



The façade of Taix French Restaurant in Echo Park. Photo by Gary Coronado.

Taix: Preservation In Name Only

By Adrian Scott Fine

On June 2, 2021, the Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously to designate Echo Park’s Taix French Restaurant—via two exterior signs and an interior wood bar top—as a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM). Based on a proposal introduced in early May by Councilmember Mitch O’Farrell, the scope of this nomination was radically reduced from an entire building and historic place to several random parts. O’Farrell’s proposal and City Council’s concurrence effectively creates an HCM in name only for Taix as it now no longer protects anything but several pieces of building salvage.

Below are some frequently asked questions (FAQs) and our responses regarding Taix.

Is Taix at risk?

Yes. In May 2020, owner Holland Partner Group (HPG) unveiled new project plans that call for the demolition of Taix. A six-story housing development with 170 apartments (86% market rate) and a 220-space parking garage will replace Taix and its surface parking lot. The longtime owner-operator of Taix, Michael Taix, sold the property to HPG in 2019.

Why does Taix matter, and is it the business, the building, or both that is historic?

Both. The legacy business (1927) and place (1962) in which it operates are important. Taix has been identified as eligible for local listing by the City’s SurveyLA initiative. The Conservancy commissioned an independent analysis which concurred its eligibility as a historic resource. The owner, HPG, also reached this same conclusion.

Did the City’s Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) support designating Taix as an HCM?

Yes. On December 17, 2020, CHC voted in full support of the pending HCM nomination, submitted by the Friends of Taix. CHC recommended to City Council to designate Taix (the existing building) as an HCM for its association with “broad cultural . . . [and] important events of national, state, or local history.”

Did the owner originally propose designating only two signs and a bar top as part of the HCM?

Welcome to our Summer Intern!

This summer, we are thrilled to welcome Daria Arzy, our 2021 Getty Marrow undergraduate intern!

Daria is a rising senior at Georgetown University, majoring in psychology with minors in history and Persian. Daria’s interest in this internship was driven by her love of Los Angeles. She was excited to learn more about historic places and the unique communities they serve in Los Angeles, her hometown.

Working remotely, Daria supported education programs such as the virtual Summer Camp, walking tours, and People + Places virtual series. With her help, the Education team was also able to resume in-person student workshops, such as Adventures in Architecture.

Prior to her internship at the Conservancy, Daria was a communications and digital strategy intern in Washington D.C. She was also part of Georgetown’s acapella group The Gracenotes, and a volunteer for a prison outreach program.

Thank you to Daria for her incredible contributions to the Conservancy this summer and to the Getty Morrow Undergraduate Internship program who made her internship possible!

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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.

Announcing New Board Leadership

July marks the beginning of the Conservancy's new Board term! We are pleased to welcome our new and continuing Board members and thank them for their leadership.

Jared Franz and **Luis Hoyos** were both elected for their second term on the board.

Jaime Garcia, Jenji Kohan, Karin Liljegren, FAIA, IIDA, Tracy Mercer, Diallo Riddle, and **Diane Robertson** were all elected to their first term on the board.

- Jaime Garcia is a Project Manager/Special Coordinator at Morley Builders and works on many of Morley's high-profile projects.
- Jenji Kohan is a creator, mother, mentor, writer, and producer.
- Karin Liljegren FAIA, IIDA, is active in crafting policies that ease the challenges of working on existing buildings.
- Tracy Mercer is an Emmy-nominated TV producer and feature film executive.
- Diallo Riddle is an Emmy and WGA nominated writer, actor, producer, and showrunner.
- Diane Robertson is a Vice President in the CBS Studios Law Department.

Linda Brettler, David Kopple, Barbara Bestor, and Sophia Nardin left the board in July. We're sorry to see them go and are grateful that all four of them will stay involved with the L.A. Conservancy and preservation.

Goodbye (but not for long) Bruce Scottow!

On a beautiful summer afternoon in June, a group of L.A. Conservancy volunteers and staff gathered on the outdoor patio of the Arts District Brewery to raise a glass to Bruce Scottow. Bruce, who served for ten years as the Volunteer and Program Coordinator for the L.A. Conservancy, had announced his retirement a few weeks earlier. He officially stepped down from his position at the end of June.

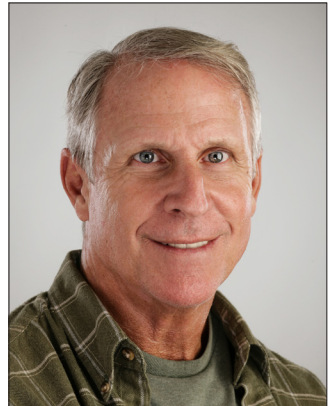


Photo from L.A. Conservancy archives.

Bruce had been a part of the L.A. Conservancy family long before he was hired in 2011. An avid fan of Los Angeles, history, and preservation, Bruce began volunteering with the Conservancy as a walking tour docent in 2007, specializing in Art Deco walking tours.

After accepting the position of Volunteer and Program Coordinator in 2011, his first-hand knowledge as a docent served him well. As the primary liaison between the Conservancy and the volunteers who work on its behalf, Bruce knew how to support the docents in their roles while balancing the needs of tourgoers and the organization. This juggling act was one Bruce employed throughout his Conservancy career.

At Last Remaining Seats, Bruce trained volunteers to handle specific responsibilities while simultaneously serving as the primary contact for patrons and customer service-related issues. He assisted in building education programs and initiatives, writing scripts and working with young people, all while keeping his oversight of the volunteers a priority. His creativity and care especially shone in the professional development and engagement events he organized on behalf of the volunteers. Most importantly, Bruce's sense of humor, empathy, and kindness was always present, every day he served on the job.

We will miss Bruce, but we expect to see a lot of him in the future, volunteering yet again as a walking tour docent! We wish him a happy, fulfilling retirement.

A Tribute to Connie Humberger (1929 - 2021)



Connie Humberger. Photo by Larry Underhill.

On May 25, longtime Conservancy volunteer and former staff member, Connie Humberger, passed away at the age of 91.

Born in Los Angeles as Concha Dolores del Tiempo, Connie graduated from Manual Arts High School in 1947, attended L.A. City College, and worked for Pacific Telephone.

In 1951, she married William Humberger and moved to Glendale, where she resided until her death. Predeceased by her husband, she is survived by daughter Andrea Humberger. Connie began working for the Glendale Unified School District (GUSD) in the late 1960s. Fluent in Spanish, she taught English as a Second Language at Horace Mann Elementary School, and later worked with bilingual education programs.

Connie had a deep love for the city of Los Angeles and its built environment, especially City Hall and the downtown theatres. After leaving GUSD, she spent more than 20 years working for the L.A. Conservancy.

Warm, positive, generous, and enthusiastic, Connie was known as the heart and soul of the Conservancy and made lifelong friends while working here.

Several Conservancy co-workers and volunteers have shared memories of Connie. These remarks have been edited for brevity. To read the tributes in full, visit our

blog: laconservancy.tumblr.com.

Conservancy Colleagues:

Linda Dishman: Connie had an amazing ability to connect with everyone. She especially loved her volunteers. That said, she expected everyone to perform their assigned duties. One time on a tour, I was covering for someone as a line monitor at Connie's site. It was great to meet and talk with members. Connie told me afterwards that I couldn't be a line monitor again because too many people wanted to talk with me which distracted me from my assigned duties. I learned a great deal from her and I am grateful for the many years we worked and laughed together.

Annie Laskey: I was hired at LAC in 2000 to run the Walking Tour program so Connie could go to part time and focus on volunteers. She had the heart of a lion and the soul of a hostess: along with advice, there were always flowers on the table and food for the guests. I was lucky to be friends with her for 20 years, and never stopped being amazed by her energy and joy.

Bruce Scottow: A long time ago, I visited the Conservancy's library to do some research. Connie came into the room and introduced herself. Over the next hour, we launched into stories about everything

under the sun. I recall that the receptionist had to ask us to "keep it down." So began our 20-year friendship. Soon I became a Conservancy volunteer and docent. No matter my role, Connie made me feel welcomed and valued, as she did all volunteers. I "channeled" Connie dozens of times through my career at the Conservancy, but try as I might, I quickly knew that nobody could fill her shoes.

Cindy Olnick: Connie got such a kick out of Southern "salads," which consist mainly of dairy products. I'd send her photos when visiting family. Her favorite was pear salad with mayo and cheese, dyed red and green for Christmas. This delightful treat will always remind me of *La Doña*.

Kevin Geary: Once, Connie and I had to attend a community meeting to give people details about a possible tour in their neighborhood. I was new to the Conservancy and new to LA. I had no idea where we were heading. Connie gave me directions but also suggested I follow her in case she left out anything. Thank goodness I was able to follow closely without losing her! We ended up taking what seemed like five different freeways, and three of them weren't even part of her directions!

Gregg Davidson: I met Connie as a volunteer at the Lafayette Square house tour in 1987. That summer Connie was on the planning committee for the inaugural LRS series and from that point on we became dear friends for the rest of her life. No matter which LA landmark we discussed there would be a Connie anecdote or story connected to it.

Trudi Sandmeier: Connie was one of my heroes - a model of empathy, compassion, and understanding, she had a gift for seeing the special part of all of us. I learned a great deal about how to be a better human from her. Her vibrant personality will live on in my memory, but she will be profoundly missed.

Please see CONNIE on page 6



Local advocates of First Baptist Church of Venice. Photo courtesy Mike Bravo.

First Baptist Church of Venice: Making a Path to Preservation *An interview with Naomi Nightingale*

By M. Rosalind Sagara

The First Baptist Church of Venice and adjacent parking lots located at 671-685 and 686-688 East Westminster Avenue are among the last remaining significant historic resources associated with the history and development of Oakwood, an early African American neighborhood in Los Angeles.

These properties tell the story of pioneering African Americans who financed and built an important center of spiritual, cultural, and social life in Venice.

In 2018, the Cultural Heritage Commission denied the Historic-Cultural Monument nomination of the church property. The community persisted and with newfound support from Councilmember Mike Bonin, a new application for landmark designation was considered by the Cultural Heritage Commission on June 3, 2021.

The Commission unanimously recommended the listing. The nomination now heads to the City Council's Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Com-

mittee and then to the City Council for final approval.

Naomi Nightingale, Venice resident, community organizer, and recent graduate of the Conservancy's Community Leadership Boot Camp, helped gather new information for the nomination. In addition, she has had a front row seat to the nearly four-year journey the community has been on to landmark the church property. Naomi spoke to Neighborhood Outreach Manager M. Rosalind Sagara in June about what she's learned about the landmarking process and her community through her work on this preservation issue.

RS: What has helped make a case for landmark designation this time around?

NN: We weren't successful the first time because the [Cultural Heritage] Commission said we didn't have enough information about the church's history in the 1960s and '70s. This time around I made sure that I interviewed people in the church that were there in the '60s

and '70s, and all the way up to Bishop Holmes' passing.

I interviewed Darrell Goode from the Santa Monica/Venice NAACP who was in meetings with Bishop Holmes and could speak to the conversations they had when territorial issues were going on between the Blacks and Browns in the Venice community and the fact that Reverend Holmes and Reverend Davis offered their churches as refuge for young people to be off the street.

This helped document the relevance and the interaction of the church with the community during the time that was missing in our former application.

RS: What has kept people motivated to stay involved over the years?

NN: The real desire to not allow our history to be erased. That was at the top of the list. To take the church away and to make it into someone's personal living room, bedroom, or living quarters was just sacrilegious.

We could not allow that to happen. To lose the church would be to lose so much more in terms of our history, the personalities of our community, the hard work that we knew, the stories that were told about our family members who lived on that street, people who went to that church, and people that we still know today. To us, even though the church was sold it was still a living, breathing, important piece of our lives. And there just wasn't the will to let it go.

RS: So far, what's the biggest takeaway of the landmarking process?

NN: The strength of the community when there is collective commitment to get something done. And that people know that it can be done. Achievement is the biggest takeaway.

This article is excerpted. For the full interview, please visit our blog at laconservancy.tumblr.com.

Preservation Snapshots



The Chili Bowl in West L.A. Photo by Marcello Vavala/L.A. Conservancy.

CHILI BOWL DENIED HISTORIC STATUS

On June 29, 2021, the City Council voted to deny the Conservancy's nomination of West L.A.'s 1935 Chili Bowl as a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM), leaving this rare example of programmatic architecture threatened with demolition by a proposed new development.

This action follows a troubling June 15 City Council Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee meeting where the public was blocked from speaking, including the L.A. Conservancy as the applicant. The City flagrantly violated the Brown Act law that requires public participation, and is now ignoring broad community concerns.

At the direction of Councilmember Mike Bonin, no public comments were allowed before the June 29th vote as the Chili Bowl HCM was placed on the consent agenda. The last time the public was allowed to speak regarding the Chili Bowl HCM occurred at the December 5, 2019, Cultural Heritage Commission meeting.

Given this is not an isolated incident, the Conservancy is extremely concerned by this action and is exploring potential next steps. This includes reviewing a proposal to move the Chili Bowl to a new, undeter-

mined location. Thank you to the many community advocates that wrote letters, emails and called in to City Council hoping to speak in support of the Chili Bowl HCM. The Conservancy hears and thanks you!

HUNG SA DAHN/ YOUNG KOREAN ACADEMY

In May 2021, the Conservancy learned of the potential demolition of 3421-3423 South Catalina Street in South Los Angeles, the former location of Hung Sa Dahn, also known as the Young Korean Academy. Further research revealed owner, Tripalink, has plans to demolish the historic buildings and develop a co-living apartment project. Asian & Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation (APIAHIP) and the Conservancy have partnered to submit a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) application for this rare and historically significant property.

Built in 1910, the Craftsman-style residence served as the headquarters for the Hung Sa Dahn from 1929 to 1979. Hung Sa Dahn was a Korean American civic organization founded in San Francisco in 1913 by Dosan Ahn Chang Ho, a Korean independence activist and singularly important figure in Korean American history. When Ahn's family relocated to Los Angeles in 1914, the headquarters moved with him.

As the Korean community in Los Angeles began expanding and coalescing in the neighborhood surrounding USC in the 1920s and 1930s, Hung Sa Dahn's membership grew. USC students, both second-generation Korean Americans and international students from Korea, were among its members. Men and women alike were welcomed to join the organization, reflecting Ahn's progressive views and belief that gender equality would contribute to better outcomes for society at large.

Given the discrimination in employment and lack of opportunity to purchase prop-

erty, the economic situation for many Korean immigrants in the community was dire, particularly as they grew older. One of the organization's functions was to provide housing assistance to members who needed it, particularly local university students and elder founding members. Three bedrooms were located upstairs on the second floor, while the downstairs contained a large meeting room, office, kitchen, and guest bedroom. In 1958, the organization constructed a detached two-story duplex to the rear of the property to provide additional housing for elder founding members.

Hung Sa Dahn continued to serve as a political voice following liberation from Japanese colonial rule in 1945 and the founding of the Republic of Korea (South Korea) in 1958. The organization's focus turned to promoting democratic governance through education and study of Ahn Chang Ho's teachings, which were believed to be universal and applicable in a variety of political contexts. The organization sold the Catalina Street property in 1979 for financial reasons, but remains active today throughout its 35 chapters.

On July 15, 2021, the Cultural Heritage Commission voted to take the Hung Sa Dahn/Young Korean Academy nomination under consideration. For more info visit: laconservancy.org/issues/hung-sa-dahn.



Hung Sa Dahn's 24th Annual Convention, December 25, 1937. Photo courtesy Korean American Digital Archive, USC Libraries.

Taix continued from page 1

Yes. In December, 2020, HPG requested CHC limit the scope of the HCM for Taix to only these elements. CHC rejected this request with HPG's proposal that was subsequently introduced by Councilmember O'Farrell in May.

Are there examples of HCMs where the scope is limited to only elements?

No. Though rare in practice and through the inherent political powers of City Council, previous HCMs have been limited to specific facades or reduced overall in scope. None have been reduced to mere pieces.

Will City Council's action on Taix impact the City's historic preservation program going forward?

Yes. The Council's final vote and Councilmember O'Farrell's motion not only dismisses Taix as a historic resource but greatly dismisses L.A.'s HCM program—a program that has designated more than 1,200 individual landmarks. HCM designation is tied to historic buildings and places, not building

fragments and salvage. The Taix outcome sets a dangerous precedent.

Can the developer create both new housing onsite while also preserving the Taix building?

Yes. This is not an either/or scenario, such as provide housing or preserve this legacy business and building. The Conservancy had been working with HPG toward this goal, and supports density and new housing, though not at the unnecessary loss of a historic place. A "win-win" is readily achievable provided HPG and City are willing to seriously consider alternatives and creative design. Other new developments are able to do this; why not at Taix?

Will the Taix business definitely return as part of the new development?

Maybe. As proposed, Taix may come back in a new storefront retail space within the new development. Yet there is no guarantee or legal mechanism tied to the project and development process to ensure this.

Will HCM status help the developer circumvent required environmental review processes?

Maybe. We anticipate HPG will claim there is no loss of a historic resource—therefore no need for environmental review analysis—given Taix (two signs and a bar top) is now designated as an HCM. If this argument is accepted by the City, this will set another harmful precedent that not only circumvents but violates the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

What is next for Taix?

The Conservancy strongly believes an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is now required to analyze and consider possible alternatives that can avoid and minimize adverse impacts to Taix. Serious consideration of an alternative to demolition and a design that both provides housing and keeps Taix (even as a partial preservation approach) is what the Conservancy and other community advocates have been asking for since 2019.

CONNIE continued from page 3

Conservancy Volunteers:

Christy McAvoy: Friend, mentor, collaborator, teacher. Connie and I shared a deep appreciation for the value of educational experiences in preservation. The level of commitment and the extraordinary quality of the docent core is a living embodiment of her achievements.

Rory Cunningham: Connie and I met at the first meeting of the Last Remaining Seats Committee and served as co-chairs for the final night of the first LRS at the Los Angeles Theatre in 1987. Her grace, charm and great humor endeared her to everyone who had the honor of knowing and/or working with her and it's why she became such a revered friend of mine for more than 3 decades.

Marcia Hanford: Her bilingual skills were precious. At the time of Year #1's Last Remaining Seats, the Broadway theatres featured mostly Spanish speaking films, and

some movie house staff could only communicate through Connie.

Jan Westman: I met Connie when I came to the Conservancy as a volunteer docent, she was always available whenever I needed help. We remained close friends after her retirement until her passing.

Tom Sutherland: Connie Humberger was one of the brightest stars in the Conservancy constellation. I worked with her many times over the last 25 years; every time was a pleasure, especially those with the LRS Committee.

Kari Fowler: I looked forward to seeing Connie every year at the LA Conservancy luncheon so we could discuss our shared affection for *Spongebob Squarepants*.

Mary Ann Lovato: Connie was devoted to the L.A. Conservancy's preservation efforts and highly valued every docent. She was very knowledgeable about Los Angeles' historic buildings, neighborhoods, boulevards,

etc. She loved Los Angeles and made a sincere effort to preserve its evolving history.

Ed Trospen: Whatever the event, whether it was a hot day, a cold day, or a rainy day, when you heard Connie's laugh, you knew you were going to have fun.

Trina Escartin: Connie was a kind and loving spirit who genuinely cared about people.

Mary Alice Wollam and Bob Brennan: Connie was curious, funny, vivacious and loved Los Angeles, but I think her greatest talent was being a friend. Connie used that talent to offer the volunteers encouragement, a sounding board, sometimes under the most hilarious circumstances. I have a bucket of Connie stories from so many LAC tours and events, but what I cherish most is the years of friendship that she gave Bob and me.

Memorial gifts may be made to the Conservancy or the Maria and Teresa Rivas Scholarship fund at Glendale Community College: bit.ly/GCC_Donate.

APRIL 16 / JUNE 15 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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Membership Matters: An Interview with Helen Tocco



Photo courtesy: Helen Tocco

Helen Tocco, an architect and Secretary of the Palms Neighborhood Council, is a proud member of the Conservancy. Development Manager Gabriela Philo interviewed her about her recent experiences as a Conservancy member and participant in the Community Leadership Boot Camp.

Which neighborhood do you live in? What makes it distinct?

I live in Palms. It is a wonderful walkable community with tons of great restaurants and local businesses, a Metro stop, good freeway proximity, and you can even find street parking here.

You've been a Los Angeles Conservancy member since 2018. What compelled you to join?

I learned about the Conservancy when they got involved to try to help save the Tabor House, which was a historic home in Palms. Unfortunately, the building was demolished, but it led me to want to learn more about the Conservancy and L.A. historic buildings.

This Spring, you joined the Community Leadership Boot Camp. What did you get out of the experience?

I am an architect in my day job and I work on historic easement and historic tax credit projects around the country, so I am always looking to expand my learning and the Boot Camp seemed like a great opportunity. I also wanted to learn how to be more prepared to save the few remaining historic buildings in Palms if any more face demolition like the Tabor House did.

You're on the Board of the Palms Neighborhood Council; why do you think it's important to be active in neighborhood activities?

L.A. is such a big city that Neighborhood Councils are crucial to help our city government keep tabs on specific local concerns and build community engagement.

Read our full interview with Helen Tocco on our blog: laconservancy.tumblr.org.

Curious about including the Conservancy in your estate plans? Contact Director of Development Liz Leshin at lleshin@laconservancy.org for more information about the Pillar Society, our planned giving group.

CONSERVANCY TOURS: WALKING & VIRTUAL

WALKING TOURS

Socially distanced, open air walking tours are now available! \$10 for Conservancy members and children seventeen and under; \$15 for the general public. (Children are free July 31 and August 12!) Reservations required: laconservancy.org/tours.

Art Deco:

Learn how Art Deco became a defining architectural style in the city. **Saturdays, 10:15 a.m.**

Historic Downtown:

Take a ride on Angels Flight® and step inside Grand Central Market! **Saturdays, 10:00 a.m.**

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Tour the historic waiting room, visit the Fred Harvey Restaurant, and more. **Saturdays, 11:00 a.m.**

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Marvel at downtown's sleek high rises and get up close to public art. **August 14th at 10:30 a.m.**



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Photo by Christina House.

Avalon Nursery & Ceramics
5334 S. Avalon Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90011
(323) 234-6762



Photo by Alixan Gorman.

Valley Photo Service
12466 W. Magnolia Boulevard
Valley Village, CA 91607
(818) 762-0355



Photo via Google Maps.

Tal's
2701 W. Florence Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90043
(323) 751-9749

Avalon Nursery & Ceramics is a longtime nursery in South L.A., owned and operated by Maria Luz Lopez since 1987. Stepping inside the lush, meandering maze of greenery, it's easy to forget that just outside this oasis is a bustling street corner! [instagram.com/avalonnurseryla](https://www.instagram.com/avalonnurseryla)

The charming, Tudor Revival-style shop in Valley Village is the oldest full-service camera shop in the San Fernando Valley. And although they can handle the most sophisticated of printing needs, they're also your go-to for vintage camera and film repairs. valleyphotoservice.com

Since the 1940s, Tal's diner in South L.A. has served up Southern-style comfort food and friendly service. Tal's long-time customers know the staff like old friends and the cozy, retro vibe makes it popular with both families and out-of-towners alike. [facebook.com/talscafe](https://www.facebook.com/talscafe)