

Black History Month Series

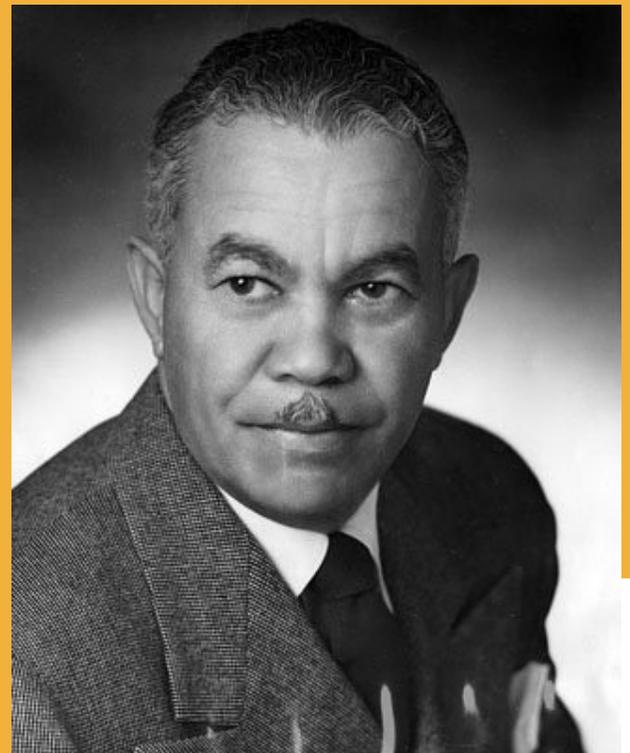
For the month of February, we will be sharing insight into the historic buildings of South LA where CRCD has invested in preserving their cultural heritage and nurturing the future.

28th Street YMCA

28TH STREET YMCA - DESIGNED BY
PAUL R WILLIAMS

When one thinks about famous architects of culturally important buildings and landmarks in Los Angeles, Paul R. Williams is recognized as one of the foremost. Over the course of a 5-decade career that spanned a time that included the roaring 20s and the civil rights era, Williams designed some of the most iconic and storied residential homes and commercial buildings in Southern California.

From private residences for the likes of Frank Sinatra and Lucille Ball to retail spaces for Saks Fifth Avenue and historic cultural monuments like the space age structure at the center of Los Angeles International Airport, Williams rose from humble beginnings as a child of foster care to become an L.A. legend.



ARCHITECT
PAUL R. WILLIAMS



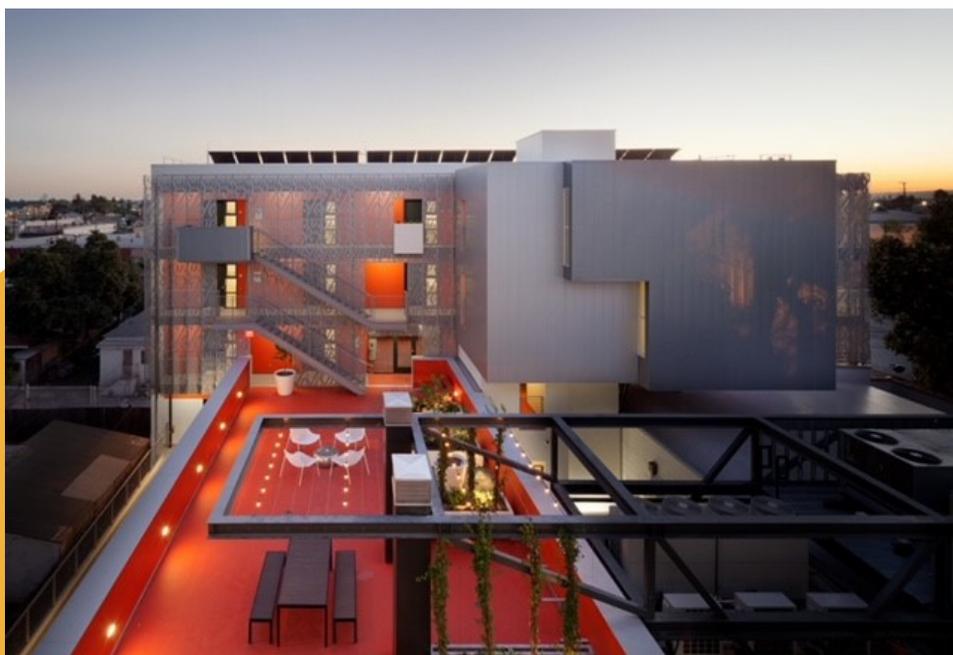
VINTAGE IMAGE OF
THE 28TH STREET Y

As the first African American member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), Williams broke down barriers to become known as “Hollywood’s Architect.” In 2017, 37 years after his passing, the AIA gave him the Gold Medal, the organization's highest honor. In 2020, USC and the Getty Research Institute partnered to provide public access to a collection of Williams’ original architectural plans and drawings. The legacy of Paul R. Williams lives on today. One part of that legacy, the 28th Street YMCA, stands out as a reminder that a space built with a community in mind can have a lasting, generational impact. The “Y” was originally designed as a place for black men and youth to gather and grow in the 1920s. There were community rooms, a pool and gym, and fifty-two dormitory-style rooms. It was a space designed for the needs of the community at the time.

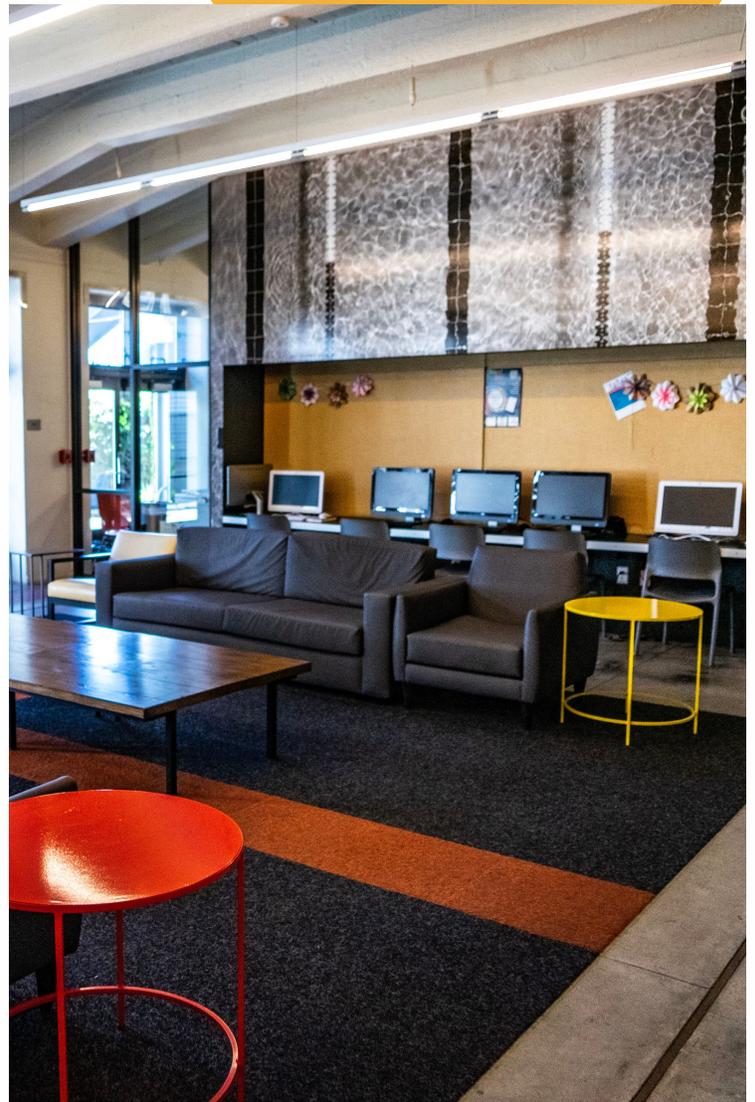


CURRENT IMAGE OF
THE 28TH STREET
APARTMENTS

This was the first club in Los Angeles that was built for the use of boys and young men of color, and the first to do so west of the Mississippi. Completed in 1925, Williams intended the YMCA to be a cultural asset for the African American community in South Central Los Angeles. In 2006, Williams' work was added to the City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments List in recognition of its importance to the community. In 2009, the National Park Services listed the YMCA as a part of the National Register of Historical Places. Then in 2011, Coalition Responsible Community Development (CRCDD), in partnership with Clifford Beer Housing, began a project to give the 28th Street YMCA a new life and purpose that would honor the legacy of Williams and the black community of early-1900s Los Angeles who invested in the building.



The restoration and renovation revitalized the historic neighborhood anchor, adding a four-story building with 50 affordable housing units above a 10,000 sq. ft. community center. Today, the Historic 28th Street YMCA is a mixed-used space that houses the hub of CRCDC's youth programs on the ground floor and is home to the City of Los Angeles Vernon-Central Network (VCN) YouthSource Center— a program that provides skills and training to young people in the community. CRCDC manages youth training, education, and employment programs from the original building. In partnership with community-based mental health service providers, the 28th Street Apartments provides supportive housing with on-site case management for transition-age youth, youth exiting foster care, and single adults who were experiencing homelessness before finding a home at 28th St.





Along with its impact in the community, 28th St. Apartments also honors the legacy of Paul R. Williams with its award-winning design and architecture. The project has received the World Architecture Festival Housing Award, the American Institute of Architects National Honor Award, and the Specialized Housing Award – an AIA recognition that specifically honors the legacy of Paul R. Williams. The 1925 YMCA served the community for decades and was a fixture in the narrative of South Central LA. Today, the 28th Street Apartments represents the past, present, and future of its community. Through both the preservation and the revitalization of this historic landmark, the original mission set forth in 1925 lives on and nurtures the leaders of tomorrow.