



# LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY NEWS



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1947 view of the Jones Dog and Cat Hospital. Photo courtesy Marcello Vavala.

## Dog & Cat Hospital Building at Risk

by *Adrian Scott Fine*

Throughout the Conservancy’s history, we have found that some historic places resonate with people more than others, especially when these places are threatened. This is the case with the Jones Dog & Cat Hospital building at 9080 Santa Monica Boulevard in West Hollywood, where a proposed mixed-use development calls for the demolition of this notable and rare example of a Streamline Moderne commercial building.

The Conservancy has been working with the West Hollywood Preservation Alliance, the Art Deco Society of Los Angeles, and the community advocacy group Save the SMB Streamline Moderne. In August, despite overwhelming community opposition, the West Hollywood City Council voted to approve the project pending traffic mitigation, but with no preservation option for the building. Despite this setback, preservationists are committed to pressing for a preservation alternative that will ultimately save this significant building.

At the core of this issue is the needless loss of a historic building. This trend is now all too common in the Los Angeles area, as the economy bounces back and land values place enormous development pressures on older buildings. Yet this issue is also about a local government’s responsibility and duty to look out for its historic and cultural resources, and a lesson to be learned when that does not happen.

Built in 1938, the former Jones Dog & Cat Hospital may be the city’s only remaining intact example of the early work of master architects Walter Wurdeman and Welton Becket. The renowned team designed numerous buildings that are now considered landmarks in the Los Angeles area, including the former Mobil Oil/General Petroleum Building (now Pegasus Apartments) downtown and Bullock’s Pasadena (now Macy’s). Their early commissions are rare and give us insight into their design sensibilities and evolution.

Other early examples of Wurdeman and Becket’s work have already been lost, including the

*Please see STREAMLINE MODERNE on page 6*

## Garden Apartments Will Bloom on Fall Tour

by *Sarah Weber*

In November, the Conservancy will hold a special one-day tour exploring several garden apartment communities in Los Angeles. Details, including the date and specific sites, will come soon by email to our E-News and Events email readers.

**The best way to stay informed about the fall tour and all Conservancy events is to subscribe to our email newsletters.**

To subscribe, visit [laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org), click “Newsletter” in the top menu bar, and fill out the form. If you have a user account on our website, you can also subscribe by clicking the “Edit” tab in your user profile and selecting the relevant checkbox(es).

Los Angeles has one of the largest collections of garden apartments in the nation, with nearly forty built between the late 1930s and the mid-1950s. The design of garden apartments puts people first, prioritizing quality of life and opportunities for social interaction.

Sadly, one of the greatest assets of garden apartments—vast amounts of open space—has become their greatest vulnerability. The growing desire for density in urban areas makes low-density properties susceptible to demolition or excessive alteration. The Conservancy has worked to preserve historic garden apartments for many years.

We hope you can join us for this special tour to experience the serene landscapes and the sense of community that garden apartment living provides. These are truly a unique part of L.A. history that should not be lost.

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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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## L.A. Historic Neighborhoods Conference October 18

Join neighborhood advocates and residents for the 2014 L.A. Historic Neighborhoods Conference on **Saturday, October 18**. This day-long event celebrating Los Angeles' neighborhoods will take place at the Wilshire United Methodist Church at 4350 Wilshire Boulevard.

This year's theme is sustainable practices and will feature panel discussions, hands-on workshops, neighborhood tours, and the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) awards luncheon. The conference is hosted by the Conservancy and the Los Angeles Department of City Planning's Office of Historic Resources. Visit [laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org) for details and registration.

## Thank You to Our Summer Interns

This summer, we were fortunate to have two fantastic interns from the Getty Multicultural Internship Program.

**David Deng** served as our communications intern, working on Last Remaining Seats evaluation, the Preservation Awards Luncheon, and migrating content from the Curating the City: Wilshire Boulevard website to our main website at [laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org). David is a junior at UCLA majoring in communication studies.



Interns Marisela Ramirez and David Deng at the Conservancy's 2014 Preservation Awards Luncheon. Photo by Larry Underhill.

Our advocacy intern, **Marisela Ramirez**, researched and developed online content about sites that exemplify the history of Boyle Heights and East Los Angeles. We will use this content for our partnership with CicLAvia on their October 2014 ride through downtown, Boyle Heights, and East L.A. Marisela recently received a bachelor's degree in art history/administrative studies at UC Riverside and will begin working toward a master's degree in historic and sustainable architecture at New York University this fall.

## Welcome Laura Dominguez, Preservation Coordinator

The Conservancy is happy to welcome Laura Dominguez to our staff as preservation coordinator. Laura's duties will include monitoring public hearings, overseeing the Conservancy's easement program, and providing neighborhood assistance.

Laura most recently served as communications and program manager at San Francisco Heritage, where one of the projects she coordinated was the successful Legacy Bars & Restaurants initiative. Before relocating to San Francisco about two years ago, Laura was in Los Angeles finishing up her Master of Historic Preservation at USC and working with the Eastside Heritage Consortium to promote the cultural heritage and historic resources of East Los Angeles. Laura holds a bachelor's degree in history and theory of architecture from Columbia University. She also previously worked with the Getty Research Institute, The Music Center, and the Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources. Please join us in welcoming Laura to the Conservancy team.



## Preservation Issues

by Adrian Scott Fine, Manuel Huerta, and Marcello Vavala

For more information about these and other preservation issues, please visit [laconservancy.org/important-issues](http://laconservancy.org/important-issues).

### Caldwell Residence

The W. N. Caldwell Residence, a 1926 Spanish Colonial Revival home in Beverly Hills designed by master architect Wallace Neff, has been in the spotlight for much of the past year. The owner of the home at 805 North Linden Drive applied for a demolition permit in September 2013. While the owner no longer seeks demolition and recently announced plans to list the property for sale, the house became an important test case for Beverly Hills' new demolition review process established through the City's 2012 Cultural Heritage Ordinance.

Under this new process, if a building proposed for demolition is related to an individual or firm on the City's list of master architects, a hold is required before the issuance of permits for demolition, alteration, or remodeling. The City's Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) can initiate a historic assessment of the property. If the property meets two or more of the city's landmark designation criteria, CHC members can vote to recommend landmark designation to the City Council.

Based on the historic assessment of the Caldwell Residence, the CHC voted unanimously on July 9 to recommend designation of the property. However, in late July, the property owner notified the City of their plans to sell the house, withdrew their pending request for demolition, and requested that the CHC rescind its motion recommending landmark designation. Before starting the designation process again, the CHC and Beverly



When demolition began on the Gregor Piatigorsky house in July, a neighborhood resident launched a determined yet ultimately unsuccessful campaign to save the home from the wrecking crew. Photo courtesy Karen Pomer.

Hills Heritage hope a preservation-minded buyer will step forward once the house goes on the market.

### Gregor Piatigorsky House and Music Room

The house and music room once belonging to internationally renowned cellist Gregor Piatigorsky was demolished in mid-July to make way for a new residence. The demolition called attention to the resurgent teardown trend while underscoring the importance of landmarking historic structures before they become threatened.

Located at 400 South Bundy Drive in Brentwood, the expansive property that spanned more than an acre was home to Piatigorsky and his wife Jacqueline for several decades following their arrival in Los Angeles in 1949. The Piatigorskys purchased the existing house on Bundy and commissioned master architect Lloyd Wright in the late 1950s and early '60s to remodel the home and design an acoustically balanced music room. The property was recently sold. When demolition began on the house, a neighborhood resident launched a determined yet ultimately unsuccessful campaign to save the music room from the wrecking crew.

### Mole-Richardson Studio Depot

The unexpected demolition of a prominent Art Deco building in Hollywood on June

10 was met with shock and concern among preservationists and the local community. The building at 900 North La Brea Avenue was designed by master architects Morgan, Walls, and Clements. It featured a mix of Zigzag and Classical Moderne detailing, including intricate, chevron-patterned grillwork. Completed in 1930 as the home of Moderncraft Laundry Company, the building most recently served as a studio supply retail store operated by the Mole-Richardson Company.

Because the building was not landmarked, the property owner was able to obtain a demolition permit without public notification or review by the Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources. This loss shows once again the importance of landmarking historic structures.

The application for the demolition permit was submitted on April 10, and the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety issued the demolition permit five days later. The City currently has no requirement for public notice of demolitions, so the community was unaware of the plans until demolition was underway.

Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell introduced a motion in August 2013 that would modify the City's demolition process for non-landmarked structures to require greater public notice and feedback. Though it has yet to be approved by the City Council, the motion would lead to the development of a public notification

*Please see ISSUES on page 6*



The Wallace Neff-designed Caldwell Residence in Beverly Hills is no longer under immediate threat of demolition. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

## Thank You to Our 2014 Last Remaining Seats Volunteers!

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## Another Memorable Season of Last Remaining Seats

by Sarah Weber

More than 12,400 people attended the twenty-eighth season of Last Remaining Seats, our annual series of classic films in historic theatres. This year was particularly special because for the first time in twenty-four years, we visited the former United Artists Theatre, which reopened as The Theatre at Ace Hotel in January (and recently won a Conservancy Preservation Award).

We also returned to The Music Center's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion to help celebrate its 50th Anniversary with a screening of *West Side Story*, complete with an interview with Academy Award®-winning actor and dancer George Chakiris.

These unique events, combined with six other screenings in historic theatres, added up to one of our most well-attended and memorable seasons.

We extend our deepest thanks to the many volunteers (listed at left) who helped plan and run the series, as well as our 2014 sponsors: Series Star Sponsor, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association; Series Supporting Sponsors: Shangri-La Construction and Webcor Builders; Series Sponsors: Cole's, NBC Universal, Trina Turk, and Warner Bros.; Evening Sponsors: Clifton's Brookdale, Linda and Jerry Bruckheimer, Hugh Hefner, The Music Center, Cathy and Steve Needleman, and Paramount Pictures; Media Sponsors: Los Angeles Downtown News and Laemmle Theatres; and VIP Reception Sponsor: Bank of America/Merrill Lynch; with partial funding from the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, Los Angeles City Councilmember José Huizar, and Brooklyn & Boyle. Major funding for the Conservancy's educational programs is provided by the Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation.



LEFT: Models wear vintage Hollywood costumes during the "Lullaby of Broadway" stage show before *Footlight Parade* at the Orpheum Theatre. Photo by Barry Schwartz.

BELOW: The DeLorean Time Machine pays a visit to The Theatre at Ace Hotel at two screenings of *Back to the Future*. Photo by Douglas Hill.



## Modern by Moonlight Joins Docomomo US Tour Day October 11

by Annie Laskey

The Conservancy is proud to participate in the Eighth Annual Docomomo US Tour Day on **Saturday, October 11**, with a special edition of our popular Modern by Moonlight tour.

The skyscrapers of Bunker Hill take on a whole new magic when seen by twilight. Beautifully lit plazas, twinkling lights, and shining glass will make you love downtown all over again. The tour ends with no-host drinks at the famous rotating BonaVista lounge on the thirty-fifth floor of the Westin Bonaventure Hotel and Suites.

Docomomo promotes the study, interpretation, and protection of the architecture, landscape, and urban design of the Modern Movement. Its annual Tour Day brings together Docomomo US chapters, partner organizations, students, architects, historians, and the general public to celebrate the Modern Movement nationwide.

Join the Conservancy and Docomomo US by celebrating Modern by Moonlight! For details and reservations, visit [laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org).



Photo by Douglas Hill.

## Adventures in Architecture Marks Sixth Successful Summer

by Bruce Scottow

This summer, we held our sixth Adventures in Architecture program in partnership with Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA), a nonprofit community center providing programs to underserved youth in the Westlake/Lafayette Park neighborhood.

This program allows us to introduce young people to some of the significant historic buildings in their own neighborhood. Many of these places have gained new life through adaptive reuse. Some have been meticulously preserved, while others face ongoing preservation challenges.

The HOLA campus, located on Wilshire Boulevard at the historic Bryson Building, provides an ideal location for site visits to nearby architectural gems and cultural landscapes.

Over three weeks in July, eleven students (ages 11-13) visited such icons as Bullock's Wilshire/Southwestern Law School, the Elks Lodge/Park Plaza Hotel, the American Cement Building Lofts, the Felipe de Neve Branch Library (and its former Shakespeare Garden), and MacArthur Park. In addition to the field trips, the students participated in hands-on activities and group discussion about each site. Adventures in Architecture concluded with a downtown tour and a glass elevator ride to the top of the Westin Bonaventure Hotel and Suites.

We extend special thanks to the volunteers who helped our education staff plan and run the program. Thanks to Mary Alice Wollam, David Thompson, Alan Reyes, and Haeyong Moon for their time, talents, and spirit of adventure!



HOLA students touring Bullocks Wilshire/Southwestern Law School. Photo by David Thompson.

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE: KATHERINE BAXTER

by Bruce Scottow

"I've always been a huge old-time movie buff."

- Katherine Baxter

The Conservancy's Last Remaining Seats series of classic films is what drew movie-lover Katherine Baxter to us in 2001. But her first steps into



Photo by Douglas Hill.

the ornate Los Angeles Theatre lobby piqued her interest in history and historic places.

Born in suburban Chicago, raised in Ohio, and a graduate of Ohio University, Katherine was lured out to California by her brother and her sister, fellow Conservancy volunteer Holly Kane. After initially working as a computer programmer for Neopets, Katherine now manages their Creative Development Department.

In her spare time, she manages the needs of her fifteen-year old "kitty," Sasha, and pursues a hobby of designing intricate Halloween costumes. Last year's costume (she wears what she makes!) was a hand-sewn "female Thor" affair replete with body armor. Her other interests include reading, as well as Turner Classic Movies and BBC television.

If you've attended a Conservancy special tour or benefit in the past ten years, you've likely seen Katherine present as a docent or helping with logistics. With Last Remaining Seats including more Saturday screenings that are more conducive to her work schedule, you're likely to see her back at the theatres, too!

## ISSUES

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process before the issuance of a demolition permit. For information about nominating properties for landmark status, visit [laconservancy.org/resources/guide/landmark](http://laconservancy.org/resources/guide/landmark).



The Art Deco Mole-Richardson Studio Depot was unexpectedly demolished on June 10. Public notice is not required for the demolition of non-landmarked structures. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

## Regeneración Workshops

On **Saturday, September 20**, the Conservancy will hold a workshop to continue exploring the role and effects of historic preservation in Latina/o communities. This is the second of two workshops titled *Regeneración* (Recuperation/Rebirth), engaging community members, business leaders, preservationists, and scholars from across Greater Los Angeles.

On May 31, more than thirty-five participants met at the East Los Angeles offices of the nonprofit Inner City Struggle for the first workshop on broad issues of preservation. The group discussed the eventual nomination and designation of specific sites, as well as building a network of active preservationists in the Latina/o community.

The Conservancy organized these two community events following last year's Latino Legacy forum, which was sponsored by the National Park Service and the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation. The workshops will launch a statewide network of constituents interested in preserving Latina/o cultural heritage and sites of significance. For details and registration for the September 20 workshop, visit [laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org).

## STREAMLINE MODERNE continued from page 1

former Pan-Pacific Auditorium, which was destroyed in a fire in 1989. The auditorium was built just three years before—and shares some visual references to—the Jones Dog & Cat Hospital. After Wurdeman's death in 1949, Becket continued as Welton Becket and Associates. The firm went on to design many L.A. icons, including the Capitol Records Tower, The Music Center of Los Angeles County, and the Cinerama Dome.

The Jones Dog & Cat Hospital was designed for Dr. Eugene C. Jones, a progressive veterinarian whose clients included Charlie Chaplin, Gloria Swanson, and Rudolph Valentino. Wurdeman and Becket expanded the original 1928 animal hospital, transforming it into a sleek and modern facility. Dr. Jones' animal hospital, which specialized in dogs and cats, was considered one of the first in Southern California. Its location at the western edge of West Hollywood near the border of Beverly Hills puts it within a short distance of the homes of wealthy clientele and their pets. The building continued to serve as an animal hospital until the early 1980s.

This hidden gem has been largely overlooked until recently. Like countless older buildings throughout Greater Los Angeles, we are often unaware of their history and significance until they become threatened.

A project for this site has gone through schematic and conceptual stages since 2003, envisioned as a gateway to the city. Yet the public was not aware that this building was designed by Wurdeman and Becket until January 2014, when the City of West Hollywood issued a draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Melrose Triangle Project, revealing details about the proposed development. The record now shows that representatives from the City and developers have known since 2008 that this building was designed by Wurdeman and Becket.

The Conservancy became involved in this issue in March 2012, when the environmental review process for the proposed project was re-initiated as part of a newly circulated EIR. Even without knowing about the Wurdeman and Becket connection, we considered the building important for its Streamline Moderne design. We urged the City of West Hollywood to evaluate a range

of preservation alternatives that incorporate the building into the larger project. When a historic building like the Jones Dog & Cat Hospital is proposed for demolition, causing a significant impact, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires the consideration of a preservation alternative.

The EIR provides no substantive information, drawings, or schematics showing how the Jones Dog & Cat Hospital building could be considered for preservation, reused, or made a part of the overall design. That is not typical or a standard practice for an in-depth EIR. The City of West Hollywood has a duty under CEQA to fully identify and evaluate alternatives. An EIR must be supported by evidence of an actual consideration of alternatives and the process by which the City made decisions.

Because a true, bona-fide preservation alternative has not been provided, we believe that the EIR is inadequate and flawed. The City cannot merely adopt a statement of overriding considerations and approve a project with significant environmental impacts. CEQA does not authorize a lead agency to proceed with a project that will have significant, unmitigated effects on the environment, based simply on weighing those effects against the project's perceived benefits.

As communities invariably change, we need to find creative ways to hold on to our community character and the physical qualities that make places special. Efforts to preserve the Jones Dog & Cat Hospital building are not about stopping the project, but rather modifying it and making it better.

There is an opportunity for a "win-win" here, with meaningful preservation that can allow the existing historic building to be reused while moving forward with an exciting and cohesive gateway project.

Historic preservation and development are not mutually exclusive. Developers have repeatedly told us that in the end, preservation made their projects even better than they would have been otherwise. We clearly see that same potential for the Melrose Triangle Project, and we believe that the residents of West Hollywood deserve a truly great project that celebrates the community's history.

# JUNE 10 / AUGUST 11 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

Your membership provides the Conservancy with crucial operating funds, as well as strength in numbers to maintain a powerful voice for preservation. Thank you!

### MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

The Los Angeles Conservancy not only helps protect the city's architectural history, it also offers many fantastic benefits to its members, such as:

- **Individual** members receive a 50% discount on up to two tickets for our great walking tours, while Dual members get the same discount on up to four tickets.
- **Supporting** members receive a copy of *Bullock's Wilshire* by Margaret Leslie Davis.\*
- **Sustaining** members receive name recognition in *Conservancy News*.\*
- **Benefactors** receive two tickets to the Opening Night Reception for our popular Last Remaining Seats film series, as well as two reserved seats for the show.
- **Cornerstone** members receive such benefits as an invitation for two to the Cornerstone Reception, held at an architecturally significant location, and, for members at the \$2,500 and above level, up to four reserved seats per screening with all Last Remaining Seats ticket purchases.

To learn more, please visit [laconservancy.org/membership](http://laconservancy.org/membership) today!

\*New and upgrading members only

## L.A. County Supervisor, Third District, Candidate Interviews Online in October

This fall, residents of L.A. County's Third District will elect a new Supervisor to replace Zev Yaroslavsky, who has reached his term limit. Multiple communities compose the Third District, including much of the San Fernando Valley, Hollywood, West L.A., and Malibu.

While the Conservancy cannot endorse political candidates, we do provide information to help voters make an informed decision. We will interview candidates Sheila Kuehl and Bobby Shriver about some of L.A. County's most pressing preservation issues and then post the transcripts on our website at [laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org). Check the website in October to see their responses.

To be notified when the interviews are available, be sure you're subscribed to the Conservancy's monthly E-News email newsletter. To subscribe, visit [laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org), click "Newsletter" in the top menu bar, and fill out the form.

The election will take place on **November 4**. To find out if you reside in the Third District, visit [rrcc.lacounty.gov/onlinedistrictmapapp](http://rrcc.lacounty.gov/onlinedistrictmapapp).

## 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](http://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.



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For the latest information about issues and events, visit [laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org).

## UPCOMING EVENTS



Wilshire Park. Photo by Larry Underhill.

### L.A. HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS CONFERENCE

Saturday, October 18

Celebrate L.A.'s historic neighborhoods at the 2014 L.A. Historic Neighborhoods Conference and HPOZ Awards. See page 2 for details.



Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

### COMING SOON: FALL TOUR GARDEN APARTMENTS

November 2014

Our fall tour will explore several garden apartment complexes in L.A. Subscribe to our E-News and Events email newsletters for the most up-to-date event information. Info on page 1.



### L.A. COUNTY SUPERVISOR THIRD DISTRICT ELECTION INTERVIEWS ONLINE

October 2014

Visit our website in October to read transcripts of our interviews with L.A. County Supervisor candidates Sheila Kuehl and Bobby Shriver and learn the candidates' views on preservation. Info on page 7.