



Photo by Rico Mandel

New Year, New Leadership Opportunities

By Adrian Scott Fine

On January 1st, I began my new role as President and CEO of the Los Angeles Conservancy. Following thirteen years of directing the organization’s advocacy efforts, I’m grateful and excited for this new opportunity. There are two core reasons why.

One: I love the Conservancy and the work we do to help keep historic places that people care about. Two: I love Greater Los Angeles as a place—the way its story can be told through buildings, neighborhoods, cultures, traditions, and people. Yes, *people*. We say this a lot at the Conservancy: people and places go together. Fundamentally, we cannot preserve places if we do not have people helping, advocating, and connecting to places that matter to them and all of us.

Preservation is changing and evolving, in Los Angeles and nationally, to tell broader, fuller stories that include places, people, and cultures that have been traditionally left out or omitted. While the Conservancy will always be here to stand up and advocate for architecturally significant places, we are also working to expand our efforts to advocate, build awareness about, and appreciation for culturally significant places.

If you know and have worked with me, you might have heard me ask if our work is effectively moving the needle. It is an analogy that particularly resonates with me, pressing myself and others to consistently think about how we can do more and ensure we are making a meaningful impact. This year, the Conservancy plans to move the needle in two ways: women’s heritage awareness and housing.

We are partnering with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and their “Where Women Made History” initiative on a Los Angeles Women’s Landmark project. This ambitious planning effort will expand the public’s understanding, acknowledge

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Join us for our Spring Tour on the Historic FOX Studio Lot!

On Sunday, April 14th, the L.A. Conservancy invites you to join us for an exciting and rare opportunity to tour the historic FOX Studio Lot!

***Sale to members starts February 28th.
Sale to general public, March 6th. This
tour is expected to sell out so buy your
tickets soon!***

Normally closed to the public, our exclusive FOX Studio Lot tour will give tourgoers the chance to amble along the original ‘streets’ and ‘boulevards’ of the FOX lot, walk by the bungalows that housed famous screenwriters and see the sound stages where beloved films were shot.

About the FOX Studio Lot:

In 1928, FOX Film Corporation’s principal studio, dubbed Movietone City, opened in West Los Angeles. Unlike the production lots of nearby Hollywood, many of which had grown in a somewhat random fashion, Movietone City was a planned development. It was laid out like a miniature city, with ‘factory’ buildings in one section, offices nearby and residences southeast of the main commercial core.

The small squares and pocket parks enhanced the street system. Each building, constructed between 1928 and 1932, had a

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LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY

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.

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Fox-Movietone Studios circa 1928. Photo courtesy the Los Angeles Public Library/Works Progress Administration

role in film production, from the ornate administration buildings and soundproof stages to more utilitarian support facilities.

A visit to the FOX Studio Lot is a visit to hallowed ground in the annals of Hollywood history. It was here that some of the biggest stars could be found (Shirley Temple, Marilyn Monroe, Mel Brooks) and where films that would become cultural touchstones (*The Sound of Music*, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *Die Hard*) were made.

Ninety-six years later, much of Movietone City remains unchanged. However, the lot it sits on has grown to encompass 15 sound stages, screening rooms, post-production facilities, four commissary eateries, in addition to other filming locations.

And more development is in store. FOX Corporation, which retained ownership of the lot when most of its entertainment assets were acquired by Walt Disney Co. in 2019, has announced plans for a \$1.5 billion upgrade. This will add more facilities to meet the demand of renters looking to utilize the space for television and movie production.

On this tour, you'll walk along the newly rebuilt New York Street and see the interior of the historic Scoring Stage, among many other original features. You'll also hear about plans for the FOX Studio Lot's future, and what the next 96 years may have in store.

Ticket information at: www.laconservancy.org

The Pasadena City College Project



This past summer, Pasadena City College (PCC) Professor Carolyn Corrie and the Los Angeles Conservancy collaborated on a new, community-based learning project!

This project involved students of the U.S. Cultural Traditions and Social Change class researching legacy businesses in the San Gabriel Valley.

The PCC students were split into groups and chose a legacy business to contact. They interviewed the owners about the business's history and place within the community. All the students were English as a second language (ESL) learners, and for many students, this was their first time having a formal meeting or discussion in English. Conservancy staff worked with Professor Corrie to help guide the students through the interview process and how to interact with business owners. We also explained the Conservancy's Legacy Businesses initiative, hoping to impart why these types of places are important in their communities.

Student groups had the opportunity to present their projects to the rest of their class, some members of the Conservancy, and other PCC staff. Many students expressed that they were happy to participate in the project and thought more deeply about how local businesses fit into and impact the fabric of their communities.

Many said they were very nervous to converse in English, but improving and expanding their English skills was a great experience. The Conservancy was happy to be able to work with Professor Corrie and her students and looks forward to future collaborations!



LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

*Thank YOU for helping
make 2023 a banner year
for the Los Angeles
Conservancy!*



15 HISTORIC CULTURAL- MONUMENT NOMINATIONS

The Conservancy worked on **fifteen** historic-cultural monument (HCM) nominations in 2023. HCM's are critical to historic preservation in Los Angeles. In 2023, these HCM's included the Watt Happening Cultural Center, Hung Sa Dahn/Korean Academy, and the Morris Kight Residence.



THE HERITAGE PROJECT

In August 2023, the Conservancy invited **15 high school students** to participate in a new immersive summer program, "The Heritage Project!" Participating students reflected the diversity of L.A. County, coming from the neighborhoods of Woodland Hills, Torrance, Watts, Cerritos, Whittier, Sierra Madre, Carson, La Puente, Koreatown and View Park, among others.

Students experienced historic places and spaces first-hand through adventures like kayaking in Catalina, getting a taste of Chinatown, learning to lasso in Santa Monica, and more.



LEGACY BUSINESS GRANT PROGRAM

Thanks to the generous support of Wells Fargo, the Los Angeles Conservancy provided **\$50,000** in grants to eligible, longtime small businesses! From South Los Angeles to the San Fernando Valley, ten diverse legacy businesses were selected to receive \$5,000 grants to assist with miscellaneous operating costs.



LINDA DISHMAN LEGACY FUND

At the end of 2023, the Conservancy's leader, Linda Dishman, retired after thirty-one years of service. To honor her work, the Linda Dishman Legacy Fund was created to provide funding to support preservation efforts across Los Angeles County. We are more than halfway to our goal of \$1 million: so far, the fund has generated **\$750,000** in gifts and pledges... and counting!

104,593

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS!

Since 2020, the Conservancy has focused on using social media as a tool to get folks involved with advocacy issues and education programs. If you aren't already, join the conversation at: [@laconservancy](https://www.instagram.com/laconservancy)

156

VOLUNTEERS

In 2023, our volunteers came out in force at events like *Last Remaining Seats*, our annual Preservation Awards, virtual tours, weekend walking tours, and more. We're thankful for their time, knowledge, and passion!

500+

TOURS AND EVENTS

Our walking tours continue to be a hallmark of the Conservancy. In addition to these award-winning historic walking tours, we hosted a score of member events, volunteer events, and virtual events. *Thank you for making these possible!*

12,640

IN-PERSON EVENT ATTENDEES

Almost 13,000 folks from Los Angeles County and beyond came out to our in-person events in 2023. That's an amazing number and we can't wait to welcome more in 2024!

1,956

STUDENT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

The L.A. Conservancy's student programming flourished in 2023, connected nearly **2,000** young Angelenos to historic places and people in Los Angeles.

1,343

NEW CONSERVANCY MEMBERS

The Conservancy is the largest local, historic preservation nonprofit in the country. Thank you for being a member and welcome to all who joined in 2023.

[LACONSERVANCY.ORG](https://www.laconservancy.org)

Staff Updates

The Los Angeles Conservancy is delighted to welcome two new staff members!

In December 2023, **Camille Elston** joined the Advocacy team as the new Preservation Coordinator. Camille is a 2018 USC Heritage Conservation program graduate and recently served as the Managing Director/Design Awards Coordinator at the A+D Architecture and Design Museum. She's the current Board President of The Queer 26 and previously has worked in the cities of Los Angeles and Pasadena. She's also a native Angeleno, growing up in Compton.

We're also happy to welcome **Chesley Crabbe** aboard as our new Development Coordinator. Chelsey is new to Los Angeles and excited to be here! She moved from Massachusetts in 2023 after five years at the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School, most recently as Executive Coordinator. While an undergrad at Trinity College in Connecticut, she had an internship with Hartford Preservation Alliance.

We are currently accepting applications for two openings: **Director of Advocacy** and **Student and Family Program Coordinator!** As Director of Advocacy, the successful candidate will have the opportunity to be a historic preservation leader for L.A. County! Our Student and Family Program Coordinator will oversee the quality of all of the Conservancy's student-related programming. For job listing and salary information, visit:

[laconservancy.org/careers](https://www.laconservancy.org/careers).



FOX Studios in Century City. Photo courtesy FOX Corporation.

Hooray for Hollywood's Historic Studios!

Earlier in this issue, we announced dates for our Spring Tour, which will take guests to see the historic FOX Studio Lot and learn about its master plan. As our upcoming tour gets ready for its close-up, here's a brief look back at some of the many advocacy issues the Conservancy has been involved with over the years to ensure that the dream machines that made motion picture and television history remain part of our heritage well into the future.

Hollywood history can be fragile and often requires urgent advocacy to keep its historic places from fading. The erasure of Hollywood history is ever-present, whether it's the iconic Hollywood Sign, which is still with us 100 years later thanks to a swell of community support, or the current push to save Hollywood icon Marilyn Monroe's former home from needless demolition.

Of course, the epicenter of Hollywood history is the motion picture studio itself.

From Culver City to Burbank and beyond, these 'dream factories' not only spurred economic growth but helped boost Los Angeles into a modern metropolis to be reckoned with. They also hold stories about the people—the trailblazers and magic makers—who often fought incredible odds to make dreams come true.

Some studios are meticulously planned like small towns, some are the results of hodge-

podge development to meet production needs, while some have irresistible architectural merit; from Tudor Revival to Art Deco. Regardless of their style and story, they are part of Los Angeles' unique built environment. Unfortunately, it's also increasingly harder to save their historic fabric from fading like the films they once produced.

For decades, the Conservancy has been involved in preserving these essential pieces of Hollywood history and the complex stories they tell: soundstages where women shattered glass ceilings in a male-dominated industry; bungalows where writers pushed the envelope on social issues; commissaries that segregated workers of color.

We've worked with developers, elected officials, and community members to find ways to keep the historic fabric of studios intact. We are also dedicated to finding win-win solutions so that inevitable new developments on studio lots do not severely alter existing viewsheds while ensuring economic viability for an ever-evolving industry.

Television City

Television City (TVC) is an iconic place in Los Angeles, both for its commanding presence in the Fairfax District. As a place that helps define this city, TVC also illustrates just how vulnerable our heritage can be as part of the ongoing surge in growth and new development throughout L.A.

The Conservancy worked for years with developers and community members to have TVC designated as a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) in 2018. We've worked hard to ensure a proposed new development surrounding TVC is compatible and does not overwhelm its historic structure. A comprehensive framework for a state-of-the-art modernization will preserve the historic complex and maintain the 430-foot Beverly Boulevard viewshed.

Paramount Studios

Back in the 1980s, this world-famous studio and landmark started refurbishing the original, largely Art Deco-style architecture on the lot. This included renaming buildings after such past Paramount power players as Cecil B. DeMille and Billy Wilder. The L.A. Conservancy proudly honored the studio for its admirable efforts to preserve its historic buildings in 1988.

In 2015, Paramount Pictures proposed an ambitious master plan to guide improvements to its Hollywood studio lot over the next twenty years. The original plans would have demolished eighteen contributing buildings in the Paramount Pictures Historic District and thirteen contributing buildings in the adjoining RKO Historic District. The Conservancy expressed concern and worked with Paramount and its project team to push for sensitive new construction and the adoption of a clear design review process with the City's Office of Historic Resources.

CBS Radford

The historic Radford Studio Center in Studio City was recently sold to Hackman Capital Partners and is getting a makeover.

The storied lot, which dates from the silent era and has been home to such iconic television shows such as "Gilligan's Island" and "Seinfeld," will undergo \$1 billion dollars worth of upgrades. Radford was also home to the groundbreaking "Mary Tyler Moore Show" which embodied second-wave feminism in the 1970s and changed the way women were portrayed on television.

The Conservancy is reviewing the proposed project and has met with the project team to assess potential impacts.

Preservation Snapshots



Courtesy The Complex Theatre

The Complex Theatre

Often overlooked by the grand theatres of Broadway or Hollywood, independent theatres are vital to the performing arts community. For almost 50 years, The Complex was a breeding ground for talent, experimentation, and community among actors, comedians, singers, and more. Now, as of December 1, 2023, the building is memorialized as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.

The Complex at 6468-6480 W. Santa Monica Boulevard was built in 1928 in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. It is a rare example of commercial development along the historic streetcar line. For community members today, The Complex is most significant as an anchor of Hollywood Theatre Row.

Designations like The Complex demand time and community collaboration. The nomination, written by the Conservancy and submitted in partnership with former Complex owner Matt Chait, received key support from Hollywood Heritage, and Hollywood Fringe Festival. Our partnership began in the fall of 2022 when The Complex was told their lease would not be renewed, sparking fears about the loss of this cultural institution and the future of the building.

The work to preserve the building as a site of theatre is ongoing. While designation does not control use, Theatre Row stakeholders, including our friends at the Fringe Festival, are in conversations with the new ownership to assess if a theatre use might be maintained in the building.



Photo by Danny Rouzer/Tim Lanza Collection

The Coronet Theatre

Congratulations to West Hollywood's historic Coronet Theatre which earned Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) status in December of 2023!

It happened thanks to a 16-year-old's wish to invest in and preserve her family's legacy. Chloe Dunn's grandmother, Frieda Berkoff-Gellis, a Russian vaudeville dancer, commissioned the Coronet in 1942 and created an artists hub that still thrives today.

With the support of Chloe's mother, Honor, this unstoppable pair successfully designated the Coronet!

Chloe and Honor dug into three generations of women—Frieda, Betty, and Petrie—whose entrepreneurship and creativity made the Coronet possible.

At the time of its opening in 1947, the property housed a 272-seat stage theater (which later also screened films), a performance space known as the "Little Theatre," a cinema, multiple storefronts, and a dance rehearsal studio.

The Late Streamline Moderne building is a landmark of L.A.'s avant-garde, famous as the site of the world premiere of Bertolt Brecht's *Galileo*, site of Ray Bradbury's science fiction theatre company, and early art house cinema for LGBTQ+ films.

Today, Largo at the Coronet brings new generations of performers to its stages every night.



Courtesy Corbis and Curbed

The Marilyn Monroe Residence

Good news! On January 18, 2024, the City's Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) recommended approval for the Marilyn Monroe Residence Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM). It will now head to City Council.

When we tell stories about the people and women of Los Angeles, it's fundamentally more real and tangible when we root them in the places that help illustrate their lives, contributions, and connection to L.A.

We think few places do this better for Marilyn Monroe than her former residence, which was the only home that the Hollywood icon ever owned by herself. She spoke about this house, was interviewed and photographed in this house, and was actively involved in the updating of this house before her untimely death at the age of 36.

News first broke in September of 2023 about the planned demolition of Monroe's former home, prompting widespread concern and the initiation of an HCM nomination, thanks to Councilmember Traci Park.

The property owners have now offered the house for possible relocation. While never a first choice, the Conservancy appreciates this consideration and will pursue all options to ensure long-term preservation.

The Conservancy will continue to keep you updated on further developments. Read the full story about this advocacy issue on our website: laconservancy.org.

LEADERSHIP continued from page 1

contributions, and advance the appreciation of diverse women's histories and impact in Los Angeles. It builds on our existing efforts, such as the LGBTQ+ Historic Places in L.A. campaign and "A Woman's Place" walking tour, as well as our advocacy work to designate The Woman's Building, the studio of artist Sister Corita Kent, and the Marilyn Monroe Residence.

The Conservancy is also looking at housing and how it relates to preservation. It is a vast and complicated challenge, both in Los Angeles and nationally, with no simple fix or singular focus. Preservation has an important role to play, and the Conservancy plans to step up to make the case.

Our recent Preservation Positive Los Angeles study taught us that over sixty percent of Angelenos are renters, and fifty-eight percent live in housing built before 1960. From bungalow courts to courtyard and garden apartments to dingbats, these are classic examples of naturally occurring affordable (and unsubsidized) housing, an asset that is serving a critical need. Yet, in the quest for more housing and greater density, these places are sometimes at risk through demolition and the displacement of existing residents. The often repeated mantra is we need to build more housing to meet the demand, which we do. But this can also call for needless demolition and redevelopment.

Preservation supports new housing through sensitive infill and the adaptive reuse of existing buildings, and adding density through accessory dwelling units (ADUs). We are also actively part of conversations about how to incentivize the conversion of empty, historic office buildings for new housing. The Conservancy, and all of us, need to do more to find meaningful ways to help keep and reinvest in our existing (and often historic) affordable housing, working at scale and moving beyond just saving one building at a time.

While our work in preservation is increasingly more complicated and nuanced, I see this as both a challenge and an opportunity for the Conservancy. In this new role, my goal is to help the Conservancy do two things to meet the current moment we are facing. One, redefine and broaden preservation and what it represents today, and two, ensure our work is fundamentally relevant, continues to save more architecturally and culturally significant historic places, and addresses pressing needs.

The Conservancy has a great team in our Board, staff, and volunteers, and I look forward to working to ensure more of Los Angeles' historic places—and the stories they tell—will remain for future generations.



The Paul R. Williams House; The Woman's Building designation. Photos from L.A. Conservancy Archives

Membership Matters: Robert Gonzalez



Courtesy Robert Gonzalez

Meet Robert Gonzalez! He's a new member of the Conservancy. Our Grants and Development Manager Andrea Joki recently checked in with him.

Andrea Joki: What compelled you to join the Conservancy?

Robert Gonzalez: I have known about the organization for quite some time and had been meaning to join. The Conservancy's special contest to win tickets to see Pink Martini (our favorite group!) on New Year's Eve motivated me to finally join, as well as the easy \$5 per month payment plan.

AJ: What are some of your favorite historic places in Los Angeles and why?

RG: My favorite places include Union Station and Olvera Street because they have a fascinating history, and they are close to each other which makes for a nice day out. The Art Deco style at Union Station is just beautiful to observe. Griffith Park's Travel Town Museum is another favorite place. They have an actual steam locomotive and old train cars you can walk through.

AJ: What is a local preservation issue or historical place that is important to you and why?

RG: One of the things I love most about L.A. is the culture. There are so many free cultural events, and I really think those kinds of places where people come together are important to preserve. I'm also interested in the housing issue. I love my home, but as a renter, I'm stuck because I'd never find what I have at that price.

AJ: What case would you make to others for joining and supporting the L.A. Conservancy?

RG: The Conservancy works to protect the things about L.A. that make it unique. They do work that benefits people, our community, and therefore it benefits me.

OCTOBER 10 / DECEMBER 31

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Conservancy acknowledges the generous contributions of our new and upgrading Supporting members, and the new and renewing members of our Sustaining, Benefactor, and Cornerstone groups.

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Saturdays
10:00 a.m.

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Saturdays
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MODERN SKYLINE

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Fourth Saturday
10:30 a.m.

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11:00 a.m.