

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION WORKS TO PRESERVE HISTORIC BRIDGES

With the release of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed widening of the North Spring Street Bridge (HCM #900), the Cultural Heritage Commission has expressed concerns about the potential loss of historic status for this and other landmark L.A. River bridges.

The bridge project as proposed would widen the deck by 20' feet on each side, nearly doubling the size of the current bridge. It would remove historic railings, light fixtures, and brackets, obscure the double-arch span over the river, and incorporate new additions that mimic the historic features lost through the widening. The EIR concluded that

this project would result in an adverse effect and loss of the bridge's landmark designation.

The monumental Los Angeles River bridges between Downtown and Griffith Park are some of the City's most iconic landmarks, with 14 bridges designated as Historic-Cultural Monuments, including the North Spring Street Bridge.



The N. Spring Street Bridge is one of two Historic-Cultural Monument bridges faced with potential loss of historic status

Constructed in 1927 near the original site of Los Angeles' founding, the North Spring Street bridge sits in one of the most historically rich areas of the city, located between two of the oldest Los Angeles River Bridges: the North Main

Street Bridge (1910) and the North Broadway-Buena

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HPOZ PROGRAM MOVES TO THE OHR

As part of a major reorganization of the Department of City Planning, the City's staffing for Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZs), or historic districts, will come under the full direction of the Office of Historic Resources for the first time in August.

The City's HPOZ program has experienced explosive growth in recent years, increasing from eight HPOZs in 1998 to 25 districts today. Since 2006, the OHR's staff has provided policy direction and training to the HPOZ program; however, the day-to-day staffing and case processing for HPOZs has been provided by planners from the Community Planning

Bureau, who spent a small amount of time on HPOZs while also handling other planning assignments.

Because HPOZ review requires specialized knowledge of historic preservation, the reorganization will concentrate the HPOZ planners in a single division, under the direction of the OHR. Five planners will staff the 25 HPOZs on a full-time basis rather than the previous system which had as many as 16 planners devoting a fraction of their time to HPOZs.

The new section will report to the OHR's Manager Ken Bernstein, and

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HISTORIC BRIDGES (CONTINUED)

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Vista Bridge (1911). The North Spring Street Bridge has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, is listed in the California Register of Historical Resources, and was designated as Historic-Cultural Monument #900 in 2008.

At hearings held on April 15 and June 3, the Cultural Heritage Commission heard from community stakeholders and voted to approve letters to the City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering (BOE) detailing the Commission's opposition to the project as currently proposed. These communications also proposed further study of alternatives that would safeguard the historic designation of the bridge, such as a separate pedestrian/bicycle bridge or a more modest widening with sufficient retention of historic fabric.

The staff of the Office of Historic Resources (OHR) is now working closely with representatives of BOE and Council Dis-

LAX'S LANDMARK THEME BUILDING REOPENS

The landmark Theme Building, home to the Jetson-esque Encounter Restaurant, reopened on July 10 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Cultural Heritage Commissioner Roella H. Louie, and the OHR's



Photo: Michael Zara

Preservation Architect Lambert Giessinger. The building was closed to the public for nine years for security reasons following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, and went through a significant seismic retrofit and upgrade after a 1,000-pound piece of stucco fell from an arch in 2007.

The structure is one of the most recognized buildings in the United States, featuring four 135-foot high parabolic steel arches intersecting each other at 90 degree angles, and is surrounded by a courtyard with plaques commemorating the opening of the new jet-age airport in 1961. The Theme building was completed in August 1961.

In 1992, the Cultural Heritage Commission considered the inclusion of the Airport Theme Building as an excellent and enduring example of modern futuristic architecture fulfilling its role of symbolically representing Los Angeles as an international city. It was declared Historic-Cultural Monument No. 570 in 1993.

trict 1 to continue developing alternatives that would protect the historic designation of the bridge while meeting the goals of the project.

The Commission and the OHR are also closely monitoring the proposed demolition and replacement of the Sixth Street Bridge (HCM #905), constructed in 1932. The bridge, nearly 2/3 of a mile long, is the largest and longest bridge constructed over the L.A. River. Unfortunately, the bridge is suffering structurally from Alkali Silica Reaction (ASR), a chemical reaction that is causing destruction to the bridge's concrete.

While it appears likely that the ASR will require replacement of the bridge's concrete, the Cultural Heritage Commission has requested that BOE fully evaluate a reconstruction alternative consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, akin to the approach taken in Pasadena during the early 1990s with the Colorado Street Bridge over the Arroyo Seco. If reconstruction is not feasible, the Commission has requested that BOE consider partial preservation alternatives that maximize retention of the bridge's key historic features. BOE may be bringing the bridge project to the board of Public Works and City Council for approval during August.

Please contact Edgar Garcia, Preservation Planner with the Office of Historic Resources, at 213-978-1189 for more information regarding the current efforts to preserve the city's historic bridges.

HPOZ MOVE (CONTINUED)

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will be under the direction of City Planner Craig Weber, who has several years of experience in staffing HPOZs. He will oversee four other full-time HPOZ planners: Matthew Glesne, Steven Wechsler, Antonio Isaia, and Nora Dresser.

One of the first major tasks for the new HPOZ Section is to take forward 17 Preservation Plans for approval by the City Planning Commission this fall for those HPOZs that currently lack such plans. The Department of City Planning has given each HPOZ Board a three-month period, ending on August 1, to craft tailored design guidelines that build upon a citywide template. The new Plans will greatly assist the OHR and the Boards in providing expeditious review for those proposals that are clearly in conformance with these guidelines.

Please welcome the new HPOZ staff as they begin their work in the coming weeks; they are eager to learn more about the unique architectural heritage and community concerns within each neighborhood.

SURVEYLA YEAR 1 SURVEYS LAUNCHED

SurveyLA's initiation phase has come to a close and the implementation phase has now begun. During this phase, historic preservation professionals will work with the OHR to complete field surveys throughout Los Angeles over a multi-year period. The field surveys follow the Phasing Plan developed for SurveyLA, which is organized by Community Plan Area (CPA). The first phase of survey work, begun earlier this month, is headed by Historic Resources Group of Hollywood and includes the following three CPA's: Hollywood; West Adams-Baldwin Hills-Leimert; and Sunland-Tujunga-Lake View Terrace-Shadow Hills-East La Tuna Canyon.



Weatherwolde Castle, HCM #841, Tujunga

Field surveyors are working in teams of two throughout these areas and are conducting the surveys from the public right-of-way using tablet PCs and digital cameras. The OHR has been working with several organizations and individuals in these areas to identify potential historic resources to be included in the surveys.



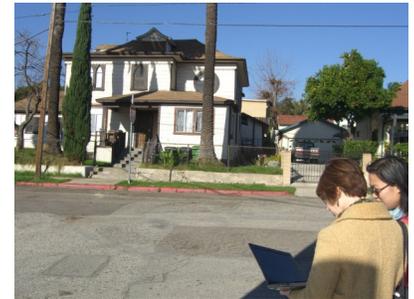
Clark Library, HCM #28, West Adams

It is not too late to participate; if you have any information about historic resources in these or other areas of Los Angeles please contact Janet Hansen at 213-978-1191. For detailed information on the Phasing Plan and the specific neighborhoods covered by the Phase 1 surveys see the "Follow SurveyLA" page of the SurveyLA website at www.surveyla.org.

OHR RECEIVES TWO STATE GRANTS FOR 2010-11

The City of Los Angeles has been awarded two Certified Local Government (CLG) grants this year by the State Office of Historic Preservation. The grants total \$50,000 and will be used to assist the OHR in completing SurveyLA, the citywide historic resources survey.

The first grant focuses on developing the industrial context for SurveyLA's Historic Context Statement. The context will provide field surveyors with the information they need to identify and evaluate industrial resources in themes relating to industrial types and architectural styles, key industries and industrial firms that shaped Los Angeles, and industrial work culture including ethnic and gender groups that formed the work force.



Surveyors at work in the field

The second grant will help the OHR implement the SurveyLA Public Participation and Outreach Program. The program focuses on working with neighborhood groups and individuals to collect specific information about potential historic resources that should be included in the field surveys.

This is the fourth consecutive year that Los Angeles has received CLG grants, and Los Angeles is the only local government in California to receive two grants.

What is SurveyLA?

SurveyLA: The Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey Project is the first-ever comprehensive inventory of our city's historic resources.

The survey findings will have a multiplicity of benefits and uses: it will help direct future growth, shape the revision of Los Angeles' 35 Community Plans, streamline environmental review processes, provide opportunities for public education, assist in disaster planning, and spur heritage tourism and the marketing of historic neighborhoods and properties.

The J. Paul Getty Trust and the City of Los Angeles have entered into a grant agreement for SurveyLA under which the Getty has committed to providing up to \$2.5 million to the project, subject to matching requirements by the City. Field surveys and evaluations will occur from 2010 through 2012. The Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) is also providing technical and advisory support for SurveyLA. For more information visit the SurveyLA website, www.SurveyLA.org.

THANK YOU, GAIL GOLDBERG!

S. Gail Goldberg, AICP, who has served as the City of Los Angeles' Director of Planning since 2006, announced her retirement on June 30. Under her tenure, the Office of Historic Resources became Los Angeles' first full-service historic preservation office and a Certified Local Government for preservation.

The Office of Historic Resources owes a great debt of gratitude to her for her visionary leadership and for her consistent sup-

port of historic preservation as a key component of planning and economic development.

Ms. Goldberg, who was formerly Planning Director in San Diego, will remain in Los Angeles and continue to be deeply engaged in planning issues here. The staff of the OHR and the Cultural Heritage Commission look forward to continuing to work with her as she takes on new challenges.

SURVEYLA WINS PLANNING AWARD

The Survey LA Public Participation Program has won the Education Award from the Los Angeles Chapter of the American Planning Association, given at the APA's annual awards ceremony, held this year on June 23 at North Hollywood's El Portal Theatre.

The SurveyLA Public Participation Program includes several distinct but integrated components, many of which are available for viewing on the SurveyLA web site: the [SurveyLA Video](#), multilingual brochures (in Spanish, Korean and Chinese), the [MyHistoricLA Guide to Public Participation in SurveyLA](#), the SurveyLA web site, the [Office of Historic Resources' E-Newsletter](#), and the [SurveyLA Volunteer Program](#) and [Volunteer Speakers Bureau](#).

Taken together, the Public Participation Program represents the first initiative ever to engage communities in historic preservation in every corner of Los Angeles. This program previously won a Preservation Award from the Los Angeles Conservancy (see April 2010 issue).

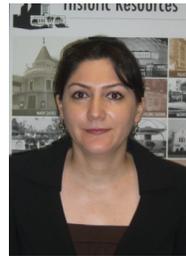


Ken Bernstein, Rita Moreno, & Janet Hansen accepting the 2010 APA-LA Education Award

The Office of Historic Resources thanks the American Planning Association for this significant honor.

OHR INTERNS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The OHR is benefiting from the work of five new interns this summer:



Aileen Babakhani recently arrived in Los Angeles with extensive experience in cultural heritage in Iran. She has a Master's Degree in historic restoration and rehabilitation from the University of Tehran, and later served on the faculty of the University of Mazandaran, Iran, teaching history of architecture, conservation methods, and survey and documentation of historic buildings.

She worked full-time in Tehran for the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization as a senior expert on restoration and conservation of historic buildings and sites.

Steve Duncan is a Master's student in Public History at UC Riverside, with a concentration in Urban History. He is a graduate of Columbia University, where he majored in Urban Studies and English. In New York, Steve worked as a founder and editor of Opus Publishing, which developed city maps and guides for New York.



He has been a photographer and author for Undercity.org on industrial archaeology and urban history and has been an on-camera host for *Urban Explorers* on the Discovery Channel.



Dan Riffin brings a strong architectural background to the OHR, where he is assisting the office's work on the HPOZ program and HPOZ Preservation Plans. Dan is a graduate of the University of Southern California with a B.A. in Architecture and a Master's in Building Science, with a Historic Preservation Certificate. He has work experience in several architectural firms, including Gruen Associates and Shlemmer Algaze Architects.

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CITY OF LOS ANGELES ACQUIRES HISTORIC OAKRIDGE ESTATE

The City of Los Angeles has acquired Oakridge, City Historic-Cultural Monument # 484, which is perhaps the last remaining vestige of the North San Fernando Valley's era of celebrity-owned ranchettes.



Oakridge, located at 18650 Devonshire Ave. in Northridge, was designed in 1937 by architect Paul R. Williams, the first African-American architect admitted to the American Institute of Architects. The home, one of Williams' few works in the San Fernando Valley, was

designed for actress Barbara Stanwyck in a French-English revival style. Stanwyck had entered into a business venture with Zeppo Marx to buy 140 acres at this location to breed thoroughbred horses – a venture that they called Marwyck Ranch, located in an area then considered the “Horse Capital of the West.”

By 1940, Stanwyck had married actor Robert Taylor and sold the ranch to actor Jack Oakie (*pictured at right*) and his wife, Victoria. The Oakies entertained Hollywood celebrities at the home for decades. While most of the ranch property was sold off for development, the Oakies retained ownership of nine acres surrounding the Oakridge home. Jack Oakie died in 1978, and Victoria Oakie donated the home to the University of Southern California in 2003, more than a decade after she successfully nominated her home for Monument status.



In recent years, several acres behind the main home and its improved grounds had been proposed for a residential subdivision. The residential project would have kept intact the house itself, as well as approximately two acres of its grounds, including the front and rear yard, swimming pool, tennis courts, and oak and pepper trees. However, after two successive developers experienced financial problems, the City was able to purchase the



entire nine-acre estate last December with Quimby funds (fees collected from local development projects).

Councilmember Greig Smith spearheaded the acquisition and is working closely with a new community advisory board, the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Bureau of Engineering, and the Office of Historic Resources to develop plans for reuse of the property. Councilmember Smith and the City departments envision Oakridge as a City park, community event space, and, potentially, a showcase for the San Fernando Valley's storied Hollywood past.



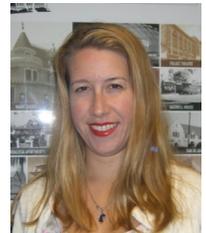
INTERNS (CONTINUED)

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Luis Torres is the OHR's Getty Multicultural Summer Intern, supported by a grant from the Getty Foundation. Luis, a resident of South Los Angeles, graduated in June with a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Cal Poly Pomona, where he won numerous awards and scholarships. He has been an active participant in community activities with the Los Angeles Urban League, Habitat for Humanity, and St. Francis Community Center.

Alycia Seaman Witzling has a Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from UC Irvine, and a B.A. in International Relations from UC Davis. She served for over three years as a Senior Field Representative for California Assemblymember Lloyd E. Levine. She has also worked as an Environmental Planning Intern for the Port of Long Beach and as a Student Professional Worker for the Department of City Planning, where she helped develop the proposed Cornfields/Arroyo Seco Specific Plan (CASP).



LOS ANGELES' NEWEST HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENTS

Frank C. Hill House (201 South Coronado Street), HCM#980.

This one-story split-level single-family home in the Westlake community, built in 1910, was designed in the Craftsman style by Albert R. Walker and John C. Vawter for attorney and businessman Frank C. Hill. Walker later partnered with Percy A. Eisen to design landmarks such as the Oviatt Building (HCM #195). This L-shaped bungalow has a low pitched gable roof with flared tips often seen in Japanese architecture.



Margaret and Harry Hay House (332 North Oakcrest Drive), HCM #981



Constructed in 1939 and located in the Hollywood Hills, this two-story single-family home was designed in the International Style by master architect Gregory Ain. The house was commissioned by Harry Hay for his mother, Margaret Hay. Harry Hay, a writer, teacher, political activist and gay rights advocate, was a founder of the Mattachine Society, the earliest homosexual rights group in the United States (1950); early meetings of the Society took place at this house.

Gless Farmhouse (131 South Boyle Street), HCM#982.

The Gless Farmhouse in Boyle Heights, built in 1887, is an enduring example of Queen Anne style architecture and is associated with several pioneer members of the Gless Family who were influential in the early development of Boyle Heights. This two-story residential building's exterior features clapboard and fish scale siding, decorative spindlework and brackets, a two-story square tower lighted by cutaway bay windows, and raised wraparound porches.



Barsha House (302 North Mesa Road), HCM#983.

Built in 1938 and located in the Santa Monica Canyon area of Pacific Palisades, the house was designed by master architect Richard Neutra (with P. Pfisterer listed as a collaborator) for

film producer Leon Barsha. Clad in smooth stucco with unadorned wall expanses, the building's exterior is characterized by horizontal ribbons of steel casement windows.



Spreckels Building (322-24 West Seventh St. and 708-16 South Hill St.), HCM#984.



Built in 1922 and located in the Downtown area, this seven-story commercial building exhibits character-defining features of Beaux-Arts style architecture. The building was constructed for the real estate firm of Dunn & Williams of San Francisco, which sold the building

in 1924 to prominent real estate entrepreneurs John and Adolph Spreckels. The building is a well-preserved example of Beaux-Arts style commercial architecture and was significantly associated with the commercial and financial development of Downtown.

Sun Realty Company Building (629-33 South Hill Street), HCM#985.



Built in 1930 and located in Downtown Los Angeles, this 13-story commercial building exhibits character-defining features of Art Deco style architecture. The building is rectangular in plan with a primary façade clad in green terra cotta facing S. Hill Street. The recessed center bay's decorative terra cotta parapet features highly stylized geometric sunburst, chevron, and floral designs.

Lento Brick Court (1288 West Sunset Boulevard), HCM #986

Lento Brick Court, located in Echo Park, was designed in 1928 by Conrad Martin Ellington and Frank B. Chambers. This complex is an excellent example of courtyard housing, with Renaissance Revival style features. Exhibiting a "U court" plan arranged on a downward slope, the site consists of five buildings, two two-story and three one-story, with ground-level storefronts on Sunset Blvd.

