

## SURVEYLA LAUNCHES IN 11 COMMUNITIES

The Office of Historic Resources has concluded the "Initiation Phase" of SurveyLA, the Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey Project, setting the stage for the citywide launch of the project's field surveys this spring.

In November 2009, the Los Angeles City Council approved the City's required matching funds to the Getty Foundation's generous multi-year grant for SurveyLA. The source of the funding is the City's Construction Services Trust Fund, which is supported by City development permit fees.

### The Coming Year's Surveys

The Office of Historic Resources (OHR) is now se-

lecting the preservation consultants to conduct the first full year of field surveys in 11 Community Plan Areas. The OHR has already completed a competitive selection process to pre-qualify eight historic preservation consult-

ing firms to conduct the project's surveys. The consultant team for the first surveys will be selected by March, with survey field work scheduled to begin in April.

The coming year's field surveys will be covering 11 Community Plan Areas of the city: Hollywood, West Adams-Baldwin Hills-Leimert; Sunland-Tujunga-Shadow Hills-Lakeview Terrace-East La Tuna Canyon, Palms-Mar Vista-Del Rey, West Los Angeles, San Pedro, Harbor Gateway, South Los



The 1885 Hollenbeck Presbyterian Church in Boyle Heights, identified through the SurveyLA pilot survey.

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## HPOZ PROGRAM TO REORGANIZE WITH ADOPTION OF NEW PRESERVATION PLANS

The Department of City Planning has been severely impacted by the City's current fiscal crisis. The combination of budget reductions, mandatory employee furloughs, and staff retirements from the City's Early Retirement Incentive Program (ERIP) have resulted in a 45% decrease in the department's staffing and resources. This reduction will result in considerable impacts to the department's Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) program.

In order to ensure the ongoing and sustainability of the citywide HPOZ program, the Department will need to make significant changes. These

changes will particularly be required if the City is to consider expanding the HPOZ program to include many additional, proposed HPOZ neighborhoods.

In confronting the severity of the Department's budget and staffing crisis, the department considered a range of potential options, including:

1. the consolidation or regionalization of HPOZ Boards
2. a moratorium on new HPOZ adoptions for at least two years

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## SURVEYLA LAUNCHES (CONTINUED)

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Angeles, Southeast Los Angeles, Central City North, and San Pedro.

### We Need Your Input!

We need your involvement and input in the coming weeks and months to make the surveys a success in these areas of the city. The actual surveys will be conducted by historic preservation professionals, but SurveyLA recognizes that you know the historic resources of your neighborhood better than anyone. Only you may know the “hidden gem” just down the street or around the corner – an often-overlooked building or place that should become better known.

So, before we begin sending the survey teams out to a given neighborhood, we’re asking the neighborhood itself to tell us what may be significant in your area. This information obtained from the community will be available to the survey

teams in their tablet computers when they conduct their surveys in the field.

Now is the time to tell us about a particular building or place that you feel should not be overlooked in the survey. Visit the SurveyLA web site at [www.surveyla.org](http://www.surveyla.org) to go to the MYhistoricLA form: it only takes a few minutes to identify a “hidden gem” in your own community.

We also hope you’ll take your involvement to the next level by joining with others in your community to participate in SurveyLA. You may download the “MYhistoricLA Guide” on our web site to learn about ways to work with others in making SurveyLA a success in your neighborhood. The Guide gives you tips on how to organize a “neighborhood walkabout” to identify historic resources, how to collect historic photos or real estate brochures that can contribute information to the survey, and how to conduct research on an important building in your area.

## NEW CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSIONER

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has appointed Gail Kennard to the Cultural Heritage Commission for a term ending June 30, 2013. Ms. Kennard replaces landscape architect Mia Lehrer. The OHR thanks Ms. Lehrer for her service to the City and wishes her the very best in her future endeavors.

Ms. Kennard is the President of Kennard Design Group (KDG), a Wilshire Center architectural firm founded in 1957 by her late father, Robert Kennard, FAIA. KDG is the oldest African-American-owned architectural practice in the Western United States. The firm’s projects include public buildings, transportation, education, recreation, and multi-unit housing.

Raised in Los Angeles and currently living in Hollywood, Ms. Kennard began her career as a journalist for United Press International and Time Magazine, and as a journalism adviser for UCLA. She serves on the Board of Advisors for the USC School of Architecture and is a Board Member and former President of Homeless Health Care Los Angeles.



### What is SurveyLA?

**SurveyLA: The Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey Project** is the first-ever comprehensive inventory of our city’s historic resources.

The survey findings will have a multiplicity of benefits and uses: it will help direct future growth, shape the revision of Los Angeles’ 35 Community Plans, streamline environmental review processes, provide opportunities for public education, assist in disaster planning, and spur heritage tourism and the marketing of historic neighborhoods and properties.

The J. Paul Getty Trust and the City of Los Angeles have entered into a grant agreement for SurveyLA under which the Getty has committed to providing up to \$2.5 million to the project, subject to matching requirements by the City. Field surveys and evaluations will occur from 2010 through 2012. The Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) is also providing technical and advisory support for SurveyLA. For more information visit the SurveyLA website, [www.SurveyLA.org](http://www.SurveyLA.org).

## HPOZ PROGRAM REORGANIZES (CONTINUED)

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3. the withdrawal of Planning staff from HPOZ Board meetings
4. moving HPOZ Board meetings to daytime hours; and
5. new fees for HPOZ Conforming Work cases

However, given the many drawbacks of these options, the department is, instead, proposing the adoption of 16 new Preservation Plans as a way to increase efficiency and free up staff resources that will allow the program to remain sustainable. The 16 new Preservation Plans would all exempt certain categories of minor work from HPOZ review, and would delegate the review of certain other categories of work to Planning staff. Many of these cases today may require a lengthier review process involving the HPOZ Boards and more labor-intensive work by staff.



Home in Country Club Park HPOZ

thoughtfully crafted design guidelines that will help shape projects in their initial stages through clear and predictable expectations.

Delegating review of minor projects that comply with these design guidelines allows for streamlined approval of good preservation projects. Delegation provides a key incentive to convince homeowners to execute projects that clearly conform to the design guidelines, as they could receive approval almost immediately; whereas projects that may change a home's historic appearance would require a lengthier review process.

With these benefits in mind, the Department of City Planning is proposing to assign staff to work with the HPOZ Boards and other stakeholders to complete all 16 remaining Preservation Plans by mid-2010. To achieve some "economies of scale," all 16 Plans would be considered for approval together by the City Planning Commission. The eight HPOZs that already have adopted Preservation Plans would not currently be required to create a new Plan with the new template for Exemptions and

Delegations; these HPOZs may keep their existing Plan, if they so choose.

HPOZ Boards would have an opportunity to tailor the design guidelines of each Plan to be responsive to the architectural styles, neighborhood character, and community priorities in each HPOZ. However, in order to ensure greater city-wide consistency among the Preservation Plans and that the Plans achieve the needed gains in efficiency, all new Preservation Plans would provide the same level of exemptions and delegations.

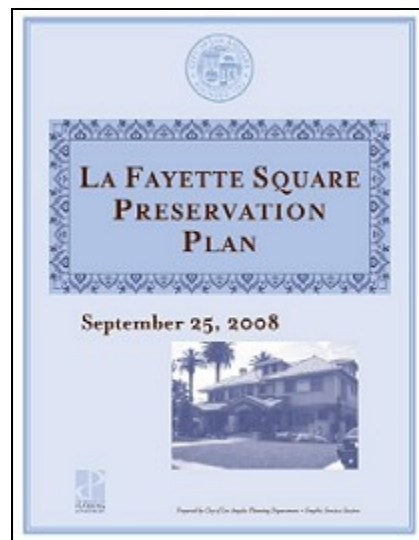
Once the HPOZ program is streamlined, the Department hopes to be able to move forward with the adoption of new, proposed HPOZs for which historic resource surveys have already been completed. These include Country Club Park, Windsor Village, Garvanza, Jefferson Park, Hollywood Grove (in Los Feliz), Vermont Square, 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> St., and the Tifal Brothers 52<sup>nd</sup> Place Tract. In some cases, newly adopted HPOZs may be combined with nearby existing HPOZs in order to minimize the total number of HPOZ Boards requiring separate staffing.

The Department of City Planning greatly appreciates the understanding of the HPOZ community during this difficult time, and looks forward to continuing our partnership to



Home in South Carthay HPOZ

preserve and enhance Los Angeles' unique historic neighborhoods.





## MILLS ACT PROGRAM ADDS 66 NEW PROPERTIES

The Los Angeles City Council on December 8 approved 66 new Mills Act Historical Property Contracts. The Mills Act program, which can provide a property tax savings to owners of designated historic properties, is the City's most important financial incentive for historic preservation.

With this action, the City now has 512 properties in its Mills Act program, and is at approximately 70% of the City Council-imposed cap of \$1 million in foregone City revenue annually.

As the City nears full capacity of the program, the OHR is continuing to take steps to ensure that the Mills Act benefits are appropriately targeted to those properties with the greatest need. Beginning in 2010, the City will only be accepting applications for properties that need significant rehabilitation or restoration work. The work needed to rehabilitate or restore the property shall be pending or not completed. Applications will be prioritized based on how the Mills Act will be used to assist the viability of the project.

Please note that the Mills Act application deadline this year will be moved up to **May 28, 2010**. Here are just a few of the 66 new Mills Act properties from 2009:

The **Ain Modernique**, located in the Gregory Ain Mar Vista Tract Historic Preservation Overlay Zone, was designed by Gregory Ain, a master architect. The house is an excellent example of Modernist architecture, with restoration work displayed in the landscaping and woodwork. More restoration and rehabilitation work is scheduled in the future, using the property's Mills Act savings.



**Ain Modernique**

The **Embassy Auditorium & Hotel** is located in the heart of downtown; it served as a civic auditorium for many public functions and events, but has slowly deteriorated throughout the years. To preserve this important landmark, significant rehabilitation work is planned to convert this historic building for use as a boutique hotel.

The **Libby House**, located in Angelino Heights, displays the importance of historical integrity in the Mills Act program.



**Embassy Auditorium & Hotel**

The Mills Act contract illustrates the owner's desire to return the house back to its original condition, with Queen Anne detailing. The restoration process will include the repair and replacement of windows and wall paneling.



**Libby House**

The **Villa Bonita** is a multi-family residential building located in Hollywood, reflecting the expansion of downtown density to the Hollywood area. The owners of this Spanish Colonial Revival structure plan to repair the stucco and rehabilitate interior details and finishes.

For more information on the Mills Act, visit <http://preservation.lacity.org/mills-act> or contact Lambert Giessinger at (213) 978-1183 or [lambert.giessinger@lacity.org](mailto:lambert.giessinger@lacity.org).



**Villa Bonita**



## CULTURAL HERITAGE ORDINANCE UPDATE

The significant amendments to the City's major preservation law, the Cultural Heritage Ordinance, remain under review in the Office of the City Attorney. The ordinance will most likely proceed to the Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee and City Council for consideration and final approval during the early months of 2010.

The proposed amendments, approved by the City Planning Commission in September 2009, are aimed at strengthening demolition review procedures, clarifying criteria for historic designation, and enhancing notifications and protections for private property owners.

Despite considerable discussion by the City Planning Commission on how the ordinance would treat the review of interior work on City Historic-Cultural Monuments, the review of interiors would remain unchanged from the current Cultural Heritage Ordinance. All interior permits would continue to be referred to the Cultural Heritage Commission and the Office of Historic Resources for review, as has occurred since 1962.

As in the current ordinance, the CHC could not deny approval of interior work altogether: it could only object to the issuance of the permit for no more than 180 days, with a possible 180-day extension of the objection period upon approval of the City Council.

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 preser-

vation 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 Holmes - Shannon House, HCM #885 in Victoria Park is one of many Historic-Cultural Monuments with significant historic interiors. The proposed ordinance amendments will not change the review of interiors.

- \* Increasing the size of the Cultural Heritage Commission from five to seven members will enhance the professional expertise on the Commission and, by including two commissioners who own Historic-Cultural Monuments, help ensure balance and diversity of perspectives.

- \* 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 a list 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.

- \* 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.

Watch the Office of Historic Resources' web site, [www.preservation.lacity.org](http://www.preservation.lacity.org), for updates on upcoming hearings at the PLUM Committee and City Council.





## NEW OHR INTERNS

The OHR has added three talented new interns to its office team in recent weeks:

**Aaron Dresben** is a *Summa Cum Laude* graduate of UC Berkeley with B.A. degrees in both Architecture and French. He has assisted the non-profit youth organization Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA) as a designer, and served as an architectural intern for Togawa Smith Martin Residential Inc. He was a finalist for the Berkeley Prize international architecture essay competition.



**Lauro Parra** is a graduate of UC Berkeley, with a B.A. in Architecture and a minor in City and Regional Planning. He worked as a construction project manager with Alain Hirsch Construction, a program assistant with Health Initiatives of

the Americas, and a deputy field director for a congressional campaign. Lauro is splitting his internship time between the OHR and the Department of City Planning's Code Studies unit.

**Shannon Ryan** is a *Cum Laude* graduate of New York University with a Bachelor of Arts in Urban Design/Architecture and Italian. She is pursuing a Master's degree in Urban Planning at UCLA, and completed an earlier internship with the Department of City Planning. She also



previously worked as an associate with Seltzer Commercial Real Estate, helping to manage commercial and residential properties.

Aaron, Lauro and Shannon join existing OHR interns **Robby Aranguren, Rennie Newton, Eric Mendelson, and Katherine Sue** in performing valuable work to assist SurveyLA, the Cultural Heritage Commission, and the other historic preservation programs of the City of Los Angeles.



## LOS ANGELES' NEWEST HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT

The Cultural Heritage Commission and City Council have designated one new Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) between October 2009 and January 2010. Several additional nominations are pending with the City Council at the time of this writing, on which we will report in the next issue.

Following is Los Angeles' newest monument:



**Bethlehem Baptist Church (4901 Compton Avenue), HCM #968.** Built in 1944 and located in South Los Angeles, this is the only built church designed by the master architect R.M. Schindler.

The Modernist church features horizontal bands of stucco, an L-shaped floor plan, and an open cruciform tower, all arranged in a layered de Stijl pattern meant to attract the attention of passing cars. The building was created for a small African-American congregation, serving as a church and community center; it has been vacant for the past several years. Bethlehem Baptist is also significant as a rare example of Modernist architecture that crossed Los Angeles' economic and racial boundaries during an era of restrictive housing covenants.

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