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The Conservancy's tour of Wilshire Boulevard Temple will take place on Sunday, April 27. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

Wilshire Boulevard Temple Tour April 27 Will Highlight Recent Restoration and Vision for the Future

by Sarah Weber

If you've heard about the monumental restoration of the 1929 Wilshire Boulevard Temple, here's your chance to see it firsthand. The Conservancy will host a one-day-only tour of the Temple's Erika J. Glazer Family Campus on **Sunday, April 27**. The event will include docent tours of the beautifully restored building and campus; speakers discussing the history, restoration, and future of the Temple; a musical presentation in the main sanctuary; and a closing reception. For details and reservations, visit laconservancy.org/wilshire-temple.

This is not the first time the Conservancy has toured this beloved Los Angeles landmark; we featured it on tours in 1987 and 2005. The April 27 tour will tell the story of Wilshire Boulevard Temple—focusing on the two-year, \$47.5 million renovation and restoration of the main sanctuary, completed last fall under the guidance of renowned preservation architect Brenda A. Levin, FAIA.

The story doesn't end there: As exceptional as it is, the restoration project is only part of a comprehensive plan for the property. Temple leaders will share their vision of the campus as a resource for not only congregants but for the surrounding multiethnic, non-Jewish community. This massive project exemplifies how restoring one historic building can help revitalize an entire neighborhood—illustrating the larger impact of historic preservation on the well-being of communities.

Wilshire Boulevard Temple serves as the third home of the Congregation B'nai B'rith,

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Murals Will Remain in Golden State Mutual Lobby

Congratulations to the owners of the former Golden State Mutual Life Insurance building (Paul Williams, 1949), who recently prevailed in a highly publicized legal dispute over the ownership of two murals in the lobby. In late 2013, owner Community Impact Development (CID) reached a settlement giving them ownership of the significant works.

The two murals flanking the upper portion of the double-height lobby were conceived by Williams as part of the building's original design. Painted by noted African American artists Charles Alston and Hale Woodruff, the oil-on-canvas works each measure more than sixteen feet long and nine feet tall. The murals are titled "The Negro in California History," and they depict the experience of African Americans in California from 1527 to 1949. The works are highly significant examples of integrated art in Los Angeles celebrating black history.

The nonprofit social services group purchased the Late Moderne building after the life insurance company closed in 2009. CID was then informed that the two murals inside the building would be removed and sold to settle debts of the former Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company. The recent settlement will allow CID to keep the site-specific murals that have been in the lobby since the building opened in 1949.

Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company was one of the first companies to offer life insurance to African Americans

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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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More Ways to Connect with the Conservancy

Things happen between our bi-monthly newsletters – we hold events, buildings are threatened, buildings are saved – and we want to make sure you know about it! We have all kinds of ways for you to stay informed. Sign up for our email newsletters, connect with us on social media, or check out our website to learn more about the issues you care about.

Email

Our **E-News** emails hit your inbox every month, providing you with up-to-date information about our issues, events, and more. Each news item is short, giving you a quick overview with a link to details. It's a great way to get the latest news at a glance.

While some of the topics in E-News overlap with content in this newsletter, the information is more timely than what we can provide in a print publication. E-News subscribers also have the chance to enter fun contests such as "Name That Building" or "Preservation Trivia" for a chance to win great prizes.

In addition to E-News, we offer targeted emails about specific topics:

- **Action Alerts** — urgent appeals for your help with specific preservation issues, from writing letters to speaking at public hearings and more
- **Last Remaining Seats** — notices and updates regarding our summer series of classic films in historic theatres
- **Events** — notices and updates specific to Conservancy events
- **Modern Committee (ModCom)** — notices from our volunteer Modern Committee
- **Garden Apartment Network** — updates specific to preserving historic garden apartments

To subscribe to any or all of these email lists, visit our website at laconservancy.org, click "Newsletter" in the top menu bar, and select the relevant checkbox(es). 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).

Social Media

Did you know the Conservancy is on Facebook, Twitter, AND Instagram? Like us on Facebook at facebook.com/losangelesconservancy and follow us on Twitter @LAConservancy for daily Conservancy updates. It's your chance to connect with us and fellow Conservancy supporters about the places and events you care about by sharing posts and leaving comments.

If you're a photo person, be sure to follow us on Instagram @LAConservancy. We post photos regularly and hold periodic Instagram contests throughout the year to see your perspectives on the unique historic places across Greater Los Angeles.

Website

We launched our new website in June 2013, and it is your one-stop shop for all things Conservancy! At laconservancy.org, you can explore an interactive map of more than 500 historic places throughout L.A. County. You can also register for upcoming events, learn about our current preservation issues and how you can help, renew your membership, find historic sites to rent for special events, and much more.

While you're there, be sure to create a user account on our website. Even though you are an active Conservancy member, you still need to create an account on our website in order to register for events, renew your membership, or make other transactions. Details on page 7.

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.

Ace Hotel (United Artists Theatre Building)

In January, Ace Hotel Downtown Los Angeles opened in the former United Artists Theatre building at 929 South Broadway. The hotel chain converted the former office tower into a boutique hotel and beautifully rehabilitated the theatre in the rear of the building as an event and performance space.

Albert R. Walker and Percy A. Eisen designed the thirteen-story office tower, and C. Howard Crane designed the grotto-like Spanish Gothic-style theatre. Crane was a noted architect who designed more than 250 theatres across the country. This is his only design on the West Coast, as he did most of his work in the Midwest. The theatre opened in 1927 to serve as the flagship for United Artist's West Coast operations.

The Conservancy will hold its Last Remaining Seats screening of *Back to the Future* at The Theatre at Ace Hotel on Saturday, June 21. See page 4 for more information.



Exterior of Ace Hotel Downtown Los Angeles. Photo by Spencer Lowell.

Hunt Residence

The Conservancy recently testified before the City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission in support of the Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) nomination for the Hunt Residence at 7 Oakmont Drive in Brentwood. In an unprecedented action, the Director of City Planning initiated the nomination in late October 2013. A demolition permit had already been issued and in effect since May 2013.

The Hunt Residence is an important work of master architect Paul Revere Williams and an excellent early example of a custom-designed Traditional Ranch House with Regency Revival detailing. This home retains a high level of physical integrity, having undergone only minimal changes since its construction in 1940. As a smaller and more informal commission by Williams, it nonetheless represents an important period in his overall work. It appears to have influenced some of his subsequent thinking about the small house and Ranch House ideals.

The owners had planned to demolish the residence and rebuild a larger structure in its place. Neighbors from the Oakmont Homeowners Association objected and in early November pressed city officials to issue a stop-work order as crews had already begun dismantling a portion of the residence. Since becoming involved in this issue, the Conservancy has been working closely with the owners to explore alternatives, including a sensitively designed addition that might allow for more square footage while still maintaining the historic residence. On January 16, members of the Cultural Heritage Commission unanimously recommended approval of the HCM nomination. The nomination was awaiting review and a vote by the City Council at press time.

West L.A. Veteran's Campus in National Spotlight

At 388 acres in size, the West Los Angeles Veteran Affairs Medical Center campus along Wilshire Boulevard is one of the largest



Wadsworth Chapel on the West Los Angeles Veteran Affairs Medical Center campus in 2005. Photo by Larry Underhill.

in the country owned and operated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). A recent report by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, *Honoring Our Nation's Veterans: Saving Their Places of Health Care and Healing*, shines the spotlight on the VA and its stewardship of historic buildings nationwide, citing numerous deficiencies in its practices.

The West L.A. campus has long been a focus for the Conservancy, notably the 1900 late-Victorian Wadsworth Chapel, the oldest remaining building on Wilshire Boulevard (and featured on our 2005 tour, *Curating the City: Wilshire Blvd.*). Vacant for many years and in need of rehabilitation, it is the last remaining example of a neighborhood of early twentieth century structures officially named the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, founded in 1887 to care for volunteer soldiers of the Civil War and Indian wars. Today, nearly forty percent of the buildings on the campus are considered historic—and, like Wadsworth Chapel, many are either vacant or underused and need attention.

The West L.A. campus is no stranger to controversy or speculation regarding its prime real estate. Supporters are working to ensure that it continues to serve its intended purpose of helping veterans.

One positive step is the adaptive reuse of a formerly empty historic building into housing for veterans who are homeless. Announced in 2007, the rehabilitation project is currently underway and will expand to two additional buildings in the near future. To read the report, visit the National Trust for Historic Preservation's website (preservationnation.org) and search for "Honoring Our Nation's Veterans."

GOLDEN STATE MUTUAL

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in Los Angeles, who were routinely denied coverage. Founded in 1925 by William Nickerson, Jr.; Norman Oliver Houston; and George Allen Beavers, Jr., the company filled a huge void and grew very quickly. By 1945, it was the largest black-owned business west of the Mississippi River.

In 1949, Golden State Mutual moved into a new, custom-built home office at the intersection of West Adams Boulevard and Western Avenue designed by renowned architect Paul Revere Williams. A native Angeleno, Williams was the first African American architect admitted to the American Institute of Architects, in 1923. He rose to national acclaim and enjoyed a prolific career spanning five decades.

Many groups, including the Conservancy, our Modern Committee (ModCom), West Adams Heritage Association, the California African American Museum, and the Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles, worked to keep the murals intact. ModCom nominated the building for Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) status, and it was designated HCM #1000 in June 2011.

The former home office of the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company in West Adams tells a fascinating story of African Americans in Los Angeles, throughout California, and nationally. The Conservancy is thrilled that the murals will remain in the lobby of the building and continue to tell that story.



Part of one of the lobby murals in the former Golden State Mutual lobby depicting the history of African Americans in California. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

Last Remaining Seats: Old Friends, Iconic Films, and a Big Anniversary

by Sarah Weber

The twenty-eighth year of the Conservancy's signature film series will include a cinema classic we have never screened before, a theatre we haven't visited in over two decades, and a big anniversary.

In addition to our familiar venues along Broadway, we are excited to return to the former United Artists Theatre (Walker & Eisen, 1927; interior by C. Howard Crane) for the first time since 1990. Meticulously rehabilitated as The Theatre at Ace Hotel, this venue has special significance to Last Remaining Seats: it was one of the four theatres used for the series' very first season in 1987.

We are also happy to be back at The Music Center's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion for the second year in a row, to help celebrate the Pavilion's 50th anniversary and its importance as one of the premier performing arts venues in Los Angeles.

Our diverse film lineup includes more Saturday options than ever before. This year's series begins on **Wednesday, June 11**, and runs every Wednesday and Saturday through the end of June. Closing out the series is Orson Welles' 1941 masterpiece *Citizen Kane*, which we have never screened in the series. We will have matinee and evening screenings at the Orpheum Theatre on **Saturday, June 28**.

As always, members enjoy advance purchase and discounts on tickets. Tickets go on sale to Conservancy members at 10 a.m. on **March 26** and to the general public on **April 9**. Tickets are \$16 for Conservancy members (\$20 for general public). For details, visit laconservancy.org.

We offer special thanks to our 2014 Last Remaining Seats sponsors (as of press time): Series Star Sponsor: Hollywood Foreign Press Association; Series Supporting Sponsor: Shangri-La Construction/Webcor; Series Sponsors: Cole's Originators of the French Dip, NBC Universal, Trina Turk, Warner Bros.; Screening Sponsors: Linda and Jerry Bruckheimer, Clifton's, Hugh Hefner, The Music Center, Cathy and Steve Needleman, Paramount Pictures; Media Sponsors: Laemmle Theatres, Los Angeles Downtown News.



Beautifully rehabilitated The Theatre at Ace Hotel. Photo by Spencer Lowell.

2014 LRS Lineup

(subject to change)

Wednesday, June 11
Los Angeles Theatre
The Lady Eve (1941)

Saturday, June 14
The Music Center's
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion
West Side Story (1961)

Wednesday, June 18
Orpheum Theatre
Footlight Parade (1933)

Saturday, June 21
The Theatre at Ace Hotel
Back to the Future (1985)
matinee and evening screenings

Wednesday, June 25
Palace Theatre
El Gran Calavera / The Great Madcap (1949)
co-presented with the Latin American
Cinematheca of Los Angeles

Saturday, June 28
Orpheum Theatre
Citizen Kane (1941)
matinee and evening screenings

You
will need a user
account on our website to
purchase Last Remaining Seats
tickets. See page 7 for more
information.

Modern Committee Honors Modern Masters

by Sarah Weber

The Conservancy's Modern Committee presented four Modern Masters Awards at its December 2013 holiday party. The awards recognize a lifetime of achievement in the fields of Modern architecture and design. Over the spans of their long and impressive careers, the award recipients have all made major contributions to the Modern built environment and design aesthetic of Los Angeles. For more information about each recipient, visit laconservancy.org/modcom.

2013 Modern Masters Award Recipients

Gin Wong, architect (active 1950-present)

Examples of his work include the original 1952 design of Los Angeles International Airport while at the firm of Pereira and Luckman, CBS Television City building (1952), and Union Oil headquarters in downtown L.A. (1958). He is a USC Life Trustee.

Jerome and Evelyn Ackerman, artists/designers (active 1952-2012)

Members of the "California modernist" movement, they created groundbreaking ceramics, tile mosaics, woodcarvings, and textiles. They were featured in prestigious museum exhibitions, design shows, and magazines such as *Home and Garden*. Evelyn passed away in 2012.

Kurt Meyer, architect (active 1948-1993)

Examples of his work include the Lytton Savings building on Sunset Boulevard (1959) and the master plan for Pasadena City College (1988). He was the director of L.A.'s Community Redevelopment Agency in the 1970s and a Trustee of the Southern California Institute of Architecture from 1987-89.

Don Gibbs, architect (active 1961-present)

Examples of his work, in partnership with his father, Hugh Gibbs, include the Gibbs and Gibbs offices in Long Beach (1963), the Warner Bros. Records building in Burbank (1981), and several buildings on the campus of Cal State Long Beach, including the Walter Pyramid and the School of Dance (both 1994).

Annual Benefit at Union Station May 17

By Adrienne Kisson

The Conservancy is thrilled to hold our 2014 annual benefit on **Saturday, May 17** at the iconic 1939 Union Station in celebration of its 75th anniversary. Designed by John and Donald Parkinson, Union Station was the last grand railroad station built in the United States. Its unique combination of Art Deco and Spanish Colonial Revival styles make it one of the most recognizable buildings in Los Angeles. It was designated as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) #101 in 1972 and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

Tickets for the benefit will begin at \$500, including dinner in the main ticket concourse and entertainment in the former Fred Harvey House restaurant. Donors at higher levels will enjoy a cocktail reception in two private luxury railcars on the station's tracks. Further details will be announced in the coming months. We hope you will join us for what is sure to be an extraordinary evening honoring one of our most beloved landmarks!



Photo by Larry Underhill.

2014 Volunteer Awards



25 Years of Service

John English



15 Years of Service

Tom Sutherland, Don Sloper,
Eric Lynxwiler, Marcia Enger,
Jeanne Wilson, Deborah Kelso,
Sandra Sandoval
Not pictured: Ken Gehrig and
Gregory Iriart



Exemplary Service in 2013

Nicole Thompson and
Martha Gruft
For their outstanding spirit
of volunteerism

Daniel Paul and Jonathan Kaplan
For their major contributions on
behalf of the Venice Eclectic Tour

Photos by Lynne Tucker

WILSHIRE BLVD. TEMPLE TOUR continued from page 1

which was founded in 1862 and is the oldest Jewish congregation in Los Angeles. The congregation left each of its first two synagogues, both located downtown and both now demolished, as its size grew and as the city moved westward.

Under the dynamic leadership of Rabbi Edgar F. Magnin, often called the “Rabbi to the Stars” because of his friends in Hollywood, the congregation purchased property at the corner of Wilshire and Hobart Boulevards in 1921. At the time, the Mid-Wilshire area was an upper-class suburban enclave with great commercial promise, sometimes called the “Fifth Avenue of the West.” Religious organizations of all denominations followed their members here as they moved west from downtown, and most of the churches were grand and impressive.

Wilshire Boulevard Temple was no exception. Dedicated in 1929 and built for a then-princely sum of \$1.4 million, the octagonal building was designed by A. M. Adelman, S. Tilden Norton, and David C. Allison. Its Wilshire façade combines a traditional Romanesque three-arch portal and rose window with a vast Byzantine dome spanning 100 feet and rising nearly 140 feet above street level.

The spectacular interior of the Edgar F. Magnin sanctuary is resplendent with black Belgian marble columns, teakwood doors, gold altar fixtures, and bronze chandeliers. As a gift to the synagogue, the Warner brothers, founders of the famous Hollywood studio, commissioned artist Hugo Ballin to design breathtaking murals depicting 3,000 years of Jewish history.

The Warners were not the only Hollywood connection to the Temple. Many prominent Jewish filmmakers who had found success and power in the Southern California movie business had strong relationships with Rabbi Magnin—and, thus, the Temple. Hollywood legends including Louis B. Mayer, Irving Thalberg, Carl Laemmle, Sol Lesser, and Sid Grauman donated funds for features such as stained glass windows, chandeliers, and marble columns.

In accordance with Rabbi Magnin’s wishes, the sanctuary was purposefully designed to look like a movie theatre, with a grand entrance; spacious lobby; broad, car-



In addition to docent tours of the beautifully restored building and campus, our April 27 event will also include speakers discussing the history, restoration, and future of the Temple, a musical presentation in the main sanctuary, and a closing reception. . Photo by Annie Laskey/L.A. Conservancy.

peted stairways leading to the balcony; and a dramatically domed and acoustically perfect auditorium with no central aisle.

Despite the building’s designation as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument in 1973 and listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 1981, its golden age passed. By the early 1990s, many congregants had moved west into other parts of the city, and the structure suffered from deferred maintenance. The stunning Ballin murals were cracked and in need of conservation, plaster from the dome had cracked and fallen due to water damage, windows were bowed, and nearly every surface was dingy and dirty.

Temple leaders faced a difficult decision: sell the building and focus on their Westside facilities, or find the money to invest in its future. In 2004, the Temple’s Board of Trustees made restoring the building a priority. The Jewish community responded in force, not only funding the restoration but continuing to raise money to expand the entire campus. The congregation has raised \$121 million to date.

The Temple is not only a symbol of religious vitality for Jews, but it will serve as an important resource for the immediate neighborhood, which is predominantly Korean and Latino. The main sanctuary has already held cultural events open to the community. In July 2014, the next phase of construction begins on the renovation of two school buildings, a new structure providing social services such

as a food pantry and health services, athletic facilities, and parking; and landscaped areas throughout the campus.

Temple leaders are working closely with other religious organizations, nonprofits, business leaders, and schools in the area to find creative solutions to bring positive change to the area. While there is still money to raise and work to do, the first phase of the campus renovation symbolizes hope and optimism for the congregation and the larger community—and stands as testament to the power of preservation.



Detail of restored Hugo Ballin murals in the main sanctuary. Photo by Annie Laskey/L.A. Conservancy.

NOVEMBER 27 / JANUARY 27 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!

CREATE AN ACCOUNT ON OUR WEBSITE

To receive your Conservancy member benefits online, you need to create a user account with your email address. It just takes a few minutes!

You will need to create a user account in order to buy tickets to Last Remaining Seats. Even though you're a current member, or even if you purchased Last Remaining Seats tickets last year, you do not have a user account until you create one on our website.

If you plan to purchase tickets to the 2014 season of Last Remaining Seats, **we urge you to create your user account now** to avoid any delays when member tickets go on sale.

To create your account, visit laconservancy.org, click "Sign in" on the top menu, click on the "Create new account" tab, and enter your name and email address. You will receive an email confirmation containing a link back to our website. Click on that link, enter whatever password you would like to use with your account, and click "Save." That's it!

Creating an account is quick and easy, although we will be glad to help you with any questions or problems you may have. Just contact us at (213) 623-2489 or info@laconservancy.org.

Visit laconservancy.org to create your account today. Thank you!

CONSERVANCY WALKING TOURS

Walking tours begin at 10 a.m. except where noted. Tours are \$5 for Conservancy members and children twelve and under; \$10 for the general public. Walk-ins are accepted on most tours. Pre-payment is required on Angelino Heights, Biltmore Hotel, and Broadway.

For details and reservations, visit laconservancy.org. Questions? Call the Conservancy office at (213) 623-2489.

WEEKLY TOURS

Art Deco

Every Saturday

Biltmore Hotel

Every Sunday, 2 p.m.

Broadway: Historic Theatre & Commercial District

Every Saturday

Historic Downtown

Every Saturday

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.

Union Station

Third Saturday

Youth, family, and group tours by arrangement; call (213) 623-2489 for information.



Los Angeles Conservancy

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



Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy

WILSHIRE BOULEVARD TEMPLE TOUR Sunday, April 27

Join us for tours of the beautifully restored building and campus, speakers, closing reception, and musical presentation in the main sanctuary. Details on page 1.



Conservancy archives

LOS ANGELES HERITAGE DAY El Pueblo Historical Monument Sunday, April 27

Celebrate the history of Los Angeles County at this free festival event, then join us at Wilshire Boulevard Temple for our tour! For details, visit experiencela.com/calendar/event/58689.



Photo by Annie Laskey/L.A. Conservancy

ANNUAL BENEFIT Union Station Saturday, May 17

The Conservancy is thrilled to hold our 2014 annual benefit at the iconic Union Station in celebration of its 75th anniversary. Details on page 5.