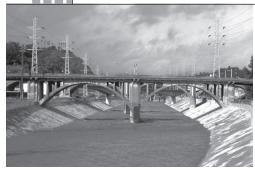


# LOS ANGELES

# CONSERVANCY new

A W A R E N E S S A S S I S T A N C E A C T I O N

VOLUME 33 NUMBER 1 JAN FEB 2011









Despite the recession, the Conservancy is busier than ever as developers seek more project approvals. Recent and ongoing issues include (clockwise from top left): North Spring Street Viaduct (photo by Kevin Break), the Edward T. Foley Center at Loyola Marymount University (photo by Conservancy staff), Barlow Hospital in Elysian Park (photo by Conservancy staff), and the Barry Building in Brentwood (photo by Raul Borja).

# Preservation Advocacy in a Down Economy

by Adrian Scott Fine

Historic buildings and places are often at risk, perhaps never more so than in the extremes of both boom and bust economies. When times are good, intense pressure for new development can often spell demolition for historic buildings. On the flip side, a troubled economy can sometimes be good *and* bad for preservation: development slowdowns can buy time and provide a cooling-off period to reconsider demolition, though historic buildings may also languish for years without an active use and suffer from demolition by neglect.

Preservation has a central role to play in a down economy. In addition to great challenges, the current recession presents an opportunity for the Conservancy to more proactively advocate for plans and policies that will reinforce preservation values in the future.

# **Busier Than Ever**

With the implosion of the real estate market in Southern California—from the high rate of mortgage foreclosures to relatively scarce access to financing—it is easy to assume that few development projects are in the works. Yet our advocacy staff is actually busier than ever.

While it is true that many projects are on hold and we do not expect to see a lot of ground-breaking ceremonies in the near future, projects are queuing up. The number of environmental

Please see ECONOMY on page 6

# Spring Tour Features Hughes Aviation HQ

by Derek Marks

As an aviator, inventor, and movie producer, Howard Hughes left an indelible mark on Los Angeles. Explore a key element of his legacy on **Sunday, March 20**, when we visit the former headquarters of Hughes Aircraft. On this site, one of America's most eccentric and influential personalities turned a playboy's interest in flight into a company that helped define twentieth-century aviation.

The site in what is now Playa Vista was one of the epicenters of Los Angeles' aviation history, and it's now on the cusp of a new life as an entertainment production campus. It was here that Hughes and his team designed and constructed planes, helicopters, satellites, lasers, and most famously, the H-4 Hercules heavy transport craft, more commonly known as the "Spruce Goose."

In 1940, Hughes began to purchase farmland between Culver City and Playa del Rey to build an aviation campus. The first building opened in 1941, and the campus grew exponentially from there: it eventually spanned over a thousand acres, employed over 30,000 workers, and housed the longest private runway in the world.

Although the campus produced many incredible technological advances, it is perhaps best known as the home of the "Spruce Goose," the wooden flying boat (actually made of birch) that became the largest plane ever to fly. In order to construct the giant

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### Los Angeles Conservancy

523 W. Sixth Street, Suite 826 Los Angeles, California 90014 (213) 623-2489 Fax: (213) 623-3909 laconservancy.org

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

The Conservancy News is published bi-monthly. Editor: Los Angeles Conservancy Printing: The Prince of Printing

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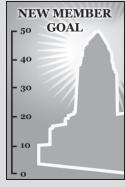
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Thanks to the Getty Research Institute for access to the Julius Shulman photography archive.

# **Recruit Members for a Chance to Win** VIP Last Remaining Seats Tickets!

As a member of the Conservancy, you play an active role in protecting the landmarks and neighborhoods that make Los Angeles unique. You're also a valuable ambassador. When you talk to your friends, family, and colleagues about our shared mission, your passion inspires others. That's why we're asking for your help in our 2011 membership drive.

From now until April 30, each time you recruit a new Conservancy member or purchase a new gift membership, we will enter you into a drawing for two VIP reserved seats at a 2011 Last Remaining Seats screening!



Graphic by Tom Davies.

You have seven chances to win. While you can win only once, you can enter an unlimited number of times. The more members you recruit, or gift memberships you purchase, the more chances you have to win!

You already provide critical support to the Conservancy through your annual membership. By encouraging new members, you will help expand our influence and impact on the community. To guarantee your entry into the Last Remaining Seats drawing, be

sure to use this special web page to purchase memberships (and tell your friends to): http://lac.laconservancy.org/drive (note that it's not at www.laconservancy.org).

If you have any questions about the membership drive, please contact Abby Matthews, membership assistant, at amatthews@laconservancy.org or (213) 430-4201. Thank you!

# **Renew Your Membership Automatically**

Now it's easier than ever to support the Conservancy—by renewing your membership automatically! When you renew online, you can choose to automatically renew for one year, two years, or indefinitely. Your credit card will be charged once a year, and your generosity will support the Conservancy's efforts for years to come.

Automatic renewals are both convenient and environmentally friendly. You'll enjoy uninterrupted service and will no longer receive renewal notices in the mail, saving on paper and postage. Simply visit the membership section of *laconservancy.org* and choose "Automatic Renewal" on the membership form. Thank you!

# **Preservation Award Applications Due January 31**



Bob's Big Boy Broiler, recipient of the 2010 President's Award. Photo by John Eng.

We're accepting applications for the 30th Annual Los Angeles Conservancy Preservation Awards, honoring outstanding achievement in the field of historic preservation. Selected by an independent jury, award recipients vary widely, from restoration and rehabilitation projects to advocacy and education efforts. Eligible projects must be located in Los Angeles County and must have been completed by December 31, 2010.

The Conservancy must receive all

2011 applications by **January 31**. You can download an application at *laconservancy.org*/ awards or request one by calling the office at (213) 623-2489. Good luck!

# **Preservation Issues in the News**

by Flora Chou, Adrian Scott Fine, Karina Muñiz, and Marcello Vavala

# **Moore House**

Many thanks to the more than 350 people who commented on the draft environmental impact report (DEIR) regarding the Moore House in Palos Verdes Estates.

Designed by Lloyd Wright (the son of Frank Lloyd Wright), the highly intact 1959 residence is proposed for demolition by its owners to make way for a new custom home. Since the City of Palos Verdes Estates has no historic preservation ordinance or local preservation protections, public participation in the environmental review process is essential to prevent the home's demolition.

Despite a large outcry in June from nearly 300 concerned citizens, the DEIR released in October concludes that the Moore House cannot be feasibly renovated to meet the owners' needs for updated living space. It fails to identify and evaluate a single reuse alternative that would maintain the home's eligibility for listing as a historic resource.

This is a clear problem, as the California Environmental Quality Act requires consideration of alternatives that can avoid or lessen negative impacts on historic resources. The Conservancy strongly believes that the Moore House can be modified and expanded in a sensitive way that would address preservation concerns as well as several of the owners' stated project goals.

Continued public pressure from members like you has greatly bolstered this effort. For the latest news and opportunities to make your voice heard, subscribe to our Preservation Action Alerts e-mail list at *laconservancy.org* ("Sign Up for E-News").



The Lloyd Wright-designed Moore House (1959) is threatened with demolition. Photo by Stephen Russo.

# Van de Kamp's Bakery

Twenty years after it closed, the historic Van de Kamp's Holland Dutch Bakery building in Glassell Park reopened in October 2010 as the centerpiece of the Los Angeles Community College District's new Van de Kamp Innovation Center. The adaptive reuse of the 1930 Dutch Renaissance Revival-style building caps the decades-long advocacy efforts of the Conservancy and the Van de Kamp's Coalition, launches a new phase in the life of this beloved landmark, and exemplifies the integration of preservation and sustainability.

Located on Fletcher Drive at San Fernando Road, the Van de Kamp's Bakery building served for decades as headquarters for the company's chain of bakeries and coffee shops. The company reinforced its corporate image through architecture with the stepped gables, red-tile roof, and brick arches of its headquarters building, which served for a time as the company logo.

Van de Kamp's closed in 1990. With the prominent building facing an uncertain future, the Conservancy nominated it for Historic-Cultural Monument status in 1992. Although only the front façade was designated, the historic status ensured that preservation alternatives were considered when plans for a bigbox store and fast-food restaurant threatened the building with demolition in 1999.

Ultimately, the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) stepped in to redevelop the site, which now features the rehabilitated bakery building along with new classroom and multipurpose space.

The Van de Kamp's project blends historic preservation, new construction, and LEED certification—a combination we hope to see much more of in the future. By reusing existing resources, preservation is inherently sustainable. Yet new technologies and approaches constantly emerge for achieving sustainability goals. Historic buildings can "go green" while still embracing new tools and techniques, preserving our heritage as part of an overall sustainability strategy.

On November 13, the Conservancy partnered with the U.S. Green Building Council



The Van de Kamp's Holland Dutch Bakery building (1930) recently reopened after rehabilitation and LEED certification. Photo by Conservancy staff.

Los Angeles Chapter and LACCD to showcase the Van de Kamp Innovation Center. A packed audience of nearly 100 guests enjoyed Van de Kamp's baked goods, heard from members of the project team, and toured the revitalized "Taj Mahal of All Bakeries."

# **Southwest Marine Shipyard**

On December 16, as this newsletter went to press, the Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners decided to end negotiations with Gambol Industries regarding the historic Southwest Marine Shipyard at Terminal Island (see photo in cover story, page 6). The board also decided not to designate the site for use as a shipyard. Gambol Industries has proposed to reopen the site for shipbuilding and a repair facility, although the Port has resisted the plan for nearly two years.

We've worked for four years to prevent demolition of the shipyard, the last vestige of San Pedro's once mighty but little-known World War II shipbuilding industry. Twenty-six destroyers were constructed and launched from this site. The original shipyard is remarkably intact today, with thirteen of sixteen

Please see ISSUES on page 6

# **Marian Gibbons** (1921 - 2010)

Marian Gibbons, a pioneer in the local historic preservation movement, passed away December 8 at the age of 89. Gibbons co-founded the nonprofit organization Hollywood Heritage in 1980 and served as its founding president, remaining on the board until earlier this year.

A native of Ohio, Gibbons helped build blimps at the Goodyear plant



Photo courtesy of Richard Adkins.

during World War II. She grew enchanted with Hollywood while living briefly in North Hollywood with her husband in the late 1940s. When she returned to Los Angeles in the late

1970s, Gibbons became an activist after seeing Hollywood in decline.

Hollywood Heritage became a driving force for preservation, fighting for historic resources, restoring properties such as Wattles Mansion and the Janes House, and nominating a stretch of Hollywood Boulevard for listing as a National Register historic district.

The organization also exemplified the growth of the preservation movement in Los Angeles. Hollywood Heritage was founded three years after Pasadena Heritage and two years after the Los Angeles Conservancy. While preservation-oriented community groups have long existed, the official incorporation of these three groups as 501(c)3 nonprofits signaled a coming-of-age for the cause.

"The three organizations considered themselves a family, helping to build the movement," said Christy Johnson McAvoy, co-founder of Hollywood Heritage and past president of the Conservancy. "It was the beginning of the local preservation network organizationally. We were growing up as a movement, and we drew strength from each others' credibility and successes."

# **Special Thanks to the Walking Tour Docents Who Gave Tours in 2010!**

Many thanks to our sixty-eight walking tour docents, who last year collectively gave 650 tours to more than 7,500 guests!

Alice Allen Janis Ashley Ron Barnett Reem Baroody David Berman Kenon Breazeale Bob Brennan Margaret Briggs Christopher Brown \* Roberta Brown Michael Burr Gail Burton Norman Carter **Bud Coffey** Pamela Corante Laura Crockett Jay Cywan Marie Demir \* Julie Downey \* Sharon Eastman Marcia Enger Annabel Lee Enriquez Stewart Rupp \*\* Gregory Figueroa John Ghini \* Michael Goldstein \* Erica Hahn

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Tourgoers visit the Southern California Edison Building on the Art Deco tour. Photo by Conservancy staff.

Shannon Simonds Steve Slakey Don Sloper \* Lorraine Stark \* Ashlev Stracke Pam Taylor \* Jill Thomsen Ed Trosper

Cameron Trowbridge Martin Turnbull Christine Upton Tony Valdez Don Weggeman \*\* Judith Weinstein Jan Westman Ted Wolfe

- \* Gave fifteen or more tours in 2010
- \*\* Gave thirty or more tours in 2010

# **HUGHES** continued from page 1

craft with the materials shortages imposed during World War II, Hughes built an enormous redwood-framed double hangar. His laboratories were stocked with the finest equipment and staffed by leading engineers and scientists, many of whom would achieve their own fame. This production facility, including its accompanying laboratories, remained the heart of the billionaire's aviation empire for decades.

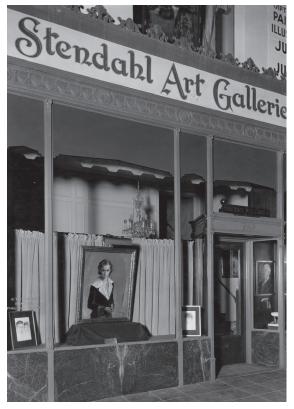
While the "Spruce Goose" is currently housed in Oregon, eleven of the original campus buildings remain on the now twenty-eight-acre site. An exciting \$50 million historic preservation development project by the Ratkovich Company will adapt the remaining structures for creative use, including design, technology, and movie production. The site will gain another layer of history, one that channels the innovative spirit of the aviators of the twentieth century into the entrepreneurs of the twenty-first.

The Hercules Campus, as the site is now known, has seldom been open to the public. In wartime, the airfield rarely even appeared on maps. The Conservancy is thrilled to offer this unprecedented tour, and we hope to see you there.

Tickets for the tour are \$20 for Conservancy members (\$25 for the general public; \$10 for kids twelve and under) and are available at laconservancy.org.

# **My Favorite Landmark**

by J. Eric Lynxwiler, Los Angeles Conservancy member and volunteer; co-author of Wilshire Boulevard: Grand Concourse of Los Angeles.



Stendahl Art Galleries in the Clark Building, 1939. Photo courtesy Floyd H. Faxon, Security Pacific National Bank Collection/Los Angeles Public Library.

# CLARK BUILDING (1930) 3000-3008 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles (Wilshire Center)

"The Earl Stendahl Gallery began with a shop at the Ambassador Hotel and moved to larger digs in the Clark Building at 3006 Wilshire. This 1930 French Provincial-style complex still stands near Lafayette Park, and its exhibitions celebrating cutting-edge artists Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and Dean Cornwell still resonate. It was Stendahl who introduced Pre-Columbian cultural artifacts to the North American art world, yet his greatest coup may be the controversial 1939 exhibit of Picasso's massive painting, the anti-war *Guernica*."

Explore 150 buildings, a thousand photos, and dozens of personal stories (add your own!) at the Conservancy's updated Curating the City: Wilshire Blvd. website, *curatingthecity.org*.

# Our Members Have Spoken! And the Winner Is... Sunset Boulevard



Gloria Swanson as Norma Desmond in *Sunset Boulevard* (1950). Photo courtesy Jerry Murbach at doctormacro.com

Thank you to the nearly 500 members who voted in our Fan Favorite poll to select a film for the 25th Annual Last Remaining Seats (LRS)! The votes are in, and this special screening will feature the 1950 classic *Sunset Boulevard* (subject to print availability).

Starring Gloria Swanson and William Holden and directed by Billy Wilder, this iconic film follows the story of a struggling Hollywood screenwriter who inadvertently winds up at the home of a fading star of the silent screen. This sardonic look at Hollywood features an Academy Award®-winning script that climaxes in one of the cinema's best-known scenes.

Sunset Boulevard last screened at Last Remaining Seats in 1992.

To see how the other Fan Favorite candidates ranked, and for lineups from all the previous LRS seasons, visit *laconservancy.org*.

# What's YOUR Favorite Landmark?

We all have at least one historic place that's particularly near and dear to our heart. In this column, back by popular demand, we'll spotlight some of the many local landmarks that have special meaning to you, our members.

If there's a historic structure in Los Angeles that makes your heart skip a beat, let us know. Simply e-mail <code>news@laconservancy.org</code> with "My Favorite Landmark" in the subject line (or call the office at 213-623-2489). Tell us why your favorite L.A. County landmark means so much to you, and we might feature you in a future issue!

# **Volunteer Committee Officers, 2010-2011**

Congratulations and thanks to the newly elected officers of our volunteer committees!

# Modern Committee (ModCom)

Chair: Regina O'Brien Vice Chair: Sarah Farris-Gilbert Commercial Chair: Charlie Fisher Residential Chair: Steven Kyle Education/Outreach Chair:

Rachel Gould Membership Development Chair:

Chris Green

### **Historic Theatres Committee (HTC)**

Chair: Michael Zoldessy Vice Chair: Scott Benson Recorder: Mariah Montgomery

Last Remaining Seats Subcommittee Chair:

Ken Gehrig

# **ISSUES** continued from page 3

buildings deemed eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Conservancy supports Gambol in their efforts to revitalize this rare collection of buildings. The project would preserve irreplaceable structures, maintain the shipyard's historic function, require no public funding, and provide much-needed jobs. Yet the Port has a poor track record in preservation, including attempting to demolish the entire shipyard in 2006.

Many thanks to those of you who wrote to the City on this issue. We don't yet know what the next steps will be, but we will keep you posted.

# **HPOZ Preservation Plans**

On December 9, the Los Angeles City Planning Commission approved preservation plans for sixteen Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZs). For the first time, all of the city's HPOZs (twenty-seven total) have clear guidelines for protecting their unique character. The plans will give property owners and HPOZ boards far greater clarity and certainty, streamline the approval process for minor changes to save time for both owners and City staff, and clear the path for other neighborhoods to pursue historic designation. HPOZ boards will continue to review major alterations and play a vital role in protecting their historic districts.

We applaud the HPOZ boards for their hard work in adapting the preservation plan template to the specific conditions in their neighborhoods, and in working with the City's Office of Historic Resources to help the HPOZ program remain sustainable during the current budget crisis. For more information, visit *laconservancy.org/neighborhoods*.

# **ECONOMY** continued from page 1

impact reports (EIRs) we analyze has doubled since before the recession. Developers, cities, and institutions are actively pursuing project approvals now so that they're ready to launch as soon as demand and financing return—a key motivation for developers, since time equals money.

Locally, the approvals needed for development projects are known as entitlements. Securing development entitlements can take years, and the process can be unpredictable. In California, projects that may have an adverse impact on the environment—including historic resources—usually involve environmental review under the California Environmental Quality



World War II-era building at the Southwest Marine Shipyard, an ongoing advocacy issue (see page 3). Photo courtesy Los Angeles Harbor Department.

Act (CEQA). This planning process allows for public input and requires consideration of alternatives that avoid or minimize impacts on historic places. For more information, download our new brochure about CEQA at *laconservancy.org*.

Even after becoming fully entitled, a project might not break ground for years, depending on financing or other changes in market conditions. Some entitled projects never come to fruition at all, but they still need to be monitored. As a result, the flurry of planning activity currently taking place could stay with us in some form for a decade or longer.

Keeping an eye on a development project often takes years of involvement and ongoing advocacy. For example, the Conservancy has been working for four years to save the historic Southwest Marine Shipyard at the Port of Los Angeles. The 1917 shipyard is one of the oldest shipbuilding and repair facilities at the Port, as well as the last remaining link to Terminal Island's significant role in the World War II emergency shipbuilding program. The site remains remarkably intact today, with thirteen of the sixteen remaining structures deemed eligible for listing as a National Register historic district. We continue to press for their adaptive reuse (see update on page 3).

Another recent example is the twenty-year master plan for Loyola Marymount University. In late 2009, the Conservancy responded to a draft EIR, urging the City to reconsider the University's midcentury architectural legacy, most notably the 1963 Edward T. Foley Center, designed by Edward Durell Stone. The final EIR and development agreement require additional review of plans for the Foley Center if demolition or exterior alterations are proposed within the next twenty years.

# Seizing the Opportunity for Proactive Outreach

As the troubled economy lingers on, a clear pattern has emerged: development entitlements will likely continue to accrue in anticipation of economic recovery. Ultimately what this means for preservation advocacy is partly an increased workload, but more importantly, the need—and opportunity—to think more broadly in terms of preservation advocacy.

The Conservancy has long pursued proactive approaches toward historic preservation; the current recession has allowed us to do even more. We've been able to identify and reach out to cities, neighborhoods, and other areas whose preservation policies are lacking—and for the most part, they've been receptive. We've made great strides in unincorporated East Los Angeles, where residents are banding together to protect and celebrate their rich heritage.

As you know, rehabilitating historic buildings fuels economic development and creates skilled jobs. Most historic rehabilitation projects are labor-intensive, in some cases as much as forty percent more so than new construction. Preservation can and should play a key role in our economic recovery; the Conservancy will make every effort to ensure that it does.

# SEPTEMBER 30 / NOVEMBER 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.

Alan Merson

Linda S. Wohl

Edward Yu

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# Thanks for Going Above and Beyond in 2010!

Debra Friedland

In addition to membership support, the Conservancy relies on additional financial assistance throughout the year for specific projects, from educational tours to urgent action on advocacy issues. We'd like to express our heartfelt thanks to the foundations, companies, and individuals who provided much-needed sponsorship, underwriting, and in-kind donations for the range of efforts we undertook in 2010. Your generosity is critical to our ability to pursue our mission. There are too many of you to name in these pages; for a complete list, please visit *laconservancy.org*. Thank you!

\* Less value of premiums; call for details.

The Los Angeles Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Please mail or fax (credit card payments) this form to receive your membership card entitling you to a full year of benefits. Thank you, and welcome to the Los Angeles Conservancy!

Los Angeles Conservancy Attn: Membership 523 West Sixth Street, Suite 826 Los Angeles, CA 90014 (213) 623-2489 **a** fax: (213) 623-3909

# 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 or call (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** 

**BI-WEEKLY AND MONTHLY TOURS** 

**Angelino Heights** 

First Saturday

Downtown Renaissance: Spring & Main Second and Fourth Saturdays

Downtown's Modern Skyline

First and Third Saturdays

**Union Station** 

Third Saturday

Youth, family, and group tours by arrangement; call the number above for information.



# Los Angeles Conservancy

523 West Sixth Street, Suite 826 Los Angeles, California 90014 laconservancy.org

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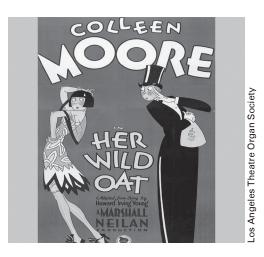
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Reminder: Conservancy *News* is available by e-mail! To receive yours, contact amatthews@laconservancy.org.

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**



HER WILD OAT SCREENING Friday, January 14, 8 p.m. **Orpheum Theatre** 

The Los Angeles Theatre Organ Society presents the 1927 silent comedy Her Wild Oat, with live accompaniment on the Orpheum's Mighty Wurlitzer organ. Visit latos.org for details.



2011 PRESERVATION AWARD **APPLICATION DEADLINE** Monday, January 31

We welcome applications for outstanding preservation efforts. Projects must have been completed by December 31, 2010 and be located in L.A. County. See page 2 for details.



SAVE THE DATE! Hughes Aircraft HQ Tour Sunday, March 20

Mark your calendar for our big spring tour, featuring the former aviation headquarters of inventor, aviator, and movie producer Howard Hughes. See cover story for details.