



The University Religious Center (Killingsworth, Brady & Associates, 1964) is one of the postwar resources targeted for demolition in USC's proposed master plan. Photo by LAC staff.

Modern Resources Targeted for Development on USC Campus

by Flora Chou

In May 2010, the University of Southern California (USC) released the draft environmental impact report (EIR) for a master plan to guide development of new uses on and around the University Park campus over the next twenty years. While the vast majority of USC's historic buildings would remain, the master plan proposes demolition of five buildings that are eligible for listing in the California Register (CR) of Historical Resources. The plan could also greatly diminish the integrity of a CR-eligible historic district.

Founded in 1880 on what was then the outskirts of Los Angeles, USC is the city's second oldest college. Three main periods of development are visible on today's campus: the Beaux Arts tradition of a 1919 plan by legendary architect John Parkinson, a 1946 plan by Arthur Gallion that introduces the influences of Modernism, and 1960s master plans by renowned Southern California architect William Pereira. While many people most closely associate USC with the grand, Italian Romanesque buildings from the Parkinson era, the campus' most significant growth occurred after World War II. As a result, the campus boasts a wide assortment of mid-century modern resources by noted architects, with designs ranging from the International Style to New Formalism that adhere to the school's brick-and-concrete palette. In 1994, a National Register-eligible historic district was identified within the core campus, focusing primarily on buildings from the Parkinson era and ranging from 1880 to 1944.

The proposed master plan encompasses the University Park campus, as well as USC-owned land in an industrial area just east of the 110 Freeway and the University Village area north of campus. The draft EIR determined that several buildings are individually eligible for listing in the California Register.

Please see USC on page 7

Saving the Sixties: What We've Learned

by Trudi Sandmeier

Pop quiz! The Conservancy's recent educational initiative, "The Sixties Turn 50," was:

- a) eye opening
- b) thrilling
- c) like opening Pandora's box
- d) all of the above

(Answer: d)

It's been ten months since the Conservancy and our Modern Committee launched "The Sixties Turn 50," celebrating Greater L.A.'s rich legacy of 1960s architecture. We hope you attended some of our many events and spent some time on our website at *laconservancy.org/sixties*. We also held a photography contest and screened three sixtiesrelated films at this year's Last Remaining Seats series. Like a language immersion program, we focused on "all sixties, all the time." We had fun and learned a lot.

For one thing, Los Angeles has a greater '60s legacy than we had imagined. Sixties buildings are everywhere! We knew the decade was an important time in the area's development, but even we were surprised at what we discovered once we scratched the surface. While not all of it merits preservation, this vast set of resources has come into high relief and deserves examination.

We also learned that a lot of people care about our sixties heritage. We had more than 2,000 votes for our unofficial People's Choice "Top 60 of the '60s" (for the final list, with photos, descriptions, and a map, visit *laconservancy.org/sixties*). People also told us about some sites we didn't know about.

Alas, we learned (well, we had an inkling) that not everyone favors preserving 1960s

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

Conservancy Staff Changes

Please join us in welcoming two great people to the Conservancy staff! We're excited to have **Jessica Burns** (right) as our new communications coordinator. A native of Claremont, Jessica holds a master's degree in communication from Pepperdine University and a bachelor's degree in anthropology from Colorado College. She brings a range of skills and a love of Los Angeles' history and architecture. As communications coordinator, Jessica will continue the Conservancy's social media efforts, coordinate our print and e-mail newsletters, maintain our website, provide



media relations and marketing support, and more.



We are also thrilled to welcome **Lauren Everett** (left) as our new receptionist. A native of Venice, Lauren joins the staff after three years of volunteering, including writing two successful Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument nominations (for Bukowski Court and Bob Baker's Marionette Theatre). She holds a bachelor's degree in film from the University of Texas and brings a passion for historic preservation and Los Angeles history. As receptionist, Lauren will handle phone calls, manage vial avante and projects and more

the library, help with special events and projects, and much more.

Mike Buhler, the Conservancy's director of advocacy, left the staff in July to become executive director of San Francisco Architectural Heritage. Mike led our advocacy efforts for nearly four years, with issues ranging from the Century Plaza Hotel and Los Angeles River bridges to the City of Los Angeles' preservation ordinance revisions, among many others. He also chaired a committee of the Bringing Back Broadway initiative. Mike made significant and lasting contributions to the Conservancy and to historic preservation in Los Angeles.

Constance Farrell, our former communications coordinator, also moved to San Francisco this summer. She will pursue a master's degree in public administration at the University of San Francisco, as well as work with Mike at San Francisco Architectural Heritage. In her two years at the Conservancy, Constance launched our social media presence, enhanced our website with new tools, and made great contributions to our media relations, e-mail outreach, newsletter, and marketing efforts.

Naomi Castillo, the Conservancy's administrative and events assistant, departed in July to pursue a master's degree in the history of decorative arts at Parsons The New School for Design in New York City. In her three years with us, Naomi welcomed and assisted countless visitors and callers, helped the office run smoothly, and provided invaluable staff support. She also managed the Conservancy's library and helped coordinate events such as our Preservation Awards luncheon.

Adam Rubin, our youth outreach coordinator, left the Conservancy in June to pursue a master's degree in historic preservation at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. For almost three years, Adam coordinated initiatives such as the Conservancy's Student Advocates and Heart of Los Angeles programs. As part of the education team, he also performed tour research, created a Google map of historic sites related to Germans in L.A., and conducted our "Sixties Turn 50" photo contest.

We'll miss Mike, Constance, Naomi, and Adam, but we're excited for them and wish them all the best in their new adventures.

Thanks to Our Getty Interns

The Conservancy had the great fortune this summer of working with Rebecca Streeter and Daniel Kramer, our interns from the Getty Foundation's Multicultural Undergraduate Internship Program. A USC sophomore majoring in architecture, Rebecca researched downtown's Seventh Street for our upcoming fall tour. A recent Stanford University graduate in history and political science, Daniel helped with a range of advocacy projects, from conservation easements



Getty interns Rebecca Streeter and

to a Google map of historic sites related to the East Los Angeles music scene of the 1960s. We enjoyed having Rebecca and Daniel in the office and greatly appreciate their contributions.

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Preservation Issues in the News

by Mike Buhler, Flora Chou, Karina Muñiz, and Marcello Vavala

Century Plaza Hotel

In August, the owner of the 1966 Century Plaza Hotel unveiled plans for its revised development project. Next Century Associates announced a plan that preserves the historic hotel as its centerpiece while providing residential, office, retail, and public open space on the property.

The project reuses the hotel building as both hotel and residential space while maintaining its eligibility as both a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) and for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources.

The Conservancy supports this project because it preserves the historic hotel and conforms to the Century City North Specific Plan. The project will undergo the normal City review and approval process, including a full environmental impact report (EIR) estimated for release and public comment later this year.

Commonwealth Savings Building

After engaging in a two-year feasibility study in collaboration with the Conservancy, the owner of the Commonwealth Savings Building in North Hollywood recently announced that it will proceed with the building's demolition.

Also known as Allstate Savings (now Citibank), the 1961 building at 5077 Lankershim Boulevard was one of the first high-rise commercial structures built in the San Fernando Valley. It has long been recognized as an important example of mid-century office design. The building was included on our Modern Committee's 2000 tour, "How Modern Was My Valley," as well as in a session on Modern office buildings at the 2007 California Preservation Foundation conference.

In 2007, the building's owner, Chandler Partners, announced plans to demolish the Commonwealth Savings Building and redevelop the site. The current version of the development plan includes a five-story building with 11,200 square feet of commercial space, 156 residential units, and two levels of underground parking.

The Conservancy launched an aggressive yet unsuccessful campaign to designate the building as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument. In September 2007, the city's Cultural Heritage Commission voted four-to-one against recommending designation. Chandler Partners then reached out to the Conservancy, starting a dialogue that ultimately



Commonwealth Savings Building (Gerald Bense, 1961). Photo by John Eng.

produced an agreement to work together to evaluate alternatives to demolition.

Chandler Partners funded a feasibility study to determine the costs of upgrading the building for continued use as office space. The study was prepared in a collaborative process, with the Conservancy providing technical assistance regarding financial incentives, design issues, and code compliance. Prepared by consultants selected by the Conservancy, the study concluded that rehabilitation would yield a very low rate of return on investment—far lower than prevailing standards in the development industry. After a thorough review by the Conservancy, the inescapable consensus was that rehabilitation could not provide a reasonable return, under even the most optimal assumptions.

This deeply regrettable outcome underscores the technical challenges of preserving certain 1960s structures. We will use what we've learned through this difficult process in our efforts to address these challenges and continue advocating for the preservation of our rich 1960s heritage.

North Spring Street Viaduct

On June 9, the Los Angeles City Council's Transportation Committee postponed its vote on the proposed widening of the 1929 North Spring Street Viaduct (see July/August 2010 cover story). The decision has been postponed to allow the city's Bureau of Engineering (BOE), the Office of Historic Resources, and the Conservancy to explore alternatives that would maintain the bridge's status as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) #900.

In response to Conservancy advocacy alerts, the City received more than seventy letters opposing the widening project. Many people also attended the Board of Public Works hearing on June 2 and the Transportation Committee hearing on June 9 to speak out against the project. Several members of the Transportation Committee expressed concerns about the BOE's failure to consider any options that would preserve the bridge, prompting the committee to direct staff to come up with an alternative that maintains its historic features.

As a direct result of your advocacy, the Bureau of Engineering has since delayed its pending request for state funding that had dictated the City's rushed schedule for final approval. The City is now considering widening the bridge on only one side. This is a significant step, though it is not yet clear if this approach would retain the structure's HCM status.

For the latest updates on this issue, visit *laconservancy.org*, where you can consult the Preservation Issues section and/or join our Action Alert e-mail list ("Sign Up for E-News").

Loyola Marymount University Master Plan

The final environmental impact report (EIR) for the Loyola Marymount University (LMU) Master Plan was released on July 15. In March, the Conservancy submitted comments on the draft EIR, which had left the school's postwar-era facilities vulnerable to demolition (see May/June 2010 cover story).

While the final EIR included expanded analysis of LMU's postwar development and the A. C. Martin buildings on campus, we remain concerned that the 1962 Edward T. Foley Center designed by Edward Durell Stone has not been properly evaluated. Specifically, the building should be evaluated against the criteria for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, to determine if it can be considered a historical resource under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The Conservancy strongly believes that the Foley Center is eligible for listing in the California Register as a representative work of a master architect and as an excellent example of New Formalism. In our comments on the final EIR, we urged the City to require full evaluation of the Foley Center and examine preservation alternatives, remove the building as a potential development site, or include additional mitigation measures before taking any action on the EIR.

THANK YOU, LAST REMAINING SEATS VOLUNTEER CAST!

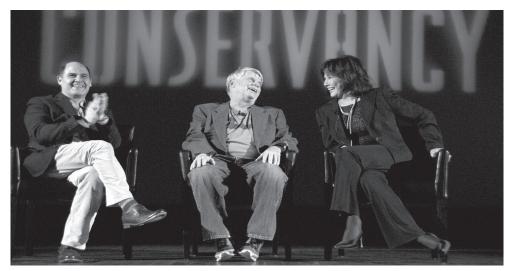
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Last Remaining Seats Lights Up Broadway

This was another banner year for the Conservancy's Last Remaining Seats film series, with nearly 11,000 tickets sold! Guests enjoyed a star-studded lineup of live entertainment and three beautiful venues: the Los Angeles, Million Dollar, and Orpheum Theatres, all on Broadway in downtown L.A.

We offer our deepest thanks to the volunteer LRS committee (listed at left), who spent countless hours behind the scenes. The Conservancy also appreciates the generous support of our 2010 sponsors: Series Star Sponsor the Hollywood Foreign Press Association; Series Supporting Sponsors Steve Bing and Wells Fargo; Series Sponsors The Edison/Andrew Meieran, NBC Universal, Cathy and Steve Needleman, and Trina Turk; Evening Sponsors 213 Downtown LA Nightlife, Hugh Hefner, Warner Bros., The Walt Disney Company, and the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs; Media Sponsor Los Angeles Downtown News; and Opening Night VIP Reception Sponsor Bank of America/Merrill Lynch.



ABOVE: Opening night at the Los Angeles Theatre featured *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, presented in conjunction with "The Sixties Turn 50." Co-stars Robert Morse (middle) and Michele Lee (right) were interviewed by *Mad Men* creator and executive producer Matthew Weiner (left) before the film. Photo by



ABOVE: Guests dress the part for a night at the 1926 Orpheum Theatre. Photo by Larry Underhill. TOP RIGHT (L-R): Pati Nava, Alfredo de Batuc, and Susana Hernández at the Million Dollar Theatre for *Flor silvestre*, co-presented with the Latin American Cinemateca of Los Angeles. Photo by Sonia Paulino. BOTTOM RIGHT: Before the screening of *Strangers*





For a complete collection of LRS photos from all six nights, visit our Facebook page at *facebook.com/losangelesconservancy*.

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2010 Volunteer Recognition Awards



The Conservancy has hundreds of dedicated volunteers, yet each year a few people truly go above and beyond. We were delighted to recognize these volunteers at our annual meeting on June 19. Pictured above (I-r) are Volunteer Recognition Award recipients Larry Underhill, Jason Foo, Steven Kyle, Mary Ann Lovato (15 years of service), John Pesetski, Mary Alice Wollam (25 years of service), Lanna Pian (15 years of service), Ed Trosper (25 years of service), Regina O'Brien, Kathy Gomez (Friends of La Laguna), Sarah Farris-Gilbert, and Senya Lubisich (Friends of La Laguna). Not pictured: Charlene Nichols, Chris Nichols, and Michael Palumbo.

Thanks, Kennedy Seniors!

We recently bid a fond farewell to seven members of the Conservancy Student Advocates program who graduated from John F. Kennedy High School in Granada Hills: Pablo Avila, Sammy Avila, Sarah Giron, Lupe Mora, Misael Perez, Darin Reyes, and Victoria Williams. We thank these advocates for their hard work and dedication in helping to preserve Greater Los Angeles' architectural resources.

At our annual meeting in June, senior Lupe Mora donated to the Conservancy a highly detailed model of "The Onion" sanctuary, which he created in conjunction with nominating the building for Historic-Cultural Monument designation. We were honored to accept this extraordinary gift, and we have it proudly on display in the Conservancy office.



(L-R) Lupe Mora and instructor Aaron Kahlenberg with "The Onion" model at the sanctuary. Photo by Larry

Annual Meeting Highlights San Fernando Valley History



Kevin Roderick, author of *The San Fernando Valley: America's Suburb*, shared the Valley's rich history at our annual meeting in North Hills. Photo by Larry Underhill.

Thanks to everyone who attended the Conservancy's 2010 annual meeting on June 19. More than a hundred members and guests joined us in North Hills at the Sepulveda Unitarian Universalist Society sanctuary (Frank Ehrenthal, 1964), known as "The Onion" for its unique shape. We are very grateful to our hosts for their warm hospitality.

We were thrilled and honored to have Kevin Roderick as our special guest. A distinguished journalist, editor, blogger, and author, Kevin regaled the audience with stories of how the San Fernando Valley developed into one of America's largest suburbs.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



The Foy House (1872) on Carroll Avenue in Angelino Heights. Photo by LAC staff.

Haunted Scavenger Hunt

The Conservancy and Out of the Box Events present our second annual Haunted Scavenger Hunt of Angelino Heights, at 4 p.m. on **Saturday or Sunday, October 23 or 24**.

Grab some friends and a flashlight and join us for some spooky fun (and prizes)! Tickets are \$25 for members and \$30 for the general public; reservations are required. For details, visit *outoftheboxevents.net*.

"Strolling on 7th Street"

Explore historic Seventh Street on a one-time-only, open-house style tour on **Sunday, November 7**. From its storied past as a premier shopping district, to its vibrant present with lofts, restaurants, hotels, and shops, Seventh Street has something for everyone. Tickets are \$25 for members, \$30 for the general public, and \$10 for children twelve and under. For details and tickets, visit *laconservancy.org*.

Linda Dishman Honored by Theatre Historical Society

At its 2010 Conclave in Indianapolis, the Theatre Historical Society of America named Linda Dishman, the Conservancy's executive director, as its Honorary Member of the Year. The society cited her "outstanding leadership of the Los Angeles Conservancy and their Last Remaining Seats series, as well as the weekly walking tours of the Broadway Theatre District." We greatly appreciate this honor.

In Memoriam

SIXTIES continued from page 1

buildings. "The Sixties Turn 50" raised plenty of eyebrows, even within the preservation community. Some people don't believe a building younger than they are could be considered historic; others have understandable resentment toward buildings that rose on the sites of older landmarks such as Bunker Hill. As devastating as these losses were, the fact remains that the newer buildings have since gained significance in their own right.

The premise behind "The Sixties Turn 50" was that buildings from that decade have started turning fifty years old. While not a requirement in most cities (including Los Angeles), the age of fifty is a widely accepted threshold for a building's consideration as historic. However, particularly in fast-changing Los Angeles, many Modern structures are often threatened well before they turn fifty.

We heard from preservationists around the nation that most had not yet begun to grapple with the sixties as a distinct period, as opposed to the postwar period as a whole.

One of the program's goals was to address the technical and philosophical challenges of preserving 1960s architecture. We raised more questions than answers, but we're not alone. People around the country are discussing these and other issues, and we're eager to be part of the conversation. The effort to preserve the 1966 Century Plaza Hotel did help to clarify how to treat historic aluminum, which can serve not only the historic hotel but countless other buildings from the sixties and beyond.

Ultimately, our efforts underscore the amount of work that is left to be done. During the span of the program, we experienced the thrill of victory with the Century Plaza Hotel (see page 3) and the agony of defeat with the 1965 Columbia Savings Building (demolished in January). Other sixties buildings remain in jeopardy, such as the Edward T. Foley Center at Loyola Marymount University (see page 3).

As we fight to save 1960s gems from the wrecking ball, we now have the benefit of a strong context and growing constituency for their preservation. We are teaching ourselves as we educate others, stretching the boundaries of "traditional" preservation, and having a bit of fun along the way.

Ed Limato (1936 – 2010)

Legendary talent agent and longtime Conservancy supporter Ed Limato passed away on July 3 at the age of 73. A steadfast and passionate advocate for historic preservation in Los Angeles, Ed served actively on the Conservancy's Board of Directors from 2002 - 2008.

Ed was instrumental in raising the profile of preservation among the entertainment industry. He was generous in every way, from holding benefit events at his beautiful 1937 Beverly Hills estate (known as Heather House), to sponsoring our Last Remaining Seats series, to hosting board meetings.



Photo by Shari Belafonte.

Born in 1936 in Mount Vernon, New York, Ed worked as a disc jockey and an assistant to director Franco Zeffirelli. He launched his talent management career in 1966,

in the mailroom at New York's Ashley Famous Agency (which later became International Creative Management, ICM). He moved to Los Angeles in the 1970s and spent most of his four-decade career at ICM (where he was a partner and co-president) and the William Morris Agency (where he served as senior vice president). He was known for his devotion to clients, his lavish pre-Oscar parties, and his grand, impeccable style. We particularly admired Ed for his genuine and unwavering commitment to preservation, and we will greatly miss him. We are extremely grateful to have had Ed as part of the Conservancy family.



Photo courtesy of

Stephen Kanner, FAIA (1955 – 2010)

Stephen Kanner, a third-generation Los Angeles architect and cofounder of the city's Architecture and Design Museum (A+D), passed away July 2 at age 54. Kanner earned architecture degrees from the University of California at Berkeley and in 1983 joined Kanner Architects, founded in 1946 by his grandfather. He was known for playful modern designs but also had a passion for Westwood heritage. Kanner completed a number of preservation projects in Westwood Village and was a founding member of the Westwood Design Review Board. He served as design partner in the rehabilitation of the former Bullocks Westwood department store (Welton Becket and Associates, 1950), which

received a Conservancy Preservation Award in 2002. Kanner was a great Los Angeles architect who left a lasting impression on our built environment.

Joseph J. Musil (1937 – 2010)

We also regret the passing of renowned theatre designer Joseph Musil, who died June 28 at age 73. Musil revived the movie-going experience of Hollywood's Golden Age through imaginative and exciting theatre design. Among his many designs was the restoration of the 1926 El Capitan Theatre in Hollywood, on which the Conservancy holds a conservation easement. Other projects included the Majestic Crest Theatre in Westwood and the Fine Arts Theatre in Beverly Hills. Musil's unique "Studio of the Theatres" was a marvel of intricate theatre decor, filled with vintage pipe organ music. Musil's love of theatres emerged at an early age; at nineteen, he became house manager of the Fox West Coast Theatre in his hometown of Long Beach. He graduated



Photo courtesy of Robert

from Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles and studied at the Academy of Fine Arts of Brera in Milan, Italy. Musil made unique contributions to the historic theatres of Los Angeles.

MAY 22 / AUGUST 5 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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USC continued from page 1

They include widely known landmarks such as Widney Alumni House (1880) and Doheny Library (1932), as well as 1960s buildings designed by Pereira, A. Quincy Jones, Edward Killingsworth, and others. These major Southern California architects were also faculty and/or alumni of USC's renowned School of Architecture. Also determined eligible was a 1927 Art Deco printing factory/National Guard building located east of the 110 Freeway. Designed by the noted local firm of Morgan, Walls, and Clements, the building is one of the few remaining resources reflecting the area's industrial history.

The proposed master plan targets four of the 1960s buildings and the 1927 industrial building as potential development sites, even though it identifies no replacement projects. The draft EIR states that it is infeasible to reuse these resources, yet it provides no analysis supporting that claim and no preservation alternative for any of the buildings. In addition, several potential development sites in the proposed master plan overlap with contributing buildings in a California Register-eligible historic district. This district expands the boundaries and timeframe of the 1994 National Register-eligible district to encompass all three main periods of campus development. Nonetheless, the buildings threatened with redevelopment are almost exclusively from the 1960s and 1970s. Many of them were designed by Pereira, who played a crucial role in the development of USC over the years.

The Conservancy commented on the draft EIR in July, urging consideration of alternatives that would avoid or lessen the impact on the individually eligible buildings, reduce the number of district contributors slated for redevelopment, and require additional environmental review when a replacement project is proposed for any site containing a historic resource. We will keep you posted as this issue develops.



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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.

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

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UPCOMING EVENTS



"THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW" Saturday, September 25 Million Dollar Theatre

This Broadway Initiative Cultural Partner event celebrates the thirty-fifth anniversary of the cult classic at the beautiful Million Dollar Theatre on Broadway. For details, visit *rhps35.com*.



HAUNTED SCAVENGER HUNTS Saturday-Sunday, October 23-24 Angelino Heights

Grab a flashlight and explore the spookier side of one of L.A.'s first suburbs. For more information, see page 5 or visit *outoftheboxevents.net.*



"STROLLING ON 7[™] STREET" Sunday, November 7 Downtown Los Angeles

Downtown L.A.'s Seventh Street was once a booming shopping corridor and is now experiencing a revival. This special tour will explore the street's rich history and architectural gems. See insert for details.