would leave the historic bridge intact and construct a stand-alone pedestrian crossing alongside it. This option was quickly rejected by BOE without full analysis in the draft EIR, even though the city is favoring a similar approach for upgrading the Riverside-Zoo Drive Bridge.

In reviewing the North Spring Street Viaduct project on April 15, several members of the L.A. Cultural Heritage Commission expressed anger and frustration over the compressed timeline for the project and their apparent powerlessness to alter its course. "I feel that we have our hands tied behind our backs," lamented Commission President Richard Barron, "and we're watching the guillotine smash [the viaduct]. It's sad, it's sad."

In addition to limiting opportunities for meaningful public comment, the hastened project schedule has contributed to significant errors and omissions in the EIR. It fails to acknowledge the bridge's local monument status and, consequently, does not evaluate the project's potential impacts on HCM eligibility. In fact, the EIR does not evaluate a single alternative that would maintain the bridge's historic status. Such oversights cast serious doubt on the city's willingness to thoroughly consider less harmful preservation alternatives to the proposed project. Councilmember Ed Reyes (whose district includes the bridge) currently supports the widening project.

After reviewing the project in May, the Conservancy's board of directors unanimously voted to make preservation of the North Spring Street Viaduct a priority. The Conservancy retained an attorney to submit a letter to the Board of Public Works detailing the inadequacies of the final EIR. We have been coordinating our advocacy efforts with residents, stakeholders, and community groups on both sides of the Los Angeles River. Many thanks to the **seventy-five people** who attended or submitted letters of support before the June meetings of the Board of Public Works and the City Council Transportation Committee.

Sixth Street Viaduct

On May 20, Bureau of Engineering (BOE) staff appeared before the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) to respond to the commission's comments on the draft environmental impact report (EIR) for the Sixth Street Viaduct Seismic Improvement Project.

The most iconic of all the L.A. River bridges, the Sixth Street Viaduct was designated Historic-Cultural Monument #905 in 2008. The viaduct suffers from a degenerative chemical reaction that has weakened the concrete. Despite

extensive research and evaluation by experts, there does not appear to be a remedy for this condition.

The draft EIR recommends demolition and replacement with a new cable-stayed span. Due to funding deadlines similar to those with the North Spring Street Viaduct, the BOE is rushing to obtain City Council approval by July 2010. The CHC and the Conservancy have repeatedly urged the BOE to thoroughly consider retrofit alternatives, including a combined retrofit and partial replacement option, yet to no avail. The Conservancy has not taken a position on the proposed replacement span, nor conceded that replacement is necessary, although safety remains a top priority.



The iconic arches of the Sixth St. Viaduct. Photo by Kevin Break.

MARCH 26 / MAY 21 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

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SELF HELP continued from page 1

commissioned a nomination to the California Register of Historical Resources. The nomination was submitted to the Los Angeles County Historical Landmarks and Records Commission in June for review, before being forwarded to the State Office of Historic Preservation.

The letter and nomination seek to ensure that any future development proposals for the site will be subject to review under the California Environmental Quality Act. Overall, the Conservancy's efforts on this issue aim to protect this unique resource and recognize the rich social and cultural legacy of Self Help Graphics & Art, which has transformed the neighborhood and the lives of many.



The Self Help Graphics & Art building in East Los Angeles.
Photo by Edgar Garcia.



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* Less value of premiums; call for details.

The Los Angeles Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Please mail or fax (credit card payments) this form to receive your membership card entitling you to a full year of benefits. Thank you, and welcome to the Los Angeles Conservancy!

Los Angeles Conservancy
Attn: Membership
523 West Sixth Street, Suite 826
Los Angeles, CA 90014
(213) 623-2489 ■ fax: (213) 623-3909

CONSERVANCY WALKING TOURS

Walking tours begin at 10 a.m. except where noted. Tours are \$5 for Conservancy members and children twelve and under; \$10 for the general public. Walk-ins are accepted on most tours. Pre-payment is required on Angelino Heights, Biltmore Hotel, and Broadway. For details and reservations, visit laconservancy.org or call (213) 623-2489.

WEEKLY TOURS

Art Deco

Every Saturday

Biltmore Hotel

Every Sunday, 2 p.m.

Broadway: Historic Theatre & Commercial District

Every Saturday

Historic Core

Every Saturday

BI-WEEKLY AND MONTHLY TOURS

Angelino Heights

First Saturday

Downtown Renaissance: Spring & Main

Second and Fourth Saturdays

Downtown's Modern Skyline

First and Third Saturdays

Union Station

Third Saturday

Youth, family, and group tours by arrangement; call the number above for information.



Los Angeles Conservancy

523 West Sixth Street, Suite 826

Los Angeles, California 90014

laconservancy.org

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"PEOPLE'S CHOICE" TOP 60 OF THE '60S:
Visit laconservancy.org/sixties to vote for Cultural Sites & Landscapes in the final round of voting.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Universal Pictures

"NANNY MCPHEE RETURNS"

Sunday, August 15, 2 p.m.

Orpheum Theatre



LAC staff

DOWNTOWN AT SUNSET

Summer Evening Walking Tours

July 21 - August 25



Levitt Pavilions

FREE SUMMER CONCERT

Saturday, August 21, 7:30 p.m.

Levitt Pavilion MacArthur Park

Join us for an advance screening of Universal Pictures' *Nanny McPhee Returns* at the historic Orpheum Theatre. The delightful family-friendly film stars Emma Thompson. See page 4 for details.

Enjoy downtown Los Angeles at sunset on one of our special evening walking tours, offered on Wednesday evenings at 5:30 p.m. through August. See page 5 for details.

Celebrate the end of "The Sixties Turn 50" with a free concert at the Levitt Pavilion MacArthur Park featuring the sounds of the Salas Brothers. See page 4 for details.