



LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY NEWS



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L-R, Clockwise: Helen Liu Fong; Sister Corita Kent's Studio; Roz Wyman; Norma Merrick Sklarek; The Crenshaw Women's Center; Julia Morgan; The Woman's Building; Biddy Mason. Photo credits: Larry Hirshowitz/L.A. Magazine, Corita Art Center, EdWiddis/Associated Press, Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, L.A. Conservancy archives, Julia Morgan Papers/California Polytechnic State University, Getty Research Institute © Maria Karras, UCLA Library Digital Collections

Women's Heritage: A New Model for Gender-Equitable Designation in L.A.

By Carley Michelle Hildebrand

Each year, Women's History Month offers an opportunity to reflect on the achievements and contributions, through acts of persistence and resistance, made by women in all walks of life. Here in L.A., women architects and designers have broken barriers in male-dominated industries for decades. Civic leaders have labored to eliminate biases from systemically discriminatory institutions. And social justice advocates have (and continue to) fight inequities in everything from healthcare to employment.

Women's heritage in Los Angeles stretches back across the centuries. You can see it in public spaces like the Biddy Mason Park downtown, which through art and poetry, commemorates the incredible story of Mason's life. You can see it in the swooping exteriors of a coffee shop or the clean lines of a Modern building designed by women like Helen Liu Fong, Edith Norman, and Norma Merrick Sklarek—trailblazers who overcame racism *and* sexism to achieve their dreams. Indeed, tangible testaments of women's history are everywhere. *And yet less than 3% of the Historic-Cultural Monuments (HCMs) in L.A. are associated with women's heritage.* A staggering and shameful disparity.

That's why the Los Angeles Conservancy is honored to partner with the National Trust for Historic Preservation to address the issue. Along with the National Trust's Where Women Made History (WWMH) initiative, the Conservancy will be part of developing a new model for gender-equitable designation in Los Angeles!

As part of the effort, we'll be working to nominate and raise awareness about sites related to women's heritage; places that tell overlooked stories and celebrate the accomplishments of women who helped shape L.A.'s physical and cultural landscape.

Chris Morris, manager of the WWMH, says "the pervasive lack of women's repre-

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Announcing the 2024 Preservation Awards!

Since 1987, the Conservancy has recognized outstanding achievements in historic preservation in Los Angeles County at our annual Preservation Awards Celebration.

This year, we're excited to bring this event to the newly restored Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood on **Thursday, May 16th!** We'll be honoring a total of nine projects and we're delighted to announce the winning projects to you first:

Chair Award:

Netflix Egyptian Theatre

Project Winners:

- Alcoholism Center for Women
- Bailey House (Case Study House #21)
- City of West Hollywood Historical Context Study
- The Paramount/Brooklyn Avenue Pizza Co.
- Rubel Castle Historic District
- Small Business Hype Squad
- UCLA Faculty Center
- West L.A. Veterans Campus: Buildings 205 and 208
- West L.A. Veterans Campus: Building 207

These projects reflect the diversity of our County, the layered histories found in historic places, and the power of community advocacy. Over the coming weeks we'll share in-depth stories about these projects, here in our membership newsletter and online.

Make sure your email is up to date to receive the latest news, and congratulations to the 2024 Preservation Award winners!

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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.

Upcoming In-Person Tours & Events

For more information and to register for our events, visit:

laconservancy.org/events.

**SUNDAY
APRIL 28**

ALL ROADS LEAD TO WESTWOOD: LITTLE HOLMBY

Holmbly-Westwood is extraordinary for its collection of residential architecture and early Los Angeles history. An early residential suburb, it's well known for its period revival architectural styles and homes dating from the 1920s through the 1950s. On this guided tour, you'll see stunning exteriors designed by master architects, learn about Holmbly-Westwood's relationship to nearby Westwood Village and UCLA, and discover what's happening today in this bucolic neighborhood. **\$20 Conservancy Members/\$25 General Public**

**SATURDAY
MAY 11**

ALL ROADS LEAD TO WESTWOOD VILLAGE

Follow your nearest road to Westwood Village and join us for a guided walking tour exploring the neighborhood's complex and layered history. Visit and learn about iconic Spanish revival-style buildings from the 1930s and historic movie theatres like the Regency Village. See firsthand how this intentionally planned neighborhood has influenced and been influenced by the developments built around it. Meet the community, explore legacy businesses, and see ongoing efforts to preserve Westwood's historic places.

\$20 Conservancy Members / \$25 General Public

In Memoriam: Planaria Price (1943-2024)



In Memoriam: Planaria Price

The L.A. Conservancy staff and our volunteer tour guides are deeply saddened by the recent passing of Planaria Price. For decades, we had the joy and privilege of working alongside Planaria in the Angelino Heights neighborhood that she loved so deeply.

A historic preservation hero, she was responsible for saving and preserving some 30 Victorian and craftsman-style homes in historic Angelino Heights, including the iconic "Charmed House" where she would kindly open the doors to L.A. Conservancy tourgoers.

Before her passing, Planaria was able to write her own obituary and we are honored to share a selection of it here:

"Planaria lived her life practicing Tikkun Olam; a Jewish lesson that one must try, however one can, to Heal the World, and she spent her life doing that. Planaria also dedicated her life to historic preservation, attempting—successfully—to save and restore over 30 Victorian and craftsman houses in the Angelino Heights area of Echo Park. She lived in her historic house on Carroll Avenue for over 50 years where she delighted in frightening children every Halloween with her green face and loud cackle."

Loved by Conservancy tour guides and staff alike, our thoughts are with Planaria's friends and family, and we wish them comfort during this difficult time.

The Heritage Project Returns in 2024!



Heritage Project students in Chinatown.

The Los Angeles Conservancy's summer intensive for high school students returns in 2024! On March 25th, applications for the Conservancy's newest program for teens, "The Heritage Project," will open. This three-week program takes place from July 8th to July 26th.

Over the course of the program, a select cohort of L.A. County high school students will participate in an exploration of Los Angeles's historic and cultural heritage. Students will visit significant places such as La Plaza de Cultura y Artes, Tongva heritage sites, Chinatown, Will Rogers State Historic Park, and even spend a night on Catalina Island. They'll meet and learn from architects, artists, activists, and others working to protect, cultivate, and tell the stories of Los Angeles's heritage. Throughout the program, students will investigate their personal and family histories in relation to the broader heritage of L.A. County and Southern California. They'll also learn how to contribute to the preservation of neighborhoods, buildings, green spaces, and other locations that make Los Angeles so unique.

The Heritage Project launched in 2023 and made a huge impact on the students who participated in it. This first cohort of students came from across L.A. County, from the San Fernando Valley to South Bay and beyond. They attended

[See HERITAGE on page 6](#)

Save the Date: *Last Remaining Seats* is Coming Back to Broadway in June



Photo courtesy The Palace Theatre

Last Remaining Seats (LRS), the L.A. Conservancy's flagship film series, is back on Broadway this June!

This summer, three of downtown Los Angeles's most stunning historic theatres will be on full display for attendees of *Last Remaining Seats*. Beginning Saturday, June 1, the opulent 1926

Orpheum Theatre will host the opening matinee and evening performance. Then, on Saturday, June 8, the spectacular Los Angeles Theatre will open its doors to wow Angelenos for another day of classic films in a historic setting. And finally, on Saturday, June 8, the L.A. Conservancy is excited to welcome you into the beautiful Palace Theatre for the close of LRS!

This jewel box of a venue opened in 1911, making it one of the oldest theatres in Los Angeles and the oldest of the 12 historic theaters that line Broadway. It has been seven years since the Conservancy last showed a film at the Palace for LRS, and we are excited to return!

All three theatres must be seen to be believed, so whether you're new to *Last Remaining Seats* or a long-time fan, mark your calendars! **The LRS lineup will be announced on the same day that tickets go on sale for Conservancy members, on April 10.** General public can purchase tickets beginning April 17. Tickets are \$20 for members, \$25 for general public. *Make sure your email is up to date to receive all the latest LRS news!*

Thank you, Conservancy Walking Tour Guides!

Our volunteer tour guides are at the heart of the L.A. Conservancy. We want to thank all of our volunteer guides who made an impact in 2023, both at our weekly weekend walking tours and seasonal special tours. *Thank you for your time, talent, and passion for L.A. history!*

Alice Allen	Cristina Haraba	David Peake
Stuart Anderson	Randy Henderson	Kay Pegram
Janis Ashley	Ann Hobbs	Don Pestana
Kathleen Campbell	Robin Holding	Babara Petersmeyer
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Michael Goldstein	David Nufer	Jill Thomsen
Jody Gunn	Andrew Odom	Ruth Wallach
	Lisa Otis-Kisor	Mary Alice Wollam
		Skeet Wright

Good Luck, Lia Schiffito!

The Conservancy recently said goodbye to our Volunteer & Program Coordinator, Lia Schiffito. Lia joined the education team in 2022, where she was a visible presence at events like LRS and was a key member of the LRS Committee. She will be leaving California to accept a new role with the University of Pennsylvania's Center for the Preservation of Civil Rights Sites. Good luck, Lia!

The Conservancy is hiring! Check out our current openings at: laconservancy.org/careers.



Photo Credit: Stephen Schafer

Housing and Preservation: Finding Common Ground

By Adrian Scott Fine

Can housing and preservation goals get along, or are they inherently in conflict with one another?

The Conservancy believes the two goals are complementary rather than competing, especially considering preservation's long-standing track record of creating new housing through adaptive reuse and sustaining existing accessible and affordable housing.

The challenge we are facing here in L.A. and places nationwide is the need for more affordable housing. This is where things can get complicated and a bit tricky, with some claiming preservation may stand in the way. The "we must build more housing" mantra is often repeated to address the housing crisis, with funding as well as state and local streamlining policies reinforcing this, in part to meet California Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) projections.

To illustrate, Los Angeles is mandated to create 456,643 housing units from 2021-2029. Of that, 184,721 must be affordable to lower-income households.

Building our way out of this affordable housing crisis is a flawed premise, as it is not possible to build new and rent cheap at scale. In Los Angeles, the average cost to build one new unit of affordable housing is now about

\$600k. This is why we must also retain and reinvest in our existing affordable housing, the largest concentration of which exists in older and historic buildings.

Nearly all agree that housing is complicated. It's challenging to calibrate and align planning policies at the local, regional and statewide levels in a way that truly addresses the problem without causing harm elsewhere.

An example is L.A. City Mayor Karen Bass' Executive Directive 1 (ED 1). While well-intended in streamlining one-hundred percent affordable housing production, without some guardrails in place ED 1 could irreparably damage L.A.'s older and historic neighborhoods, especially within our Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZ).

In February, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) was in town to convene a roundtable panel on housing and preservation, including the Conservancy alongside housing and planning advocates. ACHP Chair Sara Bronin said, "[P]reservationists have the responsibility to dig into this complexity and help lead conversations."

We cannot agree more and strongly believe there is common ground to be found if we all begin working collaboratively toward mutually beneficial goals.

Historic Preservation = Affordable Housing

The following is an excerpt from the L.A. Conservancy's groundbreaking 2020 study "Preservation Positive." Read the full report at laconservancy.org.

In Los Angeles, affordable housing and historic preservation are mutually beneficial, not mutually exclusive. Los Angeles is a city of renters. Over 60% of Angelenos rent, and 58% live in housing built before 1960. Older houses and apartment buildings, built smaller and more densely, are shining examples of naturally occurring or unsubsidized affordable housing.

A glance at the average rent for a studio apartment in Los Angeles shows newer buildings have significantly higher monthly costs.

In Los Angeles, top renter income expanded slightly from 25% to 30%, while the top gross rent increased dramatically from 25% to 55%. It is no surprise that L.A. is the third-most rent-burdened metropolitan area in the nation. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines cost-burdened households as those who spend more than 30% of their income on housing.

In historic districts, 51% of rental units are affordable for low-income households of two people and 23% for low-income households of four people. These are greater shares of affordable rental housing compared to the rest of the city. Traditional measures of affordability look at housing cost burdens. However, this metric misses a host of related expenses. Transportation costs are typically a household's second-largest expense, especially in a city as expansive and car-dependent as Los Angeles.

When comparing housing and transportation costs, Historic Preservation Overlay Zones in Los Angeles fare better than the rest of the city. A combination of density and proximity and access to public transit are likely to mitigate household costs for those residents.

Preservation Snapshots



Courtesy Chris Mortenson

The Venice Lifeguard Station

Venice's iconic beach recalls acrobats and musicians on the boardwalk, skaters flying across the bowl, crowded beaches...and, for many residents, its Mid-Century Modern Lifeguard Station.

Built in 1969, the Station was the L.A. City and then L.A. County lifeguard headquarters until 2014. This was a period of transformational growth for L.A.'s lifeguards, who not only protect 32 miles of beach in L.A. County but have also shaped the development of lifeguarding practices across the globe.

In 2014, the L.A. County Department of Beaches and Harbors commissioned a study that revealed necessary repairs for the station. Rather than investing in the building, they left the top two floors vacant for years before applying for a permit to demolish the tower.

When advocates—from artists to environmentalists to former lifeguards—caught wind of the plan in 2021, they quickly mounted a campaign to save the building. The L.A. Conservancy partnered with the Venice Neighborhood Council to submit an L.A. City Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) nomination for the Venice Lifeguard Station. In February, it was recommended by the Cultural Heritage Council for adoption. We thank Councilmember Traci Park for her support of the nomination. Grassroots campaigns aren't easy, but the Venice Lifeguard Station shows what a committed group of community members can do!



Rendering by Archimedians

The I-405 Sepulveda Pass Express Lane Project

Advocacy isn't always loud or showy. Sometimes it is quiet, even bureaucratic. A section 106 review is one of those kinds of efforts.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies working on projects that could have an adverse affect on historic properties to give the public and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment on the project. This is an important preservation tool that allows communities to consider preservation alternatives for federally funded projects.

Last March, the Conservancy received notice that the I-405 Express Sepulveda Pass Express Lane Project included a proposal to expand the freeway that would demolish six residential blocks along the current I-405 in the Brentwood Glen neighborhood.

The Conservancy alerted the consultants, representing Metro and Caltrans, to potential historic resources including a grouping of single and multi-family Mid-Century residences. (This includes The Hart Residence, a beautifully designed home by the acclaimed architect Quincy A. Jones in 1950.)

We were thrilled to hear that Metro and Caltrans chose the project alternative that will not expand the I-405 in Brentwood Glen and will keep this neighborhood intact!



Rendering by L.A. Aerial Rapid Transit

The "Gondola Project" Update

On Thursday, February 22nd, the Metro Board approved the Los Angeles Aerial Rapid Transit Project (aka Dodger Stadium Gondola) and certified its Environmental Impact Report. Also adopted at the Metro Board meeting was a motion co-authored by Directors Hilda Solis, Karen Bass, Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker, Lindsey P. Horvath, and Danielle Sandoval which included 31 conditions of approval.

Among these are a community impact mitigation plan that aims to address impacts to historic architectural elements and a commitment by the developer to establish a community benefits agreement to address concerns of residents and stakeholders impacted by the project.

While we appreciate the Directors' motion which uplifts important historical and contemporary contexts and community concerns, we continue to oppose the current project. We will continue to stay engaged in the approval process to ensure impacts to historic resources are addressed, pressing for the relocation of the Alameda Station to lessen impacts to historic Union Station and El Pueblo.

The project will require further consideration from the city of Los Angeles, Caltrans, the California State Department of Parks and Recreation, and the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health before it comes back to Metro at a future date for construction approval. Learn more about this issue on our website: laconservancy.org.

WOMEN'S HISTORY continued from page 1

sentation across all types of landmarks means that women, girls, and people who identify as female do not see themselves reflected in the history they encounter at historic places." The Conservancy's president and CEO, Adrian Scott Fine, agrees, saying that "telling stories about women's history in L.A. is fundamentally more real and tangible when we root them in the physical places that help illustrate their lives, contributions, and connection to this city. Acknowledgment is empowerment."

This initiative is a privilege for the Conservancy which has long advocated to protect sites associated with women's heritage. Below is a brief look at some of the more recent advocacy issues we've been involved with to help tell the fuller story of women's history in Los Angeles.

Roz Wyman Residence (Active)

The Rosalind "Roz" Wyman Residence in Bel-Air is pursuing Historic-Cultural Monument designation and the Conservancy has been proud to support it. Paul Revere Williams built this historic gem in 1933, but its significance goes beyond architecture. In 1953, Wyman became one of the youngest L.A. City Council members ever elected. She not only shattered glass ceilings but was also responsible for bringing the Brooklyn Dodgers to Los Angeles! From her efforts to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment to her unwavering dedication to equality and empowerment, her impact inspires to this day.

The Woman's Building (Saved)

Founded in 1973 as an act of protest, the Woman's Building is a cornerstone in late-20th-century lesbian and feminist culture. Created by and for women, it exemplifies the impulse among feminists to establish spaces outside of traditional, patriarchal institutions. "We live in a world that is male-dominated, and the art world was not serving us as artists; we felt very invisible," remembers artist Cheri Gaulke. "But here we could carve out a space that would be our space, to say 'here's what we're making as women artists. Come see.'" In June 2018, through a nomination submitted by the Conservancy, the Woman's Building was declared an HCM.

Sister Corita Kent Studio (Saved)

Lovingly known as the "Pop Art Nun," Sister Mary Corita was a major player in the Pop Art movement of the 1960s and '70s. From 1960-1968, Sister Corita used a modest building in East Hollywood as her studio and classroom. Here, she created some of her most recognizable works and influenced a generation of young artists. In 2020, her studio came under threat of demolition. When the Corita Art Center advocated for HCM designation, the Conservancy strongly supported their effort and confronted negative recommendations by the City by arguing that ordinary places can convey extraordinary stories. The studio became an HCM in 2021.

The Herald Examiner Building (Saved)

Julia Morgan was California's first licensed female architect and one of the most influential architects in the state. The exquisite Herald Examiner building was the first large-scale project she designed for William Randolph Hearst. A few years after the Examiner closed in 1989, it was threatened with demolition. The Conservancy jumped into action, nominating the building for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. After an \$80-million rehabilitation began in 2016, it reopened in 2021. The project received a Conservancy Preservation Award in 2022.

The Crenshaw Women's Center (Lost)

The Crenshaw Women's Center (1970-1972) was the first women's center for healthcare established in Los Angeles and the site of organizing and community building for straight and lesbian women. The Conservancy advocated heavily for the HCM nomination of the modest building. Sadly, the L.A. City Council reduced the designation to a "site of" commemoration, effectively erasing its place in women's history in Los Angeles. In late 2023, the building was significantly damaged in a fire and is now considered lost.

HERITAGE continued from page 3

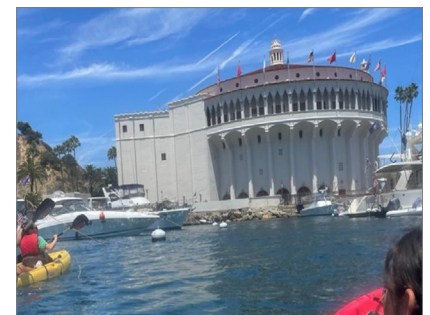
public, private, Charter, and magnet schools and represented a diverse array of interests, cultures, and backgrounds. Yet they all shared a passion for Los Angeles and exhibited a civic-mindedness that shone through in their applications.

By the program's end, the group had formed a tight bond, and were excited to take what they had learned back to their schools, neighborhoods, and communities.

Thanks to the generous support of individual Conservancy donors, we are thrilled to offer the program for a second year and look forward to meeting the incoming 2024 cohort.

The application window is **March 25th to May 3rd** and qualified students must be enrolled in an accredited high school in L.A. County for fall 2024. *Only fifteen students will be selected.* There is no participation cost and students will receive a \$500 expense stipend.

Visit laconservancy.org/heritage-project for full program information and application details.



Heritage Project students exploring El Pueblo de Los Angeles and Catalina Island, 2024. Photos by Sana Ahmed and Sarah Lann/L.A. Conservancy

Membership Matters:

KFA Architecture Partner, John Arnold, and Senior Associate, Tarrah Beebe



L-R, Tarrah Beebe and John Arnold

KFA Architecture has been a corporate cornerstone member of the Conservancy since 2002. The firm has rehabilitated more than 40 buildings throughout L.A., including the current restoration of the Paul Revere Williams residence. Development Director Liz Leshin recently talked with the KFA's partner, John Arnold, and senior associate, Tarrah Beebe.

LAC: Why do you think it's valuable to support the Conservancy?

KFA: One of KFA's missions is to build communities, and the Conservancy has grown to have a more holistic view of Los Angeles, not just "preserving" but actually building communities. The organization is about problem-solving and is not anti-development. For us, it's about having partners in change while preserving what's best in the city.

LAC: How does being a Conservancy member tie into your marketing strategy

KFA: Being part of the Conservancy is being a part of Los Angeles. We know a lot of people at Conservancy events, which gives us an opportunity to network. We always like having our name listed in the Preservation Awards program, which lets people know one of our market sectors (historic and adaptive reuse projects), and that we support the community. Getting a Conservancy award is a great honor showing that we got it right for our clients and for historic preservation.

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

KFA: KFA founder Wade Killefer helped author the city's 1999 Adaptive Reuse ordinance that allows for flexibility in building and fire codes, which helps to preserve original historic fabric while still allowing buildings to be safe. Hollenbeck Terrace, a former hospital in Boyle Heights that's on the National Register, was an important project for us because of the complexity of the building and how we were able to adaptively reuse it into a beautiful housing campus for low-income seniors.

JANUARY 1 / FEBRUARY 29 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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Make a meaningful gift to preserve L.A.'s cultural and architectural heritage by becoming a Cornerstone member! Cornerstone members actively preserve historic places in Los Angeles with annual contributions of \$1,000 or more, providing crucial funding for the Conservancy's advocacy and education programs. (Some or all of Cornerstone membership dues are tax-deductible.) For details, visit laconservancy.org/cornerstone.



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