



LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY NEWS



Jan/Feb 2016 • Volume 38 Number 1



Preservation highlights of 2015 include (clockwise from left) *Mad Men* creator and Conservancy member Matthew Weiner speaking at a Norms La Cienega rally, ongoing efforts to stem the teardown trend in historic neighborhoods, and an expert panel discussing the history and fate of Parker Center. Parker Center photo by Larry Underhill; other photos by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

Preservation Year in Review

by Conservancy staff

As the Conservancy launches a new year of adventures in preservation, we took a moment to reflect on our past year of advocacy. Here's just a sampling of highlights from our many projects in 2015 (see page 4 for highlights of our work across the organization).

Icons Restored, Reimagined, and Rescued (for Now)

If you haven't spent the past few months in a cave, you likely know about the reopening of Clifton's Cafeteria in October. The beloved 1935 eatery in downtown L.A. underwent a four-year, multi-million-dollar restoration and reimagining for new generations. Owner and Conservancy Board Member Andrew Meieran held a preview fundraiser for the Conservancy in September, and we were thrilled to be part of this historic moment.

We opened 2015 with a bang, when we learned on January 5 that the new owner of the Norms La Cienega property (not the restaurant chain) had received a permit to demolish the building. The Conservancy's announcement of the demolition permit fueled an unprecedented outcry, reaching more than 600,000 people on Facebook and garnering international news coverage. The new owner began working with the Conservancy to explore alternatives for the site. This conversation continues, and we'll keep you posted. The building's Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) designation in May will help protect it from demolition in the meantime.

Good News for Neighborhoods

A new Interim Control Ordinance (ICO) went into effect for more than a dozen Los Angeles neighborhoods, providing much-needed relief from demolition activity and out-of-scale new construction for up to two years. The ICO also establishes a process for amending the City's

Please see REVIEW on page 6

Hope for Historic Apartment Buildings

by Laura Dominguez

In late 2015, local residents successfully cleared important milestones in their campaign to save two significant multi-family residential properties in Los Angeles.

As previously reported, threats to the Mendel and Mabel Meyer Courtyard Apartments (118-126 ½ N. Flores Street) and the Edinburgh Bungalow Court (750-756 ½ N. Edinburgh Avenue) illustrate the growing teardown trend hitting multi-family homes in older neighborhoods.

On November 25, the Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously to designate the 1939 Mendel and Mabel Meyer Courtyard Apartments as a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM). The Minimal Traditional-style apartment building is significant for its associations with Meyer and Holler, one of the most prolific early-twentieth-century builders in Los Angeles, as well as with multi-family development patterns during the Great Depression.

The HCM designation provides the property with valuable protection from demolition, requiring the owner to work with the City's Cultural Heritage Commission and Office of Historic Resources on any substantial changes.

Efforts to designate the 1925 Edinburgh Bungalow Court are similarly progressing. On November 19, the Cultural Heritage Commission unanimously voted to recommend HCM designation of the Spanish Colonial Revival-style property, despite opposition

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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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Major funding for the Los Angeles Conservancy's programs is provided by the LaFetra Foundation.

What Do You Consider the Best in Preservation? 2016 Preservation Award Applications Due Friday, January 29

We're now accepting applications for the Conservancy's 35th Annual Preservation Awards, celebrating the best in preservation across Los Angeles County. Applications for this year's awards are due by 5 p.m. on **Friday, January 29**.

Since 1982, the Conservancy has presented almost 300 awards recognizing people, projects, publications, even television shows. The wide range of recipients have one thing in common: they made a lasting contribution to historic preservation in Greater Los Angeles.

We encourage a range of applications that illustrate the many ways, and reasons, that we preserve historic places. People, buildings, landscapes, educational programs, local preservation plans, grassroots advocacy efforts—all could be eligible for an award.

Any projects nominated must have been completed by **December 31, 2015** and be located in Los Angeles County.

An independent jury of experts will select the awards in early spring. We'll present the awards at our 35th Annual Preservation Awards Luncheon in May (date TBD).

For details and application materials, visit laconservancy.org/awards. Good luck!

2015 Modern Masters

In December, the Conservancy's Modern Committee presented its 2015 Modern Master Awards to two people who have made great contributions to Modern architecture and design: Disney Imagineer **Bob Gurr** and architectural photographer **Wayne Thom**.

"If it moves on wheels at Disneyland, I probably designed it," said Bob Gurr. In his Disney career, he helped develop over 100 designs, including turn-of-the-century Main Street vehicles, sleek bobsleds for the Matterhorn, the cars of Autopia, and the Monorail.

Wayne Thom is renowned for his stunning photographs of landmark buildings throughout the American West. He launched his photographic career in 1968, working with architects A. Quincy Jones, William Pereira, and Albert C. Martin, Jr.

His work was the subject of the recent exhibition, *Matter, Light, and Form*, presented by the Julius Shulman Institute at Woodbury University.

Congratulations to our honorees, and thank you for your remarkable achievements.



Wayne Thom and Bob Gurr, ModCom's 2015 Modern Masters. Photo by Larry Underhill.

Preservation Issues

by Laura Dominguez, Adrian Scott Fine, Manuel A. Huerta, and Marcello Vavala

For more information about these and other preservation issues, please visit laconservancy.org/important-issues.

Paramount Pictures

Paramount Pictures has proposed an ambitious master plan to guide improvements to its Hollywood studio lot over the next twenty years. If approved, the project would include new construction on the sixty-two-acre site, as well as the rehabilitation of existing historic buildings and structures. The draft environmental impact report (EIR) for the master plan was released in September 2015.

The project site contains two potential historic districts that are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places: the Paramount Pictures Historic District and the RKO Studios Historic District. The 1935 Streamline Moderne KCAL Building at 5515 Melrose Avenue has also been identified as eligible for local, state, and national listing.

As currently proposed, the Paramount Pictures Master Plan would demolish eighteen contributing buildings in the Paramount Pictures Historic District and thirteen contributing buildings in the RKO Historic District. Both districts would still maintain eligibility despite the proposed demolitions.

While the KCAL Building would be retained and rehabilitated, the project also proposes the construction of a new building of up to fifteen stories (or 240 feet in height) directly behind the historic structure.

The Conservancy has had ongoing conversations with Paramount and the project team, and we greatly value the thoughtful approach to integrating the site's collection of historic resources into the proposed master plan. While we believe that the project is moving in the right direction, we still have questions and concerns about the impact of the proposed master plan on the two potential historic districts and the KCAL Building.

In our comments on the Draft EIR, the Conservancy recommended the preparation of detailed standards to guide sensitive new construction, the adoption of a clear design review process with the City's Office of Historic Resources, and the incorporation of an



Former Lytton Savings, now Chase Bank, at Sunset and Crescent Heights Boulevards. The building is proposed for demolition and replacement with a new design by Frank Gehry. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

additional mitigation measure to require local designation of identified historic resources.

Lytton Savings Building / 8150 Sunset Project

In August 2015, developer Townscape Partners unveiled a new design by architect Frank Gehry for the southwest corner of Sunset and Crescent Heights Boulevards. Known as the 8150 Sunset Project, the plan calls for the demolition of the former Lytton Savings Building (Hagman & Meyer, 1960), a significant example of Modern bank design distinguished by a zigzag folded-plate roof.

The mixed-use project would contain 249 apartment units and over 110,000 square feet of commercial retail and restaurant uses in two buildings ranging from two to sixteen stories. Gehry's new design was evaluated as a new "Enhanced View Corridor and Additional Underground Parking Alternative" in a recirculated draft environmental impact report released in September 2015.

The Conservancy seeks a "win-win" solution for the site that preserves the Lytton Savings Building as part of the development. After working closely with the project team for months, we were nearing such a solution. The new alternative, which would demolish the postwar bank building, is a substantial step backwards. We continue to advocate for the reuse of the building, as it would meet all of the developer's stated project objectives.

UCLA Faculty Center

In October, the California State Historical Resources Commission rejected the Conservancy's nomination of the UCLA Faculty Center (Austin, Field & Fry, 1959) to the California Register of Historical Resources. The nomination had community support yet strong opposition from the UCLA administration. The Commission did not consider the building a good example of Mid-Century Modern ranch-style architecture.

UCLA proposed in 2011 to demolish the facility for a new conference center. After months of protest from faculty members and Westwood residents, UCLA decided to move the conference center near Bruin Plaza.

We pursued a California Register nomination to ensure that UCLA would account for the building's historic significance before considering its demolition in the future. UCLA and the Conservancy both submitted reports conducted by external consultants, as a part of the nomination's review process. The reports conflicted regarding the significance of the Faculty Center, and whether its renovations throughout the years had significantly altered the building.

We disagree with the contention that the building has been significantly altered, and we are very disappointed with this decision. We are currently determining our next steps.

Thank You for Your Support in 2015!

Thanks to your membership, the Conservancy had another successful year in 2015. Below we list some highlights of what you helped us achieve (in calendar year 2015, as of press time). With about thirty percent of our revenue coming from membership dues, your support has a direct impact on preservation in Greater Los Angeles. Just as every membership makes a difference, every action taken on behalf of a specific issue—from writing a letter or attending a hearing to spreading the word to your friends—makes a difference. Thank you!

Impact

- Took direct action to help preserve **76** threatened historic places
- Analyzed and commented on **30** environmental impact reports
- Provided technical assistance to **487** callers
- Provided support to **5** neighborhoods seeking historic district designation
- Benefited from the hard work of **274** volunteers (including board members and the Development Committee) who participated in events
- Celebrated **30** years of innovative advocacy by the Conservancy's Modern Committee
- Actively worked with **13** communities on new or updated preservation ordinances
- Raised over **\$36,000** (and counting!) for our Preservation Advocacy Fund, which goes beyond membership dues to support our preservation efforts

Top Preservation "Wins"

- **County of Los Angeles** adopted its first-ever preservation ordinance
- **Norms La Cienega** and **Mendel and Mabel Meyer Courtyard Apartments** declared Historic-Cultural Monuments
- New **Interim Control Ordinance (ICO)** will help protect more than twenty L.A. neighborhoods from mansionization
- **City of Long Beach** rejected a proposed provision that would have weakened its Cultural Heritage Commission Ordinance

Engagement

- Benefited from **6,291** active member households, representing more than **\$688,000** in general support for our advocacy and education programs
- Welcomed **more than 10,000** moviegoers to the 29th season of Last Remaining Seats
- Celebrated **35** years of our signature Walking Tour Program
- Helped nearly **12,000** people discover or rediscover historic downtown, thanks to the efforts of **77** volunteer docents leading more than **1,000** walking tours
- Led **12** young preservationists (ages 11-13) on our Adventures in Architecture summer program for inner-city youth in partnership with the Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA)
- Shared some of L.A.'s amazing Modern buildings with nearly **400** aficionados through three events hosted by our Modern Committee
- Hosted **1,074** people at public tours and programs, including a tour of City Hall, a return to the former Hughes Aircraft Company campus, and a panel discussion on the fate of Parker Center
- Launched **2** new Curating the City microsites focused on LGBTQ historic places and L.A.'s unique collection of garden apartments

Visibility

- Reached more than **600,000** people on Facebook with a single post on the demolition permit for Norms La Cienega
- Appeared in the media nearly **400** times, more than twice as often as in 2014
- Spoke at **61** conferences, classes, and community meetings
- Had more than **500,000** website visits by nearly **400,000** people
- Expanded our social community with more than **22,000** likes on Facebook, **11,000** followers on Twitter, and **5,000** followers on Instagram

Fun and Fundraising

Conservancy fundraisers support our work while exposing guests to buildings and places they wouldn't ordinarily be able to see. The following programs brought **\$605,158** to the Conservancy in 2015:

- **559** attendees celebrated excellence in historic preservation throughout Los Angeles County at our Preservation Awards Luncheon on May 7
- **37** people traveled with the Conservancy to Cuba in March, to see how the Cubans are handling issues of preservation and conservation in their rapidly growing tourist economy
- **574** people attended the Clifton's Cafeteria grand reopening on September 21
- **275** guests attended the Waverly Mansion benefit on October 17, focusing attention on preservation in Beverly Hills

Interested in Helping Plan Last Remaining Seats?

Calling All Members Dedicated to Volunteering on the 2016-17 Committee!

This year marks the thirtieth season of Last Remaining Seats, our series of classic films in historic theatres. Much of the planning and implementation is done by a committee of dedicated volunteers. To augment our devoted core of longtime committee members, we're looking for some fresh faces to lend their creativity, enthusiasm, and elbow grease!

The LRS Committee is an annual group of volunteers who help Conservancy staff primarily in:

- Selecting (through a voting process) films appropriate for the series
- Creating and implementing the pre/post-film programming, events, and displays

You don't need to be a film or theatre expert, but you do need to be an active member of the Conservancy. If you'd like to join the team, please attend the first meeting of 2016:

LRS Committee Meeting

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

L.A. Conservancy office, 523 West Sixth Street, Suite 826, Downtown L.A.

Please contact Bruce Scottow (bscottow@laconservancy.org or (213) 430-4218) if you plan to attend or if you have any questions about joining this active committee. Thank you!



Help us make the 30th season the best yet! Photo by Larry Underhill.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE: KRISTIN VOSS-HYATT

by Bruce Scottow

"The Conservancy had been on my radar since 2005."

-Kristin Voss-Hyatt

Radar or not, it's no surprise that Kristin found her way to the Conservancy.

The Fullerton, California native grew interested in architecture, archaeology, and anthropology due largely to her parents' careers in fine and decorative arts.



Kristin's career path reflects those interests: working with volunteers and on grant initiatives at Cal State Long Beach's Earl Burns Miller Japanese Garden, managing the membership program for Seattle's Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture, and her current position as marketing manager-membership at LACMA.

Kristin joined the Conservancy in 2010. She plunged into our volunteer program three years later and has since performed every imaginable role, including surveying guests at Last Remaining Seats, docenting our Arts District tour, and welcoming guests at our recent tour, From Hughes to Hercules.

A frequent user of mass transit, Kristin cites it as an ideal way to connect, close-up, with the people, art, and architecture of Los Angeles. About art and architecture, she has this to say: "Art is often thought of as something just to be looked at, but architecture is created to be both viewed AND used. That's what makes architecture so unique and so fascinating to me."

Kristin lives in Mid-City with her husband Kyle and their "exceedingly well-behaved" cats Clara Bow, Hank Chinaski, and Murray.

Thank You, 2015 Walking Tour Docents!

Alice Allen
Janis Ashley*
Reem Baroody
Liliana Barrios
David Berman
Kenon Breazeale*
Bob Brennan
Margaret Briggs
Chris Brown
Roberta Brown
Gail Burton
Kathleen Campbell
Cathy Cleveland
Bud Coffey
Carolyn Coughlin
Jay Cywan
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Danny Fisk
David Fitzgerald
Katie Frank
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Jenny Goodwin
Erica Gutierrez
Kellie Hardick
Erica Hayward

Mike Henderson
Randy Henderson
Julianna Herrera
Ann Hobbs
Robin Holding
Gordon Johnson**
Leah Kabaker
Holly Kane
Deke Keasbey
Anne Kelly
Leslie Lambert*
Eric Lynxwiler
Sterling Mackinnon
Lindsay McMenamin***
Stephen Melli
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Lilly Morcos
Libby Motika
Deanne Neiman
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Herb Silverman
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Kim Skavaril
Steve Slakey
Pamela Taylor**
David Thompson
Nicole Thompson
Jill Thomsen
Beth Topping
Ed Trosper
Priscilla Ulene
Donald Weggeman***
Jan Westman
Mary Alice Wollam

*Gave more than 20 tours in 2015

** More than 30 tours

***More than 50 tours

APARTMENTS

continued from page 1

from the owner. The nomination is now pending before the City Council's Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee.

SurveyLA, Los Angeles' citywide historic resources survey, found that the Edinburgh Bungalow Court is eligible for local, state, and national landmark designation as an excellent example of its property type and for its associations with the entertainment industry. While bungalow courts are a distinctive local building type and are closely associated with Southern California's architectural identity, only ten have been designated as HCMs in Los Angeles.

Owned by the same developer, the Meyer Courtyard Apartments and the Edinburgh Bungalow Court illustrate the rising threat to historic multi-family residential buildings. These properties are increasingly targeted for demolition and redevelopment using the City's Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance.

Similar to teardowns and mansionization in single-family residential neighborhoods, these developments represent a growing loss of community character and the need for new tools for neighborhood conservation.

The Conservancy appreciates Councilmember Paul Koretz's leadership and strong support for both nominations, as well as the dozens of community members who are working so hard on behalf of these and other threatened multi-family homes throughout the city.



The Mendel and Mabel Meyer Courtyard Apartments. Photo by Steven Luftman.

REVIEW continued from page 1

2008 Baseline Mansionization Ordinance to close loopholes that continue to endanger community character.

Another L.A. city ordinance took effect that requires property owners to provide advance notice of any planned demolition activity. The ordinance provides a brief yet important window to negotiate a preservation solution if a significant property is affected.

While we made progress in stemming the teardown trend, we saw another aspect of it take hold: the threat to multi-family housing. Residents mobilized to prevent the demolition of two significant apartment buildings, both owned by the same developer. Yet mansionization continues to destroy community character across the region and the nation.

Broader Conversations

In March, we convened a panel of experts for a candid discussion about Parker Center, the former LAPD headquarters whose fate remains uncertain. Designed by Welton Becket and Associates, the 1955 building heralded a new era in law enforcement. It gained a mixed reputation through associations with influential yet controversial Chief William H. Parker, as well as the razing of part of Little Tokyo for its construction. This difficult history only underscores Parker Center's key role in helping us remember—and learn from—our past.

Though there is no shortage of great architecture to protect, we took proactive steps in 2015 to preserve sites of primarily cultural significance—more modest places that nonetheless tell important stories of L.A.'s extremely diverse population.

We held two public workshops to teach people how to nominate important places in their communities for historic designation. The sessions focused on recognizing sites of cultural, versus architectural, importance. Thanks to our workshop partners, the City of L.A.'s Office of Historic Resources, the City of West Hollywood and the West Hollywood Preservation Alliance.

Sites of importance to LGBTQ communities got an assist from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which placed West Hollywood's The Factory on its 2015 list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places. The Factory is one of several properties with LGBTQ significance that are currently

threatened with demolition. In October, the Conservancy launched a new Curating the City microsite devoted to LGBTQ heritage (laconservancy.org/lgbtq), with profiles of more than thirty historic places and context about our local LGBTQ heritage.

We also launched a project to recognize significant places related to the Chicano Moratorium marches against the Vietnam War. Held between 1969 and 1971, the marches had a profound effect locally and fostered a new outlook on Latina/o civil rights across the country. As part of our efforts, we partnered with the Library Foundation on a public discussion featuring key figures in the marches.

Building Capacity Countywide

We continued to build on the great momentum from our 2014 Preservation Report Card (laconservancy.org/report-card), which evaluates the preservation policies (or lack thereof) in each of the county's eighty-nine jurisdictions. After years of planning and working with the Conservancy, the County of Los Angeles adopted its first-ever historic preservation ordinance to protect historic places in unincorporated areas of the county. We've advised and assisted several cities taking active steps—from grassroots to government—to protect their character, including Alhambra, Arcadia, Hawthorne, Manhattan Beach, San Gabriel, and San Marino.

On the other hand, one of the top cities in our 2014 Report Card—Beverly Hills—lost its place at the head of the class. Despite the best efforts of the Conservancy and Beverly Hills Heritage, the City of Beverly Hills took a big step backward with significant amendments to its Historic Preservation Ordinance.

By limiting the number and type of places that qualify for designation and protection, the revised ordinance undoes much of the great progress that earned the City a grade of A+ on our 2014 Report Card. We are revising the City's grade accordingly, and we will continue to advocate for the preservation program that Beverly Hills needs and deserves.

The Conservancy has our work cut out for us in 2016. With the support of members like you, we have the resources and the strength in numbers to help preserve our shared history for future generations. Thank you for making this work possible.

OCTOBER 9 / DECEMBER 7 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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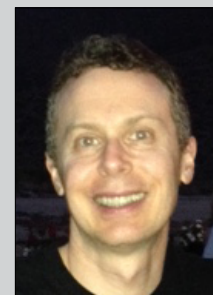


MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

WHY I JOINED: ROBERT VOGT

by Liz Leshin

Robert Vogt and his partner Joel Richardson joined the Conservancy in 2005. An attorney for NASA, Robert grew interested in the Conservancy



after the couple bought a 1951 home that they later learned was designed by John Lloyd Wright, second son of Frank Lloyd Wright.

"I always liked Modern architecture, but living in this house made me discover that I loved it," said Robert. "Architecture in Los Angeles is so unique. I grew up in the Northeast with more traditional structures, so it was like discovering a whole new world."

After a decade as a Dual/Household member, Robert contacted the Conservancy last year with an interest in donating mutual funds. "I wanted to make more significant donations to a couple of organizations where I felt I could make a difference," he said. "I thought it would be advantageous both for my financial planning and for these organizations. I wanted to give where I could see the results of the contribution being used."

Robert used part of his gift to upgrade to a Granite Cornerstone membership, whose benefits include reserved seats at our Last Remaining Seats film series.

We thank Robert and Joel for their membership and for being such great advocates for historic preservation in Los Angeles.

CONSERVANCY WALKING TOURS

Tours are \$5 for Conservancy members and children twelve and under; \$10 for the general public. Walk-ins accepted on Art Deco, Downtown Renaissance, Historic Downtown, and Modern Skyline. All others require reservations.

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

CONSERVANCY WALKING TOURS

- Angelino Heights
First Saturday of every month, 10 a.m.
- Art Deco
Every Saturday, 10 a.m.
- Biltmore Hotel
Every Sunday, 2 p.m.
- Broadway Historic Theatre & Commercial District
Every Saturday, 10 a.m.
- Downtown Renaissance
Every Saturday, 10 a.m.
- Historic Downtown
Every Saturday, 10 a.m.
- Modern Skyline
Every Saturday, 2 p.m.
- Union Station
Every Saturday, 10 a.m.

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



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For the latest updates and hundreds of historic places to explore, visit laconservancy.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Photo by Douglas Hill.

**LAST REMAINING SEATS
COMMITTEE MEETING**
Tuesday, January 12



Photo from last year's event by Gary Leonard.

NIGHT ON BROADWAY
Saturday, January 30



Board Chair Herman Hernandez photo-bombs Linda Dishman at 2015 luncheon. Photo by Gary Leonard.

**PRESERVATION AWARD
APPLICATIONS DUE**
Friday, January 29

If you're interested in helping with our series of classic films in historic theatres, please attend the first meeting of 2016. See page 5 for details.

We'll have volunteers on hand at this free event for all ages, celebrating the eighth anniversary of L.A. City Councilmember José Huizar's Bringing Back Broadway initiative. For details, visit nighonbroadway.la.

Nominate a person or project you think exemplifies the best in historic preservation. For details, see page 2 or visit laconservancy.org/awards.