

## LOS ANGELES' CITYWIDE SURVEY PROJECT: HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE?

The launch of the Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey Project, recently renamed "SurveyLA," has generated considerable interest around the city, as well as the question: "How can I get involved in the project?"

In the past, some historic resources surveys were conducted by community volunteers. But in a city of the size and complexity of Los Angeles, a volunteer-driven city-wide survey is simply not practical: the SurveyLA assessments will be made by historic preservation professionals, in order to ensure the overall credibility and consistency of the project.

Nevertheless, the OHR will be partnering with volunteers,

including students and local community members, who can contribute information to the project that will help shape these future survey assessments.



SurveyLA will be seeking public input to identify sites of historic significance to local communities, including historic community anchors such as Little Tokyo's Far East Building. (Photo courtesy of Little Tokyo Service Center CDC)

The major field survey phase of the project will not begin until late Fall of 2008. Over the next year, the OHR will be completing the framework for the survey, through the preparation of a citywide Historic Context Statement, a Field Guide to Survey Evaluation, information management upgrades, and small pilot surveys. Community organizations, neighborhood councils, and preservation groups therefore have time to prepare by getting organized in your own community.

### How to Get Started

It's not too early to start getting organized to participate. Here are some ideas on how you and your community group may "plug in" to the survey project:

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## STATE AWARDS LOS ANGELES ITS FIRST CLG GRANT

The City of Los Angeles has been awarded its first-ever Certified Local Government (CLG) grant from the State of California's Office of Historic Preservation. The OHR has received \$25,000 for assistance in developing a Public Participation and Outreach Program for the five-year SurveyLA project.

The City achieved its long-awaited CLG status in April, providing official confirmation that the City now has in place the elements of a comprehensive and effective historic preservation program. CLG status makes the City eligible to apply for annual grants funded through the federal Historic Preservation Fund, and awarded by the State

Office of Historic Preservation.

The OHR wanted to target its first CLG grant to a program that would reach the entire city. The grant will enable the OHR to retain an outside consultant or organization to help identify, organize and train volunteers for a citywide Speakers Bureau for SurveyLA. The OHR will be deploying speakers throughout Los Angeles to meet with neighborhood councils, residential associations, historical societies, and business organizations.

The Speakers Bureau will be comprised of trained volunteers who will

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## SURVEYLA: HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE? (CONTINUED)

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- If you are part of a Certified Neighborhood Council or an established community organization, you may want to consider forming a special Historic Preservation Committee that can guide your community's participation in the project
- You might begin by starting an outreach and research effort in your community, paralleling the official citywide survey, to begin identifying key, local historic resources that may warrant further evaluation. While professional architectural historians are likely to identify sites with visible architectural significance, they are less likely to know about the more modest buildings that might have shaped your community.
- Begin thinking about how you and your community group might "surface" some of the less-than-obvious historically significant sites in your area. As you learn more about your community's heritage, consider how best to tell the story (through research, written narrative, and visual images) of why these places might be significant.
- To help you in that effort, think about the following questions: What were the places that served as key gathering places or key focal points of your community over many decades? Which structures were associated with the most important individuals that shaped your community's history? Which local buildings may have been associated with important architects whose work helped define the character of your area? What sites shaped social movements and the cultural evolution of your community? Which sites provide a key window into understanding the demographic changes that your community experienced over the years? Written information that helps answer these questions will prove

invaluable to the survey teams that will be conducting local field surveys.

- Your organization might put out a call for historic photos, creating a digital library of images on your community's history.
- Local volunteers might conduct oral history interviews with longtime residents of the area, focusing on the evolution of the built environment in your community. Oral history work can be very labor-intensive, yet invaluable in developing a deeper understanding of the forces and places that shaped our local history.
- Even compiling a contact list of key, knowledgeable people on your community and its local architecture would be enormously helpful to the survey teams.

### Volunteer Speakers Bureau

The OHR will be putting together a volunteer "Speakers Bureau" to do outreach presentations throughout the city on SurveyLA (see article on p. 1). If you are passionate about historic preservation, architecture or local history, and are looking for a way to make a meaningful contribution to our community, we hope you'll get involved. We are especially in need of volunteers who speak more than one language. Contact Janet Hansen at (213) 978-1191, or [janet.hansen@lacity.org](mailto:janet.hansen@lacity.org) to sign up on our interest list.

SurveyLA represents not only an opportunity to showcase Los Angeles' rich architectural heritage, but also an unparalleled opportunity for community organizations to become involved in a positive and enduring citywide initiative.

### 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 City's website to shape decisions by policymakers, developers, urban 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 five-year period. The first two years of the project are in an "Initiation Phase" that will structure the field-work phase of the survey. Survey evaluations will not occur until years three through five of the project (Fall 2008 to Fall 2011). The Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) is also providing technical and advisory support for SurveyLA separate and apart from the grant funding.

## CLG GRANT (CONTINUED)



The State Historical Resources Commission, at its May meeting in Hollywood, presented a resolution to the City of Los Angeles congratulating the City on its new Certified Local Government Status. From left, State Historical Resources Commission Chair Donn Grenda, PhD, Ken Bernstein of the Office of Historic Resources, City Cultural Heritage Commission President Mary Klaus-Martin, and State Historic Preservation Officer Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA.

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explain why the citywide survey is important, elicit meaningful input from all segments of Los Angeles' communities, and help community members understand how they can get involved in the project.

The grant will also help ensure that SurveyLA will adequately address the linguistic diversity of Los Angeles. It will provide translation services and printing costs for a SurveyLA informational brochure, to be translated into Spanish and two other languages (to be determined). Finally, the grant will assist in the translation and distribution of a survey informational video.

Together with the forthcoming SurveyLA website, these strategies will help enable the Office of Historic Resources to conduct an effective outreach program in Los Angeles' diverse communities as the project unfolds.

## MIA LEHRER JOINS CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has appointed Miriam "Mia" Guttfreund Lehrer, ASLA, an internationally acclaimed landscape designer, to the Cultural Heritage Commission. Former commissioner Carlos Singer resigned from the Commission in May, and recently accepted a position as Deputy Counsel in Mayor Villaraigosa's office.

Ms. Lehrer is founding principal of the Los Angeles landscape architecture firm, Mia Lehrer + Associates. Born in San Salvador, El Salvador, Ms. Lehrer received her Master of Landscape Architecture from the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University. She worked on large-scale public projects such as the World Bank Coastal Zone Project in El Salvador, as well as small, intimate gardens for residential clients.

Ms. Lehrer leads the ML + A office on a diverse range of ambitious public and private projects that include large urban parks, such as the expansive Baldwin Hills Park Master Plan; historic renovation projects such as the outdoor plaza at the Capitol Records building in Hollywood, as residential projects that vary in scale and context. She is on the Board of Directors at TreePeople and the College Dance Theater, and she serves on the Hollywood Design Review Committee.



Cultural Heritage Commissioner Mia Lehrer

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## PROFILE: OFFICE OF HISTORIC RESOURCES SUMMER INTERNS

The Office of Historic Resources is benefiting this summer from the invaluable work of two talented undergraduate summer interns:

**Brian Schwartz** is a senior at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, where he is a History and Geography double major. Born and raised in Los Angeles, he is interested in the interaction between current public policy and the historic nature of his home city. In his internship, Brian is responsible for researching the historic preservation policies of other major cities, with the goal of providing guidance for the future update of Los Angeles' own preservation ordinance. After college he plans to attend law school and hopes to practice law with a focus on urban land-use issues.



Brian Schwartz and John Mimms

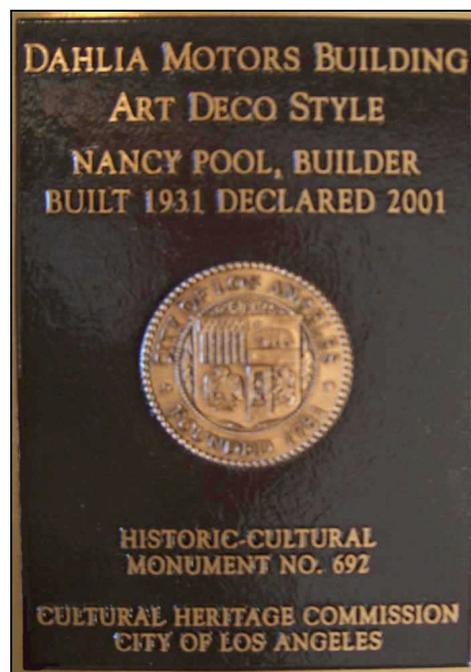
**John Mimms** has joined the Office of Historic Resources through the Getty Foundation Multicultural Internship program, designed at providing undergraduate students the opportunity to work in arts-related careers. John is a lifelong resident of Los Angeles who grew up in the Faircrest Heights neighborhood in Mid City. Interested in architecture, he is currently a junior at Columbia University majoring in Urban Studies. At OHR, John has been working on the SurveyLA project, assisting the office in shaping the public participation component of the project.

## PLAQUES AVAILABLE FOR HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENTS

The Office of Historic Resources is pleased to announce the reinstatement of the Historic-Cultural Monument Bronze Plaque Program. The OHR is proud to collaborate with the Southern California Bronze Company in the design and production of these beautiful plaques.

As the OHR works to increase the awareness of the City's historic sites and buildings, we encourage property owners of Historic-Cultural Monuments to purchase and display Monument plaques. The City's standard bronze plaque is 7" by 10" and contains text describing the Monument. In addition, the plaque includes the Los Angeles City Seal and the name of our Commission. The language and placement of the plaque on the property is reviewed and approved by the Cultural Heritage Commission and/or Office of Historic Resources Staff.

For additional information or to order your plaque please contact the Office of Historic Resources at (213) 978-1200.



## LOS ANGELES' NEWEST HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENTS

Between April 15 and July 15, 2007, the Cultural Heritage Commission and the City Council have completed the approval of ten new properties to the City's list of Historic-Cultural Monuments. Los Angeles' newest designated landmarks include distinctive commercial buildings that have recently undergone conversion to new housing units, some of the city's pioneering luxury apartment complexes, and one of downtown's earliest industrial properties.



**Mayfair Apartments and Rooftop Neon Sign, HCM #867** (1760 North Wilcox Ave.) Built in 1925 and designed by architect William Allen, the four-story residential apartment exemplifies the Romanesque/Renaissance Revival style and is a

distinguished example of an early multi-family building in the Hollywood area, with its neon "Mayfair" sign atop the property. The Classical Revival style gives the Mayfair a sophistication that contrasts with the period's ubiquitous two-story bungalows.



**O'Neill Duplex No. 1, #868** (2342-2344 West Cove Ave.) This 1953 duplex built for Virginia O'Neill is situated in the hills overlooking Silver Lake and represents a classic example of International Style residential architecture. The house was planned and

constructed by noted design-builder Rodney A. Walker, who achieved widespread recognition for his mid-Century Modern designs through his early work for R.M. Schindler and creation of Case Study Project Houses #16-#18.



**Bakman House, #869** (10623 Riverside Drive) Built in 1929 for pioneering San Fernando Valley landowner and businessman Dan Bakman, this Spanish Colonial Revival style house was one of the original homes in the Toluca Lake area. Bakman, a

managing partner of the Bonner Fruit Packing Company, lived in the house until his death, and it remains one of the finest examples of early residential development in the East San Fernando Valley.



**San Marino Villas, #870** (3390-3396 West San Marino St.) Constructed in 1923, this three story apartment building in the Wilshire Center area is a distinguished example of Spanish Colonial/Mission Revival style

architecture and the early development of the luxury apartment. Designed by architect H. Monroe Banfield, the San Marino Villas afforded residents large units the size of a private home.



**810 South Spring Street Building, #871** (810 South Spring St.) Built in 1924, this twelve-story Beaux-Arts style building represents a prominent, well-preserved example of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial and financial development of Spring Street in downtown Los Angeles, once known as the "Wall Street of the West." Architects Albert R. Walker and Percy A. Eisen

designed the building, now being converted to live-work condominiums, and were responsible for other Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments, including the Fine Arts Building (HCM #125) and the Oviatt Building (HCM #195).



**Raphael-Junction Block Building, #872** (1635-1637 North Spring St.) Built in 1889 for early pioneering Los Angeles businessman Charles Raphael, the Victorian-era Flatiron style building represents one of the earliest industrial developments in the downtown "Cornfields" area near the L.A. River and Spring St.

Bridge. Significant for its unique late 19<sup>th</sup> Century triangular design and status as one of the oldest surviving buildings in this area of downtown, the Raphael Building once housed tenants of the New York Suspender Factory and California Ice Company.



**Higgins Building, #873** (108 West 2<sup>nd</sup> St.) Constructed in 1910, this 10-story Beaux-Arts style commercial building was designed and built by noted architect Arthur L. Haley and engineer Albert Carey Martin. In addition to pioneering the use of concrete for multi-story building construction with the Higgins Building, A.C. Martin would eventually

be responsible for two other Los Angeles City Historic-Cultural Monuments, including Los Angeles City Hall. This building was recently rehabilitated into loft-style housing, with ground floor restaurants and the trendy Edison Bar in the basement.

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## LOS ANGELES' NEWEST HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENTS (CONTINUED)

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**Garber House, #874** (6058 Scenic Ave.) Built in 1922, this English Tudor Revival style house is located near the Hollywoodland area in Beachwood Canyon. The home was commissioned by Winifred Garber, an important early developer of Los Angeles, and was designed by architect Herbert A. Linthwaite, notable for inventing the “hollow channel concrete wall.”



**Val D'Amour Apartments, #875** (854 S. Oxford Ave.) Built in 1928 in the Pellissier Square neighborhood of Wilshire Center, this six-story residential apartment building is an exceptional example of Art Deco residential architecture. The building is representative of Los Angeles' luxury apartments of the 1920's, and is a contrib-

uting structure to the Wilshire Center Apartment District, determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.



**Hollywood Professional Building, #876** (7046 Hollywood Blvd.) Constructed in Hollywood in 1924 and designed by architect Richard King, this eight-story Neo-Gothic commercial building housed the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) from 1938 to 1953. The building is significant to the development of the Hollywood entertainment industry, and once housed the office of President Ronald Reagan during his tenure as president of SAG, 1947 to 1953.

## MILLS ACT PROGRAM SETS NEW RECORD

The OHR has received more than 70 applications this year for Mills Act Historical Property Contracts – the most in the 11-year history of Los Angeles' program. The Mills Act program allows owners of qualifying historic properties to enter into a ten-year contract with the City of Los Angeles, agreeing to restore, maintain and protect their property in accordance with historic preservation standards in exchange for a potentially significant reduction in property taxes. Qualifying properties include locally-designated Historic-Cultural Monuments and Contributing Properties in Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZs).

The OHR has also proposed an amendment to the City's Mills Act ordinance to reflect recent increases in local property val-

ues. Today, the ordinance limits eligibility to single-family residences with a property tax value assessment of not more than \$500,000 and to income-producing multi-family/commercial/industrial properties with a property tax value assessment of not more than \$1,500,000. While owners of properties with values in excess of these limits may apply for an exemption if they meet certain criteria, these limitations were imposed in 1996 when Los Angeles' median home value was only \$162,000. Recognizing that home values have more than tripled in the past decade, the proposed amendment would increase these valuation limits to \$1.5 million for single-family properties, and \$3 million for commercial and multi-family properties. The amendment will go before the City Council in the coming months.

## SIXTH ANNUAL HPOZ CONFERENCE

The OHR and the Community Planning Bureau of the Department of City Planning joined forces with the Los Angeles Conservancy to host the sixth annual citywide Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) Conference on May 19. The conference is the annual gathering of all HPOZ Board members and staff members who help oversee Los Angeles' 22 designated historic districts.



University Park HPOZ resident Ed Connery points out issues facing his district to City staff members and HPOZ Board members from throughout the city.

This year's conference was the first to include walking tours, featuring instructive case studies from the University Park HPOZ. The event also included a panel addressing issues of ethnic and cultural diversity in HPOZs, featuring Councilmember Ed Reyes, San Fernando City Councilmember Maribel de la Torre, and Department of Neighborhood Empowerment Assistant General Manager Bong Hwan Kim.