



LOS ANGELES

# CONSERVANCY

# news

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ASSISTANCE  
ACTION

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"I support the preservation and renovation of Wyvernwood," reads this resident's sign at a March 13, 2013 rally as part of the national "Homes for All" campaign. Photo by Flora Chou/L.A. Conservancy.

## Decision Time for Terminal Island

by Adrian Scott Fine

Despite years of steadfast advocacy by the Conservancy, the Port of Los Angeles remains poised to pass a Master Plan Update that does not provide a path forward for preservation. This move would severely jeopardize the few remaining vestiges of our region's maritime history at the Port—particularly at Terminal Island, which has a rich legacy encompassing Japanese-American heritage, wartime shipbuilding, and historic innovations in tuna canning that helped change how America ate.

While a good steward of many historic resources, the Port of Los Angeles has established an ongoing pattern of needlessly demolishing historic buildings at Terminal Island. As you may recall, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named Terminal Island to its 2012 list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places.

We have made some progress at Terminal Island since the 11 Most listing. The most pressing threat at this point is the Port Master Plan Update, which will guide growth and development at the Port through 2030.

The plan designates land uses that are incompatible with the preservation and reuse of historic buildings. It limits the type of uses without providing the necessary flexibility to ensure that Terminal Island's historic buildings can, let alone will, be adaptively reused. In some instances, multiple and incompatible land uses straddle

*Please see TERMINAL ISLAND on page 6*

## FAQs: Wyvernwood versus "New Wyvernwood"

by Adrian Scott Fine

The City of Los Angeles will soon decide whether to allow the demolition of Wyvernwood, the city's first large-scale garden apartment community. As we have reported many times since 2007, Wyvernwood's current owner, Miami-based Fifteen Group, seeks to replace the historic community with a \$2 billion mixed-use development known as the Boyle Heights Mixed-Use Community Project (or "New Wyvernwood").

Not surprisingly, the project's environmental review documentation has strongly favored increased density and new construction over rehabilitating the historic buildings. What is surprising is how some facts have been exaggerated or misconstrued—from the level of crime at Wyvernwood to the myth that preserving Wyvernwood would prevent simple updates like installing washers and dryers. This misinformation has caused a certain amount of confusion.

To help clarify the various issues involved, this article answers some frequently asked questions (FAQs). This is a complex project with multiple dimensions, so we will share more FAQs on our website and Facebook page as the proposed project reaches the final decision stage. A public hearing before the Los Angeles City Planning Commission is scheduled for June. For updates, please visit [laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org).

### Why does saving Wyvernwood matter?

By design, Wyvernwood was intended to build and foster community, providing quality

*Please see WYVERNWOOD FAQs on page 6*

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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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## May 11 Annual Meeting Explores Bunker Hill's Past and Future

Please join Conservancy board, staff, and fellow members for our annual meeting on **Saturday, May 11 from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.** at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel and Suites (John Portman & Associates, 1974-78) in downtown Los Angeles. We will hold a special panel discussion, **Modern Renewal: Legacy of Lost and Found on Bunker Hill**, as part of the Conservancy's Curating the City: Modern Architecture in L.A. series and the Getty initiative, Pacific Standard Time Presents: Modern Architecture in L.A.

Panelists include **David Martin**, design principal and co-chairman at AC Martin Partners; **Don Spivack**, former deputy chief of operations for the Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles and adjunct instructor of planning at USC; and **Brian Tichenor**, principal at Tichenor & Thorp Architects and lecturer at the USC School of Architecture. The Conservancy's executive director, **Linda Dishman**, and director of advocacy, **Adrian Scott Fine**, will also discuss what redevelopment means for preservation.

One of the earliest and wealthiest neighborhoods in Los Angeles, Bunker Hill was known in the late nineteenth century for its beautiful Victorian homes and prominent residents. Yet the area declined by the early twentieth century, and urban renewal efforts in the 1950s and 1960s led to the literal transformation of Bunker Hill into the commercial and cultural hub it is today. Going forward, we must start thinking about the future of Bunker Hill's modern sites as historic resources, even as new buildings and plazas continue to rise around them. Have we learned any lessons from the redevelopment of Bunker Hill that will help us preserve our past while also making way for our future?

The annual meeting includes a breakfast reception and optional tours of the hotel and surrounding area. The annual meeting is free and open to the public, but reservations are required at [laconservancy.org/annual](http://laconservancy.org/annual).

Major support for this program and Curating the City: Modern Architecture in L.A. has been provided by the Getty Foundation.

### Welcome Jessica Hodgdon, Communications Coordinator

Please join us in welcoming the Conservancy's new communications coordinator, **Jessica Hodgdon**. A Southern California native, Jessica holds a master's degree in arts administration from the University of Oregon and a bachelor's degree in English from Cal State Long Beach. She brings a great combination of skills in writing, publishing, social media, and new media. Jessica will support all of our communications efforts, from producing this newsletter to fostering engagement on social media and seeking out exciting new ways to engage the public in preservation.



### Welcome Manuel Huerta, Community Outreach Coordinator

We're also excited to welcome **Manuel Huerta** as our new community outreach coordinator, continuing and expanding the Conservancy's work in our Latina/o Initiative. Manuel brings a strong background in community outreach, education, advocacy, and video production. He recently spearheaded efforts of the Eastside Heritage Consortium, an ongoing volunteer initiative to identify and promote the important places of East Los Angeles. He holds a master's degree in art and art education from Columbia University and a bachelor's degree in film and TV production with a minor in Chicana/Chicano Studies from UCLA.



# Preservation Issues in the News

by Flora Chou, Adrian Scott Fine, and Marcello Vavala

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

## Electoral Candidate Interviews Online in May

As we did with two City Council candidates in March, the Conservancy has interviewed runoff candidates for mayor and several council districts in advance of the May 21 runoff election. While we cannot endorse political candidates, we document their views on historic preservation to help inform your voting decisions. We will post the interview transcripts by mid-May at [laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org).

## Commonwealth Savings Building Demolished

The 1961 Commonwealth Savings Building in North Hollywood was demolished in March. The Conservancy and our Modern Committee had advocated for the preservation and adaptive reuse of this distinctive building since 2007. Despite a thorough feasibility study in 2010 funded by the property owner and conducted by preservation consultants chosen by the Conservancy, the inescapable conclusion was that rehabilitation could not provide a reasonable financial return, even under the most optimal assumptions. This deeply regrettable outcome underscores the technical challenges of preserving certain



Commonwealth Savings Building before and during demolition. Photos by (l-r) John Eng and Jessica Hodgdon/L.A. Conservancy.



Stahl House (Case Study House #22), one of the Case Study Houses nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

1960s structures. However, awareness and appreciation of 1960s architecture has been growing since the Commonwealth Savings Building first came under threat, and significant examples, such as the 1966 Century Plaza Hotel, are being saved.

## Case Study Houses Nominated to National Register

Capping many years of hard work by volunteers, and supplemented by professional consultant assistance, the Conservancy's Modern Committee submitted a National Register Multiple Property Submission (MPS) for the celebrated Case Study House Program: 1945-1966. The MPS includes eleven residences in Los Angeles, San Diego, and Ventura counties.

Launched in 1945 by *Arts & Architecture* magazine, the Case Study House program commissioned architects to study, plan, design, and ultimately construct houses in anticipation of renewed building in the postwar years. With an emphasis on experimentation, and a goal of promoting good, modern, affordable design for single-family homes, the program helped to disseminate the midcentury modern aesthetic through its thirty-five published plans, of which twenty-five houses (and one apartment building) were constructed in California and Arizona.

Few of the Case Study Houses currently have preservation protections, and some have been demolished or significantly altered. This proactive step recognizes the

eleven nominated homes and raises greater awareness about the Case Study House program while providing a historic context for future designation of the remaining eligible properties.

The State Historical Resources Commission was scheduled to hear the nominations at its May 1 meeting.

## Rare Building in a Pickle

Contrary to a longstanding agreement, the Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering (BOE) has proposed to demolish what remains of the historic James K. Hill & Sons Pickle Works Building (1888-1909) in the Arts District. The building sits next to the 1929 First Street Viaduct and was purchased by the City to facilitate expansion of the bridge to accommodate light rail. A 2005 agreement allowed the City to remove a portion of the building for the viaduct expansion but called for the City to rebuild the south end wall. Yet more of the building was removed for unknown reasons. Despite a recent structural engineering report commissioned by the City which states that rebuilding the south end wall is feasible, the BOE has proposed demolishing the rest of the building.

The Conservancy is working with Arts District residents and groups to press the City to instead support the preservation and adaptive reuse of the building. Few Victorian-era brick industrial buildings of this type remain in Los Angeles, making the Pickle Works Building a rare and important historic resource.

# 2013 Preservation Awards

For project team lists, visit [laconservancy.org/awards](http://laconservancy.org/awards)

Congratulations to the recipients of the Conservancy's 32nd Annual Preservation Awards! They reflect a range of outstanding efforts to preserve and revitalize the historic places that make Greater Los Angeles unique.

We will present the awards at a luncheon on **Thursday, May 16**, at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. Our deepest thanks to **City National Bank**, the luncheon's presenting sponsor for the thirteenth consecutive year!

The luncheon is a great opportunity to network with preservation, community, and business leaders while supporting the work of the Conservancy. Tickets are \$125. Table sponsorships begin at \$1,250. For details, visit [laconservancy.org/awards](http://laconservancy.org/awards).



## 2013 Jury

Many thanks to the members of our independent jury, who had the difficult task of selecting this year's recipients from a very strong pool of applicants.

**Wade Killefer, FAIA, CHAIR**, Principal, Killefer Flammang Architects

**Colleen Davis**, Senior Architectural Historian, ICF International

**Noah Furie**, Chair, Beverly Hills Cultural Heritage Commission

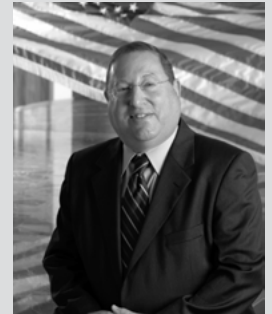
**Craig Weber**, Senior City Planner, Department of City Planning, City of Los Angeles

**Joe Williams**, President, MJV-Real Estate Services

## Local Leadership Award

### Los Angeles City Councilmember Paul Koretz

When the 1966 Century Plaza Hotel was targeted for demolition in 2008 for a mixed-use development, Paul Koretz made its preservation a priority in his campaign for the Fifth City Council District. Following his election, Koretz quickly cemented his commitment to saving the Century Plaza. He brought all the parties together and charged them with finding a solution—which they did.



Koretz's leadership changed the course of the development project, allowing serious dialogue about the hotel's adaptive reuse, paving the way for the preservation of a beloved historic site, and proving that development and preservation are not mutually exclusive.

## President's Award

### América Tropical

626 North Main Street, Los Angeles, 90012

This monumental mural by acclaimed artist and muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros was whitewashed within a few short years of its unveiling in 1932, its depiction of imperialism deemed too controversial for adjacent Olvera Street.



Image courtesy El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument.

A Herculean effort spanning more than twenty years, spearheaded by the Getty Conservation Institute and the City of Los Angeles, brought the long-observed mural back to prominence. Experts carefully conserved the mural, built a protective shelter and viewing platform, and created an interpretive center within a historic building at El Pueblo, ensuring that the mural's story will resonate with Angelenos for generations to come.

### 28th Street Apartments

1006 East 28th Street, Los Angeles, 90011

Legendary architect Paul Revere Williams designed this 1926 building as a YMCA branch to serve the African American community. It hosted important political meetings and social gatherings for more than eighty years. Having fallen into disrepair, the building was rescued and transformed into affordable housing and community space. The project rehabilitated ground floor spaces, converted upper floors and constructed a new wing for affordable housing, repaired and restored architectural details, and incorporated green building features for LEED Gold Certification.



Image courtesy Koning Eizenberg Architecture, Inc.

## Compton City Hall Window Glazing Replacement

205 South Willowbrook Avenue, Compton, 90220

This modern City Hall was built in 1977 as the centerpiece of Compton's Civic Center. A federal grant to weatherize the building's windows and doors led to findings of National Register eligibility for the structure; the upgrades would need to be compatible and be completed in a relatively short timeframe. The City committed to a sensitive upgrade, using new energy-efficient glazing of the same thickness and color as the original. This project demonstrates that preservation and sustainability do go hand in hand.



Image courtesy Chattel, Inc.

## Historic Boyle Hotel—Cummings Block

1781 East First Street, Los Angeles, 90033

Built in 1889 as a fashionable hotel and retail block in the burgeoning eastside neighborhood of Boyle Heights, this exuberant structure has always been a prominent anchor along East First Street. However, decades of neglect and insensitive renovations left the building in severe disrepair. A determined, community-based effort saved the building by transforming it into much-needed affordable housing. The building was restored to its original appearance, and a new addition provides additional housing. This beloved icon once again inspires, educates, and actively serves the community.



Image by Larry Underhill.

## Lopez Adobe

1100 Pico Street, San Fernando, 91340

This 1883 adobe was an early focal point of community activity in San Fernando. The residence was built by the prominent Lopez family, who continued to own it until purchased by the City in 1971. The adobe required significant restoration and repair after more than a century of mounting maintenance concerns had taken their toll. Committed to the restoration of its oldest house, the City pursued grant funding and assembled a project team that undertook comprehensive restoration of the adobe. This revitalized museum will serve as a model for other communities.



Image courtesy Spectra Company.

## Herkimer Arms

411A & 411B North Raymond Avenue, Pasadena, 91103

Built in 1912 as an eight-unit dwelling, the Herkimer Arms is the only surviving apartment building by master architects Charles and Henry Greene, and one of their few buildings with a granite exterior. It was threatened with demolition in 2006 yet rescued through successful local advocacy efforts that led to its purchase by a developer of affordable housing. The challenging solution involved relocating the building across town—in two pieces—and undertaking an extensive yet sensitive rehabilitation. This rare landmark now enjoys new life as the centerpiece of an affordable housing project for the community.



Image courtesy Heritage Housing.

## The Japanese House at The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens

1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, 91108

Built in 1903, the Japanese House was purchased by Henry Huntington in 1911 and relocated from Pasadena to his San Marino estate. The unique structure has been the focal point of the Japanese Gardens at the Huntington for over a century, and it needed both restoration and long-term maintenance planning. The project team carefully restored the Japanese House, revealing original finishes and a new understanding of this cross-cultural masterwork.



Image courtesy Kelly Sutherlin McLeod Architecture, Inc.

## Lukens House

3425 West 27th Street, Los Angeles, 90018

Designed by Raphael Soriano for ceramicist and educator Glen Lukens, this 1940 home had deteriorated to the point that the City boarded it up in 1998. It was so badly damaged and overgrown with brush that some thought it had been demolished. The home was declared a nuisance property and slated for demolition in 2006. Preservationists had the home designated as a Historic-Cultural Monument, which kept it standing until it was purchased by a preservation-minded buyer. Rehabilitation allowed modern conveniences while restoring and replacing historic elements, in a testament to private stewardship of historic homes.



Image courtesy M2A Milofsky Michali & Cox Architects.

**TERMINAL ISLAND** *continued from page 1*

existing historic buildings, such as at Southwest Marine Shipyard, making it nearly impossible to achieve a preservation outcome.

The Port has not completed a comprehensive inventory that identifies existing historic resources throughout the Port. Furthermore, some previously identified resources at Terminal Island are no longer included or identified within the plan, such as Cannery Steam Plant and what remains of the Japanese-American commercial business district.

It is essential for the Port Master Plan Update to include adaptive reuse options for these buildings. Terminal Island's authentic character can and should be used to fuel sound planning, economic development, and prosperity at the Port. Progress does not need to come at the expense of our shared cultural heritage.

The Port Master Plan Update was heard by the Board of Harbor Commissioners in April, and we anticipate a final plan to be adopted by early summer. The Conservancy and the National Trust for Historic Preservation want to work with the Port to make sure the plan helps save the historic buildings and promotes their reuse, while attracting compatible tenants to the historic Port.



Shipbuilding at Bethlehem Steel, 1951. Image courtesy San Pedro Bay Historical Society.

**WYVERNWOOD FAQs** *continued from page 1*

housing for working-class people and using architecture to improve their lives. When it opened in 1939, Wyvernwood was the first large-scale garden apartment development to be built in Los Angeles. It followed progressive garden city planning principles of the time, including creating both large and intimate green open spaces to provide a garden-like setting and separating cars from pedestrians to enhance safety.

Wyvernwood is a close-knit community, where people have built lives, families, and strong social connections over generations. Despite the rhetoric and pretty pictures of the proposed project, what makes Wyvernwood special and irreplaceable cannot be replicated or simply transported to a “New Wyvernwood.”

What made Wyvernwood and other Los Angeles garden apartments innovative, livable, and sustainable in the early twentieth century still holds true today. We will never again have these kinds of places, so we must preserve them while we can. This matters not just to the residents of Wyvernwood and Boyle Heights but to all the people of Los Angeles who love and appreciate the quality of garden apartments.

**Is it really financially feasible to rehabilitate Wyvernwood?**

Yes. Similar garden apartment developments—Lincoln Place in Venice and Chase Knolls in Sherman Oaks, for instance—are currently undergoing extensive rehabilitation and updates that maintain their historic buildings (see March/April issue), at a cost significantly less than what Fifteen Group estimates for Wyvernwood.

While no two projects are identical, construction and building conditions are very similar for these projects and Wyvernwood. So why does Fifteen Group claim that rehabilitating Wyvernwood would cost two to three times what it does elsewhere? Something does not add up.

Despite repeated requests, the Conservancy has not received an answer to why Wyvernwood would cost sixty-five percent more to rehabilitate than Lincoln Place. We believe that Fifteen Group's financial model for estimating rehabilitation costs lacks transparency and is unsubstantiated.

**Isn't the proposed project more sustainable and “green”?**

No. Demolishing more than 250 buildings (including garages) is not environmentally sustainable. The “greenest” thing to do is to reuse and retrofit existing buildings rather than demolishing and replacing them with new construction.

Recent studies show that it can take between ten and thirty years for a new, energy-efficient building to overcome the negative climate change impacts created during the construction process. Even under the best case scenario, Fifteen Group's proposed project will generate eleven tons of demolition and construction debris—per day—over a fifteen-year construction period.

As proposed, when completed in 2030, “New Wyvernwood” would generate seventy-eight percent more solid waste per year than Wyvernwood does today. These statistics—provided by Fifteen Group—sound anything but sustainable and green.

**Is there any way to find a “win-win” solution?**

Yes. It requires a willingness to make concessions and find middle ground. Only one true preservation alternative was considered as part of the environmental review process. Although limited and in need of further refinement, this alternative does retain sixty percent of Wyvernwood and would maintain its eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places.

The alternative can be improved to better address circulation and integrate new development and density along the edges of Wyvernwood. Fifteen Group's own analysis shows that this solution meets many of their project's objectives while causing the fewest adverse environmental effects. If embraced by both Fifteen Group and the City, this alternative could offer a true mixed-use, mixed-income project without resulting in any significant time delays.

As with any “win-win” solution, this alternative does represent a compromise. It does not preserve all of Wyvernwood, but it does retain the core of the community and provide for a meaningful level of preservation.

For more FAQs and more information, visit [laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org).

# JANUARY 19 / MARCH 12 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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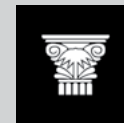
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## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

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

### NEW WEBSITE AND LOGO COMING JUNE 1

As mentioned in the March/April issue, we've been working for many months to redevelop the Conservancy's website and refresh our logo as part of our thirty-fifth anniversary celebration. We will launch the new website on or around June 1 at [laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org), and it will include the first look at our new logo.

We will introduce the website and logo in detail in the July/August issue, but basically, you'll see the same type of content currently on the website, just in a format that is brighter, more contemporary, and easier to use. An interactive map will include hundreds of historic places, and a new section will focus on L.A.'s modern architecture as part of Curating the City: Modern Architecture in L.A.

Still based on the capital that has always conveyed the organization's strength, stability, and devotion to historic architecture, the new logo will feature an updated, abstracted version of the capital, along with similar icons depicting various architectural details to better convey the breadth of the Conservancy's work.

We will roll out the new logo and graphic identity over the next year, and as always, we welcome your feedback.

## Irene Tresun (1919-2013)

Longtime Conservancy volunteer and preservation advocate Irene Tresun passed away March 2. Born in the Ukraine, she attended schools in Austria, Belgium, and Germany before coming to the United States at age 14. After graduating from UCLA, Irene forged a long and diverse career in public relations, personnel, and corporate publications.

Irene started volunteering for the Conservancy in 1981 as a downtown walking tour docent. She remained a steadfast supporter and volunteer the rest of her life, from hosting meetings of the Conservancy's former Cultural Resources Committee to manning the Conservancy table at Last Remaining Seats—always dressed to the nines and in the spirit of the night's feature film.

Beyond the Conservancy, Irene served as president of the Los Angeles City Historical Society and served on its board for many years. She traveled the world yet always kept a strong passion for Los Angeles history. She was a joy and an inspiration.



Volunteer Irene Tresun at Last Remaining Seats in 2006. Photo by Larry Underhill.

## 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

#### Modern Skyline

Every Saturday, 2 p.m. (May/June only)

### BI-WEEKLY AND MONTHLY TOURS

#### Angelino Heights

First Saturday

#### Downtown Renaissance: Spring & Main

Second and Fourth Saturdays

#### Union Station

Third Saturday

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



### Los Angeles Conservancy

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[laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org)

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## May Is National Preservation Month!

### UPCOMING EVENTS



Photo by Annie Laskey / L.A. Conservancy

#### ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, May 11

Westin Bonaventure Hotel  
and Suites

On May 11, meet with Conservancy board, staff, and fellow members. We will hold a special panel discussion, "Modern Renewal: Legacy of Lost and Found on Bunker Hill." See page 2 for details.



#### 32ND ANNUAL PRESERVATION AWARDS LUNCHEON

Thursday, May 16

Millennium Biltmore Hotel

Join us as we honor outstanding achievement in the field of historic preservation across Los Angeles County. See page 4 for details.



Photo by Larry Underhill

Image courtesy Hollywood Classics

#### LAST REMAINING SEATS

June 1 - June 29

Downtown's Historic Venues  
and Wilshire's Saban Theatre

Join us for the 27th season of classic films in historic theatres! This year's films include *My Fair Lady* (pictured), *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ* (silent), and *Casablanca*! Visit [laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org) for details.