



LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY NEWS



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SurveyLA field surveyor training in Boyle Heights, 2009. This citywide historic resources survey is the largest and most comprehensive survey ever completed in an American city. Image courtesy City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources.

SurveyLA: The Citywide Survey of Los Angeles

by Janet Hansen, City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources

The recent completion of SurveyLA, the citywide historic resources survey, marked a milestone for historic preservation in Los Angeles. This massive effort covered 880,000 legal parcels and almost 500 square miles, making it the largest and most comprehensive survey initiative ever completed in an American city. This unprecedented project recorded over 30,000 individual resources and historic districts that reflect Los Angeles' rich architectural, social, ethnic, and cultural history.

The concept of a citywide survey was initiated by the Getty Conservation Institute in 2000 and resulted in their five-year study, which looked at best practices nationwide and produced a framework for how the survey could be conducted. This survey blueprint provided the basis for a grant agreement between the City and the Getty Foundation, and by 2006 the new Office of Historic Resources was established in the Department of City Planning as a place for the survey to live and be managed. The City named the project "SurveyLA."

Prior to SurveyLA, only about fifteen percent of Los Angeles had been surveyed. Not surprisingly, these survey efforts focused on specific geographic areas associated with the earliest phases of the city's development and primarily those with historic resources dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This meant that vast areas of Los Angeles had never been surveyed and resources from the post-World War II period were virtually undiscovered.

Meeting the challenges of conducting a survey of this magnitude meant up-front development of tools and methods to streamline data collection and produce consistent results. The survey also needed to serve the intended purposes of providing the foundation for the City's preservation program and collecting data to inform sound planning policies and processes. Early

Please see SURVEYLA on page 6

Good News for Lytton Savings

Our efforts to prevent the needless demolition of the 1960 Lytton Savings building were rewarded on April 25, when Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Amy D. Hogue ruled in the Conservancy's favor in litigation to stop the demolition.

Now a designated Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM), the building at 8150 Sunset Boulevard is proposed for demolition as part of a new mixed-use development.

The environmental impact report (EIR) for the project studied two alternatives that avoided demolition of the historic building and determined that it could feasibly be adapted into the project design. The City later disagreed with its EIR, pronounced that the preservation alternatives were not feasible, and approved demolition.

The Court ruled that the City's approval of the building's demolition violated the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a state law that protects California's built environment just as it does the natural environment. CEQA requires the consideration of alternatives to demolition, which can include incorporating historic places into new developments if the fundamental project objectives can be met without demolition. As a result, the 8150 Sunset project approval must be set aside.

At 20,000 square feet, the Lytton Savings building requires only a small portion of the 330,000-square-foot planned development. The City Council already amended

Please see LYTTON SAVINGS on page 6

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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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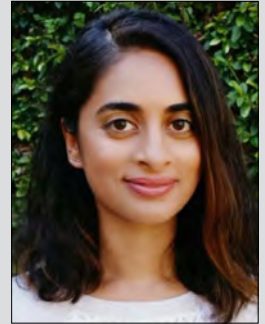
Major funding for the Los Angeles Conservancy's programs is provided by the LaFetra Foundation and the Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation.

Education Department Expands

The Conservancy is happy to welcome our two newest staff members, Education Specialist **Sana Ahmed** and Program Coordinator **Alex Inshishian**, who will join staff members Sarah Lann and Bruce Scottow in our education department.

Sana grew up in Torrance and attended UC Irvine, earning a bachelor's degree in psychology and social behavior with a minor in education. She also holds a master's degree in education entrepreneurship from the University of Pennsylvania.

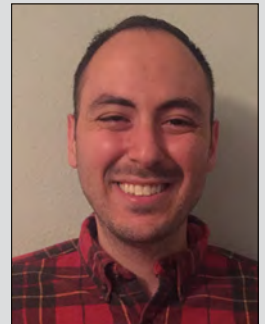
She has worked in education roles since her undergraduate days, including most recently as a program coordinator and an education specialist at Neighborhood Youth Association, an after-school academic support and leadership program for underserved youth in Venice and Mar Vista.



Education specialist is a new position for the Conservancy, and in this role Sana will be responsible for creating educational content and curriculum geared toward students and teachers, leading tours, and teaching workshops. With her help and expertise, the Conservancy will be able to expand our Student Tour program.

A Southern California native, Alex earned a bachelor's degree in history at Cal Poly Pomona and a master's degree in public history at New Mexico State University.

As program coordinator, Alex will be responsible for administering the Conservancy's programs, including walking tours, special tours, and Last Remaining Seats. He is a great fit for this position, as he has experience in both education and historic preservation.



Alex currently serves on the Board of the Historical Society of Pomona Valley. Some of his previous work includes serving as education programs coordinator at the Southern Oregon Historical Society in Medford and as a museum educator at Kidspace Children's Museum in Pasadena.

Please join us in welcoming Sana and Alex to the Conservancy—you'll see them both at many upcoming Conservancy events and tours!

Pillar Society

Just as pillars hold up buildings, members of the Los Angeles Conservancy's Pillar Society substantially support our efforts to protect L.A.'s historic places.

The Conservancy's Pillar Society was established to acknowledge those who have executed estate plans to leave the Conservancy with a legacy gift. These legacy gifts will make a significant and lasting contribution to our cultural heritage by allowing the Conservancy to continue to recognize, preserve, and revitalize the architectural and cultural resources of Los Angeles County for generations to come.

To learn more, please contact Director of Development Liz Leshin at (213) 430-4213 or lleshin@laconservancy.org. If you have already made provisions to support the Conservancy in your estate plan but have not notified us, please let Liz know so you can be appropriately acknowledged and invited to Pillar Society events, including an annual luncheon.

If you make your commitment known by the end of 2017, you will be considered a Founding Member of the Pillar Society, and, if you wish, have your name listed on the Conservancy's website and printed materials.

Thank you again for your important support of the L.A. Conservancy, and for your help in building the preservation movement in Los Angeles.

Issue Spotlight: Historic Preservation Overlay Zones

by Marcello Vavala

The City of Los Angeles' Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) program is undergoing a significant expansion, with several new HPOZs bringing the citywide total to thirty-five. The boost in the number of protected neighborhoods came about through an Interim Control Ordinance (ICO) approved by the Los Angeles City Council in March 2015, which prohibited demolitions and substantial alterations of homes for nearly two years.

Five proposed HPOZs were initially planned, including Carthay Square, El Sereno-Berkshire Craftsman District, Holmby-Westwood, Oxford Square, and Sunset Square. Some of these, such as Carthay Square, were decades in the making, and their designation was possible only through the advocacy and hard work of residents. A sixth proposed HPOZ, Miracle Mile, was later added to the group. Overall, five of the six proposed HPOZs were adopted. Holmby-Westwood, however, was not ultimately established.

The El Sereno-Berkshire Craftsman District HPOZ is located at the easternmost edge of Los Angeles, bordered in part by the cities of Alhambra and South Pasadena. A well-preserved example of early suburban tract development, the district features a mix of styles including Craftsman, Bungalow, American Colonial Revival, and Spanish Colonial Revival.

The Oxford Square HPOZ, approximately five miles west of downtown, spans three blocks along Windsor Boulevard and Plymouth Avenue between Olympic and Pico Boulevards. Primarily developed between 1900 and 1920, the district contains



Mature Canary Island date palms line the streets in the newly designated Oxford Square HPOZ. Photo courtesy City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources.

examples of Craftsman architecture as well as residences in a range of Period Revival styles. Gently sloping lawns, concrete walkways, and mature Canary Island date palms along the parkways lend a cohesive character to the neighborhood.

Further west are the new Miracle Mile and Carthay Square HPOZs, which both feature a mix of single-family and multi-family dwellings in a range of Period Revival styles. Like the earlier established HPOZs in this part of the city, both HPOZs include and protect parcels along Olympic Boulevard that pass through their borders—an important concern among neighborhood residents who advocated for their inclusion.

To the north in Hollywood, the new Sunset Square HPOZ spans eighteen blocks between Hollywood and Sunset Boulevards from Fairfax to Vista Street. Largely developed between the 1910s and '20s, the neighborhood contains both single-family and multi-family residences and features a cohesive character with consistent lot sizes and setbacks.

The proposed Holmby-Westwood HPOZ did not advance toward anticipated adoption. Council District support for the pending HPOZ was unexpectedly withdrawn late in the approval process, following vocal opposition from a portion of the property owners. Without the protections afforded by HPOZ status, the Holmby-Westwood neighborhood will continue to be threatened by out-of-scale development.

The dramatic growth of the HPOZ program speaks to its popularity among neighborhood residents citywide as an important tool for protecting community character. The 1980s saw the inception of the program and the creation of the first three HPOZs, while five additional districts were designated in the 1990s. Yet in 2000 and 2001 alone, a remarkable seven HPOZs joined the ranks and nearly doubled the size of the program.

Since then, rarely have more than two years passed without the addition of another HPOZ. A four-year gap between 2011 and 2015, when the designation of several pending districts was stalled, revealed the critical



Residents celebrated Carthay Square's HPOZ designation in early 2017. This designation was decades in the making. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

need for adequate staffing at the Office of Historic Resources (OHR) to effectively manage and keep pace with the growing program.

As we've seen repeatedly in recent years, the Mayor's proposed annual budget regularly fails to allocate necessary funds for the continued staffing and expansion of planning staff in OHR's HPOZ Unit, and the Conservancy and others must advocate for their inclusion. At press time, we were advocating for the inclusion of funding for four new planning positions focused on HPOZs in the City's 2017-18 budget. The budget will be approved in mid-May. Check the progress of this issue at laconservancy.org/issues/funding-neighborhood-preservation.

Many benefits come with HPOZ designation. We've seen firsthand how HPOZs build community, enhance quality of life, fuel reinvestment, increase property values, help owners maintain and improve their homes, and offer tax savings through the Mills Act Historic Property Contracts Program. We're thrilled at the progress of the City's HPOZ program, and we look forward to many more districts in the future.

Thank You, Conservancy Volunteers!

In March, we held our annual volunteer recognition party at the Mountain Mermaid in Topanga. Volunteers and staff enjoyed a pleasant afternoon exploring this historic site.

The volunteer recognition party is a small way for us to thank our 331 volunteers for donating their time and expertise during the past year.

We also present awards to volunteers who have done exceptional work and those who have reached a milestone in their volunteer service. Our 2017 Volunteer Awards are listed below.

Thank you to all of our dedicated volunteers! We couldn't do what we do without your hard work and support.

2017 Volunteer Awards

30 Years of Service

Alice Allen; Bob Brennan;
David Saffer

25 Years of Service

Larry Underhill

20 Years of Service

Chris Green; Mary Ann Lovato;
Lanna Pian; Mark Wojan

Special Recognition Awards

Chris Spry; Paul Tolbert



At the Conservancy's volunteer recognition party in March, we presented awards to volunteers who have done exceptional work and those who have reached a milestone in volunteer service. Photo by Alan Reyes.

Last Remaining Seats Starts Soon

We hope you can join us for another fantastic season of classic films in historic theatres! We have a great lineup this year, with highlights including the mysterious film noir *Laura* at the Million Dollar Theatre on June 7, the classic Cuban comedy *La muerte de un burócrata* at the Palace Theatre on June 14 (see next page), a Steven Spielberg double feature of *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* and *Jaws* at the Orpheum Theatre on June 24, and more!

Last Remaining Seats tickets were already selling quickly at press time—purchase yours while you can at laconservancy.org/last-remaining-seats.

Warner Grand Theatre

For the first time in Last Remaining Seats history, we're hosting two screenings in the South Bay! On June 10, we are screening *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* and *On the Waterfront* at the beautiful Warner Grand Theatre in San Pedro.

Completed in 1931, this Art Deco masterpiece features wood-carved ceilings with a copper, gold, and silver sunburst design, exquisite tile and lighting fixtures, and ornate wall tapestries.

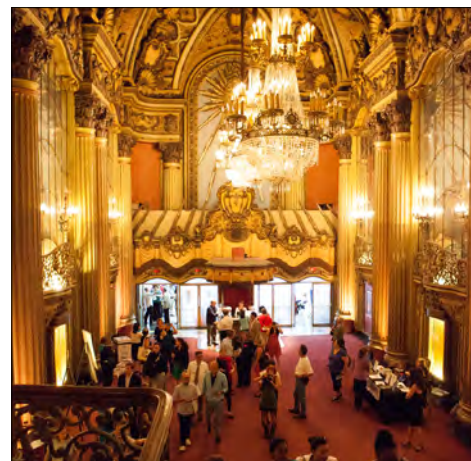
Additional Events and Programs

This season, we will once again host free Q&A sessions following each screening so you can learn more about L.A.'s historic theatres! We will also host free trivia contests after Saturday evening screenings, and each event will feature fun extras, including fashion shows, props on display in the lobby, selfie stations, musical performances, and more! See all of the individual screening details at laconservancy.org/last-remaining-seats.

See you at the movies!



The Palace Theatre (1911) is one of the oldest theatres in Los Angeles. See it at our screening of *La muerte de un burócrata* on June 14! Photo by Barry Schwartz.



Join us for a screening of the classic Irving Berlin musical *Easter Parade* at the gorgeous Los Angeles Theatre on June 17! Photo by Douglas Hill.

2017 Last Remaining Seats Lineup

Saturday, June 3, 8 p.m.

L.A. Confidential (1997) – SOLD OUT
Orpheum Theatre

Wednesday, June 7, 8 p.m.

Laura (1944)
Million Dollar Theatre

Saturday, June 10, 2 p.m.

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea (1954)
Warner Grand Theatre

Saturday, June 10, 8 p.m.

On the Waterfront (1954)
Warner Grand Theatre

Wednesday, June 14, 8 p.m.

La muerte de un burócrata (Cuba, 1966)
Palace Theatre
co-presented by LACLA

Saturday, June 17, 8 p.m.

Easter Parade (1948)
Los Angeles Theatre

Wednesday, June 21, 8 p.m.

Wings (1927)
The Theatre at Ace Hotel

Saturday, June 24, 2 p.m.

E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial (1982)
Orpheum Theatre

Saturday, June 24, 8 p.m.

Jaws (1975)
Orpheum Theatre

Latin American Cinemateca to Co-present 1966 Cuban Film

by E. Michael Diaz, LACLA, with Program Notes by Maria Elena de las Carreras, Ph.D.

The Latin American Cinemateca of Los Angeles (LACLA), a nonprofit organization, is dedicated to promoting cultural exchange through cinema by screening classic and contemporary-experimental films from Latin America and by U.S.-based Latinas and Latinos. LACLA also produces an annual student film festival celebrating the works of inner-city middle and high school students.

LACLA is pleased to once again participate in the Last Remaining Seats series. Since 1997, LACLA has produced the screening of Latino classics for this series, wishing to honor and celebrate the rich cinematic works of Latin America and those of U.S.-based Latinos.

With Cuba being so much in the news lately, LACLA decided to present this year a Cuban film, the 1966 dark comedy, *La muerte de un burócrata* (*The Death of a Bureaucrat*). Written and directed by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, the most significant of Cuban directors, the film features music by legendary Cuban composer Leo Brouwer. For cineastes familiar with Alea's work and for the broader audience, it will be a special treat to see this rarely screened and important classic on the big screen. To further enhance the evening's enjoyment, a musical presentation of Leo Brouwer's guitar works will precede the screening.

The following excerpt is from the film synopsis prepared by Maria Elena de las Carreras, Ph.D., Fulbright scholar, film critic, and LACLA Advisory Committee member:

"*La muerte de un burócrata* is centered on the predicament of a hapless nephew (Salvador Wood) to retrieve the ID of his recently deceased uncle, a model worker and inventor. His widow (Silvia Planas) placed it in the coffin, but now needs it, admonished by a bureaucrat that she will not get a pension without this piece of identification. But the bureaucrat in the cemetery tells him no exhumation is possible without a court order. A clandestine operation yields the coffin, but the nephew has to wheel it back to their home when the police unexpectedly show up. (Imagine the depredations of the Caribbean heat on an unrefrigerated cadaver). The farce escalates, the lampooning of recognizable government employees gets more ridiculous, and some sacred cows are turned upside down—like socialist realist art, and the fact that everybody is equal but some are more equal than others.

La muerte de un burócrata uses the conventions of the satire to blast the bureaucratic mindset that reduces life to a succession of absurdities with witty homages to films and directors, in the guise of scenes filmed in a variety of comedic styles: the assembly line of Chaplin's *Modern Times*, the clock from which Harold Lloyd hangs in *Safety Last!*, Dracula's fangs, the pie fights of Laurel and Hardy, a scattered and curvaceous Cuban Marilyn Monroe, and surrealist dreams like those of Luis Buñuel. This potpourri works very well and gets hearty laughs from the audience.

Shot on location in central Havana, in black-and-white, the film quite unexpectedly becomes a portrait of what the bustling city looked like in the sixties (those American cars!) before the benign neglect of the ensuing decades. The viewer gets to see what Cuban life was like, under the lens of a black comedy that gets progressively blacker."

E. Michael Diaz is President of the Latin American Cinemateca of Los Angeles. Maria Elena de las Carreras, Ph.D. serves on the Advisory Committee of the Latin American Cinemateca of Los Angeles.



Movie poster for *La muerte de un burócrata* (*The Death of a Bureaucrat*). Image courtesy Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industrias Cinematográficas.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE: PAUL SHEARGOLD

In his own words: "Last Remaining Seats (LRS) has been a fantastic experience for me. I had been looking for a volunteer opportunity



for some time, and I was determined to have 2017 be the year. I wanted to find something that was not only a great cause but also incorporated a personal interest. With my love of L.A.'s classic and diverse architecture, and my interior design background, I sought out the L.A. Conservancy.

I was a little apprehensive to attend my first LRS committee meeting; however, working on the *Easter Parade* screening at the Los Angeles Theatre has been extremely rewarding. Thinking that close to 2,000 people will experience not only the magnificent theatre and film, but also the event we create around them, has inspired me. I have found contributors to be very open and generous, which has allowed all the screening teams to offer some very unique and exciting moments. I think people will really enjoy themselves.

The committee works exceedingly hard, to not only accommodate your creativity, but to also help you realize your ideas. I feel very fortunate to be a part of that and, in a small way, a part of the incredible work the Conservancy does for Los Angeles and its residents.

Ultimately, it's about supporting a very worthy cause and giving people the best experience you can. If you've ever thought of joining the LRS committee, I assure you that everyone has skills that are valuable to the process and, in my experience, will be appreciated."

LYTTON SAVINGS

continued from page 1

the project once and can now amend the project again to accommodate the historic building, which represents just six percent of the project's square footage. We've worked with many architects and developers to successfully integrate historic places into new development, and we hope to do so here.

The Conservancy had met with the developer early on, and reusing the Lytton Savings building was planned until architect Frank Gehry developed a new design for the site. Gehry has experience working with existing buildings; he designed a performance hall inside a 1955 building in Berlin and recently broke ground on renovation of the historic Philadelphia Museum of Art.

To say the least, we are encouraged by this positive turn of events. We greatly appreciate the help of everyone who wrote letters of support or attended public hearings regarding this issue. We particularly want to thank the Friends of Lytton Savings, who successfully nominated the building for HCM designation last year.

For much more about the building and the issue, visit laconservancy.org.



This Modern bank building's folded-plate concrete roof is one of its most distinctive features. Photo by Hunter Kerhart.

SURVEYLA continued from page 1

on, City staff decided to phase the surveys by Community Plan Area, part of the Land Use element of the General Plan. Connecting survey work to these areas strengthened the link between preservation and planning and provided a means of understanding the unique makeup of the city's neighborhoods.

While SurveyLA is grounded in long-established state and federal practices for survey work, these practices were modernized to take advantage of new technologies and provide a fresh perspective on what documentation is needed to inform planning. Efficiencies in fieldwork and evaluations were achieved through the use of cutting-edge survey tools, including a custom-designed mobile field application and a citywide historic context statement (HCS). The HCS identifies themes and related property types important in the development history of Los Angeles and provides a framework to guide evaluations. Among the property types identified are residential and commercial districts as well as apartment houses, car washes, theatres, schools, bridges, landscapes, air raid sirens, and streetlights, as well as those associated with ethnic/cultural associations and a wide range of architectural periods from Victorian era to Late Modern.

Importantly, historic preservation professionals, working under contract to the City, conducted the fieldwork and were responsible for all property evaluations. But SurveyLA was greatly aided by an arsenal of volunteers who participated in all aspects of the project. Over the years, SurveyLA's volunteer program mobilized more than 200 scholars, writers, historians, student interns, preservation enthusiasts, and others to assist with tasks including photography, research, and historic context development, as well as serving on a Speakers Bureau.

The culmination of the SurveyLA effort is HistoricPlacesLA (HPLA), Los Angeles' historic resources inventory and management system. This system, a continuation of the City's collaboration with the Getty, is a customized version of Arches software, a development project of the Getty Conservation Institute and World Monuments Fund. HPLA is now the most advanced historic resources management system in the United States and

includes historic resources recorded through SurveyLA as well as those listed in local, state, and national registers (which were not re-surveyed by SurveyLA).

HPLA makes historic resource information fully accessible and searchable, serving a variety of purposes and users. Resources can be mapped and detailed, for example, by administrative areas such as City Council Districts or Community Plan boundaries. City agencies can search for information on resources under their jurisdiction, such as fire stations or streetlights. Researchers can find resources associated with a historical theme, the work of a particular architect, or a specific time period. The inventory also assists with project review, compliance with state and federal environmental laws, property designations, preservation incentive programs, adaptive reuse, and disaster preparedness.

SurveyLA has underscored the rich and wide array of historic resources throughout Los Angeles and has yielded some surprising results. And while SurveyLA has wrapped up, the resultant inventory in HPLA will continue to grow and be updated over time as properties age, more surveys are completed, new information is uncovered, and resources are designated, rehabilitated, or adaptively reused.

Janet Hansen is Deputy Manager of the Office of Historic Resources in the City of Los Angeles' Department of City Planning.

FEBRUARY 11 / APRIL 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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PILLAR SOCIETY

WHY I JOINED: DONALD WEGGEMAN

Donald Weggeman joined the Conservancy in 1985. He later served on the Board of Directors, and he is one of the few walking tour docents to lead all of our weekly walking tours.



A founding member of the Conservancy's planned giving group, the Pillar Society, Donald shares his thoughts on why planned giving is so important:

"Some people don't know what to do after retirement, but I had no such problem. The restoration of my 1906 Craftsman could absorb as much time—and money—as I could give it. In addition, volunteering for L.A. Conservancy events and docenting for walking tours—fifty-nine of them last year—gave me a rich social life and a continuing education that no job I'd ever had provided. As an educator, I'd never had such an attentive audience or such a supportive administration.

The Conservancy has been enriching my life for more than twenty-five years now, and I've arranged to support it by including it in my living trust.

If you are, like me, living on a fixed income, you may feel unable to give as generously as you might wish at this time. Consider the Conservancy's Pillar Society, which will help build an endowment for the Conservancy, ensuring the preservation of L.A. County's architectural and cultural heritage."

Learn more about the Pillar Society on page 2.

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

523 West Sixth Street, Suite 826

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



Image courtesy ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives.

LGBTQ HISTORIC PLACES IN L.A. SCREENING AND PANEL CONVERSATION

Thursday, May 25

This screening and panel conversation takes place at West Hollywood's Great Hall/Long Hall in Plummer Park, the subject of one of our new short films. Details at laconservancy.org/events/lgbtq.



Photo by Barry Schwartz.

LAST REMAINING SEATS

Wednesdays & Saturdays
June 3–24

Join us for our signature series of classic films in historic theatres! Learn more about this year's series and see the full lineup on page 4.



Photo by Deissy Flores.

WALKING TOURS

Ongoing

Conservancy members may reserve up to four spots per walking tour at the member rate, so you can bring your friends and family on an exploration of downtown history! Reserve online at laconservancy.org/tours.