



# LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY NEWS



Nov/Dec 2016 • Volume 38 Number 6



In June of this year, the City of Los Angeles adopted a new West Adams-Baldwin Hills-Leimert Park Community Plan. The plan identifies the historic Leimert Park neighborhood as an area warranting preservation and neighborhood conservation strategies. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

## Why Does Community Planning Matter?

by Adrian Scott Fine

“Make no little plans” is something many of us have heard before, a motto coined by famed urban planner Daniel Burnham. In a place as big and diverse as Los Angeles, a challenge with planning the city’s future is in part a matter of scale: how to put a vision in place that works for everyone.

While Los Angeles should think big in terms of a broad, long-term vision—through its overall Citywide General Plan—we also need to plan on a smaller scale, at the community level. In Los Angeles, this typically happens through community plans. In its most basic form, a community plan helps guide growth and development by stating what can and cannot be built in a specific area. It plays an important role in preserving the unique character of older and historic neighborhoods.

### What’s a Community?

In this context, a “community” generally means an area of multiple neighborhoods. The City of Los Angeles has defined thirty-five community plan areas that make up all of Los Angeles. Each community plan has several goals, from integrating land-use and transportation improvements to creating economically vital business districts.

By indicating where development can and can’t take place, community plans offer a base level of predictability and can ease, as well as fuel, development pressures.

While community planning is a strong concept, in reality, most of the city’s community plans are woefully out of date. As such, they don’t provide much help to planners or residents in addressing current needs. Ideally, plans would be no more than ten to twenty years old before being updated. The lack of funding in the City budget, leading to a dearth of city planners,

*Please see COMMUNITY PLANNING on page 6*

## Make a Year-End Donation in Support of Preservation

by Liz Leshin

As a Conservancy member, you know that historic preservation is about more than just buildings—it’s about the people who use them. We work, make our homes, and celebrate life’s milestones in historic buildings. They enrich our streets with their beauty, remind us of our shared history and culture, and enhance our sense of community. That’s why it’s so important to protect the structures, landscapes, and neighborhoods that mean so much to us all.

Neighborhoods across Los Angeles County—perhaps even your own—are suffering from the ongoing trend of mansionization, when original homes are torn down and replaced with massive, out-of-scale houses that block light, remove trees, and impair community character.

The Conservancy helps preserve the fabric of our neighborhoods by working with residents, community groups, and government officials to influence a range of new poli-



An example of out-of-scale construction in Carthage Square. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

*Please see DONATE on page 6*

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

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Major funding for the Los Angeles Conservancy's programs is provided by the LaFetra Foundation and the Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation.

## Conservancy Memberships Make Great Holiday Gifts

This holiday season, give the gift of Conservancy membership! Gift membership is the perfect present for the architecture lovers or history buffs in your life.

Each gift membership comes with a full year of benefits, including a subscription to this newsletter and discounts on events throughout the year, such as our walking tours, Last Remaining Seats, and special tours.

Make your holiday shopping easier by visiting [laconservancy.org/gift-memberships](http://laconservancy.org/gift-memberships) and purchasing a gift membership today. Thank you, and happy holidays!

## Welcome Jenelle Pope, Development Manager

Please join us in welcoming the Conservancy's new development manager, Jenelle Pope. A native of Syracuse, New York, Jenelle holds a bachelor's degree in mass media arts from Hampton University in Virginia. She has made Los Angeles her home for the past thirteen years, living in neighborhoods across the city, including the Westside, the San Fernando Valley, and Northeast L.A.

Experiencing these different neighborhoods has given Jenelle a keen appreciation for the Conservancy's work. "L.A.'s neighborhoods are all unique," she says. "I love that the Conservancy helps preserve the places that give communities their own special sense of place and history."

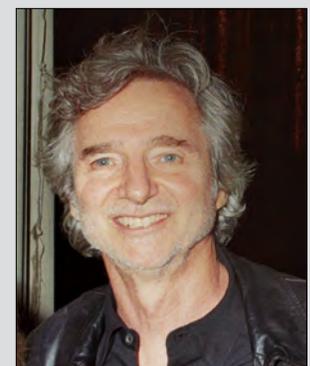
As development manager, Jenelle will be responsible for planning events throughout the year—including our largest fundraising events, our annual benefit and Preservation Awards Luncheon. She will also be in charge of securing grant funding for the Conservancy's programs and operations. Before moving to L.A., Jenelle founded a boutique event-marketing agency in New York City specializing in nonprofit fundraising events. She most recently worked as a freelance event planner and a development consultant, making her a great fit for this role.



## Curtis Hanson (1945 – 2016)

Film director, producer, and screenwriter Curtis Hanson passed away on September 20. Known for films such as *L.A. Confidential*, *Wonder Boys*, and *The River Wild*, Hanson won an Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay for 1997's neo-noir *L.A. Confidential*, filmed largely at historic Los Angeles locations.

Hanson grew up in the San Fernando Valley and was dedicated to preserving Los Angeles' historic places. He served on the Conservancy's Advisory Council for many years, and he hosted screenings at our Last Remaining Seats film series in 2002, 2003, and 2007. We miss him and will always appreciate his support.



Curtis Hanson at Last Remaining Seats in 2007. Photo by Bob Brennan.

# Issue Spotlight: Parker Center

by Adrian Scott Fine

For the past several years, the City of L.A.'s Bureau of Engineering has pressed for the demolition and redevelopment of downtown's Parker Center as part of the Los Angeles Street Civic Building Project. Built in 1955, the historic former headquarters of the Los Angeles Police Department was designed by the renowned firm of Welton Becket and Associates.

The City's Cultural Heritage Commission nominated Parker Center for Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) designation in fall 2014, yet this effort was set back due to a procedural error in May 2015. At that time, City Councilmember José Huizar, whose district includes Parker Center, presented a motion directing City staff to study a new alternative for the project that would preserve Parker Center's eight-story tower.

Preservation efforts often span several years, and they typically encompass periods of intense activity as well as holding patterns. After more than a year, three actions in August 2016 reactivated the Conservancy's work to save Parker Center:

- A renewed interest in demolition by the Bureau of Engineering, including a vote of support by the City's Municipal Facilities Committee
- A proposed Master Development Plan for the Los Angeles Civic Center
- The Cultural Heritage Commission's re-initiation of the HCM nomination

## Municipal Facilities Committee Vote

On August 25, the City's Municipal Facilities Committee (MFC) voted in support of a recommendation by the Bureau of Engineering that calls for the demolition of Parker Center and redevelopment of the site. Through Councilmember Huizar's directive, the Bureau has been studying Alternative B4 as part of the City's environmental review process. This alternative retains the main core of Parker Center while allowing for new construction at the rear.

The Conservancy was not given an opportunity to review the alternative before the Bureau presented its recommendation to the MFC. The Bureau claims that Alternative B4

will cost \$107 million more than the City's preferred project. Known as Alternative B3, this project calls for demolition of Parker Center and construction of a single, 450-foot tower on the site.

We are disappointed in the Bureau's lack of transparency in this process and the MFC's recent actions. It is not entirely clear yet, but the City's Public Works, Budget and Finance, and Entertainment and Facilities committees still need to act on this latest recommendation. They are expected to review the project in late 2016 and early 2017. We will continue to press for viable alternatives to the demolition of this highly significant site.

## Master Development Plan

An effort is now underway to create a Master Development Plan to assess significant City-owned land holdings within the Civic Center. As opposed to encompassing a true master plan and visioning process, the scope of this proposed plan is intentionally narrow. A consultant has been hired who will help the City determine the potential for future uses and possible redevelopment opportunities in the area. This plan intends to help direct City-initiated development in the future.

Why is the City proceeding with a plan to redevelop the Parker Center site before the Master Development Plan is complete? This short-sighted approach undermines the purpose of the Master Development Plan and the need for broad, big-picture planning for the Civic Center. The Conservancy has been asking this question for more than a year, as we and others have been urging the City to plan first, before proceeding with piecemeal development.

## HCM Nomination

Following the procedural error with last year's Historic-Cultural Monument nomination, the Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) agreed to delay further nomination efforts for Parker Center to allow time for the Bureau of Engineering to develop Alternative B4 (as directed by Councilmember Huizar). Members of the Commission and the Conservancy are deeply disappointed in the Bureau of Engineering for not collaborating



The threat to Parker Center heated up again in August after the City's Municipal Facilities Committee voted in support of a proposal to demolish the former LAPD headquarters. Photo by Hunter Kerhart.

with either party to develop the alternative, or even presenting it to us before taking it to the Municipal Facilities Committee for a vote.

On September 1, the CHC resubmitted an HCM nomination for Parker Center. As we have reported previously, Parker Center has a rich and complicated history that clearly merits its designation as an HCM. It has already been identified as eligible for listing in both the California Register of Historical Resources and the National Register of Historic Places.

For updates about Parker Center and other preservation issues, please subscribe to our Action Alerts email list. Simply visit [laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org) and click "Subscribe" at the top of any page.

To show your support for Parker Center, please email Councilmember José Huizar at [councilmember.huizar@lacity.org](mailto:councilmember.huizar@lacity.org) and encourage him to press for a preservation-based solution.

## WALKING TOURS – HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Have guests in town for the holidays? Conservancy walking tours are a great way to introduce your family and friends to the history and architecture of downtown Los Angeles!

The Conservancy's eight walking tours will run throughout the holiday season (including Thanksgiving weekend, Christmas Eve, and New Year's Eve) as scheduled, with the following exceptions:

- There will be no Broadway Historic Theatre and Commercial District tour on Saturday, December 24 or 31.
- There will be no Millennium Biltmore Hotel tour on Sunday, December 25 or January 1.

For our current walking tour schedule, and to reserve spots on an upcoming tour, please visit [laconservancy.org/tours](http://laconservancy.org/tours).

Most tours require reservations. During the holiday season, tours often fill up quickly, and we recommend making reservations even on tours that typically accept walk-ins.

Tours cost \$10 for Conservancy members and youth 17 or younger; \$15 for the general public. You may purchase up to four tickets per tour at the discounted member rate.



Walking tours fill up quickly during the holiday season — be sure to make your reservations early! Photo of our Past Meets Present tour by Larry Underhill.

## Make a Conservancy Tour Your New Holiday Tradition!

by Annie Laskey



Discover the history of downtown's iconic Clifton's, and learn about the cafeteria's remarkable founder, Clifford Clinton, on our special Clifton's tour! Photo by Jessica Hodgdon/L.A. Conservancy.

Downtown Los Angeles is festive during the holidays. There's an ice-skating rink at Pershing Square, holiday decorations in shops and office buildings, and plenty of wonderful restaurants for merrymaking. And now, you can add to the celebration with a Conservancy tour.

### Historic Highlights Tour

In addition to our regularly scheduled tours (at left), this December we will offer Historic Highlights, a ninety-minute tour exploring the architecture and history of five fabulous buildings near Pershing Square, some of which will be beautifully decorated for the holiday season: The Millennium Biltmore Hotel (1923), PacMutual Building (1921), Central Library (1926), US Bank Tower (1989), and One Bunker Hill (1931).

This special tour will take place on Saturdays and Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. from December 3 – 22. Building interiors are subject to availability. Please note that these tours do not visit the interior or observation deck of the US Bank Tower.

### Clifton's Tour

In love with Clifton's? The Conservancy is partnering with Clifton's to offer one-hour tours of this iconic restaurant in December, when it will be all decked out for the holidays! A destination since 1936, this redwood-

forest-in-the-dining-room café reopened in 2015 with its historic décor refurbished and new spaces on upper and lower floors. This tour explores the history of the restaurant and its colorful founder Clifford Clinton, as well as the unique décor, both vintage and new. Tours will take place at 3 p.m. on Sundays, December 4 – 18, and at 11 a.m. on Wednesdays, December 7 – 21. **Please note that this tour is not wheelchair accessible and includes several flights of stairs.**

All of our holiday tours cost \$10 each for Conservancy members and youth 17 or younger; \$15 for the general public. For more information and to register, visit [laconservancy.org/tours](http://laconservancy.org/tours).

### Holiday Tour Schedule

#### Historic Highlights

Saturdays, December 3, 10, & 17  
10:30 a.m.

Thursdays, December 8, 15, & 22  
10:30 a.m.

#### Clifton's

Sundays, December 4, 11, & 18  
3 p.m.

Wednesdays, December 7, 14, & 21  
11 a.m.

## Interested in Helping Plan Last Remaining Seats? We Need You!

by Bruce Scottow

Last year, we reached out to members interested in taking part in the film series they love: Last Remaining Seats (LRS), our summer program of classic films in historic theatres. More than a dozen members joined the committee, providing the help we needed to produce one of the most successful series in thirty years.

Longtime committee members welcomed the newcomers and together, their combined time and creative talents boosted attendance and helped us expand the series to include additional events and activities.

The LRS Committee is a group of volunteers who help Conservancy staff in:

- Voting on films to screen in the series
- Creating and implementing the pre/post-film programming, events, and displays
- Assisting at film screenings at the membership table, as ushers, and more!

You don't need any expertise in film or theatre, but you do need to be a current member of the Conservancy. **If you'd like to join the team, please attend our first meeting of 2017:**

### LRS Committee Meeting

**Tuesday, January 10, 2017**

7:30 – 9:30 p.m.

L.A. Conservancy office, 523 West Sixth Street, Suite 826, Downtown L.A.

If you plan to attend or would like to know more about this active committee, contact Bruce Scottow at [bscottow@laconservancy.org](mailto:bscottow@laconservancy.org) or (213) 430-4218.



In addition to assisting in selecting films and planning the series, Last Remaining Seats Committee volunteers also help at the film screenings. LRS Committee volunteer Elysha Navarro distributed programs at our sold-out screening of *Double Indemnity* at The Theatre at Ace Hotel on June 22, 2016. Photo by Stephen Russo.

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE: KAY PEGRAM

by Bruce Scottow

"I was never much of a fan of Modern architecture. But then I took one of our Modern Skyline tours. It was a mind-blowing experience."

-Kay Pegram

A longtime walking tour docent, Kay Pegram has changed her tune about Modern architecture so much that she now *leads* our Modern Skyline tour, as well as our popular Historic Downtown tour.



A native Angeleno, Kay came on board with the Conservancy as a walking tour docent in 1991. She stepped away for a while and then returned to us six years ago. As staff and volunteers will attest, you never really leave the Conservancy!

Kay recalls members of the Victorian Society taking one of her Historic Downtown tours, which includes no Victorian architecture. At the end of the tour, one member said, "We NEVER thought we'd like Los Angeles or its architecture. We love it!" Such are the rewards of docenting!

Easing into retirement from her marketing communications business, Kay spends her leisure time watching L.A.-themed movies (she cites *The Nice Guys* as one of her favorites), travel (a Shanghai trip is in the works), cooking, and caring for two "maniacal" cats.

A lover of walking tours, she and some of her adventurous friends have researched and conducted walks all over L.A. County. With the help of our Curating the City: Wilshire Blvd. microsite, she planned a walk spanning Wilshire from the ocean to downtown!



LRS Committee volunteers are in charge of planning displays in the lobby at each screening. At this display table of stills from Harold Lloyd films, LRS Committee members Lanna Pian and Robert Simonton shared information about the silent film star with attendees of *Safety Last!* at the Orpheum Theatre on June 25, 2016. Photo by Annie Laskey/L.A. Conservancy.

## DONATE

continued from page 1

cies that close loopholes and curb mansionization. We're making great progress in fighting rampant mansionization in neighborhoods like Carthay Square and Holmby Hills. Yet serious threats remain, and we must keep the pressure on decision-makers to act quickly.

The Conservancy's advocacy efforts require significant staff time and financial resources. As you plan your year-end giving, **please strengthen our voice for preservation by making a gift to the Preservation Advocacy Fund.** Your tax-deductible donation will enable us to respond quickly to urgent preservation issues as they arise, and to lend our expertise to community members who ask for our assistance.

**You can help us reach our goal of \$60,000 by December 31.** To donate, visit [laconservancy.org/donate](http://laconservancy.org/donate).

Thank you!



We're making great progress in our fight to preserve character in neighborhoods across Los Angeles, including Holmby-Westwood, where approval on a proposed Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) is pending. If approved, the HPOZ designation will help protect the neighborhood's historic buildings and guide future changes. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

COMMUNITY PLANNING continued from page 1

has been a perennial roadblock to updating community plans.

Fortunately, that is changing. In April 2016, Mayor Eric Garcetti and the City Council announced a plan to update all thirty-five community plans within ten years, if not sooner. "It's not just a question of if we're going to grow, but how we're going to grow," said the mayor to the *Los Angeles Times*.

The City's latest effort to prioritize community planning responds in part to two upcoming and competing ballot initiatives: Neighborhood Integrity and Build Better L.A. Each attempts to intercede in what many perceive as a broken planning process. From the Conservancy's perspective, both initiatives present challenges for historic preservation. Time will soon tell whether either garners enough public support and, if so, what that will mean for planning going forward.

With \$1.5 million in new annual funding for the Community Planning program, the City recently expanded its planning staff. At present, more than twenty community plan updates are in the pipeline. The Conservancy is participating in several of these updates, including downtown L.A., Boyle Heights, and Hollywood. Our involvement includes commenting on drafts and attending community meetings.

Community plan updates often span several years, and they benefit greatly when residents get involved. For instance, in 2012 the Conservancy and neighborhood partners began reviewing the draft West Adams-Baldwin Hills-Leimert Park Community Plan. This area contains some of Los Angeles' most outstanding examples of architecture and design. It encompasses the Leimert Park neighborhood, the Village Green garden apartments, and many examples of the city's Japanese and African-American cultural heritage. The City Council adopted the updated community plan in June 2016.

The Conservancy also participated in a City initiative to adopt a new Hollywood Community Plan. The updated plan, adopted in 2012, replaced one from 1988. The City was forced to rescind the new plan in 2014 after a legal challenge and court decision that found fault with the environmental review process. The highly outdated 1988 plan went

back into effect, and the City began a new update process this year.

Throughout the Hollywood community planning process, the Conservancy and Hollywood Heritage have expressed concerns regarding the effects of the plan on historic preservation. We are asking planners to evaluate the direct and cumulative impacts that could result from amendments to the plan. With high concentrations of historic resources, Hollywood contains about fifteen percent of the city's designated Historic-Cultural Monuments, as well as several local and National Register-listed historic districts.

In the Hollywood community plan update and others underway, such as for Boyle Heights, the Conservancy has raised serious concerns with the lack of clear data about the exact locations of identified historic resources. Mapping historic resources is a fundamental step in identifying, and planning for, the potential impacts of underlying zoning and proposed development.

A vast amount of data about historic resources now exists through SurveyLA, the City's first-ever comprehensive program to identify potentially historic resources throughout Los Angeles. By the end of 2016, most of the SurveyLA data will be available online at [HistoricPlacesLA.org](http://HistoricPlacesLA.org).

The Conservancy strongly believes that this data needs to be imbedded within every community plan in the city. The mapping should be a dynamic, accessible, and user-friendly tool to help planners, developers, and residents clearly understand what is at stake to potentially avoid and plan for impacts.

Community planning is a group effort, and we encourage all residents to participate. It provides a crucial opportunity to help shape the future of L.A.'s neighborhoods, which will only become more important over time, as L.A. continues to grow up, both figuratively and literally. Look for the Conservancy's new neighborhoods microsite that will launch soon to help residents better understand and know how to participate in the community planning process.

# JULY 28 / SEPTEMBER 30

## 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: LEAH PEVAR

by Liz Leshin

**And the  
Winner Is....  
Leah Pevar!**

Leah was one of twenty-two people who joined the Conservancy as a monthly member during our Member September promotion. Leah won our prize drawing for a night at the Ace Hotel Downtown Los Angeles and a \$150 gift certificate to the Ace's spectacular restaurant, L.A. Chapter. Many thanks to our generous promotional sponsor Ace Hotel Downtown Los Angeles and the Ace's general manager, Kenan Jones!



An English teacher for LAUSD, Leah went on a Conservancy walking tour in July. The tour was led by her friend Erica Hayward, a Conservancy docent since 2007. Leah and her husband Jeremy were so impressed by the tour of Broadway's Historic Theatre and Commercial District that they soon joined the Conservancy.

"I grew up in Southern California, and my husband has lived here for twenty years. We're totally into preserving Los Angeles," says Leah. "It's such a great cause to support the city that you live in, and see it maintained and appreciated."

The Pevars chose the monthly membership option because, as Leah explains, "Ten dollars a month is a very reasonable amount. When I logged in (to join), I was so pleasantly surprised to see so many monthly amount options. This is an extremely doable donation."

Thank you, Leah and Jeremy!

## CONSERVANCY WALKING TOURS

Tours cost \$10 for Conservancy members and youth 17 or younger; \$15 for the general public.

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

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

### WALKING TOURS

Angelino Heights

Art Deco

Broadway Historic Theatre &  
Commercial District

Historic Downtown

Millennium Biltmore Hotel

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](http://laconservancy.org/tours) or contact us at [info@laconservancy.org](mailto:info@laconservancy.org) or (213) 623-2489.



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## UPCOMING EVENTS



### GIVING TUESDAY

Tuesday, November 29

You've heard of Black Friday and Cyber Monday, but do you know about Giving Tuesday? Giving Tuesday kicks off the charitable season, and it's the perfect day to donate! Give online at [laconservancy.org/donate](http://laconservancy.org/donate).



### HISTORIC HIGHLIGHTS TOUR

Saturdays and Thursdays,  
December 3 – 22

Explore five downtown landmarks during the most festive time of year! Details on page 4.



### CLIFTON'S TOUR

Sundays and Wednesdays,  
December 4 – 21

Learn about the history of Clifton's and the restaurant's fascinating founder on this special tour offered only in December! Details on page 4.

Photo by Annie Laskey/L.A. Conservancy.

Photo by Jessica Hodgdon/L.A. Conservancy.