OHR, Cultural Heritage Commission Celebrate 50th Anniversary of L.A. Preservation

At a reception in the City Hall Rotunda on April 5, more than 150 City, community and preservation leaders celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Ordinance and Cultural Heritage Commission.

Few Angelenos are aware that Los Angeles had one of the earliest big city preservation laws in the country. The Cultural Heritage Ordinance’s passage in 1962 pre-dated New York’s renowned 1965 Landmarks Preservation Ordinance, which followed on the heels of the demolition of Penn Station. It also preceded similar preservation ordinances in Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, San Diego, Detroit and the nation’s other large cities. Only Philadelphia, whose first preservation law was approved in 1955, came before Los Angeles among large American cities.

The City of Los Angeles and its Cultural Heritage Board members also played a significant role in advocating for passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, making Los Angeles a preservation pioneer on both a local and national scale.

The OHR has been participating in several celebrations this spring to mark the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Cultural Heritage Ordinance.

The Office of Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa spearheaded an exhibition and reception with the support of Project Restore, the Office of Historic Resources, and the Cultural Heritage Commission. The exhibition, which tells the story of “50 Years of Historic Preservation in Los Angeles,” will be on view on the Bridge Gallery connecting City Hall and City Hall East.

Attend the 10th Annual Citywide HPOZ Conference

Join the Department of City Planning’s Office of Historic Resources and the Los Angeles Conservancy on Saturday, May 19 for a day of workshops, tours, and networking to learn more about how to protect the unique character of Los Angeles’ historic neighborhoods.

The conference will be from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Celebrity Centre International, 5930 Franklin Avenue in Hollywood. Early registration (by Sunday, May 13) is $20, or $25 after May 13th and on the day of the event.

The HPOZ Conference is for you if:
- You live in, or own property in, an HPOZ or historic district,
- You are a current HPOZ Board member, OR
- You are interested in historic preservation in forming an HPOZ for your neighborhood.

The HPOZ Conference offers lectures, panels, interactive discussions, and hands-on workshops aimed at community leaders and local residents in historic neighborhoods. We’ll conclude with walking tours of HPOZs in Hollywood. It’s a great opportunity to meet other neighborhood leaders from around Los Angeles, and to take new ideas back to your own community.

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until May 4.

Exhibition panels detail the history and accomplishments of the City's preservation program over the past half-century, and even offer a view of what the streets outside of City Hall's windows looked like in the 1880s. City Controller Wendy Greuel, Councilmember Tom LaBonge, and Cultural Heritage Commission President Richard Barron were among the speakers saluting the half-century of preservation accomplishment at the opening reception.

In addition to this exhibition and opening event, the Los Angeles Conservancy is commemorating this important anniversary by honoring the Cultural Heritage Commission and Ordinance with the Conservancy's President's Award at the 31st Annual Preservation Awards Luncheon, to be held at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel on Thursday, May 10.

History of the Cultural Heritage Ordinance

In 1958, a small group of volunteers, as members of the Los Angeles chapter of the American Institute of Architects' (AIA) Historic Building Committee, had become alarmed by the destruction of historic landmarks created by the explosion of growth in post-World War II Los Angeles. The AIA Committee and the City's Municipal Art Commission began working on an ordinance that would create a citizens board to survey, identify and protect historic sites throughout the city.

The 1962 Cultural Heritage Ordinance also created a five-member Cultural Heritage Board (now Cultural Heritage Commission), giving them the responsibility to designate as Historic-Cultural Monuments any building, structure, or site important to the development and preservation of the history of Los Angeles, the state, and the nation.

Following the passage of the Ordinance in April 1962, the Cultural Heritage Board's first meeting on August 6, 1962 was a pressure-packed, memorable day. The first five Historic-Cultural Monuments declared were sites that were all considered threatened, including the Leonis Adobe, located on the border of Calabasas. A stop work order was issued to stay the demolition of this important landmark, and the Adobe has the honor of being designated Historic-Cultural Monument #1. Bolton Hall in Tujunga, the Plaza Church at El Pueblo, Angels Flight, and the “Salt Box” on Bunker Hill (later destroyed by fire) were all designated at this first meeting.

In Appreciation

The OHR wishes to thank Katherine Hennigan of the Office of Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa for her leadership in spearheading the exhibition and reception. Cultural Heritage Commission Vice-President Roella Louie worked tirelessly to make the exhibition and event possible. The non-profit Project Restore, under the direction of Ed Avila, and with the hard work of Nancy Lopez, organized the opening night reception. Finally, the OHR wishes to recognize and thank Preservation Planner Edgar Garcia, who spent a great deal of his own time organizing and curating the exhibition.

We hope you'll have an opportunity to visit the exhibition and reflect upon Los Angeles' unheralded history of historic preservation leadership.
SurveyLA Findings to be Released this Spring

The first phase of SurveyLA field surveys are coming to a close and the OHR will begin rolling out the results on the SurveyLA website in late Spring (www.surveyla.org). Survey findings are compiled by Community Plan Area (CPA). Eleven of the City’s 35 CPAs were completed during phase one, and the first three to have results posted are South Los Angeles, Southeast Los Angeles, and West Adams-Baldwin Hills-Leimert Park. Resources identified and documented in these areas include late 19th century residences reflecting early settlement and development patterns, commercial buildings that evidence the once vibrant streetcar system than traversed Los Angeles, and residential neighborhoods that are not only significant for their architectural styles but for their role in Los Angeles’ rich ethnic and cultural history.

The OHR worked with consultant teams who conducted the field surveys to design reports for each CPA that are not only consistent in format and content, but are also easy to navigate and visually appealing. The reports discuss the project team and survey methodology, describe the physical character of the area and neighborhood geography, summarize the types of resources identified and the historic and cultural themes they represent, and then visually present some of the highlights of the findings. A series of appendices are attached to each report which detail all the survey findings for the CPA and are organized by resource type including individual properties, non-parcel resources (such as trees or streetlights), and historic districts.

In addition to the reports, for each CPA, a map is prepared which graphically illustrates the boundaries of the survey area; all preloaded data, such as the location of existing designated resources and districts; and data collected during SurveyLA, including the location and type of resources evaluated and which evaluation criteria were applied. Because these maps are large-scale and highly detailed, they are most effectively used as PDF documents on the SurveyLA website, where the user can zoom in and out to see details as needed.

By early 2013, the OHR plans to have SurveyLA data available to the public in a searchable online format. The goal is to have the ability to search for information on properties by various criteria including address, building type, architectural style, and even by important theme such as properties associated with the civil rights movement or women’s history.

In the coming months, the OHR will also be releasing the survey findings for Hollywood, Sunland-Tujunga, West Los Angeles, Palms-Mar Vista, Del Rey, Wilmington-Harbor City, Harbor Gateway, San Pedro and Central City North, all of which are being completed as part of Phase One.

SurveyLA findings are first and foremost used as a planning tool to provide information to make informed decisions regarding historic resources. No properties identified in the survey results are designated or subject to any type of review under the City’s historic preservation ordinances. And if you know of any properties we missed, particularly those that may have important cultural associations, we welcome your input!

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 through 2013. The Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) is also providing technical and advisory support for SurveyLA. For more information visit the SurveyLA website, www.SurveyLA.org.
ATTEND THE 10TH ANNUAL HPOZ CONFERENCE

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This year's conference sessions include:

- **Design Roundtable**
  Take part in an interactive session presenting and analyzing preservation projects in a mock critique format.

- **Gaining Community Consensus: Before, During, and After**
  Hear about real-life experiences in engaging community members and how to reach out and maintain support.

- **HPOZ 101: The Basics of L.A.'s Historic Districts**
  Gain a fundamental overview of the HPOZ Ordinance, Preservation Plans, project review, and Historic Resource Surveys.

- **The HPOZ Project: Getting Your Project to the Finish Line**
  Learn practical tips to ensure success when you upgrade, renovate, or otherwise change your HPOZ property, including initial planning, getting approval, and managing the construction process.

- **Practical Application of Restoration Principles**
  Get hands-on training on common HPOZ projects.

- **Understanding Architectural Styles and Their Role in Preservation**
  Learn about historical building styles popular in Los Angeles and their appropriate alterations.

Informal lunchtime discussions will explore topics important to HPOZs including sustainability, code violations, preservation plan feedback, and City Council redistricting.

Registration to the conference also includes your choice of free afternoon walking tours, offering an opportunity to experience the Hollywood Grove HPOZ immediately adjacent to the conference venue, or two other Hollywood-area HPOZs (Whitley Heights and Melrose Hill) within a short drive.

**About the Venue**
This year’s conference will be held at the Celebrity Centre International. Located adjacent to the Hollywood Grove HPOZ, the building originally opened in 1928 as Chateau Elysee, a residential hotel catering to the Hollywood elite. Numerous Hollywood stars resided here over the years, including Clark Gable, Carole Lombard, Humphrey Bogart, and Elizabeth Taylor.

In the 1950s, it was converted into a senior citizens home by the First Congregational Church of Los Angeles. In 1973, the iconic landmark was purchased by the Church of Scientology, which has carefully maintained the historic building and its grounds. The property was designated as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument #329 in 1987.

**Registration**
Sign up for the conference today by registering at [http://lac.laconservancy.org/hpoz](http://lac.laconservancy.org/hpoz). The registration fee covers the conference costs as well as continental breakfast and lunch. Limited parking is available on site; carpooling and public transportation are encouraged. If you have any questions, please contact Flora Chou of the Los Angeles Conservancy at fchou@laconservancy.org.

**New Leadership in HPOZ Program**

With the recent promotion of Craig Weber to Senior City Planner overseeing the Department of City Planning’s Plan Implementation Division’s Central area team, City Planner Shana Bonstin has been appointed as the new head of the OHR’s Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) Unit.

Shana brings to her new position a strong background in historic preservation, planning and urban design. As a planner in the Department’s West/Coastal Division for several years, her duties had included work on Westside HPOZs, including the Gregory Ain Mar Vista Tract. She has also staffed the community planning work in Venice, Westwood, and Palms-Mar Vista-Del Rey, and helped develop and implement Specific Plans and Community Design Overlay plans. She holds a BA in Environmental Studies from UC Santa Cruz and a MA in Urban Planning from Harvard.

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Some Tips for This Year’s Mills Act Application

The 2012 deadline for the Mills Act Historical Property Contract Program, the most significant local financial incentive for owners of historic properties, is coming up quickly, on May 25. This year’s application is available on-line at http://www.preservation.lacity.org/node/464.

With the Mills Act season now in full swing, here are some helpful tips for a successful application:

- Before you get started filling out any forms, it is important to read the entire Application Guide. This will help ensure you know whether or not your property qualifies and that you understand what the program requirements are.
- The City has expanded the Mills Act program over the last several years. However, due to the ever increasing rate at which the lost revenue cap is being reached, the program has tighter restrictions to incentivize the preservation of properties that need significant work. Ensure your property adequately meets the Priority Consideration Criteria for necessity.
- Everyone has beautiful handwriting when penning a letter to Grandmother. However, a professional Mills Act Application is not a letter to a loved one and all documentation should be typed or labeled accordingly.
- The sections in the Application Guide that state “Do not hole punch or staple any documents” mean do not hole punch or staple any documents. All of the documents, particularly the Contract and Exhibits, are considered originals with wet signatures and are eventually copied and recorded. However, if pages are stapled and unstapled, corners get blemished and the final document will not be as neat.
- Neatness counts!
- Check your work. If the forms are printing oddly or the text does not align properly, investigate a workaround to ensure the final product is legible. The Priority Consideration Criteria can be typed-out on a separate sheet, as needed. The City’s forms tend to favor PC users, but we can offer tips to Apple users in finding a way around any problems.

If you have any questions about your application, contact Lambert Giessinger at (213) 978-1183.

New Leadership in HPOZ Program

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The OHR and HPOZ unit also welcome new staff member Vinita Huang, replacing Matthew Glesne, who will be moving on to lead the Department’s work on the 2013 Housing Element of the General Plan. Vinita has worked previously as an adjunct faculty member at the New School of Architecture in San Diego and a planner for Reid Planning in San Diego. She has a B.A. in Landscape Architecture from U.C. Davis and a Master’s in City and Regional Planning from U.C. Berkeley. Vinita will be the staff planner for the Gregory Ain Mar Vista Tract, Hancock Park, Highland Park, La Fayette Square, West Adams Terrace, and Whitley Heights HPOZs.

The OHR thanks Craig Weber for his exemplary work in guiding the HPOZ Unit and in spearheading the preparation and adoption of 16 award-winning HPOZ Preservation Plans during 2010, and thanks Matthew Glesne for his many years of skillful, dedicated staff work on behalf of Los Angeles’ HPOZs.

Shana Bonstin (left) and Vinita Huang

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L.A.’s Newest Historic-Cultural Monuments

The Cultural Heritage Commission and City Council have designated six new Historic-Cultural Monuments (HCMs) from January to March 2012. Los Angeles’ newest monuments include the following:

**HCM #1011: McAlmon House (2717 W. Waverly Dr).**
Built in 1936 by master architect R. M. Schindler and located in Silver Lake, the McAlmon House consists of two single-family residential buildings designed in the International Style. The front flat-roofed building is clad in stucco and consists of irregular and cantilevered volumes unified by horizontal structural elements and bands of sliding glass walls. The property was designed for Victoria McAlmon (1879-1969), who was involved in feminist and political issues throughout her life. She was sister of Robert McAlmon, a prominent author, poet, and publisher.

**HCM #1012: Ganahl House (232 S. St. Andrews Pl).** This 1913 one-story residential building in Hancock Park is an excellent example of Prairie style architecture. The subject building was designed by prominent architect and engineer Albert C. Martin, whose firm would be responsible for such landmarks as the Million Dollar Theater, St. Vincent de Paul (HCM #90), and Los Angeles City Hall (HCM #150). The Ganahl House was built for C.C. Ganahl, son of the president and founder of the C. Ganahl Lumber Company, who would later become president of the company in the 1930s.

**HCM #1013: Normandie Hotel (605 S. Normandie Ave).** Built in 1926 in the Wilshire Center area, this four-story hotel was designed in the Renaissance Revival style by Albert R. Walker and Percy A. Eisen. The building’s notable exterior features include combed brick and masonry walls, terra cotta detailing, decorative molding surrounding the entrances, and diamond patterning under the second story windows. Walker & Eisen designed over 125 buildings during their partnership and are responsible for such prominent landmarks as the Fine Arts Building (Historic-Cultural Monument #125); the Texaco/United Artists Building (1927, Historic-Cultural Monument #523); the Oviatt Building (1928, Historic-Cultural-Monument #195); and the Beverly Wilshire Hotel (1928).

**HCM #1014: Ward-Berger House (3156 N. Lake Hollywood Dr).** Located in the Hollywood Hills area, this 1939 one-story single-family residence is an excellent example of International Style architecture. Master architect Richard Neutra designed this Z-shaped building with a low horizontal profile with an asymmetrical façade and flat roof. Neutra was the architect of 12 other Los Angeles HCMs including the Lovell Heath House (HCM #123) and the Richard and Dion Neutra VDL Research House (HCM #640).

**HCM #1015: Stein House (968 N. Stonehill Ln).** Built in 1949, this one-story single-family Brentwood residence in the International Style was designed by noted architects A. Quincy Jones and Whitney R. Smith, with engineer Edgardo Contini. The house is rectangular in plan, with a low gabled roof, and covered in composition shingles. The Monument is part of the Crestwood Hills development, the only successful large-scale cooperative housing development in California and a neighborhood that today has a high concentration of significant modernist residential architecture, including 14 other HCMs.

**HCM #1016: Schneidman House (925 N. Stonehill Ln).** Another Crestwood Hills property, built in 1950, this one-story single-family residence exhibits features of Modern and International Style architecture. Like the Stein House, the Schneidman House was designed by noted architects A. Quincy Jones and Whitney R. Smith, with engineer Edgardo Contini. The building is irregular in plan with a steeply pitched front-facing gabled roof intersecting with two flat-roofed sections.