WOULD YOU BELIEVE L.A.? (REVISITED)

Downtown Walking Tours 35th Anniversary sponsored by:  

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Since 1980, the Los Angeles Conservancy’s walking tours have introduced over 175,000 Angelenos and visitors alike to the rich history and culture of downtown’s architecture.

In celebration of the thirty-fifth anniversary of our walking tours, the Los Angeles Conservancy is revisiting our first-ever offering: a self-guided tour from 1978 called Would You Believe L.A.?

The tour map included fifty-nine different sites in the historic core of downtown, providing the basis for the Conservancy’s first three docent-led tours. These three tours still take place regularly: Pershing Square Landmarks (now Historic Downtown), Broadway Historic Theatre District (now Broadway Theatre and Commercial District), and Palaces of Finance (now Downtown Renaissance).

In the years since Would You Believe L.A.? was created and the first walking tours began, downtown Los Angeles has undergone many changes. Some buildings have been lost; others erected. Neglected office towers have found new life as apartments and condos. Cafés, bars, art galleries, retail spaces, and grand movie palaces are coming back to life even as a construction boom is poised to radically change the city’s skyline. A city is a living thing, and a city’s architecture is a record of its life and times. Come celebrate it with us!

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Los Angeles Conservancy

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Yelp L.A. Conservancy Walking Tours
1. MILLENNIUM BILTMORE HOTEL
515 S. Olive Street
Schultze & Weaver, 1923 & 1928
Tower addition: Landau Partnership, 1987
One of the most-filmed sites in L.A.

2. PACMUTUAL
(originally Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Building)
523 W. 6th Street
Original building: John Parkinson, 1908 (remodel 1936)
12-story addition: Dodd & Richards, 1921
Elegant office complex with many additions

3. JAMES OVIATT BUILDING
617 S. Olive Street
Walker & Eisen, 1928
Unique Art Deco forecourt and interior

4. ANGELS FLIGHT™ RAILWAY
Hill Street between 3rd and 4th Streets
Builder: Col. J. W. Eddy, 1901
Known as “The World’s Shortest Railway”

5. TITLE GUARANTEE BUILDING
411 W. 5th Street
Parkinson & Parkinson, 1930
Stylish Art Deco with Gothic touches

6. FOX JEWELRY PLAZA
(originally William Fox Building)
608 S. Hill Street
S. Tilden Norton, 1932
Striking Art Deco exterior and lobby

7. MILLION DOLLAR THEATRE
307 S. Broadway
Albert C. Martin, 1918
Interior: William Lee Woollett
One of the country’s earliest “movie palaces”

8. BRADBURY BUILDING
304 S. Broadway
Summer Hunt and/or George H. Wyman, 1893
A Victorian marvel

9. GRAND CENTRAL MARKET
317 S. Broadway
Horner Laughlin Building
John Parkinson, 1897
Laughlin Annex (Hill Street side): Harrison Albright, 1905
The market opened here in 1917

10. ROXIE THEATRE
518 S. Broadway
J. M. Cooper Co., 1931
The last theatre built on Broadway

11. CAMEO THEATRE
(originally Clune’s Broadway)
528 S. Broadway
Alfred F. Rosenheim, 1910
Early theatre built specifically for movies

12. ARCADE THEATRE
(originally Pantages Theatre)
534 S. Broadway
Morgan and Walls, 1910
Once an important vaudeville house

13. LOS ANGELES THEATRE
615 S. Broadway
S. Charles Lee with S. Tilden Norton, 1931
As glamorous as any movie star

14. PALACE THEATRE
(originally Orpheum Theatre)
630 S. Broadway
G. Albert Lansburgh, 1911
Oldest remaining Orpheum in the country

15. CLIFTON’S BROOKDALE
648 S. Broadway
R. B. Young, 1904 & 1935 interior:
Plummer, Wurdean and Becket
Beloved forest-themed cafeteria

16. STATE THEATRE
(originally Loew’s State Theatre)
703 S. Broadway
Weeks and Day, 1921
Was the most successful movie theatre on Broadway

17. GLOBE THEATRE
(originally Morosco Theatre)
744 S. Broadway
Morgan, Walls, and Morgan, 1913
Interior: Alfred F. Rosenheim
Traditional Beaux-Arts building and auditorium

18. TOWER THEATRE
802 S. Broadway
S. Charles Lee, 1927
The first theatre by legendary architect S. Charles Lee

19. 801 BROADWAY
(originally Hamburger’s Dept. Store)
801 S. Broadway
Alfred F. Rosenheim, 1906
Once the largest department store on the coast
20. ORPHEUM THEATRE  
842 S. Broadway  
G. Albert Lansburgh, 1926  
Elegant venue created for high-end vaudeville

21. EASTERN COLUMBIA BUILDING  
849 S. Broadway  
Claud Beelman, 1930  
Iconic Art Deco commercial design

22. THE THEATRE AT ACE HOTEL  
(originally United Artists Theatre)  
929 S. Broadway  
Walker & Eisen, 1927  
Interior: C. Howard Crane  
Extravagant Spanish Baroque building and auditorium

23. HERMAN W. HELLMAN BUILDING  
354 S. Spring Street  
Alfred F. Rosenheim, 1903  
Beaux-Arts style with Victorian touches

24. CONTINENTAL BUILDING  
(originally Braly Block)  
408 S. Spring Street  
John Parkinson, 1904  
The tallest building in the city for decades

25. EL DORADO LOFTS  
(originally Stowell Hotel)  
416 S. Spring Street  
Frederick Noonan and William Richards, 1913  
Lovely Art Nouveau-style ornamentation

26. 433 SPRING  
(originally Title Insurance and Trust Building)  
433 S. Spring Street  
Parkinson & Parkinson, 1928  
Once known as the "Queen of Spring Street"

27. HOTEL ALEXANDRIA  
501 S. Spring Street  
John Parkinson, 1906 & 1911 (addition)  
This storied hotel was home to silent film stars

28. LOS ANGELES THEATRE CENTER (LATC)  
(originally Security National Bank Building)  
514 S. Spring Street  
John Parkinson, 1916  
Theatre addition: John Sergio Fisher, 1985  
Former bank is now the lobby of a theatre complex

29. SPRING ARCADE BUILDING  
(originally Broadway-Spring Arcade)  
541 S. Spring Street  
Kenneth McDonald and Maurice Couchet, 1924  
1920s shopping arcade

30. EXCHANGE LOS ANGELES  
(originally Pacific Coast Stock Exchange)  
618 S. Spring Street  
Samuel Lunden, John and Donald Parkinson, consulting architects, 1930  
Monumental Art Deco architecture

31. VAN NUYS APARTMENTS  
(originally I. N. Van Nuys Building)  
210 W. 7th Street  
Morgan and Walls, 1913  
Classic Beaux-Arts grandeur