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Photo Credit: Adrian Scott Fine: Mercer/Vine

Lost and Almost Lost: B'nai B'rith Lodge and the Marilyn Monroe Residence

Two high-profile advocacy issues recently came into the spotlight — B'nai B'rith Lodge and the Marilyn Monroe Residence — case studies that illustrate how the City of Los Angeles, its elected officials, and agencies impact which historic places are or are not protected. In both cases owners seeking demolition claimed no plans to build on the sites, simply wanting to demolish a historic place for nothing.

B'nai B'rith Lodge is currently undergoing demolition and the Marilyn Monroe Residence is now a designated Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM). While the current status, players involved, and stories are very different, the tactics applied for both are essentially the same, using legal action to pressure the City. This illustrates why it is important for the City of Los Angeles to follow and enforce adopted ordinances, and adhere to state laws for environmental review and transparency.

When this does not take place, or exceptions are made that allow property owners to sidestep the planning process and consideration of alternatives to demolition, not only do we needlessly lose historic places but the entire process the public relies on is undermined.

B'nai B'rith Lodge

Earlier this year, the beautiful B'nai B'rith Lodge (1924), located in Westlake, came under risk of imminent demolition. B'nai B'rith is not just architecturally significant but has strong ties to Jewish history; it was built as a center for Jewish social gatherings before becoming a Teamsters Hall. But thanks to the City of Los Angeles and the owner of the building, Catholic Charities, it will soon be nothing more than an empty lot with no plans to build anything in its place.

Previously a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) nomination was submitted to the City for consideration by the Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC), but the City ultimately withdrew it due to claims made by Catholic Charities about interference with religious purposes. Catholic Charities states nothing is planned, despite previously announcing a project for this site. Following a lawsuit from Catholic Charities and despite strong community opposition and from the Con servancy, the

Coming Soon to a Mailbox Near You!

Since 1978, communication with our members has been paramount. We simply could not exist without your support—every day, you help strengthen our voice and influence in saving historic places—and the Conservancy holds a deep responsibility to ensure you are kept up to date on all of our work.

Los Angeles Conservancy News has been a primary member communication channel for decades. Although it has served its purpose well, we always seek opportunities to enrich member experiences and provide more meaningful communication.

That's why we're pleased to announce that we're revitalizing our membership publication! Starting Fall 2024, members will receive a quarterly that will provide you with a deeper, more powerful connection to the Conservancy's work and mission. We'll take you into the field to connect you more intimately with our education and preservation work. You'll read inspirational stories from fellow members, keep up to date on events, and learn about happenings in historic preservation across L.A., all in a full-color, visually striking new format!

This new membership quarterly be a dynamic publication and a source of pride for all our members. As we step into a new era, we want members to know that all previous issues of Los Angeles Conservancy News have been archived. Recognizing how many of our members value (and often collect) our newsletters, we're making an archive of previous issues available on our website. See you in the fall!

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The Los Angeles Conservancy is a nonprofit membership organization that works through education and advocacy to recognize, preserve, and revitalize the historic architectural and cultural resources of Los Angeles County.



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Major funding for the Los Angeles Conservancy's programs is provided by the LaFetra Foundation and the Kenneth T. and Fileen I. Norris Foundation

In Memoriam



Nabih Youssef (1944 - 2024)

Nabih Youssef, a former board member of the Los Angeles Conservancy, recently passed away at the age of 80.

Youssef was a highly regarded and awardwinning structural engineer who played a key role in the success of numerous preservation projects during his tenure

with the Conservancy. Born in Egypt, he emigrated to the United States and began his career at Welton Becket. It was there he first focused on earthquake engineering and embarked on a pioneering career in seismic design and safety. In 1989, he established his firm, Nabih Youssef & Associates, a leader in its field.

He is perhaps best remembered for his work on L.A. Live and the Cathedral of Our Lady of Angels, and was behind numerous renovations across Los Angeles, including L.A. City Hall and Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House. Youssef shared his passions with numerous non-profits and institutions, teaching at various universities for decades, and received numerous accolades, Thanks to his design ingenuity, Youssef leaves a lasting foundation in L.A.'s built environment.



Alan Sieroty (1931 - 2024)

By Margaret Bach

The Los Angeles Conservancy is saddened to learn of the passing of Alan Sieroty: founding Conservancy board member and civic leader, who died on March 16 in Los Angeles at 93.

Alan Sieroty's roots in our city ran

deep, and his impact on the rich cultural tapestry of Los Angeles cannot be underestimated. "Thanks to Alan's support," recalls Ruthann Lehrer, the Conservancy's first executive director, "our first office space in the Art-Deco masterpiece, the Eastern Columbia Building built by Alan's grandfather, reinforced the L.A. Conservancy's presence, identity, and sense of purpose." Alan will be especially remembered as a gifted policymaker during his career as a California legislator from 1966-1982.

As a state Senator, he played a key role in creating the California Coastal Commission and championed disability rights, environmental protection, and the arts. Most recently, Alan served as chairman of the real estate company Sieroty Co. Alan leaves a lasting and powerful legacy, and the preservation community owes him a debt of gratitude.

Photos Credits: Top, Nabih Youssef outside the L.A. Live complex in downtown Los Angeles, photo by Gary Leonard. Bottom, Alan Sieroty (center) reviews plans at a Cultural Affair Commission meeting, 1987, Los Angeles Public Library/ Herald Examiner Collection.

Announcing the 2024/25 Board of Directors!

July marks the beginning of the Conservancy's new Board of Directors terms! We are pleased to welcome our new and continuing board members and thank them for their leadership. (As a reminder, board terms are three years.) We are excited to welcome **Steven McCall** as the new Chair of the Los Angeles Conservancy Board of Directors! **Joy Forbes**, Board Chair since 2021, has concluded her term, and we are grateful for her leadership and passion for the Conservancy's mission. McCall is a longtime Conservancy member, volunteer, walking tour guide, and a board member. "With humility and inspiration," says McCall, "I acknowledge the significant responsibility before me, as I follow in the footsteps of my esteemed recent Board Chair predecessors, Alice Carr, Mike Deasy, and Joy Forbes."

Michiko Shepherd will continue as Board secretary. Tracy Mercer and Kelly Sutherlin McLeod will also resume their duties as Treasurer and Chair of the Development Committee, respectively. Karin Liljegren, FAIA, IIDA, will assume the role of Chair of the Advocacy Committee.

Five new board members were elected to their first terms:

- Rasa Bauza, AIA, Formerly of Warner Bros. Entertainment
- Russell Kehl, Principal and President, Structural Focus
- Lisa de Lorimier, Formerly of Warner Bros. Entertainment
- Michael J. Utley, Senior Writer, Capital Group Companies
- Carol Chacon Allen, AIA, Independent Residential Practitioner

The Conservancy is also saying goodbye to three board members: **Luis Hoyos**, **Jared Franz** and **Jenji Kohan**. All contributed in a many ways that significantly helped the Conservancy, and we thank them for their service.

That's a Wrap! Last Remaining Seats



This year's Last Remaining Seats was one for the record books! The enthusiasm and creativity of our LRS Volunteer Committee brought tremendous energy to the Orpheum, Los Angeles, and Palace theatres for three fun-filled weekends. In addition to watching classic movies in historic theatres, this year's series featured many memorable activities!

Magic shows and tarot card readings added mystery to *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, and a Marilyn Monroe impersonator brought glamour to *The Seven Year Itch*. A stunning replica of the classic 1968 Mustang GT was the centerpiece for *Bullitt*, while *Gaslight* featured a beautiful photo op (designed by volunteers). A belly dancer brought even more fun to *From Russia with Love* and an epic 30th-anniversary screening of *Mi Vida Loca* featured a cast reunion PLUS a cruise night down Broadway. Check out our photo gallery of the event online to relive the magic: *bit.ly/LRSPhotos2024*

Welcome New LAC Staff!

ANDREW SALIMIAN Director of Advocacy

Andrew was raised in New York and was involved with nonprofits dedicated to architecture, preservation and placemaking. He managed urban plazas with the Neighborhood Plaza Program, managed grants for the Mohawk Valley Collective, and fought for historic buildings at Friends of the Upper East Side. He has a B.S. in Architecture from the City College of New York and a M.S. in Historic Preservation from the Pratt Institute.

Andrew previously served as Pasadena Heritage's Preservation Director for five years and is excited to serve as our new Director of Advocacy.

CHANTAL SANTOYO Student and Family Program Coordinator

Chantal is a first-generation college graduate, artist, and passionate arts advocate. Born and raised in Los Angeles, she cherishes the city's vibrant culture and the ability to explore its diverse landscapes, from the beach to the mountains, all in one day. Chantal develops educational programs that connect students and families with Los Angeles's rich architectural and cultural heritage, fostering appreciation and active participation in community preservation.

THANK YOU, SUMMER INTERNS!

Arabella Delgado, Women's Heritage Intern

Arabella supported the Conservancy this summer as an intern to research how women's history is represented in existing Historic-Cultural Monuments. Her work contributed to the creation of a gender-equitable designation process. She is a Ph.D. candidate at USC in American Studies & Ethnicity where her research centers around transnational cultural and natural resources along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Samantha Sanchez, Getty Marrow Intern

Samantha joined the Education department in June as their 2024 Getty intern, helping significantly with The Heritage Project! She is a recent graduate from the University of San Diego with a double major in Architecture and Art History. Previously, she served as a Collections Intern for the Hoehn Print Study Room at USD, and as a Getty Intern at El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument.

Building on History: A Look at the 2024 California Preservation Foundation Conference Housing Summit

Affordable housing and preservation goals can—and should—have common ground. The Conservancy is committed to ensuring that both are equally valued as L.A. County continues to change and evolve. That's why we were honored to participate in the California Preservation Foundation's (CPF) 2024 annual Preservation Conference: "Building Shelter, Community, and Sustainability."

Held at the historic Millennium Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles, preservationists and advocates from across the city, state, and country gathered for four days of learning, networking, and exploring. Representatives from the Conservancy, including President and CEO Adrian Scott Fine, Director of Advocacy Andrew Salimian, and Neighborhood Outreach Manager M. Rosalind Sagara, all participated in engaging, rousing discussions touching on topics such as strategies for legacy business campaigns, challenges of interpretation and reuse, and the difficulties of recognizing culturally significant sites.

One of the conference's key events was a special Housing Summit, co-sponsored by the Conservancy. It is an issue that continues to be of paramount concern to our day-to-day work. "Building on History: A Summit for Housing Solutions" focused on the nexus between affordable housing and preservation, and how preservation is a part of the solution, reaffirming the Conservancy's belief that housing and preservation should be a "both/and" situation instead of "either/or."













 $Photos\ by\ Adrian\ Scott\ Fine/L.A.\ Conservancy;\ Andrea\ Mauk,\ Huy\ Pham,\ M.\ Rosalind\ Sagara/L.A.\ Conservancy.$



HOUSING UPDATE: MAYOR KAREN BASS MAKES CRUCIAL UPDATES TO ED 1

In July, L.A. City Mayor Karen Bass made significant revisions to her Executive Directive 1 (ED 1): a program that streamlines the production of 100% affordable housing projects. ED 1, as originally proposed and seen through some early project submissions, could have caused significant harm to older and historic neighborhoods.

This latest update is a huge step in a positive, more equitable direction. It includes added protections for designated historic resources, including Los Angeles Historic Cultural-Monuments, Historic Preservation Overlay Zones, National Register of Historic Places properties, and more. This also provides stronger protections for affordable Rent Stabilized Ordinance (RSO) units that will be impacted by ED 1 projects, and introduces new objective design standards to improve compatibility.

The Conservancy wishes to thank ALL of the passionate neighborhood advocates who strongly urged Mayor Bass to include historic preservation as part of L.A.'s affordable housing solution. We especially thank Council District 1 and Council District 5— who both took a visible lead—and staff in the Mayor's Office for finding balance in this latest update.

Affordable housing and preservation goals can—and should—have common ground. We at the Conservancy will continue our efforts to ensure BOTH are equally valued and prioritized as L.A. continues to evolve.

Preservation Snapshots



NEW MILESTONE REACHED FOR LEGACY BUSINESSES IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

On July 9, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed "Ensuring Economic Protections for Small Businesses and Nonprofits in Los Angeles County," a motion introduced by Supervisors Holly Mitchell and Hilda Solis.

This motion will study new commercial tenant protections for small businesses, including a new legacy business registry program for longtime businesses in unincorporated L.A. County.

The Conservancy has pressed for a legacy business program in unincorporated L.A. County since 2021. Legacy businesses provide essential employment and vital goods and services to diverse residents and communities throughout Los Angeles County. In so many ways, these businesses serve as a stabilizing factor and help maintain community vitality.

In 2019, the Conservancy launched our Legacy Business Initiative to raise awareness of the importance of legacy businesses throughout Los Angeles County. In 2022, we expanded the Legacy Business Initiative with a grant program available to longtime small businesses within Los Angeles County.

We look forward to supporting the County's efforts to create stronger protections and resources for longtime small businesses.



KROTONA COURT AND GRAND TEMPLE OF THE ROSY CROSS

Anyone who thought that Los Angeles' New Age obsession began in the 1950s has never heard of Krotona. From 1912 to 1920, Krotona—a campus high above the bustle of Hollywood—was the epicenter of the American Section of the Theosophical Society. The Theosophical Society was one of the earliest Western organizations to introduce Eastern and Southeastern Asian cultural practices to the U.S.

A hub of spiritual, intellectual, and artistic production, the Krotona Colony was anchored by two outstanding buildings: the 1912 Krotona Court, an early excellent example of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture, and the 1914 Grand Temple of the Rosy Cross, a rare Moorish Revival institutional property. Krotona was founded and shaped by women like Annie Bessant, President of the Theosophical Society, Marie Russak Hutchner, an architect and lecturer, and Alice Bailey, a prominent writer who coined the term "New Age."

By 1926, Krotona Court and the Grand Temple of the Rosy Cross were converted into apartments, which now serve as important rent-stabilized housing. Theosophy's legacy continues to draw Hollywood artists and spiritualists.

To protect the future of this historic place, the Conservancy nominated the Krotona Court and the Grand Temple of the Rosy Cross as an L.A. City Historic-Cultural Monument in April. On July 18, the Cultural Heritage Commission recommended the properties for designation!



HELP PRESERVE HISTORY WITH PLANNED GIVING!

August is National Make-a-Will Month, and the Los Angeles Conservancy invites you to consider your own "will" power by creating a will. In just 20 minutes, you can find a sense of security knowing that you've protected your family, dictated important decisions, and made a lasting legacy in preserving the historic places you care about in Los Angeles County.

To help members with the process, the Conservancy recently partnered with Freewill: a no-cost estate planning tool designed to take the anxiety (and expense) out of estate planning.

As you consider making plans for your lasting legacy, remember that you have several options to support the L.A. Conservancy with a legacy gift:

- Include the Conservancy in your will or trust with a dollar amount or percentage of your estate.
- Designate the Conservancy as a retirement plan or life insurance policy beneficiary.
- Leave a gift of personal property such as stocks, bonds, mutual funds, or real estate.

As a bonus, by including the Conservancy in your will, you'll automatically become a member of the Pillar Society, our planned giving group.

To let us know about a planned gift or to get started, please contact our director of development, Liz Leshin, at

Ileshin@laconservancy.org.

B'NAI continued from page 1

City of Los Angeles approved a private settlement deal in March without public discussion.

The City violated policies and demolition should not have been approved until an environmental impact report was prepared to assess impacts, mitigation, and alternatives. To date, the City has refused to publicly share the details contained in their settlement agreement with Catholic Charities.

While demolition is slowly proceeding, the Conservancy, through various appeals, is continuing to pursue transparency on how this decision was made to ensure this never occurs again. Now in our fourth appeal with the City, we remain committed to safeguarding the process and laws that protect historic places. While unlikely to be able to intervene in time for B'nai B'rith, we want to ensure this never occurs again as this flagrant disregard of planning policy sets a dangerous precedent.

But it also begs the question, why? Why was the City of L.A. complicit in demolishing a beautiful historic building that could easily have been adaptively reused? Why was Catholic Charities allowed to avoid a legally required environmental review? And why would the City allow the erasure of a culturally significant historic building for no reason?

The Marilyn Monroe Residence

On the other side of the fence is the successful nomination of the Marilyn Monroe Residence as a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM). On June 26, the entire L.A. City Council approved the nomination—without changes—providing much-needed protections.

In September 2023, news broke of the proposed demolition of Marilyn Monroe's former home in Brentwood, garnering outcry from preservationists, community members, and fans worldwide. While identified as potentially historic, the house had no legal protection, and the owners requested the demolition permit without a clear replacement project. Thanks to Councilmember Traci Park, almost immediately the Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) nomination was initiated.

Seeking to block the HCM, the owners filed a lawsuit against the City in May and in early June a request for an injunction was denied. The Court sided with the City of Los Angeles, stating irreparable harm will occur if the public process is prevented from being completed. A hearing for the ongoing lawsuit is tentatively set for August.

Few places help illustrate the life of Monroe better than her former residence in Los Angeles, and who she was as a person at this point in her life. The Conservancy applauds the City of Los Angeles and Councilmember Traci Park for standing up for this historic house, the contributions of Monroe, and women's heritage. While the future of the residence remains uncertain, Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) status provides the home with added protections against demolition, preserving Monroe's legacy for future generations.

These vastly different outcomes of two similar situations make clear just how powerful the Los Angeles City Council is in making rules and setting policy, and what can happen when it chooses to follow them and protect historic places.

Membership Matters: A Q&A with Susan Seligman



Photo Susan Seligman.

Susan Seligman is a long-time Los Angeles Conservancy member. She is a proud 5th-generation Southern Californian, raised in Long Beach and living in West Hollywood. The Conservancy's Grants and Development Manager, Andrea Joki, recently checked in with her on why Conservancy membership matters.

AJ: Why is it important to you to support the Conservancy through membership?

SS: Our collective contributions to the Conservancy add up to a significant way to help preserve our beautiful home [city] and its storied history. Los Angeles has a distinct architectural personality. Waves of building styles over the decades have left variety on the landscape, but one thing they had in common was architectural design integrity and low rooflines that allow us to see broad swaths of sky wherever we go.

AJ: As a fan of the Conservancy's *Last Remaining Seats* classic film series in downtown L.A.'s historic theatres, do you have a favorite theatre?

SS: Today, my personal favorite is the Los Angeles Theatre. I continue to marvel at its beauty. The ladies' restroom alone! Have you seen the nursery's painted walls? Looked up at the ceilings? My husband and I find new details to admire every time we go.

AJ: What is a historic place that is important to you?

SS: All of Paul Revere Williams buildings! Every remaining Williams building should be labeled a historical treasure and protected.

AJ: Why should others be members and support the Conservancy?

SS: Others must support the Conservancy because of the sad consequences if we don't. A lot of us are experiencing action fatigue, given the state of the world at the moment. Yet our home is a good place to start with a small step; join the Conservancy and together we can preserve L.A. history. Real estate developers from around the world still get free reign here. New sub-par buildings often take the place of beautiful old buildings that, once demolished, are gone forever.

APRIL 16 - JULY 1 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Conservancy acknowledges the generous contributions of our new and upgrading Supporting members, and the new and renewing members of our Sustaining, Benefactor, and Cornerstone groups.

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Members and Youth: \$18 / General Public: \$25

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