



LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY NEWS



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(l-r) Kirk Douglas Theatre; the Culver Hotel; the Ivy Substation/The Actors' Gang; Helms Bakery District. Photos by Jessica Hodgdon/L.A. Conservancy.

Culver City at a Crossroads

Join us on **Saturday, October 19** for a special exploration of Culver City!

Culver City at a Crossroads, a one-day-only event, includes a self-paced tour of over 20 historic sites, including exclusive mini tours of Helms Bakery District and special access to the Robert Frost Auditorium at Culver City High School. Registration also includes two presentations and discounts at local restaurants.

A City at a Crossroads

In 1910, Nebraska native and real estate entrepreneur Harry H. Culver saw the mostly rural land between a growing downtown Los Angeles and the seaside resort of Venice as a strategic place for development. Thus, Culver City was born at the nexus of three major Red Car lines: the Venice Short Line, the Del Rey Line, and the Santa Monica Air Line.

Major thoroughfares Venice, Washington, and Culver Boulevards converged nearby as well, and Harry Culver marketed the new city with the tagline "All roads lead to Culver City."

The city outgrew its original boundaries by its first anniversary, and attracted new residents, businesses, and even a Pacific Electric depot. Its proximity to transportation brought the film industry to Culver City, and in return, the industry brought fame to the city.

The Heart of Screenland

The official motto of Culver City, "The Heart of Screenland" is, for many, what still springs to mind when they think of this five-square-mile city in southwest L.A. County.

Film production played a dominant part of Culver City's history. In 1918, just one year after

Event Timeline

9 a.m. – 1 p.m.: Check in at Helms Bakery District to pick up tour materials and wristbands

10 a.m. – 1 p.m.: Robert Frost Auditorium at Culver City High School open to visitors

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.: Culver City Historical Society volunteers present at Ivy Substation

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.: Pre-booked mini tours of Sony Pictures Studios (tours begin every half hour; SOLD OUT)

10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.: Guided tours of Helms Bakery District (tours begin every half hour and last approximately 40 minutes)

11 – 11:50 a.m.: Presentation, "Screenland to Streamland"

1 – 1:50 p.m.: Presentation, "Art Tells a Story"

1 p.m.: Public tour of The Wendt Museum exhibit, led by museum docents (limited capacity)

3 p.m.: Public tour of The Wendt Museum exhibit, led by museum docents (limited capacity)

5 p.m.: Event ends

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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 and to register for our upcoming events, visit laconservancy.org/events.

October 19

CULVER CITY AT A CROSSROADS: Join us on an exploration of historic Culver City! This special event includes exclusive tour access to Helms Bakery, two optional presentations, plus a self-paced tour of over 20 historic sites. (9 a.m.; allow 3+ hours to visit all sites; \$40 members and youth 17 and under, \$50 general public; laconservancy.org/culvercity)

Saturdays, November

ABOVE THE SKYLINE: For a limited time, our seasonal Modern Skyline tour includes access to OUE Skyspace at the top of the U.S. Bank Tower and a ride on the Skyslide (4 p.m.; \$30 members and youth 17 and under; \$35 general public; laconservancy.org/above-skyline)

November 7 & 21

A WOMAN'S PLACE: UNION STATION & CHINATOWN: Back by popular demand, this special tour explores the history of two beloved sites through the stories of women (6 p.m.; \$15 members, \$20 general public, \$10 youth 17 and under; laconservancy.org/womans-place)

Thursdays, December

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS: The wait is over: our popular holiday tour returns Thursdays in December! This 90-minute tour brings together some of our favorite downtown buildings, such as the Millennium Biltmore Hotel, the Central Library, and The CalEdison, decked out for the holidays (5:30 p.m.; \$10 members and youth 17 and under, \$15 general public; laconservancy.org/holiday)

Book a Group Tour This Holiday Season

Explore Los Angeles' iconic architectural gems with your own personal docent! Group tours are perfect for out-of-town guests, alumni groups, social clubs, and more.

Group tours allow you the flexibility of choosing your own starting and ending locations. Tours can also be shortened: we offer 1.5-hour versions of several of the tours, and one-hour family/youth-friendly versions of Historic Downtown and Union Station.

Are you an educator looking schedule your next field trip? We also offer Student Walking Tours. Led by trained docents, these interactive, engaging tours support California's Common Core State Standards in History and Social Studies—as well as highlight important lessons about the preservation of historic sites.

For more information about our group tours, visit laconservancy.org/group-tours. For more information about Student Walking Tours, visit laconservancy.org/student-tours.

Welcome Gabriela Philo and Erik Van Breene

The Conservancy is thrilled to welcome two new staff members, Development Manager Gabriela Philo and Preservation Coordinator Erik Van Breene.

A New York native, Gabriela Philo earned a bachelor's degree in anthropology from Bard College. As development manager, Gabriela will be responsible for our Cornerstone program as well as events throughout the year—including the Conservancy's largest fundraising events, our annual benefit and Preservation Awards Luncheon.

Gabriela currently serves as a co-chair of the Andrew Goodman Foundation's Associate Board, and brings nonprofit development experience to the Conservancy. Some of her previous work includes development roles at the Municipal Art Society of New York and Literacy Partners.



Capitol Records photo by Marvin Rand.

A third generation Angeleno, Erik grew up in the South Bay. He earned a bachelor's degree in history from California State University, Long Beach and is earning his master's in heritage conservation from the University of Southern California. Erik's responsibilities include monitoring public hearings, overseeing the Conservancy's easement program, and providing neighborhood assistance.

Erik brings extensive preservation experience to the Conservancy. His previous work includes preservation roles at Hollywood Heritage, Architectural Resources Group, and the City of Los Angeles City Archives and Records Center.

Erik says, "Preservation is a passion of mine and I'm excited to work with the Conservancy to further awareness and save our city's historic resources."

Please join us in welcoming Gabriela and Erik to the Conservancy!

Thank You, Summer Intern!

This summer we were lucky to have Anna Fauver serve as an intern in our education department. Anna provided invaluable assistance to the Conservancy by researching and planning in support of this fall's Culver City events (learn more about the events on page 1). She also worked on several education initiatives, including our Last Remaining Seats series, and our Adventures in Architecture program with Heart of Los Angeles.

This fall, Anna is returning to Bowdoin College, where she is majoring in history and minoring in government. She plans to graduate in spring 2020.

Anna joined us as an intern as part of the Getty Marrow Undergraduate Internship program, which aims to encourage greater diversity in professions related to museums and the arts. Formerly known as the Getty Multicultural Undergraduate Internship program, the Conservancy has participated in the program since 1993. Several of our past Getty interns have gone on to pursue further studies and careers in the fields of history and preservation.

Thank you for your hard work, Anna!



Photo by Larry Underhill.

Marcella Akop Leaves the Conservancy

After six years on staff, Membership Associate Marcella Akop left the Conservancy in July to join the new Academy Museum of Motion Pictures as stewardship coordinator.

Marcella joined the team in 2013 as our administrative assistant and moved her way up to membership associate, serving an important role in handling the day-to-day functions of our membership program.

Thank you, Marcella, for your lasting contributions to the Conservancy, and good luck in your new role!

Help Us Improve Our Membership Program

Thank you for being a Conservancy member! Your membership helps fund our work, from nominating buildings for landmark designation to youth programming at local schools.

In order to improve our membership program, we want to hear from our current members about what you love—and what needs improvement.

In October, we'll send a link to an online survey to the email address we have on file. Until then, please make sure we have your correct information by logging into your user account at laconservancy.org, or give us a call at (213) 623-2489.

Deadline to update your email for inclusion in the survey is September 30.

We look forward to your feedback!



Converted into 51 units of affordable housing in 2013, the 1889 Boyle Hotel in Boyle Heights took advantage of the Federal Historic Preservation Tax incentive program. Photo by Erik Van Breene/L.A. Conservancy.

Proposed State Legislation: Good and Bad for Preservation

by Adrian Scott Fine

Two recently proposed state bills would greatly affect preservation in Los Angeles—both positively and negatively.

The Good: SB 451

Earlier this year, Senate President pro tempore Toni G. Atkins introduced Senate Bill (SB) 451, a bill to create a California historic rehabilitation tax credit. This legislation builds on work done in 2014 with the California Preservation Foundation and the American Institute of Architects, California Council (AIACC) to promote tax credits for the rehabilitation of historic buildings. The Conservancy is again working to help support this legislation, which would create a critical incentive for preservation. SB 451 passed both the State Senate and the State Assembly unanimously.

State historic tax credits are a dollar-for-dollar reduction in tax liability and help pencil out difficult projects. With these incentives, states not only increase revenue by broadening their tax base, but also transform areas of disinvestment and put long-vacant or underutilized buildings back into production.

Thirty-five states already have similar programs; now is the time for California to join the list.

If passed, SB 451 would create a much-needed statewide tool to help incentivize the rehabilitation of historic buildings, a move that can also meet critical housing needs.

Many states encourage the use of tax credits to rehabilitate historic buildings into housing. For example, in California, from 2002-2016 the Federal Historic Preservation Tax incentive program made 169 projects possible (totaling \$2.8 billion), a third of which helped create new housing. SB 451 would greatly expand this reach.

A California tax credit would have helped support this and many other worthwhile projects currently searching for funding. In Los Angeles, the 1889 Boyle Hotel in Boyle Heights utilized the Federal Historic Preservation Tax incentive program to ensure financial viability. Through efforts by the East Los Angeles Community Corporation (ELACC), the hotel was converted into 51 units of affordable housing in 2013. Projects like these

are difficult to finance, and every incentive is critical. As a proven program that leverages additional resources and more than pays for itself, SB 451 would:

- Create a 20% state tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic structures;
- Create a 25% tax credit for certain projects such as affordable housing;
- Allow the use of the credit by both income-producing and owner-occupied buildings, including single-family residences;
- Provide a \$50,000,000 annual aggregate cap on the tax credit program;
- Establish a review process to ensure that the development projects supported by this tax credit result in a payback to the State through increased state and local tax collections and jobs.

The Bad: SB 330

Unfortunately, the other pending state legislation, albeit well-intentioned, would cause irreparable harm to historic places and

neighborhoods throughout California.

Whether it is SB 50 (currently on a temporary hiatus), SB 592, or SB 330, multiple lawmakers are introducing legislation with the intention of easing perceived land use barriers to increase density and streamline the production of multi-family housing development statewide.

In many cases, this type of legislation would limit a community's ability to deny a project or consider other factors. Instead, it overrides local planning and existing community plans in order to facilitate the construction of four-to-five-story—or higher—residential projects in areas currently limited to single-family development.

Density, affordable housing, and preservation are not mutually exclusive. We can and should have all of these, and through careful planning, there is ample room for these in L.A.

Approximately 6% of L.A. has been identified as historic (through designation and by SurveyLA, L.A.'s compre-

hensive survey of historic places), leaving 94% available for development and increased density. In other words, **only about 60,000 of the total 880,000 parcels in L.A. are historic buildings, leaving 820,000 parcels available for new development, increased density, and much-needed housing.**

Other than proximity to transit, these bills offer little consideration for where new housing and density should be built. This blunt, one-size-fits-all approach takes away a community's ability to plan thoughtfully, or conserve its historic character and resources. If enacted, this legislation will significantly impact L.A.'s finite number of existing historic resources.

This means older and historic neighborhoods could be harmed through demolition and infill construction that is out-of-character

and scale to the surrounding neighborhood, effectively eroding the historic character of an entire neighborhood. For instance, SB 50 impacts over 40% of L.A., and in certain neighborhoods, that percentage is much higher (57% of Boyle Heights and 60% of Silver Lake).

SB 330, called the "The Housing Crisis Act of 2019," provides for streamlining and increased housing production, which we support. However, in order to be considered as part of a project's approval process, the legislation incorrectly assumes historic places are already landmarked and protected and therefore widely known. In reality, most historic resources are not formally designated or landmarked. In its quest to expedite the per-

mitting process, historic places would be in jeopardy and not considered as part of the accelerated approval process.

A common thread for each of these bills is a complex method for limiting a community's ability to plan and approve projects that shape their communities.

While laudable in its intent, speeding up housing production would have adverse impacts if not done thoughtfully.

The Conservancy—in partnership with the California Preservation Foundation and others—works with legislators to find a balance that includes safeguards for preservation.

At press time, both SB 451 and SB 330 passed the full Assembly. They were headed to the Governor for final action.

To stay up-to-date on the status of these bills and to get involved, sign up for Action Alerts at laconservancy.org/subscribe.

Preservation Snapshots

The Conservancy submitted a Historic-Cultural Monument nomination for the Modernist 1967 **Union Bank Square**. Owners KBS Realty Advisors publicly announced plans for a \$20M renovation to the plaza. Currently, we do not have sufficient details to know how and if these plans would specifically impact the site's historic character.

Designed by Harrison & Abramovitz with A. C. Martin and Associates, its tower is one of the first skyscrapers built in downtown L.A. after the repeal of the 150' height limit, and the first building taller than City Hall. Garrett Eckbo designed its Modernist-style landscaped plaza.

The Conservancy submitted comments on the proposed **citizenM** project at Hollywood and Vine, located adjacent to two historic buildings: the **Equitable Building** and **Pantages Theater**. While we appreciate the project team's efforts to carefully incorporate new construction, we are concerned that it could potentially impact the view of the **Capital Records Building**, which would be detrimental to the site's historic context.

L.A. County is scheduled to release a Draft Environmental Impact Report for a plan to redevelop the long-vacant **Rancho Los Amigos** campus in Downey. The proposal seeks to consolidate existing County facilities and build new administrative offices on a portion of the 74-acre site. Despite its historic status, the project calls for the demolition of nearly the entire district composed of over 100 buildings, including more than 60 structures that contribute to the site's significance.

We are concerned about the potential loss and are pressing the county to pursue a preservation alternative for the 1888 former County Poor Farm.

Stay up to date on all of our issues, by subscribing to our email list at laconservancy.org/subscribe



Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

Culver continued from page 1

its founding, Thomas Ince built the city's first film studio. Hal Roach created his self-named studio a year later, and Metro Goldwyn Mayer (MGM) followed suit shortly after. In the ensuing decades, hundreds of films were shot on the streets of Culver City, giving it, at times, the odd familiarity of a movie set. Today, the city nods to its fascinating history through film-themed city signage and public art.

Despite losing many of its film studios between the 1960s and 1980s, Culver City's motto once again rings true. Today, Amazon is in the process of moving into the Culver Studios lot, and HBO and Apple will house their content-creating hubs in Culver City. Thus, the city comes full circle, serving as home to the entertainment industry of today: online streaming.

Nestled within today's Culver City is an eclectic mix of beloved historic buildings, reminders of a storied past in both film and transportation. Learn more about this rapidly changing city and its unique history at our Culver City at a Crossroads event on Saturday, October 19.

For details and registration, visit laconservancy.org/culvercity.



A mural of Laurel & Hardy pays homage to the city's film history. Photo by Jessica Hodgdon/L.A. Conservancy.

Help Us Recognize Legacy Businesses

by M. Rosalind Sagara

From the family-owned bakery down the street to the dry cleaners locals swear by, our long-standing locally owned businesses, or legacy businesses, have one thing in common: they are integral to Angeleno heritage and our shared sense of place.

So what is a legacy business? Typically, it has been around for over twenty-five years and serves as a mainstay of a neighborhood.

Despite their roles as neighborhood anchors, many are at risk. Soaring rents, development pressures, and lack of succession plans are just some of the challenges. A recent local study conducted in Long Beach found that the future of its legacy businesses will come into question when baby boomer owners retire in the next five to fifteen years.

Over the years, the Conservancy has worked to protect legacy businesses, from responding to urgent threats to providing technical advice and support.

Some of our past work includes helping to bring funding for the rehabilitation of the Formosa Cafe's Pacific Electric Red Car trolley in West Hollywood, advising on restoration work of the 1949 Casa de Cadillac in Sherman Oaks, and most recently, helping to designate

Tom Bergin's as a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM).

Legacy businesses make important economic and cultural contributions to our communities. Throughout Los Angeles, communities are exploring ways to help support and recognize legacy businesses. In August, the City of West Hollywood directed staff to explore the establishment of a legacy business registry, preservation fund, and other incentives for legacy businesses. Community members in Little Tokyo established a community-owned and managed Community Impact Fund as a strategy for preserving the legacy of Japanese American family-owned businesses, cultural institutions, and spiritual centers as pressures from outside investors increase.

This work inspires and offers hope for developing innovative tools and strategies for protecting our region's legacy businesses.

In October, we are launching a new public education campaign to document the County's enduring legacy business heritage. This is the start of a larger initiative planned for the near future, including a series of public meet-ups at legacy businesses to discuss ways in which



Tom Bergin's, a Los Angeles legacy business, was designated a Historic-Cultural Monument this year. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

we can work together to better promote and protect these important places.

With a region as diverse as ours, we aim to highlight a broad and inclusive list of businesses from across the county. Tell us which businesses are important to you, and what stories you want recognized and preserved for future generations. Send us an email at rsagara@laconservancy.org or tweet at us (@laconservancy, #LAsStoryhood).

We hope to hear from you!

JULY 6 / AUGUST 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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(\$10,000+)

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MARBLE

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GRANITE

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Ronald Lushing and
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Rockefeller Kempel
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Jan Westman

LIMESTONE

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Michele and
Travis Beacham
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Steven Cerasale and
Mary Katherine
Cocharo
Catherine Galley
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Ann Miyata
The Original Farmers
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Sandra Wisot

Member Spotlight: Beth Edwards Harris

by Liz Leshin

Among Beth Edwards Harris' many hats are architectural historian, writer, Mid-Century Modern enthusiast, and former Conservancy board member. A Conservancy member since 2005, Harris consistently puts her money where her values are, supporting the organization's advocacy efforts with a significant gift each year.

Starting in 2018 and continuing this year, Harris is challenging Conservancy supporters who care about protecting the places in L.A. that matter most by offering a matching gift up to \$30,000 for any donations to the Conservancy's Preservation Advocacy Fund by December 31.

Why does she do it? In her own words:

L.A. is a multi-cultural, economically diverse, and rapidly expanding city. The Conservancy works tirelessly to make sure that the buildings and places that best tell L.A.'s complex histories remain into the future. The Conservancy not only supports the preservation of grand architecturally significant buildings but also understands the essential value of preserving multi-ethnic, socially, and economically diverse communities whose historic buildings and places are often threatened by gentrification.

Please consider a gift in addition to your membership to the Preservation Advocacy Fund, which supports Conservancy efforts to protect the diverse buildings that tell the story of Los Angeles in a variety of ways, including:

Nominating Buildings

Conservancy staff submit and support landmark nominations to designate a building or site a local landmark. So far, in 2019 we have submitted or supported five Historic-Cultural Monument nominations, four of which are pending, one of which—Tom Bergin's—was unanimously approved and designated.

Preservation Report Card

The most effective protections for historic places often lie in the hands of local governments. L.A. County has eighty-nine of them: eighty-eight cities, plus the unincorporated County government. The Conservancy developed a Preservation Report Card, assigning a grade to each city's preservation ordinances, and works with municipalities to improve preservation policies at the local level.

Showcasing Historic Places

In order for people to enjoy and learn more about L.A.'s historic resources, the Conservancy offers programs such as weekly walking tours, biannual special tours of neighborhoods such as Culver City, and events at locations such as Google Playa Vista, the Imperial Western Beer Co. (formerly the Fred Harvey Restaurant at Union Station), and Frank Lloyd Wright's magnificent Ennis House.

While we're proud of these results, we still have much to do. Your tax-deductible gift to the Preservation Advocacy Fund enables us to respond quickly to urgent preservation issues as they arise.

Please join Beth Edwards Harris and double your gift to the Preservation Advocacy Fund today by donating online at laconservancy.org/paf or contacting Development Manager Gabriela Philo at (213) 430-4204 or gphilo@laconservancy.org. Thank you!



Photo by Maura Wayman



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Saturdays, 10 a.m.

**MILLENNIUM
BILTMORE HOTEL**
Sundays, 2 p.m.

ART DECO
Thursdays, 11 a.m.
Saturdays, 10 a.m.

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN
Wednesdays, 11 a.m.
Saturdays, 10 a.m.

UNION STATION
Saturdays, 10 a.m.

CUSTOMIZED GROUP TOURS AVAILABLE BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT