Celebrating 35 Years in Preservation Achievement

by Jessica Hodgdon and Cindy Olnick

This year marks the thirty-fifth annual Conservancy Preservation Awards, recognizing outstanding achievement in preservation across Los Angeles County. Since the awards program’s inception in 1982, we have recognized more than 300 individuals, organizations, and projects, representing a broad spectrum of preservation work. We began holding a Preservation Awards Luncheon to honor award recipients in 1987. Pictured: over 300 people attended the first Preservation Awards Luncheon in the Millennium Biltmore Hotel’s Crystal Room. Photo by Randall Michelson.

The Conservancy has presented Preservation Awards since 1982, and in the past thirty-five years we have recognized individuals, organizations, and projects representing a broad spectrum of preservation work. We began holding a Preservation Awards Luncheon to honor award recipients in 1987. Pictured: over 300 people attended the first Preservation Awards Luncheon in the Millennium Biltmore Hotel’s Crystal Room. Photo by Randall Michelson.

I-110 Flyover Should Fly Away

by Adrian Scott Fine

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has proposed constructing a two-lane “flyover” ramp in the heart of University Park, a historic neighborhood near USC. The 1,400-foot-long ramp, which would soar up to approximately fifty-five feet, would allow drivers to exit the I-110 Freeway at Figueroa Way and 23rd Street.

If built, the Flyover would create an imposing physical barrier between the historic St. John’s Cathedral and the surrounding neighborhood, obstructing key view sheds and degrading the overall character of the community.

The 1925 Romanesque Revival St. John’s Cathedral at 514 West Adams Boulevard is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and designated as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument. The Flyover would come within fifty feet of the property line and 160 feet of this (for now) highly visible community landmark.

The ramp would also come in close proximity to a range of other historic resources, including St. Vincent de Paul Church, the Automobile Club of Southern California, the Thomas Stimson House, and the University Park Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ).

Caltrans first proposed a two-lane flyover ramp in University Park in 1990, abandoning the project after an outcry from the community. The original proposal was lower in

Please see FLYOVER on page 6
See You at the 30th Annual Last Remaining Seats!

Do you have your tickets yet? Tickets were already selling quickly at press time – purchase yours while you can at laconservancy.org/last-remaining-seats.

We have some special additional programming lined up to celebrate three decades of Last Remaining Seats and our long track record of helping to revitalize Broadway and the Historic Core.

Free 30th Season Events

You can stay after each screening for a free Q&A session and learn more about each of the historic theatres. After Saturday evening screenings, you’re welcome to join us at downtown’s beloved Clifton’s for free pub trivia events – show your ticket for drink discounts, and win fun prizes! Reservations are not required for these events.

We will also offer free “Drink and Discover” events with our advocacy staff before select screenings. Meet at a local bar with our advocacy staff and learn more about what we do. While these events are free, reservations are required and drinks are not included. See laconservancy.org/drink-discover for details.

Special Tours

We will offer very limited behind-the-scenes tours of the Los Angeles Theatre (June 11), The Theatre at Ace Hotel (June 18), and the Orpheum Theatre (June 25). You will be able to explore usually off-limits backstage and projection areas. Tickets are $50 per person.

Before our screening of Safety Last! on June 25, John Bengtson, author of Silent Visions: Discovering Early Hollywood and New York through the Films of Harold Lloyd, will lead walking tours of sites related to the film. On these hour-long tours you will see how the film’s downtown locations look today. Tickets are $50 per person.

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2016 Last Remaining Seats Schedule*

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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.

Earl Carroll Theatre

Developer Essex Portfolio has proposed a new mixed-use development next to the 1938 Earl Carroll Theatre building in Hollywood. Known as the 6250 Sunset Project, it would retain the historic building and add a new seven-story building on the existing surface parking lot. A pedestrian paseo would connect the two structures.

Designed by master architect Gordon B. Kaufmann, the Earl Carroll Theatre building is one of the last remaining examples of a modern entertainment venue dating to Hollywood’s Golden Age. It is eligible for landmark designation at the national, state, and local levels. The building currently houses Nickelodeon Studios.

The Conservancy submitted comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in May 2015 and spoke at a hearing on the Final EIR in February 2016. We are pleased that the project would incorporate the Earl Carroll Theatre into the new development and restore some missing historic elements. Yet we are concerned about the absence of a clear reuse plan and adequate parking that would ensure the facility’s future viability and long-term preservation.

In addition, we have concerns over the adverse impact of the project on Pete’s Flowers/Morgan Camera Shop, a National Register-eligible property distinguished by its innovative signage.

Along with Hollywood Heritage, we are now pressing for a clear preservation plan to guide a sensitive rehabilitation of the Earl Carroll Theatre, as well as a more meaningful exploration of reuse options. We also strongly recommend that the applicant nominate the building for listing as a Historic-Cultural Monument. The project will next go before the City Planning Commission.

Edinburgh Bungalow Court

On March 2, the City Council voted unanimously to designate the 1923 Edinburgh Bungalow Court as a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM). The Spanish Colonial Revival-style bungalow court is located at 750-756½ Edinburgh Avenue in the Fairfax District. Thank you to the Save 750 Edinburgh group and Councilmember Paul Koretz and his staff for their strong support and leadership throughout this process.

The Conservancy worked closely with all parties, including the property owner, throughout this process to explore possible strategies and potential solutions related to concerns about the property’s structural condition.

The HCM designation provides the property with valuable protection from demolition, requiring the property owner to work with the City’s Cultural Heritage Commission and Office of Historic Resources on any substantial changes. Yet the building remains at risk from proposed demolition and vacancy, illustrating the ongoing threats facing historic multi-family residences throughout Los Angeles.

Mission Hills Bowl

Good news for fans of Googie architecture! On March 10, the Los Angeles City Planning Commission recommended approval of the Olivo Shopping Center project, which includes the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the 1957 Mission Hills Bowl building.

Designed by noted architect Martin Stern, Jr., Mission Hills Bowl is a rare, intact example of a Googie-style bowling alley in the San Fernando Valley. It is located at 10430 Sepulveda Boulevard.

Owner Primestor purchased Mission Hills Plaza, including Mission Hills Bowl, in 2007 with the goal of redeveloping the shopping center. Early plans called for the bowling alley’s demolition, although SurveyLA determined it eligible for landmark designation at the local, state, and national levels.

The Conservancy learned of the threat after Mission Hills Bowl closed in May 2015. With our Modern Committee and community members, we worked with the project team to find a win-win solution that will incorporate the glass-and-steel building into the new development. As a condition of approval, the owner will nominate Mission Hills Bowl for Historic-Cultural Monument designation.

We commend the development team for their commitment to revitalizing this important Googie structure. The project will soon go to the full City Council for final approval.
2016 Preservation Awards

Congratulations to the recipients of the Conservancy’s 35th Annual Preservation Awards! They reflect a range of outstanding efforts to preserve and revitalize the historic places that make Greater Los Angeles unique.

We hope you can join us as we present the awards at our annual Preservation Awards Luncheon on Thursday, May 5. Our deepest thanks to City National Bank, the luncheon’s presenting sponsor for the sixteenth consecutive year. The luncheon is a great opportunity to network with preservation, community, and business leaders while supporting the work of the Conservancy. Individual tickets are $150. Table sponsorships begin at $1,500.

For details on the awards luncheon, and to learn more about the recipients, visit laconservancy.org/awards.

Clifton’s – Chairman’s Award
648 South Broadway, Los Angeles, CA 90014

This downtown L.A. icon is the last remaining of ten Clifton’s Cafeterias, once the region’s largest cafeteria chain. Designed in 1935 by Welton Becket and Walter Wurdeman, the forest-themed restaurant endured years of deferred maintenance as the business suffered from changing times and demographics. After seventy-five years in the family of founder Clifford Clinton, Clifton’s changed hands in 2010 to entrepreneur Andrew Meieran. He and his dedicated team spent four years restoring and reimagining the beloved eatery, painstakingly renovating the historic spaces on the first two floors. The project met sky-high expectations and revived a beloved landmark while positioning it for future generations.

Brand Library and Art Center
1601 West Mountain Street, Glendale, CA 91201

This site was originally a mansion built in 1904 for Leslie Coombs Brand, a prominent figure in the development of Glendale. Brand bequeathed the home to the City on the condition that it be used as a public library and park. Now one of Glendale’s most iconic buildings, the library received a much-needed renovation and seismic upgrade. The ambitious project exceeded its available budget, yet the City deemed it imperative and reallocated resources to move forward. The restoration team painstakingly removed incompatible additions, refinishing surviving woodwork, replaced windows, and recreated the building’s decorative ceiling paintings, among many other things. The Brand Library and Art Center is a fantastic example of how a community anchor can be revitalized through strong civic stewardship.

Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Building
1999 West Adams Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90018

Designed in 1949 by legendary architect Paul R. Williams, this building was created by African Americans, for African Americans. It was built for the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company, which provided coverage to a community that, at the time, could not find it elsewhere. The company’s closing in 2009 left the site’s future in question; years of vacancy and lack of maintenance left it in disrepair. The rehabilitation project brought the site back to life, preserving its character-defining features, and installing a new memorial paying homage to Williams and the site’s history. The building now serves as headquarters for the nonprofit South Central Los Angeles Regional Center, proving that a place can enjoy new life and continue serving the community, all while celebrating its past.

Hollenbeck Terrace
610 South St. Louis Street, Los Angeles, CA 90023

Built in 1938 to serve workers on the Santa Fe Coast Lines railway, the once-thriving Loma Vista Hospital in Boyle Heights stood largely vacant for decades after its closure in 1991. Production crews used the former community hospital as a filming location, and it became popular with thrill-seeking trespassers, vandals, and thieves. The new owners removed decades’ worth of remnants left by film crews, restored the landmark to its former grandeur, and adapted it into low-income housing for seniors. Hollenbeck Terrace exemplifies how even long-forgotten buildings can transform to meet today’s needs.
Homeless Veterans Transitional Housing, VA Campus
11301 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90073

Formerly known as Building 209, this 1945 structure originally served as a neuropsychiatric hospital in the Veterans Affairs (VA) West Los Angeles Campus. After years of vacancy, the Department of VA adapted the site into housing for homeless veterans undergoing treatment for mental trauma—a critical need nationwide. Years of development to meet evolving healthcare needs left the building with incompatible alterations. The project team rehabilitated the building, stabilized it, and created apartment-style units and support facilities for residents. This project provides a model for other VA sites and will hopefully foster further revitalization on this historic campus.

Hotel Normandie
605 Normandie Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90005

This 1926 landmark in the heart of Koreatown operated as a hotel for ninety years and underwent several alterations during its long history. It declined over the years, ultimately becoming littered with trash and used for illegal activities. This changed in 2011, when the building’s current owner purchased the site. He rebuffed lucrative redevelopment bids for the historic hotel and essentially crowdsourced its multi-million-dollar restoration. Hotel Normandie exemplifies how a building can return to its former glory and fuel the revitalization of a neighborhood.

Kronish House (shared)
9439 Sunset Boulevard, Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Listed for sale as a teardown in 2011, this 1954 Modern masterpiece by Richard Neutra was nearly demolished, sparking an intense public outcry that galvanized the City of Beverly Hills into action after a series of high-profile demolitions. The City created a robust preservation program, including an innovative (though recently weakened) preservation ordinance. The Kronish House was rescued when an owner came forward to purchase the home at a critical time. The architects (who had found the buyer) brought the house back to life by seismically upgrading it and removing insensitive alterations, among other things. This project prevented the loss of a highly significant structure while raising the profile of preservation in Beverly Hills.

Van Dekker House (shared)
19950 West Collier Street, Los Angeles, CA 91364

This 1939 Modern gem in Woodland Hills is likely the largest home designed by Modern master R. M. Schindler. Yet decades of neglect left it in deplorable condition, with boarded-up windows and no running water. The home’s future hung in the balance until two successive owners brought it back from the brink. A remarkable rehabilitation restored many of the home’s original features, including a unique copper roof laid by hand, sheet by sheet. The owner made the home highly energy-efficient by, among other things, discreetly installing solar panels on the roof. The project saved an exceptional work that was nearly lost, while updating it for the twenty-first century.

SurveyLA LGBT Historic Context Statement

As part of its multi-year survey of the city’s historic resources, the City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources completed the country’s first historic context statement for places associated with L.A.’s rich—yet often overlooked—lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) heritage. Producing a historic context statement is an important first step in identifying and protecting significant places, providing a framework for their evaluation. This document sheds an important light on the pivotal role L.A. has played in LGBT culture and history, while also providing a model for other communities, giving the project a potentially enormous impact.
FLYOVER
continued from page 1

height and smaller in overall scale than the current proposal. The current project was revived in 2013, and Caltrans began studying traffic improvements with funding from the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro).

The Conservancy is working closely with the West Adams Heritage Association (WAHA), St. John’s Cathedral, and other community stakeholders to identify alternative solutions to the proposed project that would reduce or eliminate its impact on historic resources. We are particularly concerned that Caltrans has failed to provide clear and compelling evidence to substantiate the purpose and need for the proposed project, including cost-benefit analysis of the proposed ramp compared to other alternatives.

We also disagree with Caltrans’ finding that the proposed project would be compatible with the existing visual character of the surrounding area, including historic properties. While we appreciate efforts to minimize the visual impact through design modifications, no amount of intervention or “dressing up” can effectively lighten a structure of this scale or render it compatible with the existing community and historic context. Instead, the flyover ramp would create visual and physical divisions within the neighborhood.

The project is required to go through various levels of environmental review in compliance with state and federal law. The Conservancy strongly believes that the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is required in this case, as clearly stated in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is needed for the proposed project. The Conservancy is working closely with the West Adams Heritage Association (WAHA), St. John’s Cathedral, and other community stakeholders to identify alternative solutions to the proposed project that would reduce or eliminate its impact on historic resources. We are particularly concerned that Caltrans has failed to provide clear and compelling evidence to substantiate the purpose and need for the proposed project, including cost-benefit analysis of the proposed ramp compared to other alternatives.

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Chinatown: Past and Present Proves a Popular Success

by Sarah Lann

On April 17, a sold-out crowd of 800 explored a deep and rich chapter in Los Angeles’ history: Chinatown. Following an engaging orientation by community leaders Greg SooHoo, a former director of the city’s Department of Cultural Affairs, and Michael K. Woo in the private King Hing Theatre, guests visited sites significant to various immigrant groups who had lived in the area over more than a century. They learned about Sonoratown, French Town, and Little Italy. Guests also learned about the dual function of Chinatown as both a home for Chinese Americans and a tourist destination.

The tour included buildings important architecturally as well as culturally, such as Cathay Bank and the Y. C. Hong law offices. Guests chatted with architect Barton Choy, son of influential architect Eugene Choy, and representatives from the Chinese American Museum and the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California. Participants ate at neighborhood restaurants, shopped in the boutiques and market stalls, and even partook in a nighttime, neon-lit scavenger hunt hosted by the Conservancy and the Chinatown Business Improvement District.

The Conservancy would like to thank the supporters who made this event possible: Tour Partner sponsors RedCar Properties LTD and the Chinatown Business Improvement District; sponsors Blossom Plaza, Councilmember Gilbert Cedillo, Gilmore Associates, and Johnson Fain; and Community Partner the Chinese American Museum.

A special thank you, as well, to the volunteers who gave their time, talents, and expertise on April 17. The tour wouldn’t have happened without you.

PRESERVATION AWARDS continued from page 1

for a preservation-related storyline, and the hit series Mad Men was honored in 2011 for reig-

nifying popular interest in postwar architecture.

Many recipients provide direct public benefit, from affordable senior housing, to supportive services for kids transitioning out of foster care, to innovative spaces for kids to learn and thrive. Among this year’s recipients, Hollenbeck Terrace in Boyle Heights provides housing to low-income seniors, and Homeless Veterans Transitional Housing/VA Campus provides much-needed housing to L.A.’s homeless veterans.

Each winter, we invite individuals and organizations to apply for our Preservation Awards. Eligible projects must be located in L.A. County, be completed at the time of application, and meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (for construction projects) or must follow the Secretary of the Interior’s Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes (for cultural landscape projects).

We then invite experts in architecture, historic preservation, and community development to serve on an independent jury to select the recipients. Our advocacy staff visits each site to learn more about the projects so that they can answer any questions the jury may have.

The competition was particularly tough this year, and the jury had the difficult task of selecting eight recipients from the thirty-two highly qualified submissions.

We also bestow a special award each year for exceptional contributions in historic preservation; this recipient is selected by our Board Chair. Formerly known as the President’s Award, our highest honor was

Please see AWARDS LUNCHEON on next page.
MEMBERSHIP REPORT

FEBRUARY 2 / MARCH 25

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.

TRAVERTINE
CORNERSTONE
($10,000+) Wesley Phoa and Margaret Morgan

CORPORATE GRANITE
CORNERSTONE
($2,500 - $4,999)
Rising Realty Partners
Shangri-La Construction

GRANITE CORNERSTONE
($2,500 - $4,999)
Jamie and David Wolf – The Rosenthal Foundation

CORPORATE LIMESTONE
CORNERSTONE
($1,000 - $2,499)
Chattel, Inc. | Historic Preservation Consultants
Earl B. Gilmore Foundation
Nabih Youssef Associates
Rockefeller Partners Architects
Simpson Gumpertz & Heger Inc.
Thomas Safran & Associates

LIMESTONE
CORNERSTONE
($1,000 - $2,499)
Roelia Hailih Louie
Don Haisch and Hersin Magante
Leslie Heumann
Thomas Lucero
Carol Mitchell
Rita Morales Patton
John Schwarz
Charles Shickley and Dawn Vincent
Richard and Liane Weintraub

BENEFACTOR
($500 - $999)
Debi and Tad Akin
Michele and Travis Beacham
JoAnn and Wade Bourne
Donnell Cohen
Gary Cohn
Jeffrey and Wendy Dahlgren
Patricia and Patrick Gomez
Arthur Greenberg
Hollywood International
Regional Center

Katie Horak
Kathryn Welch Howe and Con Howe
Jorge Limon and Leslie White
Paula Mamuri
Leslie Mitchner
Walter and Donna Marie Sebring
Stephen Taylor and Luciano Bruno
G. Charles Wright

SUSTAINING
($250 - $499)
Paul Alley
Scott Benson
Steve and Julie Bram
Diana Chavez
Catherine Collinson
Adam Greco
Grace Gregory
Kathleen Grzegorek
Deborah Henderson and Gwen Davis
Randall Henderson
Jim Jacobsen
Kevin and Lora Jones
Barbara and David Kaplan
Kate Kelly and George Schweitzer
Victoria Lafortune and Larry Barrett
Christine and Dominic Lazzaretto
James McMath and Sakae Takushima
David Mosser
Elizabeth B. Motika
Pablo Ochoa-Mayo and Craig Benedetti
Gail and Brian O’Neill
Greg Randall
Anne Reinhart
Kristin Rey
Jessica Ritz and Henry Myers
Leann Roque
Straven and Richard Rosenthal
Meredith and William Savery
Bob Timmerman
William Wilbur
Bryant and Sarah Winchell

SUPPORTING
($100 - $249)
Gregory Adamson and Stacy A. Mayeda
Anthony Agraim
Helen Auerbach
Abby Blum and Jaime Garza
Anthony Caldwell and Michelle Jacobson
Leslie Carlson
Terrie Coady
Gary and Mary Couey
Dana Cremin
Terry Dadd
Patricia Danaher
Lori and Loring Davies
Ida M. Franklin
Amy Galaudet
Jennifer Goodhue
R. David Gould and Julie Lee
Kimberly Groome
Bryan Hale
Jeffrey Harlacker and Jason Miller
Eleanor and John Heaphy
Jose Huizar
Bob Israel
Marichu Joaguin
Robert and Mille Kern
Jonathan Kier
Despina Landers
Janis and Chris Maslyk
Carol McCafferty
Patrick McCarthy and Deborah Graber
Dave Monks
Lorraine Mora and Michael Verrecchia
Charles and Carol Norris
Ronald Nowek
Roger Ormae
William O’Neill
Stephen Ortiz
Steve Partida
Leonard Perez and Catherine Meller
Sandra and Donald Reierson
Natalie Roberts
Dena and Noah Schechter
Karen and Gordon Silverstein
Naheed Simjee and Paul Hertz
B. and J. Skinner
Melissa and Michael Trikilis

AWARDS LUNCHEON continued from previous page
renamed the Chairman’s Award this year. Downtown’s beloved Clifton’s has the distinction of earning this year’s Chairman’s Award.

Help us honor the achievements of all of this year’s recipients at our 35th Annual Preservation Awards Luncheon on Thursday, May 5 at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. The luncheon will be sponsored for the sixteenth consecutive year by City National Bank. For luncheon details and tickets, visit laconservancy.org/2016-awards-luncheon.

To learn more about all of this year’s award recipients, see the project descriptions on pages 4-5, or visit laconservancy.org/awards.
CONSERVANCY WALKING TOURS

Tours are $5 for Conservancy members and children twelve and under; $10 for the general public. Most tours require reservations. Walk-ins accepted on some tours, subject to availability.

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

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

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

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

PRESERVATION AWARDS LUNCHEON
Millennium Biltmore Hotel
Thursday, May 5

Join us as we celebrate the best in preservation! Individual ticket and table reservations available at laconservancy.org/awards. Learn more about this year’s winning projects on pages 4-5.

LAST REMAINING SEATS
Downtown L.A.
Wednesdays & Saturdays
June 4–25

Tickets are on sale now for our annual series of classic films in historic theatres! Don’t miss Top Gun at the Los Angeles Theatre, Safety Last! at the Orpheum Theatre, and more! Complete lineup on page 2.

WALKING TOURS
Downtown L.A.
Weekends, ongoing

Our regularly scheduled walking tours cost only $5 for Conservancy members. Join us every weekend as we explore downtown’s history and architecture. Details and reservations at laconservancy.org/tours.

Photo by Gary Leonard.
Photo by Larry Underhill.

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