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news

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Historic photograph of Richard Neutra's 1955 Kronish House by master photographer Julius Shulman. © J. Paul Getty Trust. Used with permission. Julius Shulman Photography Archive, Research Library at the Getty Research Institute (2004.R.10).

Demolition Delayed for Kronish House

by *Adrian Scott Fine*

Sometimes, the threat to a specific historic building—and the efforts to save it—galvanize a tremendous outpouring of support that leads to a critical turning point. The Kronish House in Beverly Hills is a good example, leading to what we hope will be a watershed moment in a city that historically has resisted putting preservation into practice.

As you may know by now, the 1955 Kronish House, designed by Richard Neutra, is threatened with demolition. After intensive advocacy and an enormous public outcry, the Kronish House still stands, though the clock is ticking: its demolition is on hold only until October 10. The Conservancy is working very hard to try and find a preservation-minded buyer for the house. Dion Neutra, the architect's son and the project architect on the Kronish House, is also leading efforts to secure the home's future.

The Kronish House is one of only three Richard Neutra designs ever built in Beverly Hills and the only one that remains intact (one was demolished, the other completely altered). The residence was built for Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Kronish on a nearly two-acre lot at 9439 Sunset Boulevard. At nearly 7,000 square feet, the home is reportedly Neutra's largest residential commission in North America. It has a formal, pinwheel-shaped design, with three wings radiating from a glass-enclosed garden area visible from several rooms. The house was designed with fine finishes and innovative amenities, including walls of glass and slick, smooth surfaces. Neutra also designed the original swimming pool.

Please see KRONISH on page 6

Ennis House Sold

by *Cindy Olnick*

We are thrilled that the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Ennis House has a new owner. Business executive Ron Burkle purchased the home in July and will continue its rehabilitation. Mr. Burkle has a track record in the stewardship of historic homes, and we look forward to working with him to ensure the preservation of this beloved landmark.

Completed in 1925, the Ennis House is the last and largest of Wright's "textile block" homes in Los Angeles. Its prominent perch atop a Los Feliz hillside has made it a visual icon of the neighborhood and the city.

The house had suffered greatly despite its worldwide significance. Deferred maintenance, well-intended but harmful weatherproofing, the 1994 Northridge earthquake, and the near-record rains of 2005 took an extraordinary toll. The Ennis House landed on the "most endangered" lists of both the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the World Monuments Fund.

The nonprofit that owned the house reorganized in 2005 as the Ennis House Foundation, represented by groups including the Conservancy. The foundation led a massive effort to stabilize the property and launch its rehabilitation. Citing the need for continued restoration beyond its means, the foundation placed the house on the market in 2009.

The Conservancy holds a detailed easement on the entire site that protects interior and exterior features and specifies some form of public access at least twelve times per year. We will work with Mr. Burkle to determine what form this access will take.

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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.

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

Trudi Sandmeier Leaves Conservancy Staff

We are both sad and delighted to report that as of August 1, **Trudi Sandmeier** is director of the Master of Historic Preservation Program at the USC School of Architecture. She left the Conservancy staff in late July. While we miss her terribly, this is an extraordinary opportunity for Trudi, and we are very excited for her. The search for her successor is under way.

Trudi worked at the Conservancy for nearly eleven years, in three different positions. She made countless contributions, but a few stand out. As preservation advocate, she worked on a vast range of specific advocacy issues, expanded our outreach to residents of the city's historic districts (HPOZs), and managed our easement program. She took on the role of Broadway Initiative coordinator in 2003, providing technical assistance and marketing support to property owners, attracting new programming to the historic Broadway theatres, implementing design guidelines, and administering a \$1 million façade rehabilitation grant program.

In five years as director of education, Trudi enhanced signature programs such as walking tours and Last Remaining Seats while pursuing innovative new approaches to public outreach. She aligned educational programming more closely with advocacy through groundbreaking efforts such as Spanning History: The Bridges of the Los Angeles River and The Sixties Turn 50. Trudi championed the vernacular and industrial architecture that is often overlooked, yet vital to Greater L.A.'s cultural legacy. She also launched a new youth outreach program that continues to engage the next generation of preservationists.

We look forward to continuing our work with Trudi as she seeks new ways of integrating preservation education and practice. Please join us in wishing her the very best in her new adventure.

Shannon Ryan Joins Conservancy Staff as Membership Assistant



We're excited to welcome **Shannon Ryan** as the Conservancy's new membership assistant. A native Angeleno, Shannon has been a member of the Conservancy for the past two years. Her love of the built environment led her to pursue a master's degree in urban planning from UCLA, which she received in June. Shannon has interned for the Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources and is very happy to continue working in the field of preservation. In her new role, Shannon hopes to ignite her passion for history and architecture in others and help increase our membership base. Please join us in welcoming Shannon to the Conservancy staff.

Thanks to Our Getty Interns

This summer, we were lucky to have **Anne Nguyen** and **Mickie Torres-Gil** as interns from the Getty Foundation's Multicultural Undergraduate Internship Program. Anne is a fifth-year architecture student at the University of Notre Dame with a concentration in historic preservation and a minor in art history. Over the summer, she researched postwar garden apartment complexes as part of our advocacy efforts with Wyvernwood. A senior at USC majoring in architecture, Mickie worked on several of our public programs, including our regular walking tours and preparation for our HPOZ tour (see page 5). Both Anne and Mickie also worked at Last Remaining Seats. We enjoyed having them in the office and greatly appreciate their contributions.



Getty interns Anne Nguyen (left) and Mickie Torres-Gil. Photo by Jessica Burns/L.A. Conservancy.

Preservation Issues in the News

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

Note: As always, there's a lot going on in advocacy—far too much for this small space. We're trying briefer summaries of more issues; please visit laconservancy.org for details about each. Please let us know what you think by e-mailing news@laconservancy.org or calling the office at (213) 623-2489.

Century Plaza Hotel

In late July, the draft environmental impact report (DEIR) for the Century Plaza Mixed-Used Development in Century City was released, which includes the Century Plaza Hotel (Minoru Yamasaki, 1966). As a result of our ongoing collaboration with owners Next Century Associates and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the “preferred project” and several alternatives preserve the hotel building as the centerpiece. Public comments on the DEIR are due **Tuesday, September 6**. You can read the full DEIR online at <http://cityplanning.lacity.org> and the Conservancy's comments at laconservancy.org/centuryplaza.

Capitol Records Tower

New development is slated near Hollywood's iconic Capitol Records Tower (Welton Becket and Associates, 1956). The Millennium Hollywood Project would add new construction around the tower, a City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument. The environmental review process for the project began in May with the release of a Notice of Preparation (NOP). The Conservancy's comments on the NOP sought to ensure compatible, complementary new infill construction. We emphasized that if the proposed project adversely affects the character-defining features and views of the Capitol Records Tower, preservation alternatives and appropriate mitigation measures must be considered.

Glendale County Building

The state's Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) proposes to expand or replace the Glendale County Building at 600 E. Broadway in Glendale, also known as the



The 1959 Glendale County Building features an exterior stepped entrance canopy (left) and a serpentine brick wall with curved wood benches on the interior (right). Photos by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.



Glendale Courthouse (Arthur Wolfe, 1959). Citing a need for additional space for security and amenities, the AOC has issued an NOP to build a five-story courthouse on the existing site. The AOC claims that it intends to retain the significant architectural elements of the building's modern design. Yet the plan's feasibility, and its ability to maintain the building's eligibility as a historic resource, are yet to be determined.

Leuzinger High School

Despite protest from local residents and Leuzinger High alumni, the Centinela Valley Union High School District school board voted in July to adopt a Notice of Exemption from environmental review for the Leuzinger High School campus. The district recently began demolishing several of the school's distinctive, postwar-era “finger” classroom buildings, so named because of their slender shape. The Conservancy has urged the school district to consider the campus a historical resource under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Save Leuzinger's Legacy and Friends and Alumni of Leuzinger High School, two advocacy coalitions formed

by residents and alumni, have retained legal counsel. They are pursuing litigation in an effort to force the school district to prepare an environmental impact report and halt additional losses on the campus.

Jefferson Park

Jefferson Park became Los Angeles' twenty-ninth Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) in June. The HPOZ encompasses a portion of the West Adams area south of Adams Boulevard and west of Western Avenue. With nearly 2,000 properties, it is the second-largest HPOZ in the city (next to Highland Park) and one of the city's most culturally diverse neighborhoods. It also contains one of the highest concentrations of Craftsman bungalows in the county. Developed between 1905 and 1930, it includes many homes built using prefabricated kits produced by companies such as Bungalowcraft and Montgomery Ward and Co. The neighborhood's cohesive character is enhanced by shared Craftsman features such as broad eaves, wood shingle siding, and deep porches.

TAKE A BOW, 2011 LAST REMAINING SEATS VOLUNTEER CAST!

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
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| Marjorie Karpen | Karen Workcuff |
| Steven Kyle | Michael Zoldessy |
| Denise Le Blanc | |

*Special kudos to David, Bob, Steve, and Robert, who have volunteered for **twenty-four years!**

25th Last Remaining Seats a Huge Success

We hope you joined us to celebrate this very special twenty-fifth season of Last Remaining Seats, our annual series of classic films in historic theatres. This season was historic in several ways, from a record nine screenings and 14,000 tickets sold, to honoring the hundredth birthday—and substantial restoration—of the Palace Theatre.

We offer our deepest thanks to the many volunteers (listed at left) who helped plan and run the series, as well as our 2011 sponsors: Series Star Sponsor the Hollywood Foreign Press Association; Series Supporting Sponsor Steve Bing; Series Sponsors NBC Universal, Trina Turk, and Valley Economic Development Center; Evening Sponsors Cathy and Steve Needleman, Linda and Jerry Bruckheimer, Warner Bros., Clifton's and The Edison, Paramount Pictures, 213 Downtown LA Nightlife, and Hugh Hefner; Media Sponsor Los Angeles Downtown News; and VIP Reception Sponsor Bank of America/Merrill Lynch; with partial funding by The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, Los Angeles City Department of Cultural Affairs, and The Walt Disney Company.



ABOVE: Linda Dishman introduces members of the Last Remaining Seats volunteer sub-committee. Photo by Ben Miller Photography.



ABOVE: Guests enjoy the view from the balcony of the 1926 Orpheum Theatre on opening night. Photo by Gary Leonard. TOP RIGHT: Before the screening of *King Kong*, Maxwell DeMille interviewed 100-year-old Pauline Wagner, Fay Wray's stunt double in the film. Photo by Greg Szimonisz. BOTTOM RIGHT: The show's about to start at the newly restored Palace Theatre, which turned 100 on June 26. We celebrated with three screenings of *Sunset Boulevard*, selected by Conservancy members. Photo by Gary Leonard.



Fifth “At Home with History” Tour Highlights L.A.’s First HPOZ “Triplet”

by Mickie Torres-Gil

On **Sunday, November 6** from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Conservancy will bring back our popular At Home with History tour exploring the historic neighborhoods of Los Angeles. In the City of Los Angeles, historic districts are known as Historic Preservation Overlay Zones, or HPOZs. The City has designated eight new districts since our last HPOZ tour in 2006, bringing the total to twenty-nine.

This year’s tour will feature three new HPOZs coined “the triplet” by residents. Country Club Park, Wilshire Park, and Windsor Village are adjacent to one another, sharing a border along Crenshaw Boulevard. Although each HPOZ was established separately, all three share one HPOZ board, as well as a common history of once being part of Rancho Las Cienegas. Yet each has evolved into its own unique neighborhood. **Windsor Village** developed primarily between 1910 and 1962; it contains Period Revival homes and historic institutions. **Wilshire Park**, developed from 1909 to 1941 in response to bustling Wilshire Boulevard, reflects mainly Dutch and Spanish Colonial Revival styles. **Country Club Park**, once associated with the Los Angeles Country Club, features homes designed from 1903 to 1952 in an array of styles.

As in the past, At Home with History will include docent-led tours of homes in each neighborhood and “neighborhood ambassadors” on hand to talk about the experience of living in an HPOZ. Tickets are \$30 for Conservancy members and \$40 for the general public. For details and tickets, visit laconservancy.org. See you there!



Homes in the Windsor Village HPOZ. Photo by Mickie Torres-Gil.

2011 Volunteer Recognition Awards



The Conservancy has hundreds of invaluable volunteers, but each year some rise to an even higher level or reach a milestone of long-term service. These volunteers were honored with a Conservancy Recognition Award at our annual meeting on June 12 at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. This year’s recipients included (pictured, left-right) Back row: Patricia Sinclair, Bob Brennan (22 years of Last Remaining Seats photography), Lisa M. Snyder (distinguished service), Don Solosan, Ron Mackovich, Kris Bellino (distinguished service), Alex Garcia (15 years), Stanley Sheff (15 years), and Marvin Farber (25 years). Front row: Charles Fisher, Jan Westman (15 years), Frank Bellino (distinguished service), Bruce Scottow, and Rory Cunningham (25 years). Not pictured: Tom Ruff (15 years), Julie Downey, John Ghini, and David Peake. Photo by Larry Underhill.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Lautner Preservation Symposium

On **Sunday, October 9**, the Conservancy and The John Lautner Foundation will host a candid discussion with architects and owners of Lautner homes about different approaches to stewardship—from restoration to reconstruction, and everything in between. This special event is part of the John Lautner Turns 100 series, a year-long celebration of the legendary architect, who would have turned 100 this year. For details and reservations, visit laconservancy.org. Questions? Call the Conservancy office at (213) 623-2489. For more information about the John Lautner Turns 100 series, visit johnlautner.org.

DOCOMOMO US Tour Day

The Conservancy is proud to participate in the fifth annual DOCOMOMO US Tour Day with a special afternoon Downtown’s Modern Skyline tour at 2 p.m. on **Saturday, October 8**. For details and reservations, visit laconservancy.org.

Haunted Scavenger Hunts

The Conservancy and Out of the Box Events present the third annual Haunted Scavenger Hunt of Angelino Heights, a new Halloween tradition for the whole family! Choose **Saturday or Sunday, October 22 or 23**. Hunts begin at 4 p.m. and end around 6:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$25 for Conservancy members and \$30 for the general public. Reservations are required, and we often sell out! For information and reservations, visit outoftheboxevents.net.

“The Taste: Food Noir” September 4 to Benefit the Conservancy

The Conservancy is proud to participate in an exciting event over Labor Day weekend. On **Sunday, September 4**, the *L.A. Times* and *Food & Wine* magazine will present Food Noir in downtown Los Angeles, part of The Taste culinary festival happening citywide. Food Noir will feature some of Los Angeles’ most celebrated restaurants and chefs for an evening of noir-inspired dishes, wine, and spirits. **Receive 20% off the ticket price** by entering the discount code **“Conservancy”** when you purchase (expires September 4 at 4 p.m.).

From 8 p.m. to 12 a.m., Broadway will be closed between Eighth and Ninth Streets, and guests can partake in everything from cooking demonstrations and wine and spirit seminars, to tastings from local restaurants and top vintners at eighty different booths.

The event is for foodies and film buffs alike, as the Conservancy will host a “pop-up” Last Remaining Seats! We’re working with the 1926 Orpheum Theatre to screen short films, old newsreels, trailers, and cartoons throughout the evening.

Each all-inclusive ticket includes unlimited tastings from over thirty of L.A.’s vintage restaurants/chefs, unlimited samples of over thirty wineries, breweries, and spirits, screenings in the Orpheum Theatre, and live musical entertainment.

A portion of ticket sales will benefit the Conservancy. For details and tickets, visit <http://events.latimes.com/taste>.

KRONISH continued from page 1

Soda Partners, LLC purchased the house in a foreclosure auction in January for \$5.8 million and placed it on the market in April for nearly \$14 million. It was initially marketed as a teardown, though the listing later acknowledged Neutra’s design of the house and encouraged restoration. Yet the owner initiated the demolition process in July.

Based on what has been disclosed, the proposed demolition of the Kronish House seems purely speculative, with no replacement project planned. As far as we can tell, the owner intended to raze the home and clear the site in order to better attract a buyer. Like most teardowns, the perceived value is in the land—in this case, a rare two-acre site off Sunset Boulevard offering complete privacy. Yet tearing down to build up is short sighted, especially with such an exceptional property.

The Kronish House is not just another Beverly Hills residence. It was designed by one of the foremost modernist architects in the world. As an internationally renowned master architect, Richard Neutra helped develop California modernism and was an immense influence on American designers. His surviving works are highly regarded and considered some of the most significant of the twentieth century. Many of his commissions, including the Kronish House, perfectly melded the interior and exterior of a space such that it would, as Neutra stated, “place man in relationship with nature; that’s where he developed and where he feels most at home.”

Given the significance of Neutra and the Kronish House, many people wonder how the home’s demolition could even be possible. While Beverly Hills has an impressive collection of significant buildings, some designed by master architects, currently the City does not have a way to protect them from inappropriate alteration or demolition. In the past year alone, the City issued the demolition permits for the John Lautner-designed Shusett House (1951) and the Friars Club Building (1961) by architect Sidney Eisenshtat.

A demolition permit currently can be issued over the counter in Beverly Hills, with no staff discretion required. Once certain conditions are met in terms of safety, public notice, fencing, and landscaping, an owner is free to demolish, regardless of a property’s significance.



A recent photograph of the Kronish House. Photo courtesy Curbed LA.

The stark reality that Beverly Hills could actually lose a house of this caliber prompted a huge outpouring of support. More than 500 people and counting—from Beverly Hills, throughout the United States, and around the world—wrote letters, e-mailed, called, or tweeted the City. All of them urged the Mayor and City Council to take any action possible to delay the demolition until other options can be fully explored.

By all accounts, the message was clearly received, leading to the placement of the Kronish House issue on the August 2 City Council agenda. In testimony after testimony, nearly two dozen people shared a similar concern about Beverly Hills losing its character piece by piece.

The owner’s representative for the property agreed to postpone demolition until at least October 10. If not for this action, the Kronish House could have been demolished as early as mid-August. While this is a huge challenge, it provides critical time to try and save the landmark residence.

The Mayor and members of the City Council went an important step further, directing the Planning Commission to review its preservation ordinance and procedures to help ensure that landmarks like the Kronish House cannot be so easily lost in the future. The Conservancy applauds this action and looks forward to working with the City and residents to help craft stronger tools for preservation in Beverly Hills.

Many, many thanks to everyone who attended the City Council meeting, wrote to the City, or spread the word to others. You made all the difference in helping to buy much-needed time for the Kronish House, as well as to prompt the City toward true preservation policy.

JUNE 6 / AUGUST 2 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

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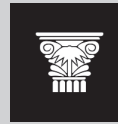
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Attn: Membership
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(213) 623-2489 ■ fax: (213) 623-3909

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Thank you to all our members who have been participating in the **Ralphs/Food-4-Less Community Contribution Program**. Each time you use your Ralphs or Food-4-Less rewards card, a portion of your total purchase is donated to the Conservancy. Since the Conservancy began our partnership with Ralphs/Food-4-Less four years ago, members have contributed thousands of dollars simply by buying groceries!

Please sign up or renew today. **Even if you've participated in the past, you need to renew your registration each fall** for the current term (September 1, 2011 – August 31, 2012).

Simply visit ralphs.com, sign in or register, click on "Community Contribution" under the "Services" tab at the top of the page, and select "enroll" in the "Participant" section. On the next screen, you can find the Los Angeles Conservancy by name or NPO number (80379). If you've previously enrolled in the program, you can also renew your registration by signing in and going to "My Account" – "Community Rewards."

If you don't have a Ralphs rewards card, you can get one at the customer service desk of any Ralphs.

If you participate through Food-4-Less, you don't need to re-register your rewards card. If you have a Food-4-Less rewards card and have not registered it, you can register online at Food4Less.com. 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 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

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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UPCOMING EVENTS



Ben Miller Photography

THE TASTE: FOOD NOIR

Sunday, September 4
Downtown Los Angeles

Enjoy a 20% discount on this unique event benefiting the Conservancy! Part of The Taste culinary festival, it features food, drink, and a "pop-up" Last Remaining Seats at the Orpheum Theatre! See page 6 for details.



John Lautner Foundation

LAUTNER PRESERVATION SYMPOSIUM

Sunday, October 9

The Conservancy and The John Lautner Foundation present a candid discussion with architects and owners of Lautner homes about different approaches to stewardship. For details, visit laconservancy.org.



Conservancy archives

HAUNTED SCAVENGER HUNTS

Saturday-Sunday, October 22-23
Angelino Heights

Grab a flashlight and explore the spookier side of one of Los Angeles' oldest neighborhoods. For details, see page 5 or visit outoftheboxevents.net.