



City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning

# OFFICE OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

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## SURVEYLA LAUNCHES PILOT SURVEY PROGRAM

The pilot surveys for SurveyLA, the Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey, got underway at the end of 2008. The launch marked a key milestone for SurveyLA and heralded the kickoff of field survey activities under the City's multi-year grant agreement with the J. Paul Getty Trust.

The pilot surveys are crucial to the success of the citywide survey because, in addition to generating useful survey data, they will also test the methodology of SurveyLA before it is used citywide.

The OHR will be testing all components of the survey program including documentation methods, pre-survey research and preparation, consistency of decision-making in the field, survey equipment (tablet PC, cameras), data management, communications and public participation strategies, and review and approval processes.

### Pilot Survey Areas

The pilot survey program covers three geographically

distinct portions of Los Angeles with quite divergent types of built resources:

Boyle Heights - This survey will focus on a geographic area that is extremely rich in ethnic and cultural history. The survey will cover Boyle Heights' residential neighborhoods, and will complement the Community Redevelopment Agency's (CRA) historic resources survey of the Adelante Eastside Redevelopment Area which focuses on commercial and industrial properties in Boyle Heights.



OHR staff, volunteers, and consultants gather during field survey training in Boyle Heights.  
Photo by Stephen Schafer

Streetcar Commercial Development, ca. 1910-1940s - Much of Los Angeles' early commercial development was shaped by the city's extensive streetcar system. This pilot survey will test this context, reviewing smaller-scale commercial architecture of our city. Two commercial corridors have been selected: Vermont Avenue between Martin Luther King Boulevard and Manchester Boulevard, and Pico Boulevard from the

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## NEW PRESERVATION ORDINANCE MOVES FORWARD

The City's Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) voted unanimously on November 20, 2008 to recommend to the City Council a significant overhaul of the City's historic preservation ordinance.

The Office of Historic Resources (OHR) is proposing important changes aimed at strengthening demolition review procedures, clarifying criteria for historic designation, and enhancing notification of private property owners. The City of Los Angeles' Cultural Heritage Ordinance, originally approved by the City Council in 1962, created the procedures for the designation and protection of significant buildings and sites as Historic-Cultural

Monuments. While the Ordinance has undergone several minor, procedural modifications, it has never been comprehensively updated to give Los Angeles a state-of-the-art historic preservation program.

The Cultural Heritage Commission held public workshops and hearings on these ordinance amendments during early 2008. The amendments have since gone through additional refinements as recommended by a Cultural Heritage Ordinance Working Group, convened by the OHR and the Office of Council President Eric Garcetti, that met last summer and early fall.

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## SURVEYLA PILOT SURVEY PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

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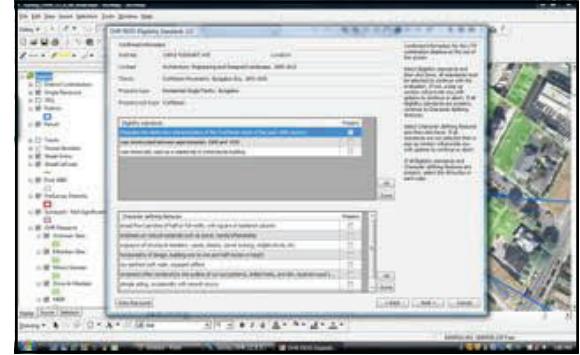
110 Freeway to Crenshaw Blvd.

Post WWII Suburbanization in the San Fernando Valley, ca. 1945-1965 - A large proportion of Los Angeles' built environment dates from the post-World War II era, including much of the San Fernando Valley and the Westside. To evaluate the speed at which large residential tracts may be evaluated during the Implementation Phase of the project, this Pilot Survey will examine suburbanization in the San Fernando Valley. This pilot survey includes two subareas - the East Valley communities between Victory Blvd. to the north, the 101 Freeway to the south, Whitsett Avenue to the east, and Woodman Avenue to the West, and West Valley communities between Vanowen St. to the north, the 101 Freeway to the south, Balboa Boulevard to the east, and Winnetka Avenue to the west.

The pilot surveys are being conducted by top historic preservation consulting firms, with assistance from trained SurveyLA volunteers who will be part of the survey field crews. The Boyle Heights survey is being conducted by Architectural Resources Group, with Christopher A. Joseph and Associates. The Streetcar Commercial and San Fernando Valley Post-War Suburbanization surveys are being conducted by Page and Turnbull, with Historic Resources Group and Galvin Preservation Associates.

To cover a city as large as Los Angeles, SurveyLA needed to move beyond the "pencil, paper, and clipboard" surveys of yesteryear, bringing historic resources surveys more fully into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Department of City Planning's Systems and GIS Division, in collaboration with the OHR and consult-

ants I C F Jones & Stokes and North-South G I S , Inc., spent many months during 2008



SurveyLA field interface allows surveyors to evaluate historic resources using a series of drop-down menus

developing a custom mobile field application and database for SurveyLA's field work. The mobile application will be accessed by the survey teams in tablet personal computers and will provide the surveyors with the information they need in the field to evaluate resources efficiently and consistently.

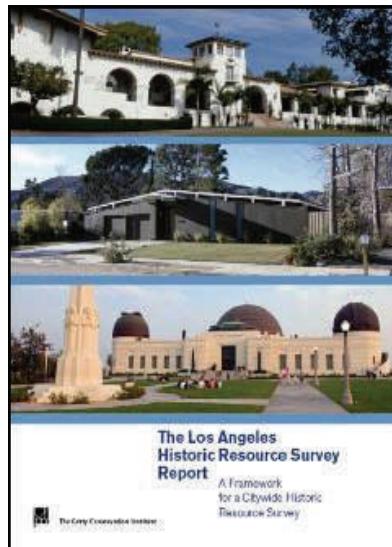
This application is structured as a multi-step "wizard" that allows a surveyor to make selections from a series of drop-down menus, all leading to an evaluation of the subject property. Surveyors will be able to access information in database form, gleaned from a citywide Historic Context Statement, which will include detailed "eligibility standards" for property types related to each applicable historic context. The OHR hopes that this application, which will be fully tested in the pilot survey program, may revolutionize the practice of historic resources surveys here in Los Angeles and in other cities.

The OHR looks forward to completing the pilot survey work by mid-2009 and sharing the results with the public.

## GETTY SURVEY REPORT RELEASED

The Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) has published The Los Angeles Historic Resource Survey Report, the document that laid the groundwork for SurveyLA.

The report, prepared by Kathryn Welch Howe, is the culmination of years of research by the GCI on "best practices" in historic resources survey work around the nation. It outlines a proposed structure for the citywide survey, details the importance of a citywide Historic Context Statement, discusses the need for rigorous criteria and evaluation methods, and underscores



the value of a centralized survey database.

The report also contains recommendations on communication and community engagement, funding of the survey, and linkages to historic preservation incentives.

GCI and the OHR hope that the report will prove useful to historic preservation professionals and to the general public in communities undertaking historic resources surveys.

The full report is available on the SurveyLA web site, <http://www.preservation.lacity.org/node/425>.

## NEW SURVEYLA VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

The SurveyLA project has attracted more than 70 volunteers eager to assist in this ground-breaking historic preservation project. To help coordinate the activities of all SurveyLA volunteers, the OHR has brought on an additional volunteer to fill the new role of "Volunteer Coordinator": **Caroline Labiner**.

A professional architect with a Masters in Architecture from MIT and an undergraduate degree in Architectural History from Harvard, Caroline is Secretary of the Windsor Square-Hancock Park Historical Society, former Board Chair of the

Los Angeles Children's Museum, and a Board member of the Barnsdall Art Park Foundation.

To sign up as a SurveyLA volunteer, go to <http://preservation.lacity.org/node/409>, or call our SurveyLA volunteer line, (213) 978-1190.



## OHR INTERNS

The OHR has been benefiting greatly from the work of five talented interns in recent months:

**Carli Chauvin** is a graduate of Arizona State University with a degree in Design Studies: History and Culture. Carli is conducting background research for SurveyLA and is also assisting the survey field crews.



From left, Robin Kim, Betsy Law, and Carli Chauvin

**Robin Kim**, a graduate of Williams College, is splitting her internship between the OHR and the Department of City Planning's Urban Design Studio. Robin has an interest in the intersection of urban design and historic preservation and worked previously for Suisman Urban Design in Santa Monica.

**Betsy Law** is a graduate of UCLA with a degree in Geography/Environmental Studies. A resident of Alhambra, Betsy is interested in pursuing a career in urban planning and is participating in the survey field work for SurveyLA.

**Eric Mendelson**, a former OHR intern, has returned to work at the OHR while on leave from Brown University. A graduate of Harvard-Westlake School, Eric has made invaluable contributions to the SurveyLA Field Guide to Survey Evaluation.



Sylvia Schweri and Eric Mendelson

**Sylvia Schweri** is a graduate of Northwestern University, with a Masters in Art History and Art Conservation from New York University. A newcomer to Los Angeles, Sylvia is extending her art conservation experience into historic preservation and urban planning.

### SurveyLA Background

**SurveyLA: The Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey Project** is the first-ever comprehensive inventory of our city's historic resources. The project will bring together all that is known—and much that is presently unknown—about Los Angeles' built heritage and make this information readily accessible on the web to shape decisions by policymakers, developers, planners, community organizations, and property owners.

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.

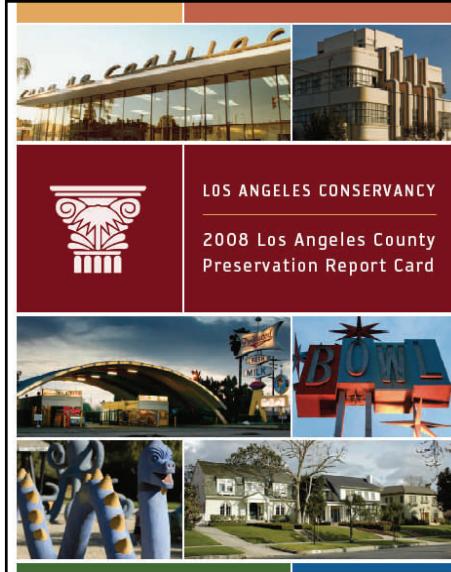
The J. Paul Getty Trust and the City of Los Angeles have entered into a grant agreement for SurveyLA under which the Getty has committed to providing up to \$2.5 million to the project, subject to certain matching requirements by the City. The survey is organized in two phases, to be completed over a multi-year period. The first two years of the project comprise the "Initiation Phase" during which survey tools and methods will be developed and tested. Field surveys and evaluations will occur in the "Implementation Phase," years three through five of the project (2009 to 2011). The Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) is also providing technical and advisory support for SurveyLA separate and apart from the grant funding. For more information visit the SurveyLA website, [www.SurveyLA.org](http://www.SurveyLA.org).



## LOS ANGELES GETS HIGH MARKS IN PRESERVATION REPORT CARD

The Los Angeles Conservancy released its 2008 Los Angeles County Preservation Report Card, issuing letter grades to all 88 incorporated cities in the County (plus Los Angeles County government) assessing the extent of each jurisdiction's protections for historic resources. The report is an update of a similar report card issued in 2003. The OHR is pleased that the City of Los Angeles received an "A-" for its preservation program, and was specially highlighted as a City government that had achieved "notable improvements."

Los Angeles is one of only seven cities in the County to receive an "A" or "A-" grade (Pasadena, South Pasadena, Santa



Monica, Long Beach, West Hollywood, and Whittier are the others). Los Angeles would have received a full "A", except that the City's Cultural Heritage Ordinance only provides for delay, rather than actual denial, of demolition permits for Historic-Cultural Monuments. The proposed amendments to the ordinance recently approved by the Cultural Heritage Commission (see p. 1) would rectify this shortcoming, so the City hopes to drop the "minus" from its "A" when the report card is next issued.

To read the full Report Card, see <http://www.laconservancy.org/issues/reportcard.php4>.

## WILSHIRE PARK BECOMES 24TH HPOZ

In November 2008, the Los Angeles City Council gave final approval to the Wilshire Park Historic Preservation Overlay Zone, making it the 24th HPOZ in the City of Los Angeles.

Wilshire Park includes 527 parcels and is roughly bounded by Wilshire Boulevard to the north, Olympic Boulevard to the south, Wilton Place to the east, and both sides of Bronson Avenue on the west. The Wilshire Park neighborhood was largely built out between 1905 and 1941, in an array of architectural styles including Craftsman, Mediterranean Revival, Colonial Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, and the largest collection of Dutch Colonial Revival within a single HPOZ.



A home in the Wilshire Park HPOZ

The Wilshire Park community deserves congratulations for taking a leadership role in conducting the neighborhood's historic resources survey and performing exemplary work in outreach and education.

## NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR FIRST HPOZ AWARDS

The OHR is seeking nominations of successful historic rehabilitation projects or community outreach activities in Los Angeles' 24 Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZ) for the first-ever citywide "HPOZ Awards." The new awards, meant to recognize quality work and commitment by individual property owners, will be handed out on May 30, 2009 at a luncheon as part of the annual HPOZ Conference, sponsored by the Department of City Planning and the Los Angeles Conservancy.

Awards may be given in the categories of rehabilitation, restoration, landscaping, paint, community outreach, and a "special" category for historical research, planning, or design. Eligible

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**Office of Historic Resources**  
Department of City Planning  
200 N. Spring Street, Room 620  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
(213) 978-1200  
Fax: (213) 978-0017

Office of Historic Resources Staff:  
Ken Bernstein, Manager  
Janet Hansen, Deputy Manager  
Lambert Giessinger, Preservation Architect  
Edgar Garcia, Preservation Planner  
Rita Moreno, Management Assistant

## OHR RELEASES GUIDE TO PLAQUE PROGRAM

Do you own a property that has been designated a City Historic-Cultural Monument, or do you know of a Monument in your own community that is deserving of wider recognition? If so, the OHR encourages your participation in the City's bronze plaque program for Historic-Cultural Monuments.

In recent years, the City of Los Angeles has lacked a budget to pay for the installation of plaques at Historic-Cultural Monument sites, but encourages property owners to do so as a sign of pride in owning one of the most significant historic properties in the city. In some cases, community organizations or Certified



Historic-Cultural Monument Plaque

## MILLS ACT PROGRAM CHANGES FOR 2009

The OHR is releasing a new guide for owners of historic properties interested in applying for potential property tax relief under the Mills Act Historical Property Contract program. With over 440 properties in the City's Mills Act program, the City is now more than halfway toward reaching its City Council-imposed cap of \$1 million in foregone City property tax revenue annually.



The Joseph L. Starr Farmhouse's owners will be able to rehabilitate this Jefferson Park home thanks to a successful application in the 2008 Mills Act program

single-family residences and \$3 million for multi-family/commercial properties) will be required to prepare an Historic Structure Report to substantiate more fully the current condition of the property and articulate a phased plan for proposed rehabilitation and maintenance work. For more information, visit <http://www.preservation.lacity.org/mills-act>

To ensure that the Mills Act benefits are appropriately targeted to those properties with the greatest need, the OHR is instituting new requirements for 2009. Properties seeking an Exemption from the Mills Act program's property valuation limits (\$1.5 million for

Neighborhood Councils have helped pay for the installation of plaques to promote a community's designated landmarks. City Council offices also frequently participate in a plaque dedication ceremony that brings the community together to celebrate a historic site's Monument status.

The OHR has recently released a policy guide to the plaque program that provides more detailed instruction on how to purchase and install a Monument plaque. Download the guide today at <http://www.preservation.lacity.org/node/428>.

## NEW PRESERVATION ORDINANCE (CONTINUED)

*(Continued from page 1)*

With the Cultural Heritage Commission's recent approval, the ordinance is next scheduled for consideration by the City Planning Commission at its January 22nd meeting in Van Nuys. To review the Commission agenda, go to <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/> and click on "Meetings and Hearings". Following Commission action, the ordinance will proceed to the City Council for consideration.

## HPOZ AWARDS (CONTINUED)

*(Continued from page 4)*

projects must be located within a Los Angeles HPOZ and must have been completed by December 31, 2008. The nomination deadline is March 16, 2009.

The HPOZ Conference, which has traditionally been focused on training for HPOZ Board members, is being expanded this year to welcome all HPOZ neighborhood residents and all community members who have an interest in the city's historic districts.

To download an awards nomination form or for updated information on the conference as it approaches, visit the OHR's web site, [www.preservation.lacity.org](http://www.preservation.lacity.org).

## LOS ANGELES' NEWEST HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENTS

The Cultural Heritage Commission and City Council have designated five new Historic-Cultural Monuments between October and December 2008. Los Angeles' newest monuments include the following:



### Santa Monica Forestry Station/ Eucalyptus Grove, HCM #935

(601 N. Latimer Road): Occupying eight acres, this grove of trees and plants in the Rustic Canyon area is a portion of the Santa Monica Forestry Station, established in 1888 as the nation's first experimental forestry station by Abbot Kinney (1850-1920), founder and developer of Venice, California. Kinney served on the California State Board of Forestry and secured the land to study eucalyptus trees and other species for local cultivation.

The grove is located adjacent to the Rustic Canyon Recreation Center (HCM #663), which was built as the Uplifters Clubhouse in 1923 when the area became camp grounds for several religious and social groups. The Forestry Station has also been designated as California Historical Landmark No. 840.



### Aldersgate/We Boys J.O.C. Lodge, HCM #936 (925 N. Haverford Ave.):

Built around 1910, this two-and-a-half story residential building exhibits character-defining features of Mission Revival-Craftsman architecture.

In 1928 the building was moved from the Wilshire district to Temescal Canyon by members of the First Methodist Church, who used it for the next 35 years as an institution for the instruction of young men ("We Boys") and young women (the "Jesus Our Companion" or "J.O.C." group), and as a guest lodge.

The building's façade has wide overhanging eaves above exposed knee braces, large Mission style dormers, and ball parapets. Its Craftsman-style interior has mahogany furnishing, sideboards, and accents.



### Westinghouse Electric Building, HCM #937 (420 S. San Pedro St.):

Completed in 1922 in downtown Los Angeles, this six-story mixed-use building exhibits character-defining features of Art Deco architecture. The building housed the Westinghouse Electric Company's Los Angeles headquarters

until 1948. Westinghouse rivaled General Electric in importance, and contributed to "the Golden Age of Electricity."

The building is constructed of steel and concrete and features an austere façade with a smooth surface. Pilasters and linear banding express the characteristic vertical emphasis of the Art Deco style.



### Scott Avenue Court, HCM #938 (1463- 69 4/5 Scott Ave.):

Constructed between 1927 and 1930, this ten-unit bungalow court in Echo Park

exhibits key features of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The buildings have stucco exteriors with varying decorative elements and window types, recessed entryways, and occasionally private patios.

Designed by John Freese, a draftsman in the architectural office of Schultz and Weaver, Scott Avenue Court exemplifies housing built to accommodate rapid growth in 1920s Echo Park.



### The Black Cat, HCM #939 (3909 W. Sunset Blvd.):

Built in 1939, this one-story building in Silver Lake was the site of one of the nation's earliest documented gay rights demonstrations, more than two

years before the more renowned Stonewall riots in New York City. Reacting in response to a violent police raid on New Year's Eve in 1966, between 300 and 600 individuals demonstrated peacefully at this site on February 11th, 1967. The court case resulting from the police raid was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court and was one of the first major legal actions in defense of the civil rights of homosexuals.

The Art Deco building, which has operated as a nightclub bar/laundromat since the early 1960s, sports a stylized parapet with fluted vertical projections and geometric motifs. The side elevations feature smooth stucco punctuated by fluted vertical pilasters.

