

## PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVES NEW CULTURAL HERITAGE ORDINANCE

The City Planning Commission (CPC) on September 10 voted 7-1 to approve significant amendments to the City's major preservation law, the Cultural Heritage Ordinance.

The discussion at the September CPC meeting — the third public hearing that the Commission held on the ordinance — focused largely on a single issue: the review of proposed changes to Historic-Cultural Monument interiors. The Commission adopted the September staff recommendation on interiors which will make no changes to the way the ordinance has addressed interior modifications for the past 47 years.

The ordinance will most likely proceed to the Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee and City Council for consideration and final approval

in early 2010.

### Background

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



Frank Lloyd Wright's Ennis House interior hallway (HCM 149)

The Cultural Heritage Commission held public workshops and hearings on these ordinance amendments last year. The amendments subsequently went through additional refinements as recommended by a Cultural Heritage Ordinance Working Group, convened

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## SURVEYLA VIDEO WINS AN EMMY AWARD!

The half-hour video for SurveyLA, the Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey Project, is now an Emmy Award winner. SurveyLA won top honors in the Arts and Culture/History category at the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences' 61st Los Angeles Area Emmy Awards on August 29.

The television program was a joint project of the City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources and the City's Information Technology Agency, LA Cityview Channel 35. The program highlights why a citywide historic resources survey is important to Los Angeles, and takes viewers to

diverse historic places around the city, including Frank Lloyd Wright's Ennis House, the Dunbar Hotel on Central Avenue, the Far East Café in Little Tokyo, Weatherwolde Castle in Tujunga, Church of the Epiphany in Lincoln Heights, and the Modernist neighborhoods of Crestwood Hills in Brentwood and Balboa Highlands in Granada Hills.

Channel 35 picked up three other local Emmy Awards, outpacing many of Los Angeles' commercial television stations.

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## CULTURAL HERITAGE ORDINANCE APPROVED (CONTINUED)

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by the OHR and the Office of Council President Eric Garcetti, which met five times between June and October 2008. The OHR held several additional public workshops on the ordinance earlier this year. The CPC held public hearings on the ordinance in June and July before taking action in September.

### Review of Interiors

Following the July CPC hearing, the Department of City Planning convened a special Working Group on Interiors, which met for more than 12 hours during July and August. OHR staff recommended an approach to the review of Historic-Cultural Monument interiors that was proposed by members of this Working Group. Under this proposal, adopted by the CPC, review of interior work would continue as it does today under 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.

This compromise lessened any potential burden on property owners, while still protecting Monuments whose significant interiors are often inseparable from the building's overall architectural significance. In practice, very few permits are referred to the CHC for potential objections -- more than 99 percent are signed off at a staff level, often the same day -- and in recent years the CHC has not voted to approve an objection to even a single interior modification.

### Cultural Heritage Ordinance and SurveyLA

While some representatives of the business community have expressed concerns that SurveyLA (see p. 4) will result in Historic-Cultural Monument designations for hundreds of properties, this is inaccurate. The OHR will not be pursuing Historic-Cultural Monument designations for properties identified in the survey. The survey information is meant to be used as a planning tool and to create greater certainty for property owners. Surveyed properties will not be subject to the Cultural Heritage Ordinance.

### Benefits of a New Cultural Heritage Ordinance

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.
- 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.

### Next Steps

With the September approval by the CPC, the ordinance will go to the Office of the City Attorney for review and possible refinement. The CPC also voted to request that the City Attorney and Department of City Planning staff review how the Cultural Heritage Ordinance provisions will interact with requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Because these reviews may take a few months, City Council consideration will likely occur early next year.

## SURVEYLA EMMY (CONTINUED)

*(Continued from page 1)*

A Certified Local Government grant from the State Office of Historic Preservation provided funding for translation of the program into Spanish and for the duplication and distribution of 1,000 DVD copies to community organizations throughout the city. If your community organization would like to view or screen the video, please contact the OHR for a copy of the DVD. The program is also available for viewing on-line in three segments, posted on YouTube and on the Survey web site, [www.SurveyLA.org](http://www.SurveyLA.org).

## NEW OHR INTERNS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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

**Robby Aranguren** joined the OHR this fall upon relocating to Los Angeles from Texas, and brings a strong interest in architecture and urban planning. He graduated this year from the University of Texas, Arlington, where he studied Architecture, City and Urban Planning, and Real Estate, and served as President of the Filipino Student Association.

**Michaela Baker** is a 2009 graduate of California Polytechnic University, Pomona, where she received a Bachelor of Architecture. She has previous work experience through internships with two architectural firms, studied abroad in Florence, Italy, and conducted research for a National Register of Historic Places nomination of a tract of cabins in the San Bernardino National Park.

**Rennie Newton**, a native of Massachusetts, is a 2009 graduate of Occidental College here in Los Angeles, where he majored in Urban and Environmental Policy. He previously participated in the Harvard Graduate School of Design Career Discovery summer program in Urban Planning, worked as an intern for the Coalition for Economic Survival, and as a volunteer for the Kerry for President campaign in 2004.

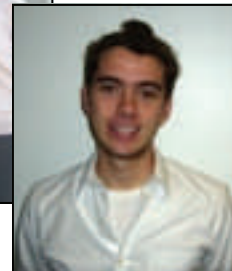
**Katherine Sue** is a 2009 graduate of UC Berkeley, where she

studied the History of the Built Environment and won a prize for her paper on San Francisco's Sunset District. She worked in Oakland for Asian Immigrant Women Advocates, leading weekly English classes for women in low-wage industries and organizing a teaching curriculum related to political education and human rights.

**Jenna Kachour**, profiled in the July 2009 newsletter, continues her internship into the fall, and the OHR is pleased to welcome back former intern **Eric Mendelson**, profiled in our January 2009 newsletter.



From left, Eric Mendelson, Katherine Sue, Robby Aranguren, Michaela Baker, and Jenna Kachour



Rennie Newton

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

### DEVELOPING SURVEYLA'S HISTORIC CONTEXT

One of the greatest challenges of SurveyLA is developing survey tools and methods that meet accepted federal and state survey guidelines and standards and provide streamlined, cutting-edge approaches to identifying and evaluating historic resources in a city as large, complex, and diverse as Los Angeles. Toward that goal, the Office of Historic Resources is leading the development of a citywide historic context statement (HCS) – a narrative, technical document that provides a framework for completing field surveys.

The HCS uses the Multiple Property Documentation approach developed by the National Park Service. This approach identifies the themes, trends and patterns of history shared by properties into historic contexts; identifies and describes historic resources, or property types, that represent the contexts; and provides specific standards to guide the evaluation of significance. As a management tool, this approach provides essential

information for historic preservation planning because it evaluates properties on a comparative basis within a given geographical area and because it can be used to establish preservation priorities based on significance.

The SurveyLA HCS consists of seven broad contexts which cover the period from about 1850 to 1980 and are specific to the City of Los Angeles.

- Spanish and Mexican Colonial Era Settlement
- Residential Development & Suburbanization
- Commercial Development
- Industrial Development
- Institutional Development: Government & Private
- Architecture, Engineering & Designed Landscapes

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## HOW CAN YOUR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATE IN SURVEYLA? “MYHISTORICLA” GUIDE WILL GET YOU STARTED

The OHR has released “MyHistoricLA: A Guide to Public Participation in SurveyLA,” to help you or your community organization participate meaningfully in Los Angeles’ citywide historic resources survey.

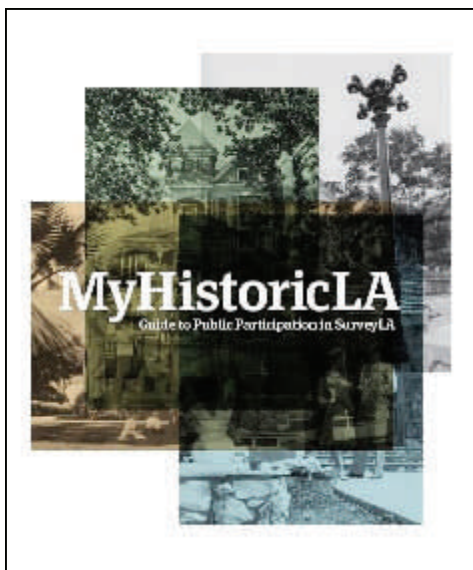
Over the next few years, historic preservation professionals will be conducting the SurveyLA historic resources survey in all communities of Los Angeles. When SurveyLA comes to your neighborhood, the professional survey teams will be identifying buildings, neighborhoods, and places of unique architectural, historic, and cultural significance.

Because SurveyLA’s success will depend significantly on the public’s active participation, this “MyHistoricLA” guide is designed to give you the tools you need to become part of this exciting effort. The actual survey 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, long before it becomes threatened with demolition or alteration.

So, before we begin sending the survey teams out to a given neighborhood, we’ll be 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.

The new MyHistoricLA Guide is organized in three sections: “MyNeighborhood,” “MyStory” and “MyPlace,” each containing step-by-step instructions on how to organize community activities that will contribute directly to the survey.



The “MyHistoricLA” Guide

In the “MyNeighborhood” section, the Guide contains detailed instructions on how your community can organize a “Neighborhood Walkabout” – a fun event that can gather and energize neighbors to help identify significant individual resources or potential historic districts in your area. Your community might also organize a “Community Photo Collection Day” to collect and scan old photos of extant historic resources, or neighborhood real estate advertisements that could help provide valuable information for the survey teams.

“MyStory” aims to elicit the stories associated with places in your neighborhood, particularly seeking to capture the social, historic, and cultural significance that may not be immediately obvious to the survey professionals documenting the visible architectural history of your neighborhood. This activity involves one-on-one interviews with long-time residents who have important information to share.

“MyPlace” builds upon the information collected in “MyNeighborhood” and “MyStory” activities by seeking to collect

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### What is SurveyLA?

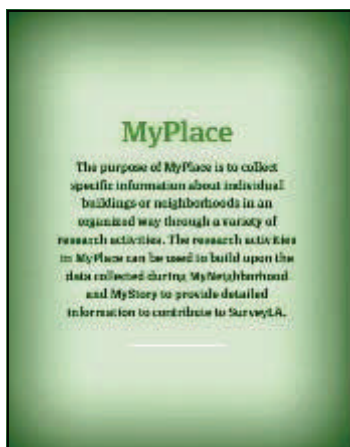
**SurveyLA: The Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey Project** is the first-ever comprehensive inventory of our city’s historic resources.

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 late 2009 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).

## MYHISTORICLA" GUIDE (CONTINUED)

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more detailed information on specific buildings or neighborhoods. This involves property-specific or neighborhood-specific research, by collecting information from the LA Public Library, historical LA Times archives, Sanborn insurance maps, and city directories. The "MyHistoricLA" Guide provides a standardized format for community members to enter this information for the OHR, so that

the information obtained can go directly into the SurveyLA database for use by the survey team.

The "MyHistoricLA Guide" is now available on the SurveyLA web site, at [www.surveyla.org](http://www.surveyla.org).

The OHR thanks the State Office of Historic Preservation for the Certified Local Government (CLG) grant that made possible this Guide, including a Spanish-language version. We also wish to thank Historic Resources Group (HRG) in Hollywood, which served as the lead consultant in preparing the Guide.

We hope that the Guide will be a useful catalyst for broad-based community participation in SurveyLA, and that it also serves as a useful prototype for other cities that want to engage community members in large-scale historic resources surveys.

## DEVELOPING SURVEYLA'S HISTORIC CONTEXT (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 3)

- The Entertainment Industry

Each context is comprised of themes and sub-themes which not only address important movements in Los Angeles architecture or distinct property types, but also focus on important topics in ethnic, social, and cultural history. For example, Institutional Development includes government buildings as well as resources relating to social, cultural, political, and religious history and movements. The Entertainment Industry includes resources associated with the motion picture, recording, television and radio industries in addition to those associated with entertainment culture such as night clubs and restaurants. Within Residential Development and Suburbanization, the theme relating to Multi-Family Residential Development deals with resources ranging from elegant high-rise apartments of the 1920s and '30s to the apartment types of the post-World War II era. Los Angeles' diverse ethnic and cultural history is reflected throughout the HCS and addresses topics such as the Civil Rights Movement, Deed Restriction and Segregation, and LGBT history.

Developing a context statement for a city as large and complex as Los Angeles is an extreme challenge. The OHR has been working with an incredible team of over forty historians, architectural historians, historic preservation professionals, researchers, photographers, interns and others, many of whom are volunteering their time to the project. This unique collaboration is producing one of the most comprehensive citywide historic

context statements in the nation and is setting new standards for historic resources surveys.

The OHR would like to thank the Getty Conservation Institute, which is providing technical and advisory support for development of the HCS.

Work on the HCS will continue throughout this year and the final draft will be used to conduct the Year 1 SurveyLA field surveys, which start in 2010. Since context statements are informed by field work, the OHR anticipates that revisions will be made to the HCS as the surveys progress.

If you have information about specific topics or historic properties that may help inform the HCS, please contact Janet Hansen at [janet.hansen@lacity.org](mailto:janet.hansen@lacity.org) or (213) 978-1191.

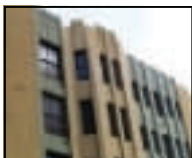
## LOS ANGELES' NEWEST HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENTS

The Cultural Heritage Commission and City Council have designated eight new Historic-Cultural Monuments (HCMs) between July and September 2009. These include two of the earliest works of notable Modernist architect Raphael Soriano, a significant work of R.M. Schindler, and a late-19th Century downtown landmark. Following are Los Angeles' newest monuments:

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

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**Ashby Apartments, HCM #960** (808 South Hobart Blvd.) Built in 1930 and located near Wilshire Center and Koreatown, this five-story multi-family residential building was designed in the Art Deco style by architect Max Maltzman. Maltzman was a prolific designer of Period Revival and Art Deco style apartment buildings in the 1920s-30s and is responsible for the design of four Historic-Cultural Monuments including the Ravenswood Apartments (HCM #768) in Hancock Park.



**Marshall-Kline Residence, HCM #961** (2037 South Harvard Blvd.) Constructed in 1903, this two-story single family residential building in the Harvard Heights Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) is an excellent example of Italian Renaissance Revival style architecture. The house includes significant interior features, including built-in cabinetry, a stained-glass skylight and wood paneling. The Shaw family lived in the house for three generations starting in the 1940s, including Lovie Yancey, founder of the Fatburger hamburger chain.



**Eckley-Mitchell Residence, HCM #962** (2048 South Oxford Blvd.) Constructed in 1907, this two-story single-family residential building was designed in the Craftsman style and is a contributing structure to the Harvard Heights HPOZ. The building was commissioned and occupied by William Henry Eckley, a businessman from San Francisco. Another owner of the subject property was Courtland George Mitchell, who was one of the first African-American candidates for City Council, in 1953.



**Linda Scott Residence, HCM #963** (1910 South Harvard Blvd.) Constructed in 1907 and located in Harvard Heights, this two-story, single-family residential building was designed by the noted architect, Frank Tyler, in the Mediterranean style with some elements of Moorish influence. The house was built for Linda Scott, the first female deputy sheriff in the state of Arizona, and was in real estate and social clubs in Los Angeles.



**Ross House, HCM #964** (2123 North Valentine St.) Built in 1938 and located in the Elysian Heights/Echo Park area, this two-story residence was designed by Raphael Soriano in the International Style. Soriano was a noted and influential architect of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Modern architecture, pioneering the use of prefabricated steel and aluminum in residential construction. Soriano received several prizes and accolades for his designs and participated in the famed Case Study House program. The house was later sold to Albert Nozaki, Soriano's friend and classmate at USC's School of Architecture.



**Wilson House, HCM #965** (2090 North Redcliff St.) Built in 1938 and located in the Silver Lake neighborhood, this three-story single-family residence was designed by R. M. Schindler in the International Style. The Wilson House represents a significant and influential example of Schindler's later works, and is located near two of the architect's other designs, the Droste and Walker houses.



**Douglas Building, HCM #966** (257 South Spring St.) Built downtown in 1898, this five-story commercial building was designed in the Classical Revival style. The building was designed by James and Merritt Reid of Reid Brothers, a leading San Francisco architectural firm, which was also responsible for numerous commissions including the original Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco and the Hotel Del Coronado in San Diego. The Douglas Building is one of the few remaining examples of Los Angeles commercial architecture from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century; the building was recently converted to residential use.



**Lipetz House, HCM #967** (1843 North Dillon St.) Built in 1936 and located in the Silver Lake neighborhood, this two-story residence was also designed by Raphael Soriano, with features of both Streamline Moderne and International Style architecture. The house exhibits an overall horizontal emphasis, smooth lines, and rounded corners. The Lipetz House is noted for being Soriano's first residential commission. Soriano was introduced at the house to famed architectural photographer Julius Shulman, helping to launch Shulman's career and establishing a long collaboration.