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Design by Future Studio.

Paul Revere Was Here: A Spring Campaign **Celebrating Architect Paul R. Williams!**

by Sarah Lann

This spring, the Los Angeles Conservancy and the Southern California Chapter of the National Association of Minority Architects (SoCal NOMA) take you on a countywide expedition celebrating the life, work, and legacy of Paul Revere Williams.

By any measure, the accomplishments of master architect Paul Revere Williams (1894 - 1980) are astounding. His imprint is still seen and felt across Los Angeles' built environment and his legend seems to loom larger with each passing year. His legacy is well-known to many, preserved in buildings synonymous with Los Angeles, such as The Beverly Hills Hotel and the Stanley Mosk Courthouse.

His career spanned nearly six decades, during which he designed more than 3,000 structures. His buildings, whether private residences, commercial spaces, affordable homes or civic and institutional structures, run the gamut of architectural styles--yet each reveals Williams' gift for balanced proportions and elegant composition.

In becoming an architect, Williams may have broken racial barriers, but he still faced adversity and racism at every turn. He built lavish homes for Hollywood stars in neighborhoods he was not allowed to live in, and redesigned hotels that denied entry to people of color. He also created structures that served the Black community, such as the First AME Church and the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company building. He became the first Black member (and later, Fellow) of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and was posthumously awarded the AIA's Gold Medal, America's highest honor for an architect, in 2017.

Given Williams' impact as an architect and civic leader, there is never an inopportune time for exploring his work and celebrating his accomplishments. But for the Los Angeles Conservancy, dedicated to preserving L.A.'s significant cultural and architectural structures, there is urgency in telling Williams' story now, in 2021. Despite his legendary status and prolific output, examples of Williams' work face increasing threats of demolition or excessive alteration. In 2019, a Holmby Hills estate designed by Williams that was previously lived in by Eva Gabor was denied landmark

Paul Revere Was Here

Join us as we explore the depth of Paul Revere Williams' legacy in Los Angeles through a series of programs that will not disappoint! For full info, visit: Iaconservancy.org/PRWasHere

VIRTUAL TOUR

Paul Revere Was Here: On the Trail of L.A.'s **Legendary Architect**

(Includes Driving Tour Guide and Map)

Tour Dates: Wednesdays, April 14 and 28,

2021; May 12 and 26, 2021

Time: 6 p.m.

Cost: \$25 Members / \$30 General Public

VIRTUAL PANEL DISCUSSION

Paul Revere Was Here: Locating a Legacy

Date: Thursday, April 15, 2021

Time: 6 p.m.

Cost: \$15 Members / \$20 General Public A recording will be available following the event

VIRTUAL CONVERSATION SERIES

People + Places: Preserving Paul R. Williams

Date: Wednesday, April 22, 2021

Time: 12 p.m. Cost: Free

VIRTUAL STUDENT FIELD TRIP

Paul Revere Was Here: On the Trail of L.A.'s

Legendary Architect

Date and Time: Starting April 14, this virtual field trip will be available upon request

Cost: \$50 per session (Scholarships available!)

VIRTUAL GROUP TOUR

Paul Revere Was Here: On the Trail of L.A.'s

Legendary Architect

Date and Time: Starting April 14, group tours

will be available upon request Cost: \$60 for groups of 12

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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 Events

For more information about our upcoming events, visit laconservancy.org/events.

Group Virtual Tours

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Ongoing. Explore Los Angeles from the comfort of your own home by taking a live virtual tour! Tours include Art Deco, Historic Downtown, Westwood Village, A Woman's Place: Union Station and Chinatown, and Don't Call Me Ugly. Your own personal docent will virtually lead you and your party through some of downtown's most iconic buildings! Virtual Tours take place through Zoom, are available any day of the week, and can accommodate up to 100 guests. We ask for all requests to be submitted at least seven days before the desired tour date. Group tours start at \$60 for Conservancy members and \$90 for the general public for groups of twelve. To book or learn more, visit: laconservancy.org/group-tours

Adventures in Architecture

Ongoing. For students grades 3-12! Adventures in Architecture workshops take students on a virtual field trip to significant historic sites located within a unique Los Angeles neighborhood. We are currently offering three different neighborhood explorations: Burbank, Lincoln Heights, and Westlake/MacArthur Park. To book or learn more, visit: laconservancy.org/AiA

Virtual Field Trips

Ongoing. Take your students beyond the textbook with a live, interactive virtual field trip! Led by Conservancy educators, these tours are an entertaining mix of architectural and cultural Los Angeles history. Choose from Union Station, Historic Downtown, A Woman's Place: Union Station and Chinatown, and Paul Revere Was Here. To book or learn more, visit: laconservancy.org/virtual-field-trips

Member Exclusive: Don Francisco's Coffee

For more than 50 years, the Gaviña family has been roasting coffee in Los Angeles. Their family legacy is one of tradition, community, and quality, and we're excited to announce a special partnership with this historic L.A. business! Join (or renew your membership) by May 31st for a chance to win a Don Francisco's Coffee gift box. ALSO: The first *30* people to join (or renew) at the \$250 level or above will win a Don Francisco's Coffee Club Subscription! Please use promo code COFFEE at checkout.



PLUS: In addition to providing delicious membership incentives, Don Francisco's Coffee is giving Conservancy members 20% off all Don Francisco's Coffee products! Please use code LACON20 for a 20% discount on your next order at donfranciscos.com. Offer valid through May 31st, 2021.

Nishiyama Residence/Otomisan Japanese Restaurant submitted for Historic-Cultural Monument Listing!



Photo by Susan Hwang.

The Boyle Heights Community Partners and the Conservancy partnered to submit the Historic-Cultural Monument nomination of the Nishiyama Residence/Otomisan Japanese Restaurant located at 2504-2508 East First Street in Boyle Heights.

Owned by the Nishiyama Family from 1924 to 2000, the property tells the story of a pioneering Japanese American family. During a time when their opportunities were restricted due to land ownership, housing, and job discrimination, the Nishiyamas created economic promise for Japanese and Japanese Americans in Los Angeles.

Japanese families began settling in Boyle Heights in the 1920s. They found the neighborhood to be welcoming to working class immigrants and free of discriminatory housing practices prevalent in other neighborhoods of Los Angeles. Access to housing, proximity to Little Tokyo, and the development of religious and cultural institutions that served the Japanese community, were important factors driving the settlement of Japanese in Boyle Heights.

In 1924, the Nishiyama Family added a commercial building to the property. It originally housed a Japanese-operated grocery store, and later included a Japanese-operated florist shop and barber shop. In the 1950s, the grocery store was converted to a food establishment. In 1956, Otemo Sushi Café (now called Otomisan Japanese Restaurant) opened in the easternmost storefront of the commercial building.

Otomisan is the last remaining Japanese restaurant in the neighborhood and believed to be one of the oldest continuously-operating Japanese restaurants in Los Angeles.

On November 5, 2020, the Cultural Heritage Commission unanimously voted to take the nomination under consideration.

Netflix 's *City of Ghosts*: A Charming View of L.A. History



Photo courtesy Netflix.

Kids of all ages are sure to enjoy a new Netflix animated series that celebrates L.A.'s richly diverse neighborhoods! *City of Ghosts* follows five kids who learn the history of different communities in Los Angeles through their encounters with friendly ghosts.

The documentary-style show features animated characters voiced by neighborhood residents, a live-action background enhanced with a brilliant animated finish, and a lens that is inclusive of our beautifully diverse city.

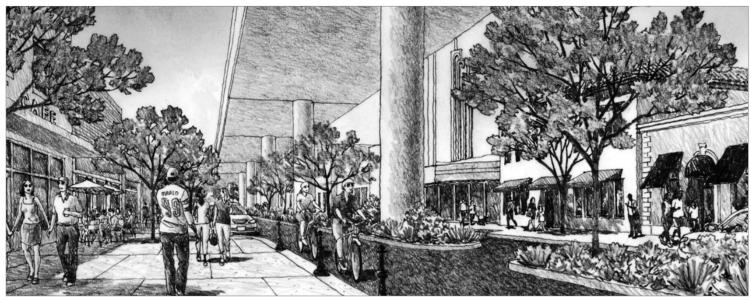
Most impressive, however, is how the show tells the multi-faceted histories of beloved L.A. neighborhoods: a heartfelt exploration that reinforces why places matter and how communities evolve.

The characters learn about Boyle Heights' Japanese history, Leimert Park's jazz tradition, Koreatown's Oaxacan community, and Los Angeles' indigenous roots. And, if you love Bob Baker Marionette Theater, you're in for a real treat!

Angelenos, near and far, will relish seeing the places they recognize and adore—from the Central Library in downtown and Mariachi Plaza in Boyle Heights to the Vision Theatre in Leimert Park and the Venice Arcades.

The show was created by award-winning animator Elizabeth Ito and features photography by Kwasi-Boyd Bouldin, both of whom grew up in Los Angeles. We hope you and your family enjoy the series as much as we did!

Now streaming on Netflix: bit.ly/NetflixCityOfGhosts



A proposed, elevated automated people mover (APM) will travel through Market Street. Rendering courtesy the City of Inglewood.

PRESERVATION ALERT: Can Downtown Inglewood Survive a People Mover?

by Erik Van Breene

The City of Inglewood is proposing an elevated, forty-foot-tall automated people mover (APM) that will travel through Market Street in downtown as part of a plan to get attendees from the Metro stop to the Forum and new NFL SoFi Stadium. As currently planned, the Inglewood Transit Connector (ITC) project and the APM structure will partly travel through,

and cast a shadow over, the core of

its historic Market Street.

"The goal is to make Market Street in the image of Old Town Pasadena," said Inglewood mayor, James T. Butts., Jr. in 2019.

But in its current iteration, the APM has the very real possibility of doing the opposite and damaging the future economic viability of downtown Inglewood.

Development of Inglewood's downtown district was initially developed in the 1900-10s along Commercial Street (now La Brea Avenue).

By the 1920s, Commercial Street was largely built out and new development moved west to Market Street. Some early key businesses included the Federal Building and Loan Association in 1927, with its office constructed at the corner of Market Street and Pimiento Street (now Manchester Boulevard), and the Bank of Inglewood with its two-story mixeduse building at the corner of Market and Queen Streets.

As the boom years of the 1920s pushed on,



The Fox Theatre in Inglewood. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy

Market Street continued to flourish. A Los Angeles Railway trolley car ran down the center of Market Street and brought a steady flow of shoppers and workers downtown.

Although Inglewood experienced significant economic growth during World War II and the postwar period, development downtown began to slow as commercial centers in North

Inglewood, Morningside Park, and Crenshaw grew. In 1957, the trolley car tracks were removed causing a blow to downtown's customer base.

Despite the slowing downtown economy, several new developments were built. In 1941, a JCPenney department store opened

> along Market Street, and in 1954 added a second story in the Mid-Century Modern style, and is still standing today.

Downtown Inglewood's Fox Theatre (1949) is one of L.A.'s great movie palaces, designed by famed theatre architect S. Charles Lee, and Carl G. Moeller. A Late Modern style icon for Inglewood, the Fox remained operational until 1988 and is currently vacant. In 2013 it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In recent years, Inglewood has seen a rapid rise in property values and real estate investment resulting from the recently restored Forum and newly built SoFi Stadium. The area is finally well-positioned for a comeback, serving as a community-serving destination.

The key question is can downtown Inglewood

survive after an elevated Automated People Mover casts its shadow and creates an environment people don't want to be in?

The City of Inglewood introduced the idea of a people mover in 2018 and initiated its environmental review process in late 2020. The Conservancy submitted comments and immediately began by asking questions about the purpose and need for this project, as well as consideration of alternative routes.

With large, forty-foot-tall concrete pylons extending from the street to the APM platform overhead, Market Street will be plunged into the shadows and become a radically different environment from the Market Street that exists today. The Conservancy is concerned about what type of place will result from this project for pedestrians and its ability to serve as a shopping district again. Views of the Fox Theatre will be forever altered, bisected by the people mover structure and limiting its future options and economic viability for rehabilitation and reuse.

Another historic building, the Federal Building and Loan Association, will be demolished and replaced with surface parking to accommodate the radius turn for the people mover. Adding salt to the wound, the City is not including a stop in downtown, effectively bypassing the area which the City says it wants to revitalize.

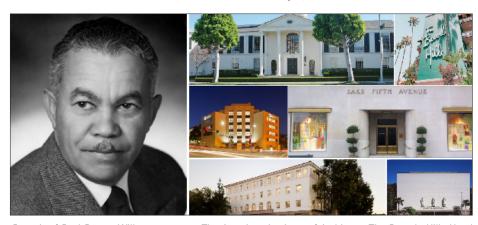
There are other alternatives that could be pursued while still providing transportation for riders from Metro to the Forum and SoFi Stadium. Despite ours and other requests from Inglewood stakeholders, the City seems intent on pursuing and approving their preferred project.

Our hope is that a modified project and selection of an alternative route will equally meet the City of Inglewood's goals without unnecessarily sacrificing historic downtown Inglewood.

The City needs to hear from you so please contact Mindy Wilcox, Planning Manager (ingle-woodtransitconnector@cityofinglewood.org), the City Manager, and City Council members (contactcm@cityofinglewood.org).

Learn more about the latest on this project at: bit.ly/lnglewoodAPM

PAUL REVERE WILLIAMS continued from page 1



Portrait of Paul Revere Willams courtesy The American Institute of Architects; The Beverly Hills Hotel, Canva stock; MCA Headquarters, photo courtesy Coldwell Banker/Kevin Mark Lodie; Golden State Mutual Insurance Company, photo by Paul Turang Photography; Saks Fifth Avenue, photo by Peter Brandt; 28th Street Apartments: Photo by Eric Staudenmaier Photography; Courthouse: Photo by Carol M. Highsmith/Wikimedia Commons

status after its owner illegally removed the home's historic façade, rendering it illegible for designation. The home was ultimately torn down. A few years prior, in the Oakmont neighborhood of Brentwood, neighbors standing in front of a wrecking ball were the only thing that kept a 1940s Paul Revere Williams home standing long enough for the City to intervene.

In the decades preceding these incidents, numerous buildings of his were destroyed, vanishing from the Los Angeles landscape. With them go a piece of Paul Revere Williams' story and Los Angeles' history.

In a time of reckoning for the United States, protecting his work takes on special meaning. In the 2019 PBS documentary *Hollywood's Architect: The Paul R. Williams Story*, Dr. Lonnie Bunch of the Smithsonian Institute puts that meaning into words, saying, "It's very easy to be written out of history when you're not present. That erasure of our history creates the sense for many African Americans that they haven't done very much; haven't accomplished very much. That they haven't transformed America."

Preventing this erasure from happening any more than it already has is precisely why this spring, the L.A. Conservancy in partnership with SoCal NOMA is thrilled to present *Paul Revere Was Here*—a spring campaign to raise awareness about one of L.A.'s most influential architects.

Starting April 14, the name "Paul Revere" takes on a new meaning. Through a variety of different educational experiences and content—including virtual tours, panel discussions, social media engagement, and downloadable resources—we will take you on a journey to the places in L.A. County that help tell Paul R. Williams' story of resilience, brilliance, and inspiration.

Paul Revere Was Here will also shine a light on the vulnerabilities of existing Williams structures—most of which have no protection or historic designations—and ask what more we can do to save the works by a man that transformed America.

Visit *laconservancy.org/PRWasHere* for registration information and to learn more about the campaign. Follow us on our Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter (@laconservancy) for more on Paul Revere Williams' legacy in Los Angeles County.

The Los Angeles Conservancy dedicates the Paul Revere Was Here campaign to the memory of Jerome Robinson. A longtime docent, volunteer, scholar and friend, Jerome's recent work focused on architect Robert F. Kennard, who was inspired by Paul R. Williams.

Membership Matters: An Interview with Mark Thaler

by Gabriela Philo

Mark Thaler, a fourth-generation native Angeleno, is a proud Cornerstone member. Development Manager Gabriela Philo recently interviewed him about his love of Los Angeles, the Conservancy, and his work as Director of Special Projects, Southwestern Law School, formerly Bullocks Wilshire department store.

GP: Whart part of Los Angeles did you grow up in?

MT: I grew up on Hazeltine Avenue in Van Nuys. My great-grandparents came to Los Angeles over one hundred years ago. They bought a house in Boyle Heights when it was a brand-new development built on top of the old ranch. My great-grandfather was a recycler. He drove a Model T from Boyle Heights as far out as the valley to collect feed sacks from the chicken farms at the time.

GP: You've been a Los Angeles Conservancy member since 2016. What compelled you to join?

MT: I want L.A. to be L.A. We're a great city. We're the destination for people who dream and aspire. And if we don't purposely preserve our roots, there's no force on earth that will do it for us. Part of L.A.'s story is in our living, physical spaces.

GP: Last year, you decided to become a Cornerstone member and you're renewing at that level again this year. Why do you think it's important to support the Conservancy?

MT: It's important to keep educating decision makers and to keep fighting. This is a small investment that will be appreciated by the people who come after us in 100 years and beyond.

GP: Which programs of the L.A. Conservancy do you like and why?

MT: Everything the Conservancy does,



Photo courtesy Mark Thaler.

in my opinion, is downstream of advocacy. You can start and stop tours and lectures any time. Once the buildings that embody our stories are gone, that's forever. I've seen the Conservancy show up when a small number of citizens are trying to save a special place, when they are opposed by all the money and political connections in the world. I am so grateful for the Conservancy's work.

GP: Can you share a few words about why Southwestern Law School chose to move into and restore the Bullocks Wilshire building? How do you feel that building has lent itself to adaptive reuse?

These are two institutions that made Los Angeles in different ways. Southwestern is truly L.A.'s law school - the single most important school enabling L.A.'s civil society to work for over 100 years. Bullocks Wilshire embodied the optimism and striking vision of this city for generations.

Southwestern's embrace of Bullocks Wilshire is one of the greatest adaptive reuses ever, period. The Conservancy fought for us when it counted, too, when irreplaceable pieces of the building were being raided by the final department store owners in the '90s. Every Angeleno should be proud of what we all achieved with this pairing.

DEC. 16, 2020 / FEB. 15, 2021

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Support historic small businesses by adding your voice to the Conservancy's legacy business initiative! In addition to being longstanding community anchors, legacy businesses are also a source of employment and—in some areas—an essential neighborhood amenity. They also help tell the full story of L.A.'s history, representing the many diverse communities that make up L.A.'s vibrant cultural history. Help celebrate historic small businesses by patronizing them and showing your support on social media: #ISupportLegacyBusinesses



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