We ♥ Garden Apartments! Visit Three “Villages in the City” November 1

by Sarah Weber

Join us on Saturday, November 1 from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for a special tour of three garden apartment communities in Los Angeles. You’ll see firsthand why garden apartments are so special, yet increasingly vulnerable to demolition and redevelopment.

This one-time-only tour will include an opening session to hear from experts about the history of garden apartments in Los Angeles. We’ll screen a brief documentary about garden apartments and discuss our work to preserve them, including our current efforts at Wyvernwood in Boyle Heights (1939), which is threatened with demolition. You’ll then drive yourself to three garden apartment communities to explore their fascinating design, landscape, and interior living spaces:

• The Village Green in Baldwin Hills (1941)
• Chase Knolls in Sherman Oaks (1948)
• Lincoln Place in Venice (1951)

Don’t miss the chance to explore these places firsthand. Tickets are $25 for Conservancy members and residents of The Village Green, Lincoln Place, and Chase Knolls; $35 for the general public; $15 for students; and $10 for children 12 and under. For details and tickets, visit laconservancy.org/gardentour.

Special thanks to Aimco/Lincoln Place Apartment Homes, Chase Knolls Garden Apartments, Historic Resources Group, and K. C. Restoration for their generous tour sponsorship.

A New Approach to Multi-Family Housing

The origins of garden apartments lie in the British Garden City Movement of the nineteenth century, fostered by urban planner Ebenezer Howard and later by Americans.
Preservation Advocacy Fund: The Heart of the Matter

Some of the Conservancy’s advocacy efforts this year have been dramatic, such as the litigation against the City of West Hollywood to force compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (see page 1).

Other recent advocacy has been more incremental, such as supporting residents of the View Park neighborhood in their grassroots, proactive work to form their own View Park Conservancy, and pursue a historic district nomination for their neighborhood.

What both types of efforts have in common is that they take a significant amount of Conservancy staff time and financial resources. We are fortunate to have the support of members like you, whose membership dues provide about one-third of our annual revenue.

Another third of our revenue comes from philanthropic support beyond membership dues, including donations to the Preservation Advocacy Fund, which enables the Conservancy to remain a strong voice for preservation in Los Angeles County.

As you plan your year-end giving, please strengthen our voice for preservation by giving a gift of any amount to the fund by December 31. You’ll enjoy tax benefits and make a real difference in preserving the historic places that matter to you. Donate online at laconservancy.org or by calling (213) 430-4204. Thank you!

Website, Tours Garner Awards

We are honored to have received two awards in recent months: the Los Angeles Downtown News’ 2014 Best of Downtown Award for Downtown Tours, as well as the third annual Blue Drop Award for Best Advocacy Website.

The Blue Drop Award recognizes websites created on the Drupal web platform. The Conservancy won the Best Advocacy Website award for what the Drupal community described as a “beautiful Drupal website that was accessible and easy to use both in the browser and on mobile devices” and a “user-friendly back end that allowed for manageable updates and a wealth of editable content… Robust microsites put the spotlight on the historic destinations they sought to preserve, encouraging social media engagement and event registration through ease of use and vibrant imagery.”

Launched in June 2013, the Conservancy website at laconservancy.org was made possible by generous grants from the Getty Foundation, the Ahmanson Foundation, and other sources. It was created under the leadership of Conservancy staff by the talented firms of ThinkShout, YYES, and KELL Partners.

Kurt Meyer (1922-2014)

Modern architect Kurt Meyer passed away in August. Born in Switzerland, Meyer relocated to Los Angeles in 1949. He was best known for his commercial projects, including his designs for financial institutions such as Lytton Savings. Some of his other major career achievements include designing the master plans for Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), Pasadena City College, the Huntington Beach Civic Center, University of Redlands, and San Bernardino County Government Center.

Meyer served on the Conservancy’s first advisory council and was chairman of L.A.’s Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) from 1976 to 1978. “Kurt was a passionate advocate for great architecture in Los Angeles,” said Margaret Bach, the Conservancy’s founding president, in the Los Angeles Times. Meyer told the L.A. Times in 1983, “I don’t believe that it comes down to a choice of serving the community or running a successful practice… it is possible to do both.”

Our Los Angeles Conservancy Modern Committee recognized Meyer in December 2013 with a Modern Masters Award.
Preservation Issues
by Laura Dominguez, Adrian Scott Fine, Manuel Huerta, and Marcello Vavala

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

Parker Center

The City of Los Angeles, through its Bureau of Engineering (BOE), is pressing for the demolition and replacement of Parker Center, located at 150 N. Los Angeles Street in downtown’s Civic Center. In June 2014, the BOE announced its preference to replace Parker Center with one or two twenty-seven-story towers on the site.

Designed by Welton Becket & Associates and J. E. Stanton, Parker Center opened in 1955 as the Police Facilities Building (renamed in 1966 to honor Chief William H. Parker). The eight-story, International Style building with integrated art and landscaping components was a significant postwar addition to the Civic Center.

Parker Center was considered a state-of-the-art crime-fighting facility and one of the first centralized police buildings in the nation. Special features included a criminology lab, a lineup auditorium, and a communications center. It also includes two site-specific art pieces as part of the original design: the bronze sculpture “The Family Group” by artist Bernard J. Rosenthal on the building’s exterior and the expansive mosaic “Theme Mural of Los Angeles” by artist Joseph Young on the interior.

Parker Center provides the backdrop to important and often controversial stories of mid-twentieth-century Los Angeles, from early urban renewal and its impact on Little Tokyo and the Japanese-American community, to the turbulent evolution of the city’s modern-day police force. It offers a prime opportunity to acknowledge, and learn from, more complicated aspects of the city’s history.

The building was first threatened with demolition for a new police facilities building in the early 2000s. The City considers the now-vacant Parker Center’s central location prime for housing city staff and addressing the need for approximately 1.1 million square feet of office space. At an estimated cost of $475 million, the City’s preferred project would provide a net of 588,240 square feet and house 2,945 employees.

A preservation alternative—and what the Conservancy suggests has the best opportunity for a “win-win” outcome—retains and rehabilitates the main portion of Parker Center. It calls for the addition of an eleven-story wing to the rear. At an estimated cost of $325 million, this option would provide a net of 354,499 square feet and house 1,775 employees. Additional height and density can be achieved with modification to provide a greater amount of overall square footage, housing even more employees while reusing Parker Center.

Reinvesting in Parker Center reuses an important historic building with an expansion that can accommodate modern, twenty-first century technologies; allows for at least 1,775 or more employees to be housed in centralized location near City Hall; offers the same if not better capabilities to connect and engage with the Little Tokyo neighborhood and community; honors the city’s past and history, and tells the story of L.A.; and saves the taxpayers $150 million.

Please sign the Conservancy’s petition at change.org/p/reuse-parker-center and tell the City of L.A. to reuse, not demolish, this historic building. Thank you!

Fifth Church of Christ, Scientist

The recently announced Hollywood Horizon project calls for the demolition of one of Hollywood’s significant churches: the former Fifth Church of Christ, Scientist at the northwest corner of Hollywood Boulevard and La Brea Avenue. The Modern house of worship was designed by local architect Howard Elwell, and the first services were held in the completed church in 1960.

The distinctive, fan-shaped building is dramatically sited with a curved facade oriented toward the corner and grand entrances off both streets accessed through arched portals.

The building is constructed of reinforced brick and reinforced concrete tilt-up panels. The amphitheater-style auditorium was carefully designed for acoustical efficiency, featuring a fan-shaped accordion ceiling and canted rear walls.

The congregation, whose numbers had declined in recent years, sold the property in 2008 to New York-based developer LeFrak Organization. The new owner is partnering with Beverly Hills-based developer Kennedy Wilson on the project.

As proposed, the project would have 140 apartments in three buildings of six, eight and twenty-four stories. The Conservancy is pressing for the consideration of preservation alternatives that would retain and incorporate the building as part of the proposed project.
Our Vision for the Future

by Cindy Olnick

Thanks largely to the support of members like you, the Conservancy has evolved since 1978 from a small grassroots group into a powerful force for historic preservation. We’re pleased to report that the organization is strong and stable. Yet like any other organization, we must continue to evolve in order to meet new needs in a large, diverse, and dynamic landscape.

In 2013, the Conservancy’s board of directors and senior staff launched an intensive strategic planning process to assess our current strengths and areas of opportunity, and to set forth a vision for the next several years.

Our strategic goals for 2014-2018 stem from an overall vision of enhancing the Conservancy’s impact, engagement, and visibility. They appear briefly below.

Instill the value of tangible history.

Many people don’t realize the impact of historic places on their everyday lives, or how preservation relates to broader issues including livability, sustainability, and density. To instill the value of historic places, the Conservancy will:

• Bring the preservation community into the fold of broader issues and public policy initiatives, such as re:code LA and local preservation policies;
• Cultivate the next generation of preservationists by developing a dedicated, high-priority youth initiative; and
• Encourage and support the funding of local grassroots preservation.

Enhance our role as a local, regional, and national leader in historic preservation.

The Conservancy has built a strong track record of leadership locally, regionally, and nationally. To leverage our expertise, build capacity throughout Los Angeles County, and contribute to advancements in the field of historic preservation, we will:

• Continue to practice effective, innovative advocacy and education;
• Identify emerging issues and develop new intellectual concepts; and
• Foster dialogue and collaboration among a wide range of stakeholders including developers, elected officials, community members, and preservation organizations.

Strengthen our profile as a proactive part of the solution.

Preservationists are often derided as obstructionists who oppose any change to the built environment. As you know, this is a myth. To raise our profile as a proactive voice for preservation, we will:

• Highlight our role as a partner and a resource for developers to help them meet their goals in a way that respects historic places; and
• Work to increase the understanding that preservation and development are not mutually exclusive, and that we can help projects succeed by showcasing the unique historic resources at their core.

Broaden our impact and the visibility of our work.

The Conservancy serves all of Los Angeles County—eighty-eight cities plus the county’s unincorporated areas. To broaden our impact across this broad region, we will:

• Increase our efforts to foster preservation throughout the county, through initiatives including our Preservation Report Card;
• Work to unite diverse communities and amplify our voice through multi-year initiatives spanning both advocacy and education; and
• Heighten the visibility of our work through strategic communications, learning more about our various constituencies and how best to engage them in the ongoing conversations about preserving the historic places that make Greater L.A. unique.

Deepen our focus on issues of diversity.

Los Angeles County is an extremely diverse region with constantly shifting demographics. To maintain relevance, more effectively engage the region’s population, and more fully reflect the area’s history, the Conservancy will:

• Increase the diversity of our constituents and our programming; and
• Help people add their own layers of history to important places, using preservation as a tool to build community.

Expand our base of support.

Preservation is ultimately about the connections between places and people, and we need more people involved in the effort. To this end, we will:

• Form new strategic partnerships with allied organizations and professionals;
• Develop programming for new and under-served audiences; and
• Work to better understand our constituents.

Increase our membership and revenues to sustain a proactive, ambitious agenda.

To meet our strategic goals and advance our mission, we will:

• Sustain and expand our membership;
• Increase general operating support; and
• Focus efforts on major gifts and planned giving, to help sustain the organization’s well-being over the long term.

Strengthen our organizational capacity to enable the pursuit of strategic efforts.

To make sure we succeed in these and other efforts, the Conservancy will:

• Update our bylaws;
• Evaluate our signature programs;
• Strengthen our communications capacity; and
• Invest in the administrative functions that are increasingly critical to our mission and operations.

To learn more about our strategic plan, and to read our mission statement and values statement, visit laconservancy.org/strategic-plan.

In the past few months, the Conservancy has been hard at work developing two new microsites for our always-growing website at laconservancy.org.

Curating the City: Eastside L.A. (laconservancy.org/eastside) explores the layered history of Eastside neighborhoods, focusing on three interconnected communities in the area’s history: Latino, Japanese American, and Jewish American.

Housing discrimination was commonplace in early twentieth-century Los Angeles, and local housing covenants often prohibited non-Caucasians from living in certain neighborhoods. These restrictions contributed to the multiculturalism of the Eastside, outside the center of the city, where different communities co-existed and, in many cases, worked together to create social change.

The microsite features a searchable map of notable locations in the area, which you can filter by architect, style, location, decade, and more. Like the rest of the site, we will expand the map over time with new locations. We hope you’ll visit soon to explore these sites and share your own stories of historic Eastside L.A.

Curating the City: Wilshire Blvd. (laconservancy.org/wilshire) is based on our award-winning website at curatingthecity.org, created in 2005. As the website approached the end of its life span, we moved the content to our main website and updated it with new content and photos.

Spanning sixteen miles and three cities from downtown L.A. to the ocean, Wilshire Boulevard played a key role in the history and development of Los Angeles. It represents virtually every major architectural style of the twentieth century, encompasses the most dense and ethnically diverse neighborhoods of Los Angeles, and embodies changing visions of urban life.

Like the Eastside L.A. microsite, the new Curating the City: Wilshire Blvd. features a searchable, filterable map of nearly 150 notable locations lining the boulevard. We hope you enjoy both of these new online offerings, and we encourage you to share your own stories of special places on Wilshire and the Eastside.

Home Alone Comes to the Orpheum
by Bruce Scottow

Join us on Sunday, December 7 at 2 p.m. for the Conservancy’s ninth annual holiday film matinee. This year, we will present John Hughes’ Home Alone at the magnificent OrpheumTheatre (1926) on Broadway.

This 1990 film carries the tag line, “A family comedy without the family.” In their mad rush to pack their bags and catch their flight to Paris for the holidays, Kevin’s family forgot one small detail: Kevin.

Initially happy to have the house all to himself, Kevin (Macaulay Culkin) quickly realizes that he is not, in fact, home alone. Enter two bumbling burglars, played by Joe Pesci and Daniel Stern, who soon discover that the empty home they thought would be easy pickings is guarded by one very crafty eight-year-old. Anticipating the burglars’ plans for a Christmas Eve break-in, Kevin booby traps the house, teaching the idiotic duo some hilarious, and often painful, lessons.

This must-see classic will screen at the historic Orpheum Theatre in downtown L.A.’s Broadway Theatre District. The Orpheum opened in 1926, the fourth and final house in Los Angeles operated by the Orpheum vaudeville circuit. Designed by G. Albert Lansburgh, the theatre reflects the gilded and formal French Renaissance style of the sixteenth century. A multimillion-dollar rehabilitation was completed in 2001 under the direction of its owner, Steve Needleman.

Tickets for the holiday film matinee are $10 for Conservancy members, $5 for children 12 and under, and $15 for the general public. For details, visit laconservancy.org.
LITIGATION continued from page 1

to allow meaningful evaluation and comparison with the proposed project.

“Cities have to obey the law when it comes to environmental review,” said Adrian Scott Fine, the Conservancy’s director of advocacy. “West Hollywood’s actions set a dangerous precedent and exemplify a growing trend of cities dismissing their legal responsibilities under CEQA.”

The Melrose Triangle Project EIR failed to consider a range of reasonable preservation alternatives or to adequately analyze the alternatives and mitigations that it did consider, including the feasible adaptive reuse and incorporation of the Jones Dog & Cat Hospital building into an economically viable mixed-use project.

In addition to the Conservancy, local advocacy groups including the West Hollywood Preservation Alliance, the Art Deco Society of Los Angeles, and Save the SMB Streamline Moderne have worked tirelessly for the reuse of the building as part of the project.

The developer of the Melrose Triangle Project, the Charles Company, had agreed over the summer to work with the preservation community and evaluate options that would incorporate the building. The Conservancy has worked successfully with the Charles Company in the past to reuse the Golden Gate Theatre in East Los Angeles as a retail drugstore. Yet in this case, the developer proposed only to reconstruct a small portion of the Jones Dog & Cat Hospital facade in a new location. This approach is not meaningful preservation.

FALL TOUR continued from page 1

Clarence S. Stein and Henry Wright. They envisioned planned environments of low density, human scale, park-like landscaping, and shared open space that connected people with nature and with each other. Los Angeles is believed to have the second largest collection of historic garden apartments in the nation.

Ironically, the very qualities that distinguish garden apartments make them vulnerable to demolition and redevelopment. The Conservancy has been working with activists and communities for many years to preserve historic garden apartments. As you tour three very special communities, you’ll see exactly why they are worth saving.

The Village Green

The Village Green (formerly called Baldwin Hills Village) is recognized worldwide as a pivotal and progressive experiment in multi-family housing.

The 1941 complex in Baldwin Hills spans sixty-four acres and contains more than 600 residential units. Its all-star design team included Reginald D. Johnson, Lewis E. Wilson, Edwin E. Merrill, Robert E. Alexander, Clarence S. Stein, and landscape architect Fred Barlow, Jr.

The Village Green epitomized Garden City planning principles: the use of the superblock, homes facing central greens, and complete separation of people from cars.

It has been lovingly preserved and cared for by generations of residents. It is the only garden apartment community in California designated as a National Historic Landmark, the highest level of recognition bestowed by the National Park Service.

Chase Knolls

Chase Knolls was designed by Heth Wharton and Ralph Vaughn on thirteen acres of former dairy land in Sherman Oaks. Its buildings have a simple, modern appearance, with elegant horizontal lines, steel casement windows, and wide overhanging eaves, shading upper-story windows from the hot Valley sun.

Wharton and Vaughn worked with landscape architect Margaret Schoch on the design of Chase Knolls. Schoch’s landscape provides open gardens, meandering walking paths, and the shade of century-old trees, which pre-dated the complex.

In 2000, the then-owners planned to demolish the 260-unit development and replace it with a project that would double the density on the site. Following strong opposition from long-time tenants, elected officials, and the Conservancy, the owners ultimately decided to preserve Chase Knolls. The buildings have since been rehabbed with new roofs, period-appropriate paint colors, and the restoration of key features.

Lincoln Place

Also designed by Wharton and Vaughn, the 1951 Lincoln Place apartments in Venice were built for low- to moderate-income residents. Standardized layouts kept material costs down, though a variety of design elements made each building visually distinctive and modern in character.

Spanning more than thirty acres, Lincoln Place originally contained 795 one- and two-bedroom units in fifty-one buildings a mile from the beach.

In 2001, the previous owner proposed its full-scale demolition and redevelopment into hundreds of market-rate condominiums.
AUGUST 12 / SEPTEMBER 23
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.

CORPORATE GRANITE CORNERSTONE
($2,500 - $4,999)
Architectural Resources Group
Skye Partners
Sunset Junction
Shopping Center
GRANITE CORNERSTONE
($2,500 - $4,999)
Steven D. Archer and Paula Bacon
Steven Cerasale and Mary Katherine Codaro
CORPORATE LIMESTONE CORNERSTONE
($1,000 - $2,499)
City National Bank
Structural Focus
LIMESTONE CORNERSTONE
($1,000 - $2,499)
Linda Dishman and John Hinrichs
Elizabeth Leviit Hirsch
Catherine Meyler
The Mike and Corky Hale Stoller Foundation
Jeanne and Gary Newman
Dick and Donice Pancost
Bret Parsons
Patricia Serenbetz
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Jan Westman
Kenneth and Jann Williams

BENEFACCTOR
($500 - $999)
Robert and Ellen Foster
Jolie and Jon Jashni
Mary Alice Toomey
SUSTAINING
($250 - $499)
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($100 - $249)
Fran Black and Joe Markowitz
Liz Brunwin and Ari Hyman
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Patricia Lombard and William Simon
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Daniel and Alice Mitchell
Michael Nissman
Patti O’Neill and Michael Walzman
Sandra Pattison
Janet Raffalow
Deborah Reamer and Andrew Clare
Bill and Katherine Rinehart
Richard Shrieve and Yvonne Don
Jane Taylor
Thomas and Faye Triggs
Linda Venis and Gary Berg

GIVE A GIFT MEMBERSHIP FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Looking for an easy and meaningful holiday gift that you can give to anyone, even at the last minute? Why not share your passion for preservation by giving a gift membership to a family member, friend, or colleague for the holidays?

Each gift membership comes with a full year of benefits, including Conservancy News and special discounts, as well as advance notice of special tours and events.

If you purchase a gift membership by December 31, the Conservancy will invite both you and your gift recipient to a special walking tour of Union Station, to take place in early 2015.

You can purchase your gift membership online at laconservancy.org.

Thank you, and happy holidays!

GARDEN APARTMENTS continued from page 6

Ownership changed hands to Denver-based Aimco (Apartment and Investment Management Company).

The fight to save Lincoln Place evolved through multiple owners into an epic preservation battle with illegal demolitions and several lawsuits. Ultimately, a historic preservation agreement signed in 2010 included rehabilitating the remaining 696 units and building ninety-nine new units to replace the ones that had been demolished.

Lincoln Place reopened in August 2014, once again providing high-quality apartment living in a low-density environment.

Learn much more about the history and preservation of these communities at the “We Heart Garden Apartments!” tour on Saturday, November 1. We hope to see you there!

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. Questions? Call the Conservancy office at (213) 623-2489.

WEEKLY TOURS

Art Deco  
Every Saturday
Biltmore Hotel  
Every Sunday, 2 p.m.
Broadway: Historic Theatre & Commercial District  
Every Saturday
Historic Downtown  
Every Saturday
Union Station  
Every Saturday

BI-WEEKLY AND MONTHLY TOURS

Angelino Heights  
First Saturday
Downtown Renaissance: Spring & Main  
Second and Fourth Saturdays
Modern Skyline  
First and Third Saturdays, 2 p.m.
Youth, family, and group tours by arrangement; call (213) 623-2489 for information.

For the latest information about issues and events, visit laconservancy.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

WE **GARDEN APARTMENTS**!  
Saturday, November 1  
10:00 am - 4:30 pm

Don’t miss for our fall tour, which will offer rare access to three garden apartment communities throughout Los Angeles. Details on page 1.

HOME ALONE  
Orpheum Theatre  
Sunday, December 7

Celebrate the holiday season at our annual holiday matinee. Join us at the historic Orpheum Theatre for a screening of this holiday favorite. See page 5 for details.

MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO OUR PRESERVATION ADVOCACY FUND BY DECEMBER 31

Donations to the Preservation Advocacy Fund enable us to remain a strong voice for preservation in L.A. County. Learn more on page 2.
DECEMBER 7, 2014
at 2 p.m.
at the historic
ORPHEUM THEATRE

FROM JOHN HUGHES
HOME Alone
A FAMILY COMEDY WITHOUT THE FAMILY

© 20th Century Fox

LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY PRESENTS
In their mad rush to pack their bags and catch their flight to Paris for the holidays, Kevin’s family forgot one small detail: Kevin. Initially happy to have the house all to himself, Kevin (Macaulay Culkin) quickly realizes that he is not, in fact, home alone.

Enter two bumbling burglars, played by Joe Pesci and Daniel Stern, who soon discover that the empty home they thought would be easy pickings is guarded by one very crafty eight-year-old. Anticipating the burglars’ plans for a Christmas Eve break-in, Kevin booby traps the house, teaching the idiotic duo some hilarious, and often painful, lessons.

The film will screen at the historic Orpheum Theatre in downtown L.A.’s Broadway Theatre District. The Orpheum opened in 1926, the fourth and final house in Los Angeles operated by the Orpheum vaudeville circuit. Designed by G. Albert Lansburgh, the theatre reflects the gilded and formal French Renaissance style of the sixteenth century. A multimillion-dollar rehabilitation was completed in 2001 under the direction of its owner, Steve Needleman. The Orpheum is a popular event and filming location and was featured in the 2011 Academy Award-winning film, The Artist.

Happy Holidays from the Los Angeles Conservancy!