

CULTURAL HERITAGE ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS CONTINUED BY PLANNING COMMISSION

The City Planning Commission on July 9 deferred action on proposed amendments to the City's Cultural Heritage Ordinance, requesting that staff bring back to the Commission on September 10 potential language refinements on a single issue: the designation of the interiors of residential properties.

The City of Los Angeles' Cultural Heritage Ordinance, originally approved by the City Council in 1962, details the procedures for the designation and protection of significant Los Angeles buildings and sites as Historic-Cultural Monuments. The proposed changes are aimed at strengthening demolition review procedures, clarifying criteria for historic designation, and enhancing notifications and protections for private property owners.

The Cultural Heritage Commission recommended approval of these amendments in November 2008, incorporating the recommendations of a diverse Cultural Heritage Ordinance Working Group that met throughout the summer of 2008. Nevertheless, after

many property owners of Historic-Cultural Monuments expressed concerns about the proposed changes, the OHR held three public workshops this year to discuss the ordinance with property owners.



Pacific Electric Building, HCM No. 104

The City Planning Commission held an initial public hearing on the ordinance on June 11, before giving direction to Office of Historic Resources (OHR) staff to continue discussions with affected parties and to report back at the July 9 meeting on 13 specific issues raised during the public testimony.

Over the past month, OHR staff worked to address these issues, and also continued discussions with representatives of the development community, Monument property owners, and the Los Angeles Conservancy. These discussions have resulted in a number of proposed changes to the draft ordinance, including the following:

*** Designation of Interiors:** At the June hearing, several property owners argued that the regulation of interiors raises privacy concerns and potential issues surrounding

(Continued on page 2)

JOINT COMMISSION MEETING SPOTLIGHTS WATTS TOWERS CONSERVATION EFFORTS

The Cultural Heritage Commission will hold a joint meeting with the City's Cultural Affairs Commission on Thursday, July 16, 2009 at 1:00 p.m., in City Hall, Rm. 1010, to discuss the City of Los Angeles' ongoing conservation activities at the Watts Towers.

The Watts Towers were constructed between 1921 and 1954 by Simon Rodia and are located at 1761-1765 East 107th Street. Rodia's creation is a jewel within the Watts neighborhood — a strong symbol of creative endeavor against all odds and a source of pride for the community.

When speaking about the Towers, Simon Rodia said, "I had in mind to do something big and I did it."

Working alone and using simple hand tools and cast-off materials — broken glass, sea shells, generic pottery and ceramic tile — Rodia, an Italian immigrant, spent over 30 years building a tribute to his adopted country and a monument to the spirit of individuals who make their dreams tangible.

The Towers became a City Historic-

(Continued on page 3)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>In Brief</i>	2
<i>-Mills Act Interest</i>	
<i>-CLG Grant Awarded</i>	
<i>HPOZ Conference</i>	3
<i>Your Historic LA</i>	4
<i>LA's Newest Historic-Cultural Monuments</i>	5
<i>OHR Interns</i>	6



CULTURAL HERITAGE ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 1)

the legitimate powers of local government. A majority of big-city preservation ordinances either prohibit designation of interior spaces altogether or significantly limit interior designations to areas that are regularly accessible to the public. The new draft ordinance therefore recommends new language that would restrict designation of interiors to publicly accessible spaces. Private interior spaces could still be included in the designations upon agreement of the property owner, and would automatically be included when interior work is reviewed as part of a Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit project or Mills Act Historical Property Contract.

At the July 9 hearing, representatives of the West Adams Heritage Association (WAHA) and several other neighborhood preservation organizations expressed strong concerns about the loss of review for private interiors. The Commission continued the discussion to September 10, so that staff and affected parties can explore language that would extend interior protections to residential properties:

*** Inventory of Character-Defining Features:** Many property owners have requested greater clarity as to the specific "character-defining features" covered by a Historic-Cultural Monument designation. Under the ordinance changes, all new Monument designations would contain an inventory of these features. In addition, any existing Monument owner may request preparation of such an inventory at any time, by submitting a draft inventory to the department, based upon a report by a qualified historic preservation consultant.

*** Owner representation on Cultural Heritage Commission:** The new draft ordinance now proposes a requirement that two of the seven members of the expanded Cultural Heritage Commission be owners of Historic-Cultural Monuments: one shall be an owner of a residential Monument, and one shall be an owner of a commercial or industrial Monument.

A complete summary of the draft ordinance, including a full summary of the most recent ordinance changes, may be found at <http://www.preservation.lacity.org/node/94>.

The OHR believes that the new ordinance will significantly improve upon the current preservation review process, in the following ways:

- * The Cultural Heritage Commission will have the power to deny, not just temporarily delay, proposed demolitions of Historic-Cultural Monuments.
- * The ordinance will create a more "up front" system of preservation review, rather than continuing to surprise owners with review of proposed work only at the "back end," at a project's

permit phase.

* The new ordinance will create greater clarity for owners and make clear that certain work, such as ordinary maintenance and repair, is exempt from review altogether.

* The new ordinance will, for the first time, ensure that property owners have the right to participate in all public hearings on the potential designation of a property as a Monument.

MILLS ACT PROGRAM CONTINUES TO GENERATE WIDESPREAD INTEREST

The OHR received 69 Mills Act Historical Property Contract applications by the annual submission deadline on June 26.

The Mills Act is the City's most significant financial incentive for owners of historic properties, providing potential property tax relief to owners of City Historic-Cultural Monuments or "Contributing Structures" within Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZs).

The 2009 applications break down by property type as follows:

- 3 Commercial
- 7 Multi-Family Residential
- 59 Single-Family Residential

Of these, three properties have applied for an exemption from the program's property valuation limits of \$3,000,000 for commercial, industrial or condominium properties and \$1,500,000 for single-family properties. Two exemptions are for single-family properties and one is for a commercial property. Each of the exemption applications has prepared the required Historic Structure Report to describe the rationale for granting an exemption. The exemption cases will be scheduled for review by the Cultural Heritage Commission in mid-September. It is anticipated that with this year's applications the City will be at approximately \$650,000 of the available \$1,000,000 of lost revenue for the Mills Act program.

LOS ANGELES AWARDED CLG GRANT

For the third consecutive year, the City of Los Angeles has been awarded a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant by the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). This year's grant, for \$25,000, will help create a pioneering electronic data transfer system, allowing historic resources data collected from SurveyLA to go directly to OHP and the State's Historic Resources Inventory. During the past two years, CLG grants have enabled the OHR to develop public participation materials for SurveyLA.

WATTS TOWERS (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 1)

Cultural Monument in 1963 and were later added to the National Register of Historic Places (1977). In 1990, the Towers also became a National Historic Landmark.

While this landmark has had several owners during its lifetime, the California Department of Parks and Recreation is the current owner of the property. The City of Los Angeles' Department of Cultural Affairs has responsibility for maintenance and conservation of the Towers themselves under a 50-year lease. Because the Towers are a City Historic-Cultural Monument, the Office of Historic Resources and Cultural Heritage Commission play an oversight role, reviewing work on the Towers.

After the Towers were passed on to the State, a Preservation Plan as well as a Maintenance and Restoration Guide were created for the site by the Ehrenkrantz Group in 1983. These guides have been updated periodically as new conservation materials become available and are tested for use at the Towers. The site's conservation staff consists of three full-time City employees, with part-time structural engineering services provided through an annual City contract.

FEMA funds have been available to the Department of Cul-



Watts Towers, HCM No. 15

tural Affairs to repair damage to the Towers in the aftermath of earthquakes and wind storms. However, lack of consistent City funding for more general conservation of the Towers has affected its ongoing upkeep.

Although the intricate and delicate nature of the Towers is the essence of their design, these qualities make the maintenance and renovation of the towers problematic, and will require a continual commitment to the Towers' conservation.

Currently, public tours at the Watts Towers are restricted to enable repair of the damage to the center tower and the floor, sustained during the storms of 2004-05. During repairs, the Watts Towers Arts Centers have remained open, and perimeter tours have been offered, although visitors have not been able to venture beyond the security fencing. The tour hours are Thursday-Saturday 10:30 – 3:30 p.m., and Sunday, 12:30 – 3:30 p.m. For more information, call (213) 847-4646.

The OHR and Cultural Heritage Commission are committed to working with State Parks, the Department of Cultural Affairs, the Watts community, and friends and supporters of the Towers, to create sustainable partnerships that will ensure the long-term conservation of this unique Los Angeles landmark.

HPOZ CONFERENCE DRAWS RECORD CROWD

On Saturday, May 30, the Department of City Planning and the Los Angeles Conservancy sponsored the eighth annual Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) Conference, at Angelica Lutheran Church in Pico Union. This year's conference was the largest ever, attracting 150 attendees. It featured multiple tracks of sessions, including a "hands-on" session on window repair techniques (photo at left).



The conference also included the first-ever "HPOZ Awards" recognizing exemplary

projects and community outreach efforts in Los Angeles' 24 HPOZs. The award winners included: Nolte Lofts in University Park, Pisgah Village in Highland Park, and the rehabilitation of 1400 Alvarado Terrace in Pico-Union. Community Outreach Awards were presented to the Mar Vista Tract Website, the Highland Park Heritage Trust Brochure, as well as Rev. Carlos Paiva of Angelica Lutheran Church and Gloria Farias of Pico-Union Housing Corporation. We encourage you to attend next year's conference.



INTRODUCE US TO YOUR HISTORIC LA!

Do you have information about a local lesser-known building or place that is an important part of your community history? OHR wants to hear from you! Tell us about your favorite Los Angeles gems: the homes of your early community leaders; the locations of transformative social and political movements; the buildings that reveal the strong ethnic diversity of the city; significant cultural institutions; and intact districts of early homes or commercial buildings.

The “MYhistoricLA” component of SurveyLA gives you an opportunity to contribute your knowledge about Los Angeles, assisting the project’s professional survey teams in identifying and evaluating potential resources and districts in your community. Identifying a potential resource through “MYhistoricLA” does not mean that your site will receive historic designation – it may not ultimately be found to be significant – but your submission will ensure that potentially significant places are not overlooked during the survey.

How can you pass along this information? Simply go to the SurveyLA website today and click on the “MyHistoricLA” form at <http://www.preservation.lacity.org/survey/historic-identification>.

The OHR has already received some fascinating submissions about hidden Los Angeles treasures. Here is a sampling:

Iverson Movie Location Ranch

More than 2,000 movies and television shows were filmed on the **Iverson Movie Location Ranch** in Chatsworth from 1912 through the 1960s. Jerry England writes about the Garden of the Gods, an “extraordinary” group of rock outcroppings that “is one of the most recognizable locations ever filmed during the golden era of the B-Western movie.” Hundreds of famous Hollywood cowboys – including John Wayne, Gary Cooper, and Gene Autry – wandered these trails, making the Iverson

Ranch a memorable piece of film and Valley history.

Dvorak/Fenton Residence

Christina Rice submitted the **Dvorak/Fenton Residence**, a Spanish Colonial Revival home in Encino. The estate belonged to actress Ann Dvorak and her husband actor/director Leslie Fenton from 1934 to 1944. Rice writes, “Ranches owned by members of the film industry played a significant role in the development of the San Fernando Valley in the 1930s-1940s, but many of these historic properties have been demolished.” The home extensively features tiles manufactured by D&M, an important producer of tile in California during the ‘30s, and most of the original fixtures have been preserved.

Margaret Hay House

Located in Hollywood, the **Margaret Hay House**, built in 1939, is a fine example of a Mid-Century Modern residence designed by locally-renowned architect Gregory Ain. An anonymous contributor writes that the home first belonged to Margaret May, “who was the mother of Harry Hay, the founder of the Mattachine Society and the father of gay rights in the United States.” Though Hay himself lived in Silver Lake, the contributor believes that he held the first Mattachine meetings in his mother’s home.

Apple Pan

Located at 10801 W. Pico Boulevard in West Los Angeles, the **Apple Pan** has been a cherished fast food spot in Los Angeles since 1947. An anonymous contributor reminisces: “It has not changed in over 60 years in any way. They still serve you at the U-shaped counter...It stands out among a sea of nondescript structures.”



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 (late 2009 to 2012). 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.

LOS ANGELES' NEWEST HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENTS

The Cultural Heritage Commission and City Council have designated eleven new Historic-Cultural Monuments (HCMs) between April and June 2009. Los Angeles' newest monuments include the following:



Bank of America – Echo Park Branch, HCM #949 (1572 W. Sunset Blvd.) This commercial building at the center of Echo Park's business district was built in 1908 and later redesigned in the Beaux Arts style by the noteworthy architectural firm Morgan, Walls, and Clements in 1926. After the renovation, Commercial National Trust and Savings occupied the building and later became Bank of America, which operates the branch to this day.

Original Echo Park Clubhouse, HCM #950 (100 N. Echo



Park Ave.) This institutional building in the Craftsman style was erected in 1908 by the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks as a clubhouse for Echo Park. The building moved to its current site adjacent to the park in 1925, and was replaced by what is now the Echo Park Recreation Center (HCM #836). The building's architects, Sumner P. Hunt, W. Wesley Eager, and Silas Burns, of the firm Hunt, Eager & Burns, are also responsible for the design of several other HCMs.



James F. Real Studio Office, HCM #951 (77 Patrician Way) When it was built in 1958, this Late Modern style building was the first in Los Angeles to utilize the "Thin Shell" construction method, where the roof and its supports are poured in concrete as a single piece. Engineer William C. Taylor and architect Arthur G. Lavagnino designed the building as an office for real estate developer James F. Real,

the original owner of the adjacent Eagle Rock (HCM #10) and surrounding land.



Kaye Residence, HCM #952 (4754 Vanalden Ave.) Constructed in 1963 and located in Tarzana, this two-story, single family residence was designed by Gregory Ain in the Modernist style. Ain was a master architect who worked early in

his career with architects Richard Neutra and R. M. Schindler. Other works by Ain include the Charles H. Edwards House (HCM #260), Amsalem A. Ernst House (HCM #840), and the Mar Vista Tract (designated HPOZ).



Foreman and Clark Building, HCM #953 (701 S. Hill St.) This 13-story commercial building was constructed in 1929 at the downtown intersection of Hill and Seventh Streets. The firm Curlett & Beelman Architects designed the building in the Art Deco-Gothic style with facades clad in concrete and terra cotta arranged in the classic base-shaft-capital composition. This building was the flagship of a Los Angeles-based department store chain, Foreman & Clark, noted for their distinctive second-story window displays.



Dunsmuir Flats, HCM #954 (1281 S. Dunsmuir Ave.) Built in 1938 and located in the Wilshire Vista Heights neighborhood, this multi-family residential building was designed in the International Style by architect Gregory Ain. The complex consists of four interconnected two-story flat roof buildings, each with a separate covered entry at the first floor and bedrooms opening onto trellised balconies on the second floor.



Dickinson and Gillespie Building, HCM #955 (200 E. Culver Blvd.) This two-story commercial building in the Spanish Colonial Revival style was built in 1922 for the real estate company of Dickinson & Gillespie. The company was established in Minneapolis but relocated to this building in Playa del Rey in 1924. Under the control of Fritz B. Burns, who oversaw the development of the building, the company developed Windsor Hills, Westside Village, Toluca Woods, and West Westchester.



Villa Bonita, HCM #956 (1817 N. Hillcrest Road) Tremendous growth fueled by the entertainment industry in Hollywood during the 1920's and 30's led to the development of denser housing, such as this seven-story apartment constructed in 1929. The building was designed by local architect Frank Webster in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The building's original owner and various residents of the building were associated with the Hollywood entertainment industry. Villa Bonita is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



Great Republic Life Building, HCM #957 (756 S. Spring St.) Built downtown in 1923, this 13-story commercial building is associated with the development of Spring Street as the "Wall

(Continued on page 6)

LOS ANGELES' NEWEST HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENTS (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 5)

Street of the West” in the early part of the 20th Century. The architectural firm of Walker & Eisen designed the building in the Beaux Arts style, and was responsible for such landmarks as the Fine Arts Building (HCM #125), Texaco/United Artists Building (HCM #523), and Oviatt Building (HCM #195).



Bob Baker Marionette Theater, HCM #958 (1345 W. First St.) Bob Baker is a Los Angeles-based puppeteer who began working with puppets at the age of seven. He went on to form his own company, Bob Baker Productions, after working for Academy Award-winning George Pal Animation. In 1961 Baker purchased this one-story commercial building, constructed in

1953 just west of downtown, for use as a live puppet theater and showcase for marionettes. It is the longest-running puppet theater in the nation and the only one of its kind in Los Angeles.



See's Candy Shop and Kitchen No. 1, HCM #959 (135-139 N. Western Ave.) Charles Alexander See opened the first See's Candy Shop and Kitchen in this two-story Italian Renaissance Revival style commercial building in 1921. Based on candy recipes from his mother, Mary See, it is in this building that the See family developed its distinctive store design and aesthetic. The company now includes more than 200 shops and is California's largest boxed chocolate manufacturer.

OHR INTERNS MAKE THEIR MARK

The Office of Historic Resources is benefiting from the work of four remarkable interns this summer:

Laura Dominguez is the OHR's participant in the Getty Multicultural Summer Internship program, which provides an internship stipend to talented undergraduate students. She will be a senior next fall at Columbia University, majoring in the History and Theory of Architecture. Last summer, she completed an internship with the public programs division of the J. Paul Getty Museum. While studying in New York, she has been an intern with the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, where she wrote a walking tour of the South Village neighborhood.

Karolina Gorska joins the OHR while pursuing her Master's degree in Urban Planning at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design, where she serves as the American Planning Association class representative and as a teaching assistant for urban planning courses. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Architecture from Wellesley College. She worked previously as a Regional Planning Assistant for the Los Angeles County De-



Karolina Gorska and Laura Dominguez

partment of Regional Planning, and as an intern for the Collections Management Department of the L.A. County Museum of Art (LACMA).

Jenna Kachour is an experienced urban planner, with a Bachelor of Science in Public Policy, Management and Planning, a Master's in Planning (with a concentration in Economic Development), and a Graduate Certificate in Historic Preservation, all from the University of Southern California. She has worked as an Assistant Project Manager for Brown/Meshul, Inc., a land-use planning consulting firm and as a planning consultant for Deborah Murphy Urban Design + Planning.

Bill Magruder joined the OHR as an intern this spring, upon returning to the United States from his ongoing graduate studies in International Integrated Urban Studies at Bauhaus-University in Weimar, Germany. He has a Bachelor of Arts in German Studies from Bard College, and a Master of Arts in Cultural Geography from the University of British Columbia. While in British Columbia, Bill worked as a volunteer for Heritage Vancouver, assisting with research, writing and event planning for historic preservation advocacy.

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



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