
IV. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

O. CULTURAL RESOURCES

1. HISTORIC RESOURCES

A Cultural Resources Assessment for the proposed project was prepared by W.H. Bonner Associates in April 2003 to analyze the potential historical resources impacts associated with the proposed project. A summary of the Cultural Resources Assessment with respect to potential historical resources impacts is set forth below. The Cultural Resources Assessment, which is incorporated herein by this reference, is included in its entirety as Appendix L to this Draft EIR.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Ethnohistory

At the time of European contact in 1769, the San Fernando Valley, including the Verdugo Hills area, was occupied by the Fernandeno, so called by the Spanish for those Native Americans living near Mission San Fernando Rey de Espana. The Fernandeno are considered a subgroup of the Gabrielino who occupied the Los Angeles Basin, including much of Los Angeles and Orange counties. According to Bean and Smith,¹ the Gabrielino are one of the least known groups of California native inhabitants. In addition to much of the Los Angeles Basin, they occupied the offshore islands of Santa Catalina, San Nicolas and San Clemente. Gabrielino populations are difficult to reconstruct. However, it is estimated that any one time as many as 50 to 100 villages were simultaneously occupied. Like the prehistoric culture before them, the Gabrielino were a hunter/gather group who lived in small sedentary or semi-sedentary groups of 50 to 100 persons, termed rancherias. These rancherias were occupied by at least some of the people all of the time. Location of the encampment was determined by water availability. Within each village houses were circular in form, and constructed of sticks covered with thatch or mats. Each village had a sweat lodge as well as a sacred enclosure.²

Their subsistence relied heavily on plant foods, but supplemented this with a variety of meat, especially from marine resources. Food procurement consisted of hunting and fishing carried out by men and gathering of plant foods and shellfish by women. Hunting technology included use of bow and arrow for deer and smaller game, throwing sticks, snares, traps and slings. Fishing was conducted with use of shell fish hooks, bone harpoons and nets. Seeds were gathered with beaters and baskets. Food resources were stored in baskets, then processed with manos and metates, and mortars and pestles.

¹ Bean, Lowell J. and Smith, Charles R., Handbook of North American Indians, California, 1978, pp. 530-549.

² *Ibid.*

Plants and meats were cooked in baskets coated with asphaltum, in stone pots, on steatite frying pans, and by roasting in earthen ovens.³

Historic Period

In 1850, when California joined the Union as its 31st state, the project site was part of two ranchos (Tujunga and San Rafael) and an undeeded strip of land that lay between the two ranchos.

According to one account, the first intrusion of Europeans into this portion of the San Fernando Valley occurred in 1776 when the Garces expedition passed through what today is Foothill Boulevard. San Fernando mission was not established until 1797.

Between these two events, Jose Maria Verdugo was granted some 36,000 acres of land in 1784 which he named La Zanja (later San Rafael). Verdugo did not actually live on the land until 1797, when he retired from the military. He was joined by his family, his brother, and a friend, Antonio Rosa. Cattle raising was the major activity on the rancho.

Although the southern and eastern boundaries of the land grant were well established, the western and northern borders were not specific. As a result, disputes arose with the administrators at Mission San Fernando over grazing rights. In 1817, an inquiry was held which established the north and west boundaries of Rancho San Rafael.

Jose Verdugo died in 1831, leaving the rancho to two of his children (Julio and Catalina). In 1850, following the American takeover of California, the two siblings filed a petition with the new government. The Board of Land Commissioners confirmed title in 1855. However, it was not until 1882, after the land had been resurveyed, that a patent was issued for Rancho San Rafael. In the meantime, however, Julio Verdugo had gone into debt. In 1861, the rancho had been divided between the two siblings with Catalina receiving ownership to the northern, more mountainous portion. Eight years later, when Julio's debts became uncontrollable, the rancho lands were sold at auction to Alfred B. Chapman. Catalina Verdugo died in 1871. Her brother died five years later. Over the ensuing years, the former rancho lands were subdivided again and again.

Rancho Tujunga was considerably smaller than San Rafael. It consisted of less than 7,000 acres. The parcel had formerly been part of the Mission San Fernando claim. After secularization of the mission system in 1834 by the Mexican government, individuals were granted portions of the former mission lands. In 1840, Governor Alvarado granted the Tujunga lands to Pedro and Francisco Lopez. The grant amounted to some 6,680 acres. In 1860, the rancho was sold to D.W. Alexander, Francis

³ *Ibid.*

Mellus, and Augustin Olvera. Patent on this parcel was confirmed in 1874. At that time David Alexander and Alexander Bell were named the legal owners. Like Rancho San Rafael, Rancho Tujunga was used almost exclusively for cattle raising.

The community of Sunland was established sometime before 1902.⁴ In 1926, the community of Sunland, then encompassing some 3,848 acres and La Tuna Canyon, amounting to 4,910 acres, were annexed by the City of Los Angeles. These communities remained primarily residential, with no large commercial enterprises to stimulate rapid growth. As such, growth was slower than in other parts of Los Angeles.

Investigation Methodology and Results⁵

A cultural resources records review was conducted at the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) prior to onsite monitoring. This review was required to determine whether cultural resources might be recorded on or within a one-half mile radius of the project site. The review involves a review of historic topographic maps and historic register lists.

Historic Properties. Historic registers including the National Register of Historic Places (2001), the California State Historic Resources Inventory (2001), the California Points of Historical Interest (2001), and the California Historical Landmarks (1996) were examined as part of the review. No historic properties are listed on or within a one-half mile radius of the project site.

Historic Maps. A review of historic maps indicates that the project site had been part of two Hispanic land grants (San Rafael and Tujunga). A strip of land between the ranchos was never granted during the late eighteenth or first half of the nineteenth centuries.

According to the 1902 USGS Santa Monica, California 15' topographic sheet, the entire project site was undeveloped at that time. An unpaved road entered La Tuna Canyon from the west, but only extended to the present debris basin, which is not located on the project site. One structure is shown south of the east end of the road, but not on the project site. To the north, the community of Sunland had been established with some roads leading south into the Verdugo Hills, but not onto the project site.

By the 1940s, La Tuna Canyon Road had been extended further east with more structures appearing on both sides of the road. The SCE transmission line in use today had been constructed. The communities

⁴ *United States Geological Survey, Santa Monica 15 minute sheet, 1902.*

⁵ *The assessment is in compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the National Environmental Policy Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act as Amended, and Executive Order 11593 requirements.*

of Sunland and Tujunga had grown, but no roads or structures were shown on the project site other than the SCE transmission line.

In 1957, La Tuna Canyon Road appears to be paved up to Sadali Drive where “St. Elizabeth’s Retreat” is plotted. The road extends eastward beyond this point, but appears to be unpaved. No other development is indicated.

Interstate 210 was constructed in the late 1960s. At that time, La Tuna Canyon Road was most likely extended eastward to connect with Honolulu Avenue.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Thresholds of Significance

In accordance with Section 21084.1 of the California Public Resources Code and Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines, the proposed project would have a significant impact on the environment if it would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource.

Project Impacts

Based upon the results of the records review and onsite field inspection, there are no historical resources (as defined in Section 21084.1 of the California Public Resources Code or Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines) on the project site. Therefore, development of the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of any historical resource.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Implementation of the proposed project would not result in any project or cumulative impacts. Therefore, no mitigation measures are necessary.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

As previously discussed, there are no historical resources located on the project site. Therefore, the project, in combination with related projects in the vicinity, would not result in a cumulative impact on historical resources.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

No impacts on historical resources would occur with implementation of the proposed project.