



LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY NEWS



Mar/Apr 2017 • Volume 39 Number 2



Local media studio FORM follows FUNCTION interviewing and filming ACT UP/LA members Kevin Farrell and Helene Schpak at West Hollywood's Great Hall/Long Hall in Plummer Park. At the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the 1980s and '90s, prominent AIDS advocacy group ACT UP/LA held their meetings at this 1938 building. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

Short Films, Panel Conversations Celebrate LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A.

by *Laura Dominguez*

Greater Los Angeles has long been at the forefront of creating and shaping a collective, yet diverse LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning and/or queer) identity. For decades, the region and its residents have played a vital role in bringing the experiences of LGBTQ communities into the public consciousness, with stories and struggles that are embedded in our built environment.

Over the course of the twentieth century, the region was home to the world's first gay pride parade, the world's first LGBTQ synagogue, the country's longest-running LGBTQ publication, groundbreaking work in medical research and care for LGBTQ communities, and other milestones. Yet Greater Los Angeles' contributions to LGBTQ history are often eclipsed by other cities, and deeply significant historic places have been threatened or lost before their stories could be understood.

For several years, the Conservancy has been working on a project to document, recognize, and preserve historic LGBTQ places in L.A. County. A microsite (dedicated section of our website) at laconservancy.org/lgbtq offers general information and profiles dozens of places related to LGBTQ heritage. In February 2017, we launched our latest effort, a short film series produced in collaboration with local media studio FORM follows FUNCTION.

Distributed in partnership with KCET, the series brings together a diversity of stories, perspectives, and experiences that reveal the layered historic and cultural importance of LGBTQ places throughout the region.

Please see SHORT FILMS on page 6

Last Remaining Seats Member Tickets on Sale March 29

We're excited to once again share a variety of classic films in some of L.A.'s most beautiful historic theatres! This year's Last Remaining Seats series will take place on Wednesdays and Saturdays, **June 3 to 24**.

We'll announce the 2017 lineup **Monday, March 20**—we have more films than ever; surely there's something for everyone!

For notification of the lineup, as well as notice when tickets go on sale and other updates, subscribe to our Last Remaining Seats email list (click Subscribe at the top of any page on our website, or edit your website account).

As always, Conservancy members may purchase tickets before the general public during our members-only presale. Tickets go on sale to members **March 29** and the general public **April 5**.

Last Remaining Seats is by far the Conservancy's largest annual event: last year, we welcomed more than 13,000 moviegoers to L.A.'s historic theatres. A series this large takes a great deal of planning and work, and we could not make it happen without the help of our volunteers.

If you are already a Conservancy volunteer, thank you! We will contact you in late April about volunteering for Last Remaining Seats. If you are interested in becoming a new volunteer to help with this year's events, please contact Bruce Scottow at bscottow@laconservancy.org or (213) 430-4218.

See you at the movies!

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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 and the Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation.

Our Values

Dear Conservancy member,

From all of us at the Los Angeles Conservancy, thank you for your membership support.

We are incredibly grateful for our diverse community of supporters throughout L.A. County. Your commitment to our shared, tangible history inspires us to work harder to preserve and protect the full breadth of our region's cultural inheritance.

Our work is grounded in the belief that historic preservation empowers and nourishes communities by creating meaningful connections between people. By preserving places and stories that matter, we encounter not only our own history, but the history of others. We find new empathy for our neighbors, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, economic means, religion, age, abilities, and more.

In this time of uncertainty, we recommit ourselves to better understanding who we are and where we come from.

Ours is a region known around the world for its architectural icons and resounding cultural voice. Yet as residents, we know a more personal L.A., from the *panadería* down the street, to the mosque around the corner, and the mural tucked away in the park.

L.A. County's greatest strength and resource is its diversity. No single place or voice can encapsulate Greater L.A.'s history, from its triumphs to its struggles. When we confront our past in the world around us, every layer of history matters.

The board and staff of the L.A. Conservancy are Angelenos. We love our communities, and our stories are L.A. stories too. As we enter a new era in our nation's history, we'd like to hear from you. Tell us which places are important to you, and what stories you want recognized and preserved for future generations. We encourage you to ask new questions about your city, and seek out and experience someone else's L.A.

Send us an email (info@laconservancy.org) or tweet at us (@laconservancy, #LAsStoryhood) and let us know how we are doing at recognizing and preserving a more inclusive version of L.A.'s history. Share your journey to learn more about your city and neighbors.

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Preservation Issues

by Laura Dominguez, Adrian Scott Fine, and Marcello Vavala

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

Pan American Bank

California's oldest continuously operating Latinx community bank is one step closer to being listed in the National Register of Historic Places. On February 3, the State Historical Resources Commission unanimously voted to recommend Pan American Bank in East Los Angeles for national designation.

In 2015, the Conservancy received funding from the National Park Service's Underrepresented Community Grants program to prepare a National Register nomination for the 1965 New Formalist bank building. Eight grants were distributed through the California Office of Historic Preservation to support nominations for historic properties associated with Latinx history in Fresno, Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Francisco. The nominations build on the statewide historic context statement, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California*, which is intended to guide the inclusion of Latinx historic places in the National Register.

Founded in 1964, Pan American Bank is significant for its association with the economic development of East Los Angeles after World War II. It provided critical bilingual financial services to Mexican and Mexican American businesses and residents, who often faced discriminatory policies at other financial institutions. The bank made it possible for community members to secure home and small business loans that were otherwise inaccessible, inspiring the creation of similar institutions.

Pan American Bank's co-founder, Romana Acosta Bañuelos, would later become the first Latina Treasurer of the United States under President Richard Nixon. She served from 1971 to 1974, during which she was the highest-ranking Mexican American in the federal government. Over the course of her career, she was a strong advocate for gender and racial equality in business and the financial industry.



East L.A.'s Pan American Bank building is one step away from National Register designation. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

In addition, the building's original five-panel mosaic mural—titled “Our Past, Our Present, and Our Future” and designed by prominent Mexican artist José Reyes Meza—foreshadowed the rise of the Chicano mural movement of the 1960s and '70s. It is believed to be the oldest existing mural in East Los Angeles.

If designated, Pan American Bank will be the second building in unincorporated East Los Angeles to be listed in the National Register and the first for its associations with Latinx heritage. The former Golden Gate Theatre (now a CVS) became the first nationally designated property in 1982. The nomination will now be forwarded to the Keeper of the National Register for final approval.

Mansionization Loopholes Closed

Great news! On March 1, the Los Angeles City Council unanimously voted to strengthen laws protecting neighborhoods from out-of-scale single-family construction. The Conservancy and many neighborhood advocates across the city worked hard over the past several years to close loopholes in policies that allowed the mansionization trend to sweep L.A.'s older and historic neighborhoods.

Los Angeles first passed the Baseline Mansionization Ordinance (BMO) in 2008

and the Baseline Hillside Ordinance (BHO) in 2011. Yet a few provisions in the ordinances, including exemptions and design bonuses, actually encouraged the kind of out-of-scale homes they were designed to prevent.

The Conservancy has long advocated for sound policies and planning that allow neighborhoods to adapt for new growth without sacrificing character. We hope that the amended BMO/BHO will create more incentives to retain existing houses, rather than replacing them with new, out-of-scale ones.

One issue that we had hoped to fix remains. More than any other design element, garages attached to the front of homes change the pattern, feel, setting, and overall character of an older neighborhood. The previous BMO/BHO exempted up to the full 400 square feet of an attached garage from a home's overall square footage. The new ordinances count half that amount, though we pressed for the full amount to count. While imperfect, this is an important step in the right direction and a huge win for L.A. neighborhoods.

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to call, email, and attend meetings about this issue. You've made a real difference in protecting neighborhood character! The Conservancy especially wants to thank Councilmember Paul Koretz for his leadership and help in making this happen.

2017 Preservation Awards

Congratulations to the recipients of the Conservancy's 36th Annual Preservation Awards!



Out of many qualified applications, our independent jury made the difficult decision of selecting the winning projects. These projects represent a wide range of outstanding efforts to document, preserve, and revitalize the historic places that make Greater Los Angeles unique.

Please help us honor this hard work and dedication at our annual Preservation Awards Luncheon on **Wednesday, May 3**. Our deepest thanks to City National Bank, the luncheon's presenting sponsor for the seventeenth consecutive year.

The luncheon is a great opportunity to network with preservation, community, and business leaders while supporting the work of the Conservancy. Individual tickets are \$150. Table sponsorships begin at \$1,500.

For details on the awards luncheon, and to learn more about the recipients and project teams, visit laconservancy.org/awards.

Awards Jury

Each year, we invite experts in architecture, historic preservation, and community development to serve on an independent jury to select the recipients. Many thanks to the members of our 2017 jury for their thoughtful decisions!

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Author

Chairman's Award

SurveyLA: The Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey

SurveyLA is the most comprehensive survey ever completed by an American city. Before this project, only fifteen percent of Los Angeles had been surveyed to identify historic resources. Over eight years, professionals evaluated 880,000 land parcels. They used the latest technology, modernizing survey work and making it more efficient. Community outreach events helped identify locations of social, cultural, and historical significance that might have been overlooked. The completion of SurveyLA represents a huge milestone for preservation in Los Angeles and serves as a model for other American cities.



Vermont Knolls historic district, one of the neighborhoods evaluated by SurveyLA. Photo by Stephen Schaffer.

CBS Columbia Square

6121 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90028

This Hollywood landmark housed the West Coast headquarters of the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS). Completed in 1937, the campus contains three buildings: the Radio Building, Studio A, and the Commercial/Television Building, all designed in the International Style with Streamline Moderne elements. When the current owners acquired the complex, the site was deteriorating due to underuse and had undergone incompatible alterations and deferred maintenance. The project team completely rehabilitated the complex and added thoughtful, compatible additions. This project proves that historic sites—even those that have seen better days—can return to their former glory and adapt to current needs.



Image courtesy Kilroy Realty.

Cultural Landscape Report and Treatment Plan for the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum & Botanic Garden

301 North Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia, CA 91007

The recipient of the **Royce Neuschatz Award for Historic Landscapes**, this document provides a vital guide for caring for the Arboretum's wide range of resources. The 127-acre property in Arcadia houses public gardens and several historic structures, including a Victorian cottage constructed in 1885 and an adobe dating from the 1840s. The cultural landscape report summarizes the history of the site, allowing for greater understanding of how to identify and protect the site's historic resources. The treatment plan will guide stewardship of the botanic gardens as well as significant buildings, allowing the public to continue to enjoy the history of this unique site.



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Grand Central Air Terminal

1310 Air Way, Glendale, CA 91201

The birthplace of commercial air travel in Southern California, this site saw the creation of American Airlines and was used by legendary figures including Amelia Earhart and Howard Hughes. The airport shuttered in 1959, and the property became a light industrial business park. The building had fallen into disrepair since the 1990s. An ambitious project begun in 2012 transformed the airport for new uses. The project team researched and restored the building's exterior and significant interior spaces. Now a creative campus for The Walt Disney Company, this prominent Glendale landmark is an excellent example of preservation through adaptive reuse.



Photo by Paul Turang.

Kinross Cornerstone

10910 West Kinross Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90067

Designed by Stiles O. Clements, this Spanish Colonial Revival-style retail structure was part of the original Westwood Village development. It has served generations of residents and UCLA students since 1930. The building underwent a number of incompatible alterations over the years, and many original details had been removed or severely damaged. With no surviving original working drawings, the project team relied on photos, physical evidence, and research into Clements' work to bring this building back to its former glory. This project proves that, with a bit of love and care, a historic building can survive to serve future generations.



Photo by Chang Kyun Kim.

Preservation Resource Center at the Shotgun House

2520 Second Street, Santa Monica, CA 90405

This small, narrow home in Santa Monica's Ocean Park neighborhood was threatened with demolition in 1998 and again in 2002. In the ensuing years, it was moved three times before landing one and a-half blocks from its original site. When the City of Santa Monica sought a use for the house, the Santa Monica Conservancy proposed to adapt it into their headquarters and a preservation resource center for the community. The fully rehabilitated house earned LEED™ Gold certification, proving that even a century-old structure can be adapted for sustainable, contemporary use.



Photo by Stephen Schaffer.

Valley Times Photograph Collection

The *Valley Times* was a daily newspaper published from 1946 to 1970. The Los Angeles Public Library received the newspaper's entire photo collection, which depicts an important time of growth and change in the San Fernando Valley. Photos include groundbreakings for construction projects, brand-new Mid-Century Modern buildings, aerial photos showing changes to the overall landscape, and more. Yet the photos had been stored improperly for decades and suffered from degradation. A project to process, organize, and digitize the *Valley Times* photo collection saved these important historic records. Now, this invaluable resource for researchers and preservationists can help tell the stories of significant events, people, and places in the Valley.



Shopping center complex opens in Burbank (1962). Photo by Bob Martin, Valley Times Collection/Los Angeles Public Library.

View Park Historic District National Register Nomination

Los Angeles, CA 90043

The View Park neighborhood in unincorporated L.A. County is home to many beautiful, single-family homes designed in various revival styles. Originally, racially restrictive covenants barred non-whites from owning homes in this area. As housing segregation lessened, View Park became a predominantly black neighborhood by the 1960s, with residents including Ray Charles and Bebe Moore Campbell. To recognize the neighborhood's rich history, the View Park Conservancy pursued its listing in the National Register of Historic Places. A major community outreach and fundraising campaign raised more than \$100,000 from residents to document nearly 1,800 properties. View Park is one of the largest National Register historic districts in California, as well as the largest district in the U.S. designated for its association with African American history.



Photo courtesy Architectural Resources Group.

LINDA DISHMAN CELEBRATES 25 YEARS AT CONSERVANCY



Photo by Shari Belafonte.

Happy anniversary to our president and CEO, Linda Dishman! Linda became our executive director in March 1992 (we renamed her position in 2015).

In the past twenty-five years, the Conservancy has grown substantially, including more than tripling our staff and increasing our budget fivefold. These gains have allowed us to expand our efforts to recognize, preserve, and revitalize the historic architectural and cultural resources of Los Angeles County.

Under Linda's leadership, the Conservancy has become a driving force for preservation in Greater Los Angeles—finding solutions to save threatened historic buildings, fostering stronger preservation laws and incentives, raising awareness of our region's unique architectural treasures, and empowering people to take an active role in preserving our shared, tangible history.

Because the Conservancy office is located in downtown Los Angeles, Linda has been able to see the impact of our work there most directly. "Downtown today is much different than it was twenty-five years ago," she says. "It's amazing to see so many of downtown's historic buildings brought back to life through adaptive reuse."

Thank you, Linda, for your enduring leadership and dedication!

SHORT FILMS continued from page 1

The first three installments spotlight The Black Cat (Silver Lake), The Woman's Building (Chinatown), and Great Hall/Long Hall at Plummer Park (West Hollywood). The films feature on-site interviews with community members, as well as archival footage.

Each site was selected in part to help tell a broad story about LGBTQ places and civil rights, as well as the enduring value of these spaces. As our preservation efforts advance, we hope the films engender a much larger conversation about LGBTQ historic places in our contemporary landscape and what they represent to LGBTQ communities today. We aim to expand the series over time.

Uncovering Hidden Stories

The films enliven these three distinct places through personal narration, amplifying community stories of struggle, empowerment, and inclusion. In connecting their memories to place, the film subjects reflect on these spaces as sanctuaries for marginalized LGBTQ communities during earlier eras of disenfranchisement.

Activist Wes Joe, who was instrumental in designating The Black Cat as an L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument in 2008, tells the emotional story of a watershed demonstration that occurred at the bar in 1967, two years before New York's Stonewall uprising.

"You can read about things in books or see videos, but...there's something about touching a building or seeing how it really looked," says Joe in The Black Cat short. "It can spur your imagination; it can deepen your understanding about [its] significance..."

The Woman's Building housed the first independent art school for women, the Feminist Studio Workshop (FSW). Created by and for women, the building exemplified the impulse among feminists, including lesbians and bisexual women, to establish autonomous spaces outside of traditional, patriarchal institutions during the 1970s, '80s, and '90s.

"We live in a world that is very male-dominated, and the art world was certainly not serving us as women artists—we were very invisible," says artist Cheri Gaulke. "That we could carve out this little space that would be our space, and not just our space privately, but our space publicly. To say, here's what we're making as women artists."

Great Hall/Long Hall in Plummer Park is listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its New Deal-era roots during the 1930s. Yet it is also significant for its later role during the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the 1980s and '90s as the meeting place for the local chapter of ACT UP, a prominent AIDS advocacy group. ACT UP/LA members Kevin Farrell and Helene Schpak share their stories in the third film.

"People forget what we were up against in those days...[They] wanted to pass laws against us, get us tattooed... just crazy stuff for people that were HIV positive and for people that had AIDS," recounts Farrell. "History was made here, period," says Schpak.

Screenings and Panel Conversations

The films premiered at a screening and panel conversation at The Black Cat on February 9. Panelists at the premiere event included artist, educator, and activist Cheri Gaulke; urban planner and community activist James Rojas; and LGBTQ civil rights activist Alexei Romanoff. The three panelists discussed their own experiences and the importance of preserving LGBTQ historic places. A video recording of the February 9 panel conversation is available on the Conservancy's Facebook page at [facebook.com/losangelesconservancy](https://www.facebook.com/losangelesconservancy).

Additional screenings and panel conversations are planned for this spring. The second event will take place on **Thursday, March 16** at Los Angeles State Historic Park, and the third will take place on **Thursday, April 20** at ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives. We also plan to hold an event in West Hollywood in May or June. Registration for each event is \$5, and proceeds support the Conservancy's LGBTQ film project. Reserve your spot at [laconservancy.org/events/lgbtq](https://www.laconservancy.org/events/lgbtq).

To commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of The Black Cat protest, the series debuted online on the Conservancy and KCET websites on February 11. You can watch the short films in their entirety at [laconservancy.org/lgbtq-films](https://www.laconservancy.org/lgbtq-films).

LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A. was funded in part by a grant from the Richard and Julia Moe Family Fund of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

DECEMBER 10 / FEBRUARY 10 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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Alethia Pappageorge
Andy Parker
Oliver Pemberton
Ella Pennington and
Randy Frank
Ralph Peters
Dennis Rodriguez
Ricardo Roldan and
Gennelle Dedek
Loretta and Richard Rose
Ruth and David Sabeen
Brittany and Kevin Salazar
Greg Scarich and
Louisa Bonnie
Hermalee and Warren Schmidt
Diane Schroeder
Lisa See
John Sherwood and
Barbara Metzenbaum
Sergei Shubin
Charlane Smith
Karen Smits
Judith Sobol
Andrea Spatz
Gary Swinton
Anne Taubman and
David Boyle
Christy and Alan Taxon
Paul and T. Tolbert
Elena and Mike Topoozian
Mark Tuohy
Andrea Ursillo
Ron Vaccina
Jeffrey Varanini
Allison Varzally and
John Romley
Vincent M. Waldman
Tom Weinberg
Ellen Whorton
Joie Wilson
Steve Zimmerman



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

MEMBERS WHO GIVE BACK

Some Conservancy members find creative ways to support us through their work. Realtor (and monthly member) **Matthew Berkley** has a socially conscious business model that encourages his clients to give back to the community. He donates between ten and fifteen percent of his net commission to help various nonprofits, including the Conservancy.

After obtaining his real estate license in 2001, Matthew decided to focus on historic and architectural properties. "I believe that giving back to organizations such as the Conservancy will help to ensure the preservation of our historic structures and other contributing elements that define the vast history of the region," he said.

Author **Paul Haddad** has been a Conservancy member since 1996. His most recent book, *10,000 Steps a Day in L.A.: 52 Walking Adventures*, features a range of special destinations in the built and natural environment. Paul donates twenty-five percent of his proceeds from the book to the Conservancy and another twenty-five percent to Tree-People. "For every walk through, say, downtown L.A., there are walks in the Santa Monica mountains," he said. "Donating to both organizations equally seemed like a good way to honor two of the most important stewards for preserving Los Angeles in their own way."

Thank you, Matthew and Paul; we appreciate your support.

If you would like to do something similar, please contact Director of Development Liz Leshin at lleshin@laconservancy.org or (213) 430-4213.

CONSERVANCY WALKING TOURS

Tours cost \$10 for Conservancy members and youth 17 or younger; \$15 for the general public.

Most tours require reservations. We accept walk-ins on some tours, subject to availability.

For details and reservations, visit laconservancy.org/tours. Questions? Contact us at info@laconservancy.org or (213) 623-2489.

WALKING TOURS

Angelino Heights

First Saturday of each month

Art Deco

Every Saturday

Broadway Historic Theatre & Commercial District

Every Saturday

Historic Downtown

Every Saturday

Millennium Biltmore Hotel

Every Sunday

Union Station

Every Saturday

Youth, family, and group tours available by special arrangement. For details, visit laconservancy.org/tours or contact us at info@laconservancy.org or (213) 623-2489.



Los Angeles Conservancy

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Los Angeles, California 90014

laconservancy.org

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

UPCOMING EVENTS



Box 1, Folder 95, Advocate records, Coll2012-030, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

LGBTQ HISTORIC PLACES IN L.A. SCREENINGS AND PANEL CONVERSATIONS

March 16 & April 20

Our new short films spotlight three locations that played an important role in LGBTQ history. We hope you can join us at upcoming screenings and panel conversations this spring and summer. Details on page 1.



Photo by Gary Leonard.

PRESERVATION AWARDS LUNCHEON

Millennium Biltmore Hotel
Wednesday, May 3

Help us honor the best in preservation at our annual Preservation Awards Luncheon! Learn more about the 2017 award recipients on pages 4-5.



Photo by Larry Underhill.

LAST REMAINING SEATS

Wednesdays & Saturdays
June 3–24

We hope you will join us for another fantastic season of classic films in historic theatres! We'll announce the lineup on March 20, and member tickets go on sale March 29.