

A Quarterly Journal of
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COVER IMAGE

The Los Angeles Conservancy is creating short, fun videos with USC graduate students to highlight women's histories revealed by their research and to introduce Los Angeles Women's Landmarks to a large new audience.
Credit: Chris Morris



A quarterly journal with news, technical assistance, and case studies relevant to local historic preservation commissions and their staff.

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All current NAPC members who serve as staff to preservation commissions are encouraged to distribute articles in *The Alliance Review* to commission members and other staff and elected officials within your member organization.

NAPC can provide additional digital copies of *The Alliance Review* to members of your commission. Simply email us at director@napcommissions.org with your commission member's name and email address.

2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

The National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) is governed by a board of directors composed of current and former members and staff of local preservation commissions and Main Street organizations, state historic preservation office staff, and other preservation and planning professionals, with the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and Chairs of the board committees serving as the Board's Executive Committee.

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NAPC NEEDS YOU!

NAPC is seeking volunteers to help advance its mission of providing education and technical assistance to local preservationists, particularly those involved in the work of local preservation commissions. Volunteers may serve on a variety of committees and in other capacities that take advantage of their individual skills and experiences. Editorial and production work on *The Alliance Review*, membership recruitment and retention, resources development, education programs and technical assistance are just a few of the possibilities. Join us today to make a difference in the future of preservation by contacting NAPC at 757-802-4141 or director@napcommissions.org.

Christina Morris is Senior Director of Preservation Programs for the National Trust for Historic Preservation and is based in Los Angeles, CA. Over three decades of preservation practice, she's done a bit of everything – preservation and architectural planning, leading a wide range of local and national advocacy campaigns, training and leading preservation commissions, and creating and managing impactful grant programs. For the last 5 years she developed the Trust's Where Women Made History initiative to finally recognize, elevate, and celebrate the many ways that women have shaped our shared history.

Something We All Can Agree On - Women's History is Our History

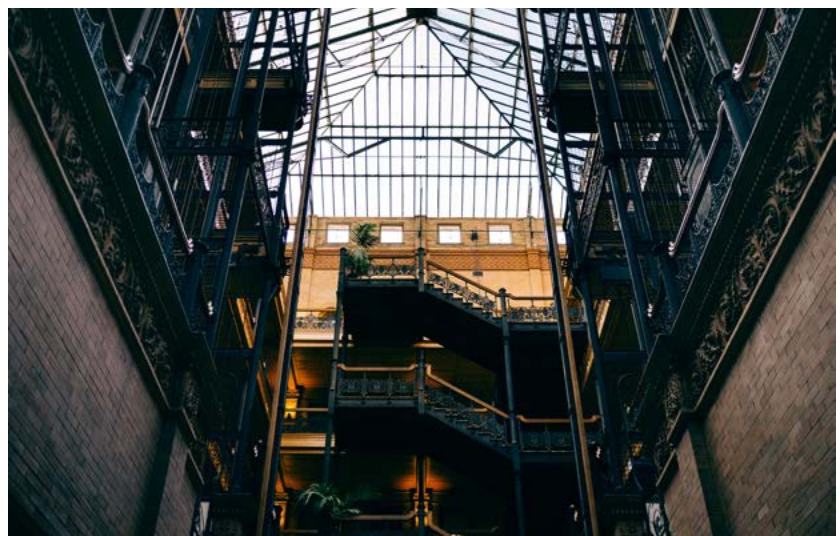
By Christina Morris

I suspect everyone reading this article has an innate understanding that women represent just over 50% of the population. But if you had to take a guess, what percentage of our local, state, and national landmarks do you think are designated in recognition of women's history and accomplishments?

In spite of their omnipresence and outsized roles in our nation's history, women have yet to receive anything close to the level of recognition that they deserve. This is particularly true when it comes to landmarking. Women's history and achievement is vastly underrepresented across all types of designation and recognition, from the local to the national level. The result is that women and girls in our country simply do not see themselves reflected at historic places. Women—and this includes women of all races, ethnicities, identities, and faiths—are recognized in less than 5% of our National Historic Landmarks. It's been stubbornly stuck at that very low percentage for nearly 50 years. We don't have an accurate sense of women's representation on the National Register for Historic Places because women's history isn't a category that's identified or tracked.

In my own city of Los Angeles, our recent analysis of the city's over 1,320 historic-cultural monuments (official local landmarks) revealed that only 2% are

designated for women's history and achievements. That's roughly 30 monuments out of 1,300, in a city that has one of the oldest preservation ordinances (1962) and landmarking programs in the country, and a long history of women's leadership in business, government, entertainment, education, architecture and design, advocacy, social services, art and culture, and more. It's quite likely that most cities with



Credit: Wikimedia Commons, Bradbury Building, Ashim D'Silva

The iconic Bradbury Building in downtown Los Angeles is just one place where Los Angeles Women's Landmarks is adding missing women's history into the record by recognizing the significant role of Simone Martinez Bradbury in the building's design and construction.

landmarking programs have a similar track record when it comes to recognition of women’s accomplishments, which is why we encourage commissions and staff to undertake a similar “audit” of their local landmarks to better understand how women’s history is being memorialized and communicated in their own communities.

As leader of the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Where Women Made History initiative, I believe it’s imperative that we finally tackle this persistent and inexcusable lack of recognition and do so in a way that can be replicated by preservation commissions and staff across the country. There is no better place to confront this challenge and devise creative new solutions than Los Angeles, which consistently has been a national leader in city-wide survey and designation with SurveyLA, but still struggles with many of the same challenges experienced by other cities and commissions of all sizes (multiple priorities and demands on their time, chronic underfunding, limited staff capacity).

In 2024, the National Trust and the Los Angeles Conservancy launched the Los Angeles Women’s Landmarks project, an ambitious, multi-year effort to address the inherent biases that have historically skewed the landmarks designation process. Los Angeles will serve as our laboratory to generate a new national model for a more gender-equitable designation by:

1. Developing new procedures and ordinance language that will allow missing diverse women’s histories, and all underrecognized histories, to be added into existing landmark designations,
2. Tackling new sites and stories of intersectional women’s history as models for how future landmark designations should be done to more fully represent all of LA’s residents, and
3. Demonstrating how designations can and should be a source for new public-facing interpretation and student educational programming that communicate the critical roles women played in shaping Los Angeles.

All of the elements of the project—our guiding



Supporters and partners from the Office of Historic Resources, the LA Cultural Heritage Commission, African American Historic Places LA, and USC joined the National Trust and the LA Conservancy for a celebratory group pic after presenting the Los Angeles Women’s Landmarks project to the City’s Cultural Heritage Commission.

questions, research, new procedures and methods, materials, educational programs, etc.— are designed to benefit other cities, commissions, and organizations across the country. We hope that anyone who wants to highlight women’s history in their community will be inspired to draw on our project as a model.

From the very earliest concept and planning stages, Los Angeles Women’s Landmarks was grounded in outreach, relationship-building, and partnerships. In fact, the ultimate success of the project depends on its relevance to both traditional and non-traditional preservation partners, and their support for and willingness to participate in the work. So far this has played out in a few different ways, all of which have resulted in consistently positive responses and benefits that exceeded our expectations.

Better Together

Drawn together by our shared commitment to more gender-equitable representation in historic designation and in the work of historic preservation in general, the National Trust and the Los Angeles Conservancy have committed for the first time to undertake a long-term project as fully equal partners, formalized with a memorandum of agreement. From outlining the ambitious multi-year project scope and budget of Los Angeles Women’s Landmarks, connecting with multiple community and institutional partners, implementing the project’s many phases of work, and even raising funds, we do everything as a team. Sharing the project responsibilities and workload in this way

Credit: Andrew Salimian, Los Angeles Conservancy

has been very advantageous, allowing us to learn from each other and our respective areas of expertise (for instance, the Conservancy brings its invaluable local political knowledge and connections to the table, and the National Trust engages its GIS team for data analysis, visualization, and storymapping). But it's also been a truly transformative experience for our organizations by forging a stronger, more productive relationship that translates across multiple staff, departments, programs, issues, and projects. Both organizations are now much better connected, more informed, and more effective as a direct result of our collaboration on the Los Angeles Women's Landmarks project.

Invite Everyone

The National Trust and the Los Angeles Conservancy are leading this project together, but our intention is not to do all the work ourselves. Instead, we want people across Los Angeles to feel supported and empowered to tell the women's stories that are most meaningful to them, and in their own voices. Over several months (and many, many lunches and cups of coffee!) we've contacted and met with more than

70 diverse individuals, organizations, and institutions to introduce them to the principles and goals of Los Angeles Women's Landmarks. We invite their recommendations for any sites or stories of women's history that are relevant or important to their communities or their work, and welcome their participation in the project in whatever way works best for them. This could be as simple as sharing names of women and places of women's history they feel deserve more attention or making introductions to other potential partners. Or they can take a larger role such as assisting with designations or serving as an informal advisor to the project. We've been overwhelmed by the positive and enthusiastic response from virtually everyone we've met so far, many of whom share our conviction that equal recognition of women's accomplishments is important, necessary, and long overdue. Thanks to Los Angeles Women's Landmarks, we're strengthening or building new relationships with a large collection of institutions and museums, local organizations, historical societies, archives, educators, government staff and officials, consultants, advocates, and historians.

The Los Angeles Conservancy is a co-equal partner in Los Angeles Women's Landmarks and prominently features the project in their communications, including their quarterly Landmark newsletter.



The annual Women’s History Symposium at the Ebell of LA was the perfect venue for a group of Los Angeles Women’s Landmarks partners to lead attendees in cultural asset mapping of underrecognized women’s history sites across LA.



Credit: Victoria Bernal

designation processes that we want to change in order to better recognize women’s contributions. We understood that the success of our project depended not only on their conceptual support for the equity goals of Los Angeles Women’s Landmarks, but their partnership, direct participation, and leadership throughout the life of the project. We communicate regularly with city staff and collaborate with them on project strategies to ensure that we’re pursuing approaches that will be most effective and have the greatest chance of succeeding. This

close coordination also has allowed us to connect Los Angeles Women’s Landmarks to other diversity initiatives being led by OHR and city staff, which only amplifies the significance and reach of our project.

While these strategies may seem simple, they’ve had an outsized impact on the success of our project and on our organizations by connecting us to a much broader range of people and ideas; changing how we think about our work and our roles in it; and deepening our relationships with each other. ■

Student Leaders

One of the most exciting aspects of the project is our partnership with the University of Southern California (USC) Heritage Conservation program. With the leadership and support of the USC School of Architecture, graduate students (coincidentally, all women) in Heritage Conservation are playing fundamental roles in the Los Angeles Women’s Landmarks project by analyzing existing Historic-Cultural Monument designations to document how women are (and are not) recognized; helping us identify tools and methodologies for researching women’s histories, which can be notoriously difficult to find; doing critical research on intersectional women’s history that will become the first ever monument designations in Los Angeles amended to add missing women’s history; and recording fun, informative short videos with us to share what they’ve learned with a large and growing public audience. It’s been deeply gratifying to collaborate with and learn from these women, who represent the next generation of preservation leaders and who will carry this experience into their professional lives.

City Support

Engaging the City staff and leadership in the Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources (OHR) was essential from the earliest planning phases of Los Angeles Women’s Landmarks. The OHR staff and the City’s Cultural Heritage Commission are responsible for the



Credit: Chris Morris

An all-female group of graduate students in the USC Heritage Conservation program devoted an entire semester to conducting research on the missing diverse women’s history that should be added into existing Historic-Cultural Monument designations.

NAPC OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Like local historic preservation commissions, the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions values meaningful feedback and active engagement with our audience. We intentionally seek opportunities to connect with our members and the broader preservation community, while also creating tools and spaces for those who work or volunteer in historic preservation to learn from one another, share ideas, and build lasting connections. The examples below highlight a few ways we do this.

NAPC-L

NAPC's listserv group, comprised of over 1,000 preservationists, that encourages collaboration, discussion, and sharing of ideas and points of view.

Local Preservation Program Survey

What is the typical budget for a local preservation program? How many staff support this work? Are commissions guided by local design guidelines for design review? Through this online survey, NAPC is collecting and sharing data to inform and inspire commissions nationwide. By providing a space to share this information, NAPC helps commissions strengthen their advocacy and planning efforts.

Advisory Group

NAPC recently formed a group to offer on-the-ground perspectives on emerging trends and policy challenges facing local preservation commissions nationwide. Member's feedback will inform NAPC training and education programs as well as advocacy efforts.



MESSAGING GUIDE FOR LOCAL PRESERVATION PROGRAMS

This guide offers practical communication strategies, shared definitions, and ready-to-use ideas to help preservationists advocate more effectively. Used by commissions across the country and featured in statewide conferences and CAMP trainings, the Messaging Guide helps commission members, staff, and partners clearly communicate the value of historic preservation and build broader public support.

For more information about these initiatives, please visit www.napcommissions.org or email director@napcommissions.org.

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How did you hear about NAPC?

Become part of the national network of local preservation, historic district, and landmark commissions and boards of architectural review. Organized to help local preservation programs succeed through education, advocacy, and training, the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions is the only national nonprofit organization dedicated to local preservation commissions and their work. NAPC is a source of information and support for local commissions and serves as a unifying body giving them a national voice. As a member of NAPC, you will benefit from the experience and ideas of communities throughout the United States working to protect historic districts and landmarks through local legislation, education, and advocacy.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

- \$20.00**
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- \$45.00**
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 - Local nonprofit organizations
- \$150**
 - Commissions: Municipal/county population of 5,000 to 50,000*
 - Regional or statewide nonprofit organizations
- \$200**
 - Commissions: Municipal/county population greater than 50,000*
 - State Historic Preservation Offices
 - Federal Agencies
 - National nonprofit organizations

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\$200 PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

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In addition to receiving all NAPC membership benefits, Professional members are listed in the NAPC Professional Network Directory at <https://www.napcommissions.org/professional-network>

** Membership includes all commission members and staff. Please provide complete list of members with names, phone numbers and email address for additional digital copies.*

PREMIUM MEMBERSHIP

Half of all premium membership dues support NAPC's student internship and Forum scholarship programs

- \$250 CHAIRS CIRCLE**
- \$500 FOUNDERS CIRCLE**