The Shifting Nature of Architectural Tours: Beyond Architecture

by Sarah Lann

The Los Angeles Conservancy has a long-standing tradition of hosting special educational tours to raise awareness of historic places and the need to preserve them. While our popular, ongoing weekend walking tours (such as Historic Downtown, Art Deco, and Union Station) focus on the historic center of Los Angeles, special tours, which occur only once and generally for a single day, have the ability to cover a wide variety of themes, architectural styles, and geographic areas. As the built environment—and the role of historic preservation—changes, our tours are also evolving to encompass much more than architecture.

The Conservancy’s special tours have explored a vast range of topics throughout the years. In 1997, the Cruising Industrial Los Angeles tour introduced guests to historic manufacturing and other industrial sites. Spectacular Vernacular in 2006 examined the correlation between custom-designed postwar homes and their tract-housing counterparts. In 2008, Noir-chitecture: A Hard-Boiled Tour through the Historic City visited spots made famous by Los Angeles’ noir fiction writers. In 2009, the tour with the unforgettable title, It’s a Mod, Mod, Mod, Mod City, toured 1960s architecture in the South Bay.

Our tours have always imparted important stories of the places we visit. Yet increasingly, we’re using new components to tell the stories of the communities and people who inhabit Los Angeles’ neighborhoods, along with architecturally significant sites. These sites are part of the city’s and its citizens’ cultural heritage. Nowhere is that more true than for the residents who live in, work in, and use those buildings on a daily basis.
Give the Gift of Membership This Holiday Season

Looking for the perfect holiday gift for the L.A. history buff or architecture lover in your life? Give a gift membership! Each gift membership comes with a full year of benefits, including presales and discounts on events such as Last Remaining Seats and special tours.

You can purchase your gift membership online at laconservancy.org/gift-memberships. To buy more than one, please contact us for convenience (you can buy only one membership online at a time).

Please allow five business days for delivery by mail, and contact us if you’d like to receive the gift membership yourself (otherwise, we’ll mail it directly to the recipient).

You can reach our membership team at member@laconservancy.org or (213) 430-4201. Thank you, and happy holidays!

Preservation Award Applications Due December 1

Do you know of a particularly fantastic preservation project that deserves recognition? Nominate it for a 2018 Conservancy Preservation Award!

Applications are available at laconservancy.org/awards and are due by 5 p.m. on Friday, December 1.

We encourage applications that convey the power of historic preservation across L.A. County. We recognize large-scale projects, grassroots efforts, people, educational programs, and more. We’ll honor the recipients at our 2018 Preservation Awards Luncheon on Wednesday, May 2.

For details and to apply, visit laconservancy.org/awards. Thanks, and good luck!

Connect with the Conservancy Online

We make every effort to make this newsletter as comprehensive and timely as possible. But in reality, it’s impossible for this printed piece to accommodate late-breaking news and opportunities. There’s so much going on between these bi-monthly newsletters—new events open and sell out, buildings are threatened and rescued—and we want to make sure you know about it! The best way to stay informed about the programs and issues you care about is by connecting with us online.

Do We Have Your Email Address?

We’re communicating more often with members by email, to share timely offers and member perks. If you haven’t updated your email address lately, please make sure we have your current address so we can reach you with important information. You can contact us at member@laconservancy.org or (213) 623-2489, or log into your account at laconservancy.org and change it in your profile.

Email Subscriptions

Email subscribers are often the first to know about our programs and issues. You can subscribe to a range of email lists for information tailored to your interests, from general E-News (sent monthly) to Action Alerts, Events, Last Remaining Seats, and more (sent only as needed). Visit laconservancy.org, click “Subscribe” in the top menu bar, and select the relevant list(s). Or, simply log into your account and edit your profile.

Social Media

We want to hear from you—find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram! You can connect with us and fellow Conservancy supporters by sharing posts and leaving comments.

Find us on Facebook at facebook.com/losangelesconservancy, and follow us on Twitter and Instagram as @LAConservancy.
Preservation Issues
by Adrian Scott Fine and Marcello Vavala

For more information about these and other preservation issues, please visit laconservancy.org/important-issues.

Crossroads Hollywood

This summer, the Conservancy submitted comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Crossroads Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Crossroads Hollywood project. This eight-acre mixed-use project in the heart of Hollywood would be anchored by the historic Crossroads of the World at 6671 Sunset Boulevard, east of Highland Avenue.

The massive project, by Harridge Development Group and longtime property owner Morton La Kretz, includes more than 1.4 million square feet of new residential, office, hotel, retail, restaurant, and entertainment space. The project would construct three large towers, each between thirty and thirty-two stories. The inward-facing project is oriented along a pedestrian paseo. Rather than promoting vibrant street life along Sunset Boulevard, the project calls for the realignment of a portion of Las Palmas Avenue.

As proposed, the project would rehabilitate the Crossroads of the World and reintroduce retail to the complex, which has functioned primarily as office space since the 1950s. However, in order to accommodate new construction, the project would demolish more than half a dozen buildings that have been identified as eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. The project would also relocate one of the buildings in the Crossroads complex and demolish the California Register-eligible Hollywood Reporter Building, which has a pending Historic-Cultural Monument nomination. The Art Deco Society of Los Angeles submitted the nomination in direct response to the development threat.

The Draft EIR contained only one preservation alternative, which was narrowly defined and appeared to be designed to fail. The Conservancy is disappointed that more potentially feasible preservation alternatives were not evaluated. Similar projects have offered additional alternatives, including partial preservation that could meet all or most of the project objectives while reducing the impacts to at least some of the threatened cultural resources. We have met with representatives of the project team and will continue to push for a range of preservation alternatives for the project.

Chuey Residence

The iconic Chuey Residence, designed by master architect Richard Neutra, is currently listed for sale, subject to bankruptcy court approval. The real estate listing was posted in August and originally contained language describing the property as “a truly unique development opportunity” that’s “ideal for a compound,” while omitting any details that the house was a masterwork by Richard Neutra.

Located at 2460 Sunset Plaza Drive, the International Style residence was constructed between 1956 and 1957. It was commissioned by the noted poet Josephine Ain Chuey and painter Robert Chuey. The home served as an intellectual and cultural gathering place for years as the setting for parties, poetry readings, and the showing of Robert Chuey’s paintings.

News that the Chuey Residence was being marketed as a teardown circulated widely online, prompting widespread concern about the future of this important residence.

The Conservancy submitted a disclosure letter to the listing agents for the property in September to make prospective buyers fully aware of the historical significance of the Chuey Residence, as well as any requirements under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) if an owner proposes a lot subdivision, demolition, and/or major alteration to the home.

The disclosure letter and widespread press coverage appear to have prompted a revision to the real estate listing, which has been updated to include details of the property’s historical significance and remove mention of any development opportunity. We are working to find a preservation-minded buyer and ensure the preservation of this very significant home.

The Fig (Flower Drive Historic District)

A highly intact California Register historic district of 1920s-era apartment buildings is threatened by a new mixed-use development project.

The group of nineteen Period Revival-style fourplexes spans two blocks of Flower Drive, next to Exposition Park. All but two of the buildings contribute to the district’s significance.

Developer Ventus Group (formerly known as Spectrum) proposes to demolish nearly half of the district: the entire 3900 block of South Flower Drive. The homes would be replaced with a project called The Fig, four seven-story structures containing a hotel, student housing, mixed-income housing, and parking.

The Conservancy submitted comments on the project’s Notice of Preparation in 2016 and will comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) released in October.

The Conservancy has also met with representatives of the project team, with a focus on exploring meaningful preservation alternatives that reuse some of the contributing structures. While the heights of the hotel and parking structures have both been reduced to seven stories (from the originally proposed twenty-one and nine stories, respectively), the overall footprint of the project’s buildings has not changed.

Special Walking Tour: Holiday Highlights

by Alex Inshishian

The sounds and sights of the holiday season are all around us. The glow of festive lights fills the air, wreaths hang on skyscrapers with care, and there’s even an ice rink in Pershing Square. Downtown is beautiful during the holidays, so start the season off right by booking a holiday tour with the Conservancy.

This December, our regularly scheduled tours will be joined by Holiday Highlights, a ninety-minute holiday remix that brings some fan favorites together on one tour. Our highly knowledgeable docents will lead you through architectural delights such as the Millennium Biltmore Hotel and PacMutual Building, all beautifully decorated.

Get in the spirit dressed in your best holiday attire, and receive a special gift from the Conservancy!

Holiday Highlights takes place at 1 p.m. on Saturdays, December 2–30 and at 5:30 p.m. on Thursdays, December 7–28. Building interiors are subject to availability.

This tour is perfect for young people and families, and you can make a day of it downtown (see below).

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Holiday Highlights Tour Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Saturdays, December 2–30</th>
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<td>Thursdays, December 7–28</td>
<td>5:30 p.m.</td>
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Reservations for Holiday Highlights will be available Wednesday, November 8 at our normal rate of $10 for Conservancy members and youth 17 and under; $15 for the general public. For more information and to register, visit laconservancy.org/tours.

Bring Holiday Visitors on a Downtown Excursion

Do you have family or friends visiting over the holidays? Conservancy walking tours are the perfect way to entertain out-of-town guests and introduce them to L.A.’s history and architecture.

In addition to our special Holiday Highlights tours in December (details above), our regular weekend walking tours will run throughout the holiday season as scheduled. With all that downtown L.A. has to offer, you can enjoy a whole day of exploration. Here are just a few suggestions.

Shopping

Saturday, November 25 (the Saturday after Thanksgiving) is Small Business Saturday. After bringing your Thanksgiving guests on one of our regular Saturday morning tours (Art Deco, Broadway Historic District, Historic Downtown, or Union Station), stay downtown and explore some of the neighborhood’s unique stores. Two of our favorites:

- **MADE by DWC**, the Downtown Women’s Center’s boutique shop. The shop is located in their historic, Preservation Award-winning 1927 building. All sales proceeds go to programs and services for homeless and low-income women. MADE by DWC is located at 438 South San Pedro Street. For details and hours, visit madebydwc.org.

- **The Last Bookstore**, a unique bookstore with used and new books, vinyl records, and a local art collective with artist studios on the second floor. The Last Bookstore is located at 453 South Spring Street, in a 1914 former bank building in the heart of the Historic Core. For details and hours, visit lastbookstorela.com.

Ice Skating in Pershing Square

From November 10 through January 16, you can ice skate in downtown’s Pershing Square. Our Art Deco, Broadway Historic District, Historic Downtown, Holiday Highlights, and Millennium Biltmore Hotel tours all meet in Pershing Square. We recommend going ice skating while you’re in the neighborhood before or after the tour. For details, visit holidayicerinkdowntownla.com.

Millennium Biltmore Hotel Tour

The Biltmore is known for its holiday decorations. Join us on Sunday afternoons for our Millennium Biltmore Hotel walking tour, and see this historic hotel decked out for the holidays. We will hold this tour as scheduled on both Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve, so it’s the perfect opportunity to bring holiday guests downtown.

We hope to see you and your guests on a walking tour this holiday season!
Docents Needed for Student Walking Tours

by Sana Ahmed

In our efforts to bring history, architecture, and a passion for preservation to young people, the Conservancy will launch new walking tours this winter designed specifically for student groups. We’ve developed versions of our signature Historic Downtown and Union Station walking tours with a focus on youth engagement and learning for third to twelfth graders. These tours incorporate engaging activities and guiding questions to foster understanding and interaction throughout the experience. The tour content also aligns with California State and Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) curricular standards across multiple disciplines, making it perfect for school field trips.

We are thrilled to provide a more enriching experience for student groups. To best deliver this new educational content, we’ll hold training sessions in December for existing docents who would like to lead student tours, as well as new docent volunteers.

Whether or not you’re already a walking tour docent, we encourage you to apply for our Student Walking Tour Docent Program if you’re interested in igniting a passion in youth for Los Angeles history, preservation of historic spaces, and community awareness. Experience in education, though welcome, is not required. We invite all professional backgrounds.

Join us in this exciting new opportunity, and spread the word to those who enjoy working with youth!

How to Apply

If you’re interested or just curious, please submit a volunteer application online at laconservancy.org/about/volunteers. Be sure to indicate your interest in Student Walking Tours by checking the relevant box.

Submit your application by noon on Monday, December 4 to be considered for the December training program.

Please complete the volunteer application even if you’re already a walking tour docent. We’ve updated it and need to make sure we have the most accurate information.

Training Schedule

Docent training for Student Walking Tours will take place over three days:

Wednesday, December 6, 7–9 p.m.
Saturday, December 9, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
Saturday, December 16, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.

Attendance at all trainings is mandatory. If you can’t make these sessions, stay tuned for news of additional training in spring 2018.

If you would like more information or have any questions, please contact Sana Ahmed, education specialist, at sahmed@laconservancy.org or (213) 430-4216.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE: CHRIS SPRY

In his own words: “Trained as an architect, I apprenticed in Florida, where I had a brief association with the Miami Design Preservation League at its startup in 1978. That was short-lived, as I relocated to Los Angeles later that year. Soon after, we bought a house in Silver Lake, a neighborhood whose architectural lineage is impressive. I was interested in all of it!

I joined the Conservancy in 1985 to support the Los Angeles Central Library preservation effort and to help save the Silver Lake and Rowena Reservoirs. Despite a heavy work schedule in facility management at TRW, now Northrop Grumman, I remained up on the Conservancy’s causes.

You could say my “aha” moment hit during their 2009 tour, It’s a Mod, Mod, Mod, Mod City. I then took almost every downtown walking tour the Conservancy offered. My retirement in 2015 proved well-timed, as I was accepted into the Conservancy’s walking tour docent training class early the next year.

Leading the tours is addictive. Initially trained as an Art Deco docent, I soon wanted to lead other tours as well. I found that the crossover of knowledge from one tour to another gives me a stronger background in all of them. I love the physicality of the walking tour format, as well as the varied guests and docents I meet while doing the tours. Apart from tour docenting, I am an avid collector of miniature souvenir buildings, and am involved in the Souvenir Building Collector’s Society.”
DONATE
continued from page 1

LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A.

This year, we released three short films highlighting places with important LGBTQ history: The Black Cat in Silver Lake, The Woman’s Building in Chinatown, and Plummer Park’s Great Hall/Long Hall in West Hollywood. In 2018, we will expand the series to recognize additional sites in L.A. County.

Chicano Moratorium

We’ve submitted a National Register nomination to document the history and significant places associated with the Chicano Moratorium Marches in East Los Angeles, which took place between 1969 and 1971.

Help Us Do Even More

We believe that L.A. County’s greatest strength and resource is its diversity. No single place or voice can encapsulate our region’s history, and we are committed to uncovering the layers of history that have often been overlooked.

Please boost our efforts to recognize and protect significant places throughout L.A. County by giving a gift of any amount by December 31. You’ll enjoy tax benefits and make even more of a difference in preserving the historic places that matter to all Angelenos. Donate online at laconservancy.org/paf. Thank you!

BEYOND ARCHITECTURE continued from page 1

As an organization dedicated to recognizing, preserving, and revitalizing the historic and cultural resources of Los Angeles County, the Conservancy strives to provide tour guests with the knowledge and context necessary to unlock meaning and appreciation for a particular area or building. We believe that telling the stories of a neighborhood’s development from a physical, cultural, and social perspective is imperative in this effort.

Our past three special tours—Exploring Chinatown: Past and Present, The Homes of View Park, and L.A.’s K-Town: Culture and Community (November 3–5)—included specific educational components. Panel discussions and presentations by architects, community leaders, academics, and preservationists provide a fuller understanding of the buildings, blocks, and landscapes that tourgoers visit.

To help guests get a real feel for the neighborhoods, recent tours have included historic pub crawls and scavenger hunts. Activities organized by community members range from bake sales to Neighborhood Ambassadors (local volunteers stationed along the tour routes). While not entirely new to Conservancy tours, this direct participation by residents has grown far more common and integral to the experience.

Neighborhood organizations can offer tourgoers something the Conservancy simply can’t: they bridge the gap between our interpretation of the built environment and the lives of its residents—their impact on the neighborhood, and vice versa. We are grateful for participation by organizations such as the Chinese American Museum, who opened on their day off just for the Chinatown tour, and the Korean Youth Community Center, whose youth groups worked at one of the Koreatown tour sites.

Preservation of the built environment is important not just because of architectural or historical criteria, but also because places contain the stories of the people who inhabit them. As historic preservationist Ned Kaufman wrote in *Place, Race, and Story: Essays on the Past and Future of Historic Preservation*, “Because stories live at once inside people and places, they remind us of an important truth: that the meaning of a place lies neither wholly in its forms and materials nor wholly in the minds of the people who use it, but arises out of the interaction of the two.”

Nothing attests more to this truth of a place’s duality than when we consider where, or what, the places we preserve and explore even are. What is Koreatown, really? Where is it? Who defines it? The City Council, with its official boundaries, or the community itself, which spills beyond them?

In planning our Koreatown tour, the Conservancy needed to examine what “Koreatown” means, from both a physical and a cultural standpoint. A tour of Koreatown with preservation at its heart must explore both of these arenas. It must tell the story of the grand Art Deco buildings that line Wilshire Boulevard, the Korean market used as a gathering place by shopkeepers during the L.A. riots, and the second-generation-run Oaxacan restaurant, housed in a building with the architecture of a traditional Korean palace.

All of them are Koreatown. All of them are worth preserving.
AUGUST 9 / SEPTEMBER 24
MEMBERSHIP REPORT

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

CORPORATE MARBLE
CORNERSTONE
($5,000 - $9,999)
Forest City Development

CORPORATE GRANITE
CORNERSTONE
($2,500 - $4,999)
AEG Real Estate
Caruso Affiliated Holdings, LLC
The Spirited Group

GRANITE CORNERSTONE
($2,500 - $4,999)
Jan Westman

CORPORATE LIMESTONE
CORNERSTONE
($1,000 - $2,499)
Frederick Fisher & Partners
Gruen Associates
Marmol Radziner and Associates
The Mike and Corky Hale Stoller Foundation
Park & Velayos, LLP

LIMESTONE CORNERSTONE
($1,000 - $2,499)
Alice Carr and Nathaniel Grouille
Eric Moore
Gary and Jeanne Newman
Chris Regan and Susannah Keagle
Ann and Robert Ronus
Andree Valdry
Kenneth and Jann Williams

BENEFACOR
($500 - $999)
Gail and Rod Crosby
Steven Fader and Nalsey Tinberg

CORPORATE MARBLE
CORNERSTONE
($5,000 - $9,999)
Judie McKee
Rebecca Pynoos
William Rendahl
Michael Sfregola and Sue Shanley
Susan Steinhauer and Daniel Greenberg
George and Brad Takei
Mary Alice Toomey

SUSTAINING
($250 - $499)
Douglas Allan
Martha Andreani
Kathleen and Barry Blodgett
Julie Lugo Cerra
Donald and Zoe Cosgrove
Michael and Joy Forbes
Gary T. Izumi
Toula Kalatzis
Azar Kattan
Pauline Lemire
Judith Levitt and Walter Koenig
Leslie S. Lyndon and Bill Carey
Laura Massino
Peg Meehan
Ruth Mehringer
Weston Milliken
Bret Parsons
Arline Pepp
Arthur and Patricia Price
Michael Rabkin and Chip Tom
Maria Romano
Alex Rose
Howard Smith
Jolene Abbott
Jason Ahn
Eva and Rod Brettler
Jodi Colburn
Gail Conway
Emma Cortes
Carol Ellis
Ron and Sheharazad Fleming
David Gajda
Steven Giannotta
Gary and Judy Gonser
Jacqueline Ismen
Letha Joan Kemper
Alia Klein and Sandra Rubalcaba
Marian Manzer
Bret McMurray
Larry Miller
Daniel and Alice Mitchell
Mary Ann Morris and Robert Urling
Su Pari
Bill and Katherine Rinehart
Kitty Sarkissian
Madeline Schilder
Fran Solmor and David Grust
Aaron Tanaka and Jun Luge
Gail Wise and Gary Lemon
Rachel Yoo

Hugh M. Hefner (1926 – 2017)

Hugh Hefner, the founder of Playboy and a longtime Conservancy supporter, passed away on September 27 at age 91.

Hefner had a lifelong passion for classic film and sponsored an evening of our Last Remaining Seats film series (typically the silent film) for many years. He often brought a bus filled with friends to the screenings. We greatly appreciate his long-standing support.

DO WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?

As a Conservancy member, you can enjoy members-only discounts and other perks throughout the year. However, sometimes these opportunities arise between issues of this newsletter, so you might miss out if you don’t subscribe to our email lists (see page 2).

This summer, our City Hall walking tours sold out before members received their July/August newsletters. Our special walking tour, Lawrence Halprin: Reconnecting the Heart of Los Angeles, also sold out very quickly this fall, and our October 7 open house at the Formosa Café took place outside of our newsletter publication schedule. Subscribers to our Events and E-News email lists were among the first to know about these events.

We typically email members when member presales begin for special events such as our Koreatown tour or Last Remaining Seats series. We want you to take advantage of this membership perk, so please make sure we have your current email address on file (or consider opting back into email if you’ve opted out in the past).

Have you changed your email address? Give us a call at (213) 623-2489 or email member@laconservancy.org, and make sure we have your current email address connected to your membership record. We can also sign you up for any of our email newsletters.

You can also update your contact information and email subscriptions at any time by signing into your website account at laconservancy.org.

Thank you for being a valued member of the Conservancy!

Conservancy President and CEO Linda Dishman with Hugh Hefner at our 2010 screening of American Graffiti. Photo by Gary Leonard.
For the latest updates and hundreds of historic places to explore, visit laconservancy.org.

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS
WALKING TOUR
December 2–28

Explore some of downtown L.A.’s landmarks when they’re all dressed up for the holidays! Learn more on page 4.

PLEASE DONATE TO THE PRESERVATION ADVOCACY FUND

Donations to our Preservation Advocacy Fund go above and beyond membership dues to support our advocacy work, including our new LGBTQ film series (pictured). Details on page 1.

PRESERVATION AWARD APPLICATIONS
Due December 1

Each spring, we honor some of the best in recent preservation work at our annual Preservation Awards Luncheon. Nominate a completed project by December 1. Learn more on page 2.

CONSERVANCY WALKING TOURS

Tours cost $10 for Conservancy members and youth 17 and 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. Questions? Contact us at info@laconservancy.org or (213) 623-2489.

WALKING TOURS

Angelino Heights
First Saturday of every month

Art Deco
Every Saturday

Broadway Historic Theatre & Commercial District
Every Saturday

Historic Downtown
Every Saturday

Millennium Biltmore Hotel
Every Sunday

Union Station
Every Saturday

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

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

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