



What do Johnny Mercer, Welton Becker, Leila Morse and Nat Cole have to do with the 13 Story building at 1750 Vine Street, Hollywood California?

The Capitol Records Building designed by Welton Becker in 1954, Co-founder of Capitol Records Mr. Johnny Mercer, affectionately referred to as “The House That Nat Built” Dedicated in 1956 by Ms Leila Morse (Granddaughter of Samuel Morse)

The buildings spire resembles a phonograph needle and has a warning light mounted on the needle that flashes out the word “HOLLYWOOD” in International Morse Code every 20 seconds!

Subtle Signals; The light atop the tower blinks “Hollywood” in Morse code. Leila Morse, granddaughter of telegraph inventor (and code namesake) Samuel F.B. Morse, first activated it on April 6, 1956.

It is plain to see that the City of L.A. loves the building too as six years ago placed a 4 million dollar grant to help renovate the 1950s building in a bid to keep Capitol around. Now Mayor Villaraigosa and other city officials are trying their best to once again keep Capitol’s 160 employees in Hollywood.

John Lennon has a star on the Hollywood Walk of fame in front of the tower, as do rock diva Tina Turner and country crooner Garth Brooks. Each of the building’s three recording studios, located at the base of the tower, rests on a layer of cork for added protection from outside noise.



Not a rumor but it is true about this landmark of Hollywood entertainment world domination is that the little red light atop the building spire flashes the word “Hollywood” in Morse code on an infinite loop. The loop has been interrupted only once since Samuel Morse’s granddaughter switched it on in 1956 and that was to change the message to “Capitol 50” to celebrate Capitol records’ 50th Anniversary in 1992. In 1993 the light returned to flashing “Hollywood.”

Changes may be in the works for the world’s first circular office building, plus Los Angeles’ first fully air conditioned building. Home to The Beatles, The Beach Boys, Pink Floyd, Frank Sinatra, Peggy Lee etc & my all time favorite Nat King Cole. Owners EMI have announced reduction of the labor force and times are changing in the recording business. I hope the Capitol Records Office building is around for a long time to come. Long may that beacon tap out the Morse Code. Scripted sfgate.com everything2.com Ideas of K2UTS