



OFFICE OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

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LINCOLN PLACE APARTMENTS SAVED FROM DEMOLITION, AWARDED NEW MILLS ACT CONTRACT

The Office of Historic Resources recorded 38 Mills Act Historical Property Contracts with the County of Los Angeles at the end of 2011, including a new contract for Lincoln Place Apartments in Venice, the subject of a long-running preservation saga.

The Mills Act Historical Property Contract Program allows qualifying owners to receive a potential property tax reduction and use the savings to help rehabilitate, restore, and maintain their buildings. The Mills Act is the single most important economic incentive program in California for the restoration and preservation of historic buildings by private property owners. Enacted in 1972, the Mills Act legislation grants participating local governments (cities and counties) authority to enter into contracts with owners of qualified historic properties who actively participate in the restoration and maintenance of their properties to receive property tax relief.



Lincoln Place Apartments in Venice is significant for its overall site design and park-like setting.

The City of Los Angeles adopted local Mills Act legislation in 1996.

Among the new properties in the Mills Act program are significant historic homes in many of the City's Historic Preservation Overlay Zones, including Highland Park-Garvanza, Angelino Heights, West Adams Terrace, and Pico Union, as well as individually designated Historic-Cultural Monuments, including Hollywood's Magic Castle.

The latest new contracts increase the total number of properties in the City of Los Angeles' program to 601 Lincoln Place, one of the largest

properties to be awarded a Mills Act contract, is a large garden apartment complex that exemplifies the urban planning approach known as the Garden City Movement. It occupies a 38-acre area of Venice just north of

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SHARE YOUR HISTORICLA THROUGH NEW "VIRTUAL TOWN HALL"

The Office of Historic Resources (OHR) is launching an exciting new addition to SurveyLA, the Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey Project. Through a web tool called MindMixer, the OHR is creating a new online conversation to identify "hidden gems" of Los Angeles' history and architecture.

The new web site, launching Monday, January 30, will create an on-line forum, or a "virtual town hall", to identify significant historic resources in our communities. To join the conversation, please register today at www.myhistoriclal.org.

We'll be jump-starting the conversation

with some directed questions about Los Angeles' significant historic resources. What do you think is the most significant, little-known site associated with African-American history in Los Angeles? What San Fernando Valley properties still have remnants of the Valley's early agricultural history? What do you consider the most significant, intact post-World War II suburban neighborhood in Los Angeles? Weighing in on any or all of these questions will connect you to like-minded local residents and help SurveyLA at the same time.

MindMixer, (see www.mindmixer.com)

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LINCOLN PLACE APARTMENTS SAVED FROM DEMOLITION, AWARDED NEW MILLS ACT CONTRACT

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Lincoln Boulevard and bounded by Penmar Avenue, Frederick Street and Lake Street. The complex also became a Historic-Cultural Monument as part of the Mills Act application process.

The Lincoln Place preservation saga dated back to 2001, when a previous owner demolished seven buildings at the perimeter of the complex and significantly altered an eighth building, as a precursor of plans to demolish the entire complex for market-rate condominiums. Ownership later changed hands to Denver-based AIMCO (Apartment and Investment Management Company), the nation's largest apartment-holding company.

Tenants and local supporters rallied to help save Lincoln Place from demolition.

These efforts included nominations of the complex for historic designation: the State Historical Resources Commission voted to declare Lincoln Place eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources in 2005. However, most of the tenants were evicted from the complex in 2005-6 and litigation ensued. By 2010, AIMCO had changed its approach to the property, pursuing instead a historic rehabilitation of the entire complex: a settlement agreement with the City committed AIMCO to the rehabilitation of 696 units and the return of 83 former tenant

households. AIMCO has been pursuing historic preservation incentives, including the Mills Act contract and Federal Historic



Chase Knolls Garden Apartments in Sherman Oaks, also designed by Wharton & Vaughn Associates.

Rehabilitation Tax Credits, to help make the rehabilitation economically feasible.

Like Village Green in Baldwin Hills, Chase Knolls Apartments in Sherman Oaks, and Wyvernwood Apartments in Boyle Heights, Lincoln Place is significant less for the architecture of its individual buildings as for its overall site design, marked by its park-like setting designed to foster community interaction. Apartment buildings are set back from curved streets with ample green space, over 350 mature trees, and meandering paths for pedestrian circulation, at a remove from automobile circulation. Individual buildings and building groups are organized so as to create semi-enclosed garden courtyards for residents.

The architecture firm of Wharton & Vaughn Associates designed the Lincoln Place Apartments, with Ralph Vaughn as lead designer on the project. Vaughn (1907-2000) was an African-American architect, the son of prominent Washington D.C. architect, Roscoe Vaughn, and trained in architecture at the University of Illinois alongside William Pereira and Charles Luckman. Before World War II, Vaughn worked under Paul R. Williams, and during the war, worked as a Hollywood set designer under famed artistic director, Cedric Gibbons. Wharton & Vaughn Associates also designed Chase Knolls Garden Apartments in Sherman Oaks (HCM #683) and North Hollywood Manor.

COUNCIL MOTION SEEKS TO PRESERVE THE MILLS ACT PROGRAM

With the approval of the Mills Act contract for Lincoln Place (see p. 1) and other properties, the City of Los Angeles' Mills Act Historical Properties Contract program is nearing the fiscal limit set by the City Council many years ago. To ensure that this important preservation incentive remains available to help revitalize historic communities and assist those who are pursuing important historic rehabilitation work, Councilmember Jose Huizar has introduced a motion to raise the Council-imposed program cap.

When the Mills Act Ordinance was first approved by the City-Council in 1996, the Council set a limit of \$500,000 in total revenue loss to the City due to all cumulatively adopted Mills Act contracts. The Council soon raised this cap to \$1 million in 1999, but it has not been increased since that time.

Over the past decade and a half, the Mills Act has become the most important incentive for historic preservation and revitalization in every part of the City, including numerous adaptive reuse projects in downtown and Hollywood, neighborhood-oriented rehabilitation work in communities such as Pico Union and Highland Park, and projects in most of the City's 29 Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZs). Because the City provides no direct historic preservation funding to owners who wish to rehabilitate their historic buildings, the Mills Act program represents the only local financial incentive to spur historic preservation. In most years, the approval of dozens of new Mills Act rehabilitations, each of which has a significant economic multiplier effect in local communities, results in an incremental fiscal impact to the City of less than \$100,000.

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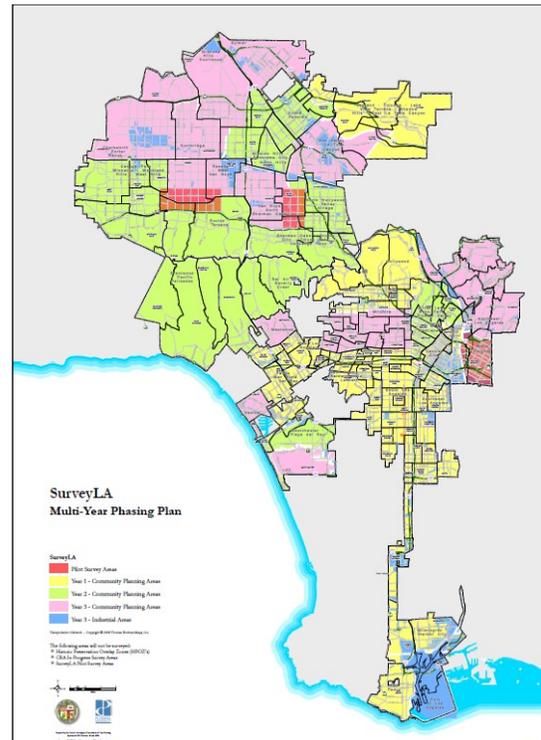
SURVEYLA COMES TO THE VALLEY

During the early months of 2012, SurveyLA, the Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey Project is launching its fourth group of surveys, which will cover most of the south San Fernando Valley.

The Group 4 surveys include four Community Plan areas of the city: Sherman Oaks-Studio City-Toluca Lake-Cahuenga Pass; North Hollywood-Valley Village; Encino-Tarzana; and Canoga Park-West Hills-Winnetka-Woodland Hills.

As always, the OHR will simultaneously be preparing for other surveys that will start many months later, beginning our "MyHistoricLA" outreach activities to elicit information on potential historic resources in your community. During early 2012, "MyHistoricLA" will be coming to: Venice, Westwood, Sun Valley-La Tuna Canyon, Van Nuys-North Sherman Oaks, Chatsworth-Porter Ranch, Northridge, Northeast Los Angeles, Reseda-West Van Nuys, Granada Hills-Knollwood, Sylmar, Wilshire, and LAX.

We hope you will contribute information on significant historic buildings and places in these communities. Visit www.myhistoricla.org (see article on page 1) or <http://preservation.lacity.org/survey/identify> to tell us about a historic place that matters to you.



Many areas in green are scheduled to be surveyed in Group 4, starting in early 2012.

COUNCIL MOTION SEEKS TO PRESERVE THE MILLS ACT PROGRAM

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Councilmember Huizar requested that the Department of City Planning report back to the Council with a proposal on how to approach the increase in the Mills Act cap. This report, with a proposed ordinance amendment increasing the cap to \$2 million, is expected to be heard by the Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee during January.

While the Council discusses the extension of the program for future years, the OHR has determined that sufficient capacity still remains to accept new Mills Act applications for 2012. The 2012 Mills Act application will be available in mid-February and this year's submission deadline is Friday, May 25th.

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 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.



SOUTHEAST LOS ANGELES PURSUES NEW HPOZs RICH IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY

It is easy to appreciate many of Los Angeles' historic districts or HPOZs (Historic Preservation Overlay Zones) on an aesthetic level. Regardless of whether you like stately Queen Anne houses, rustic Spanish Haciendas, or space-aged Dingbats, there's probably something for you in an HPOZ.

However, Los Angeles is preserving these special neighborhoods not just because of their architecture, but because of the story that the architecture tells about who Angelenos were, how this city came to be, and how we have progressed together as people. Sometimes an HPOZ will tell a story about development patterns in LA, such as Adams-Normandie, an early streetcar-suburb. Occasionally an HPOZ will tell a story about a particular developer, such as the progressive Joseph Eichler and his forward-looking Modernist ranch houses in Granada Hills' Balboa Highlands. Quite often, our HPOZs tell the story of a particular group of people who inhabited a neighborhood during its period of significance.

The Office of Historic Resources is currently working with three neighborhoods in the South Los Angeles area that merit potential HPOZ status: 27th-28th Street, the Tifal Brothers 52nd Place Tract, and Vermont Square. All three are located in Council District 9, represented by Councilmember Jan Perry, who has taken a leadership role in spearheading the study of these neighborhoods as CD 9's potential first HPOZs.

The architecture of these neighborhoods is interesting enough: the 27th-28th Street neighborhood possesses a high concentration of Queen Anne cottages with ornate details (a neighbor recently proclaimed "these are the only houses in this area that still have their 'jewelry'"). The Tifal Brothers Tract on 52nd Place is a street of developer-built Craftsman bungalows with rip-rap masonry porches, and Vermont Square is an Arts and Crafts period neighborhood built around a neighborhood park



A house contributing to the significance of the proposed 27th-28th Street HPOZ.

with L.A.'s first branch library. But the significance of these quaint neighborhoods is amplified when one considers what they say about the story of African-Americans in Los Angeles.

During the 1900's Los Angeles attracted thousands of African-American families with the possibility of homeownership. By 1910 nearly 40 percent of African-American families in the L.A. area owned homes. However, by the 1920's, developers began to embed racially restrictive covenants into subdivisions. While these dubious covenants would eventually be thrown out by the Supreme Court, for a brief period of time they created an incubator of African American culture and society along the Central Avenue corridor—the spine that connects these three pending HPOZs.

Los Angeles' African American history is deeply rooted in this area, where churches, community institutions, theatres and jazz clubs all thrived. While many of these large institutional spaces have benefited from historic preservation protection, such as Second Baptist Church (HCM# 200), the Lincoln Theater (HCM# 744) and The Dunbar Hotel (HCM #131), the surrounding neighborhoods that were home to our early African American families have not. Countless homes have either been replaced with more contemporary buildings or remodeled beyond recognition. However, each of these three enclaves retains enough "jewelry," if you will, to continue to tell the story of our collective cultural history.

Over the next several months Office of Historic Resources staff will be working with local residents to design a Preservation Plan that will suit the needs of the community, will finalize the historic resources survey, and will usher the pending HPOZs through the adoption process. Our hope is that these neighborhoods will continue to stand as a testament to Los Angeles' rich and diverse cultural history.

PROPOSE A SESSION FOR THE HPOZ CONFERENCE

The Office of Historic Resources and the Los Angeles Conservancy will be hosting the 10th annual HPOZ Conference in May, and we are looking for experts in the field of historic preservation to lead informative, provocative and practical sessions during the one-day educational event.

Led by volunteers, sessions will be approximately an hour in length and can focus on topics such as sustainability, architec-

tural history, practical application of preservation principles, or any other topic that you feel may benefit the nearly 150 neighborhood preservationists who will be in attendance.

The OHR will post a more formal "Call for Sessions" at www.preservation.lacity.org in the next few weeks, but if you are interested in contributing please contact craig.weber@lacity.org for more information.



COUNCIL APPROVES DEMOLITION OF SIXTH STREET BRIDGE

On November 18, 2011, the Los Angeles City Council approved the demolition and replacement of the Sixth Street Bridge (Historic-Cultural Monument #905). Constructed in 1932, the bridge is the longest span over the L.A. River and is arguably one of the most iconic bridges in the city. Unfortunately, the bridge has been suffering structurally from Alkali Silica Reaction (ASR), a chemical reaction that is causing the bridge’s concrete to deteriorate.

The monumental Los Angeles River bridges between Downtown and the San Fernando Valley are some of the City’s most recognizable landmarks, with the 6th Street Bridge easily being the grandest and most signature bridge of the entire grouping. The bridge is recognized throughout the city as a symbol of Los Angeles and is, in fact, one of the most filmed sites in Los Angeles. Recognizing its importance, the Los Angeles City Council declared the 6th Street Bridge a Historic-Cultural Monument in 2008.

After careful review of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) in 2009, the Cultural Heritage Commission submitted substantive comments on the alternatives discussed. Understanding the structural issues with the bridge, the staff of the Office of Historic Resources (OHR) and Cultural Heritage Commissioners worked closely with the Bureau of Engineering in studying options to address the bridge’s ASR condition. Because of the extraordinary circumstances created by the ASR condition, the Cultural Heritage Commission and OHR staff believed that the project necessitated a new approach in historic preservation for bridges and other public infrastructure that may be impacted by ASR or other structural issues and deficiencies. The 6th Street Bridge appears at the moment to be the first pre-World War II bridge in the nation to be proposed for complete demolition and

replacement because of an ASR condition.

The Cultural Heritage Commission expressed concerns that the project team selected a preferred alternative that would demolish the 6th Street Bridge and replace it with a new cable-supported bridge of contemporary design. The Commission voted unanimously on November 3, 2011 to support a reconstruction alternative that would have, at minimum, replicated the bridge’s iconic double arch span over the LA River.



The iconic Sixth Street Bridge, scheduled to be demolished because of structural damage due to concrete deterioration.

A significant precedent for such an approach was the reconstruction of Pasadena’s Colorado Street Bridge in 1991-93. The entire deck of that bridge and many other historic features, including spandrel columns, had been fully recon-

structed, rather than repaired, yet the bridge retained its listing in the National Register of Historic Places and as a City of Pasadena landmark.

The Commission also emphasized that the new design should recognize that the Sixth Street Bridge is the centerpiece of an ensemble of remarkable historic bridges along the Los Angeles River. While the bridges are individual Historic-Cultural Monuments, rather than formally designated as a historic district, they do also constitute a de facto district.

Ultimately, the City Council concurred with the selection of a contemporary cable-stayed design for the replacement design. The Cultural Heritage Commission will continue to work with Bureau of Engineering staff to help ensure that the new design does not detract from the collective historic significance of the L.A. River bridges.

The OHR will provide further updates on the bridge replacement project as soon as they become available.

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L.A.'S NEWEST HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENTS

The Cultural Heritage Commission and City Council have designated three new Historic-Cultural Monuments (HCMs) from September 2011 to January 2012. Los Angeles' newest monuments include the following:



HCM #1006: Lincoln Place Apartments (1138 E. Lake Street & Other Addresses).

(See Article on Page 1 for more information on the Lincoln Place Apartments).



HCM #1007: Heritage Square Museum (3800 Homer St and 3504 Pasadena Ave). The Heritage Square Museum was established in 1969. The open-air museum is located on a 10-

acre parcel owned by the City of Los Angeles approximately halfway between Pasadena and Downtown Los Angeles. The site was originally set aside for the relocation of two Los Angeles HCMs, Donovan's Castle and the Saltbox (#27 and #5, respectively). Unfortunately, the two buildings were both destroyed by fire after being relocated to Heritage Square in October of the same year. Despite their loss, the Cultural Heritage Commission went on to establish the site for other endangered monuments. Hale House (#40) was the first to relocate in 1970, followed by the Shaw Residence (#65) in 1971 and the Palms Railroad Depot (#22), John J. Ford (#108) and William Hayes Perry Residence (#98) in 1975. Heritage Square acquired the Osborn Carriage Barn from

The Huntington Memorial Hospital Site and the Lincoln Avenue Methodist Church from the United States Post Office in 1981. In 1986, the Octagon House was given to the Museum by the City of Pasadena. Other acquisitions include the interior of an early 20th century drug store and soda fountain, a trolley car and railway car. Many of the buildings at Heritage Square are eligible for designation on the National and California Registers. All of the main buildings relocated to the site date from 1879 to the 1910s and together with constructed pathways, fountains and gardens, convey to visitors a sense of the Victorian era in Los Angeles.



HCM #1008 350 N. Sycamore Ave Apartments (350 N. Sycamore Ave). Built in 1936 in Wilshire, the North Sycamore Chateau is a 6-unit apartment building built over subterranean parking. 350 N. Sycamore exemplifies the Chateausque architectural style that

was popular for apartment buildings throughout the 1930s in Los Angeles. The stucco exterior walls, towers with conical turret roofs, high ornamentation, tall and narrow windows, the steep, multi-gabled roof and intricate wrought-iron balcony with fleur-de-lis detailing are among its character-defining features. The central courtyard is made up of a manicured garden and the interior boasts hardwood floors, decorative French mantles, ornamented crown moldings and built in cabinetry. The apartment building was designed by architect William Barber and built by the Publix Construction and Investment Company. The building is a combination of highly ornate Chateausque detailing and ingenuity in engineering a relatively early underground parking structure.

SHARE YOUR HISTORICLA THROUGH NEW "VIRTUAL TOWN HALL"

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is an online platform that allows community members to share ideas collaboratively, from the privacy of their own home, school or workplace. It gives participants the opportunity to compete for points that may be converted into prizes, and to create new relationships and communities on-line.

MindMixer has already been working with the Department of City Planning on its new Mobility Element of the General Plan, shaping new transportation policies for the city. The City's Mobility Element MindMixer site (<http://ideas.la2b.org/>) has generated dozens of policy ideas and numerous lively discussions that are shaping decisions on this

new plan. SurveyLA will not be seeking policy ideas through MindMixer, but will be tapping into Angelenos' collective knowledge of places that are significant citywide or to local communities.

Building upon the OHR's more static "MyHistoricLA" form online (<http://www.preservation.lacity.org/survey/historic-identification>), the new MindMixer site will now allow your feedback to become part of a community-wide conversation – and stimulate others' ideas. Input captured through MindMixer's myhistoricla.org will directly guide evaluations by the historic preservation professionals working on SurveyLA.

Let's kick off our citywide conversation about historic places that matter to you. Give Myhistoricla.org a try!