

HISTORIC RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

1801 Avenue of the Stars Century City Shopping Center 1930 Century Park West Century City (Los Angeles), Los Angeles County, California (APN: 4319-003-061, 4319-003-064, 4319-003-063)

Requested by

Westfield, LLC

Prepared by

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I. INTRODUCTION

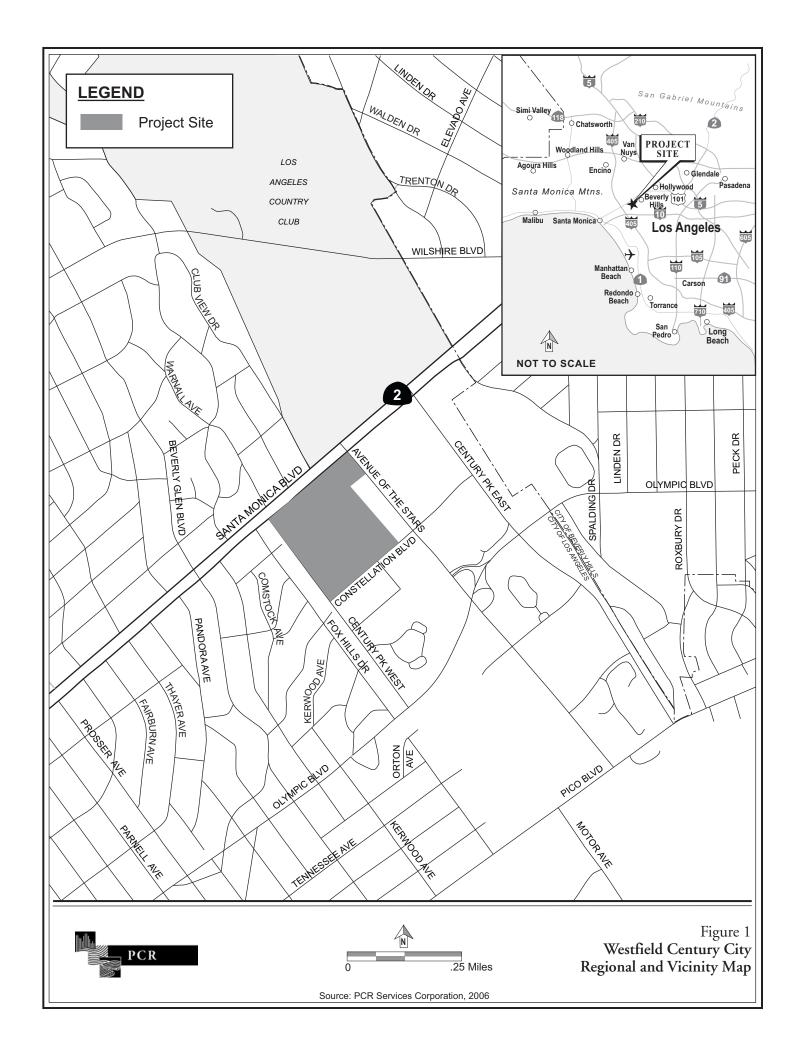
A. INTRODUCTION

This historic resources assessment by PCR Services Corporation (PCR), evaluates the federal, state, and local significance of the subject property located at 1801 Avenue of the Stars, 10250 Santa Monica Boulevard, and 1930 Century Park West in the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California. The subject property is presently owned by the Westfield Corporation. This technical report was prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, to assess the buildings on the subject property for their potential eligibility as historical resources. The assessment includes a discussion of survey methods, the jurisdictional framework for historical resources, historic context, and an assessment of the subject property. This report does not, however, discuss potential impacts and mitigation measures for any specific action being considered relative to the subject property.

The subject property is situated in a primarily commercial zone. (See Figure 1, Regional and Site Vicinity Map, on page 3.) Non-commercial uses in the vicinity include the Los Angeles Country Club golf course, located on the north side of Santa Monica Boulevard across from the subject property. Single-family residential uses are located westerly of the Century City Shopping Center.

The subject property consists of three parcels contained within the boundaries of Santa Monica Boulevard to the north, Avenue of the Stars to the east, Constellation Boulevard to the south, and Century Park West to the west. The parcel situated on the northeast corner with the address 1801 Avenue of the Stars is presently improved with a thirteen-story office building having a rectangular footprint surrounded by a concrete plaza, landscaping, and a wide fountain. A four-level underground parking garage is located beneath the building and plaza. This property, hereafter referred to as 1801 Avenue of the Stars, has also been referred to as Gateway West. A concrete pedestrian bridge spanning Avenue of the Stars connects the subject property with an identical building situated on the opposite street corner at 1800 Avenue of the Stars, also known as Gateway East. 1801 Avenue of the Stars is sited on an approximately 300-foot by 350-foot lot of Tract 26196 in the City of Los Angeles.

The Century City Shopping Center with the address, 10250 Santa Monica Boulevard, occupies the large parcel west and southwest of 1801 Avenue of the Stars. It is sited on a very large, primarily rectangular parcel that is approximately 735 feet by 1073 feet in size. A five-story office building with the address, 1930 Century Park West, is located at the southwest



corner of the property on a smaller parcel with dimensions of approximately 127 feet by 243 feet. This latter property is bordered on its north and east sides by the Century City Shopping Center. Two high-rise office towers, 1901 and 1999 Avenue of the Stars, border but are not part of the subject property east of the shopping center.

B. METHODOLOGY

The historic resource assessment was prepared by Margarita Wuellner, Ph.D., Principal Architectural Historian, PCR, who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards in history and architectural history. A multi-step methodology was utilized to evaluate the subject property. This involved review of the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) and its annual updates, the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register), the California Historic Resources Inventory database maintained by the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), and the City of Los Angeles' list of Historical-Cultural Monuments to identify previously recorded properties within or near the survey area. Site inspections and review of building permits and tax assessor records were conducted to document the construction history, alterations and existing conditions. This data was used to assist in evaluating the property for significance. A site survey of the property, including photography and an intensive visual examination, was also conducted. properties in the area that exhibited potential architectural and/or historical associations were also photographed. The site survey was conducted in accordance with the procedures established by federal, state and local guidelines for conducting historic preservation work. Site-specific research on the subject property and vicinity utilizing Sanborn fire insurance maps, city directories, newspaper articles, historical photographs, and other published sources was conducted. This information was incorporated into the historic context for the subject property. Ordinances, statutes, regulations, bulletins, and technical materials relating to federal, state, and local historic preservation, designation assessment processes, and related programs were reviewed and analyzed. The criteria of the National Register, California Register, and the City of Los Angeles were employed to evaluate the potential historical and architectural significance of the property.

II. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Historic resources fall within the jurisdiction of several levels of government. Federal laws provide the framework for the identification, and in certain instances, protection of historic resources. Additionally, states and local jurisdictions play active roles in the identification, documentation, and protection of such resources within their communities.

Numerous laws and regulations require federal, state, and local agencies to consider the effects of a proposed project on cultural resources. These laws and regulations stipulate a process for compliance, define the responsibilities of the various agencies proposing the action, and prescribe the relationship among other involved agencies (e.g. State Historic Preservation Office and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation). The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended; the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); the California Register of Historical Resources, Public Resources Code (PRC) 5024, and the City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Ordinance (Los Angeles Administrative Code, Section 22.130) are the primary federal and state laws governing and affecting preservation of historic resources of national, state, regional, and local significance. A description of these laws and regulations is provided below.

A. FEDERAL LEVEL

1. National Register of Historic Places

First authorized by the Historic Sites Act of 1935, the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) was established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as "an authoritative guide to be used by Federal, State, and local governments, private groups and citizens to identify the Nation's cultural resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment." The National Register recognizes properties that are significant at the national, state and local levels. Further discussion of National Register criteria and guidelines is provided in Section III, Part B, Criteria for Evaluation of Historic Resources, of this document.

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¹ Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), 36 § 60.2.

B. STATE LEVEL

1. California Register of Historical Resources

The California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), as an office of the California Department of Parks and Recreation, implements the policies of the NHPA on a state-wide level. The OHP also carries out the duties as set forth in the Public Resources Code (PRC) and maintains the California Historic Resources Inventory and California Register of Historical Resources.² The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) is an appointed official who implements historic preservation programs within the state's jurisdictions. Also implemented at the state level, CEQA requires the identification of substantial adverse impacts which may affect the significance of identified historical resources through an environmental review process. Further discussion of OHP survey methodology and specific criteria to determine the significance of a resource are provided in Section III, Part B, of this document.

Created by Assembly Bill 2881 in 1992, the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is "an authoritative listing and guide to be used by state and local agencies, private groups, and citizens in identifying the existing historical resources of the state and to indicate which resources deserve to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse change." The criteria for eligibility for the California Register are based upon National Register criteria. Certain resources are determined by the statute to be automatically included in the California Register, including California properties formally determined eligible for, or listed in, the National Register.⁵

The California Register consists of resources that are listed automatically and those that must be nominated through an application and public hearing process. The California Register automatically includes the following:

- California properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places and those formally Determined Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places;
- California Registered Historical Landmarks from No. 770 onward;

⁴ California Public Resources Code § 5024.1(b).

² California Public Resources Code § 5024.1(a).

³ Ibid.

⁵ California Public Resources Code § 5024.1(d).

 Those California Points of Historical Interest that have been evaluated by the OHP and have been recommended to the State Historical Commission for inclusion on the California Register.⁶

Other resources which may be nominated to the California Register include:

- Individual historical resources;
- Historical resources contributing to historic districts;
- Historic resources identified as significant in historical resources surveys with significance ratings of Category 1 through 5;
- Historical resources designated or listed as local landmarks, or designated under any local ordinance, such as an historic preservation overlay zone.⁷

C. LOCAL LEVEL

1. City of Los Angeles Historic - Cultural Monuments

The City of Los Angeles enacted a Cultural Heritage Ordinance in 1962, which defined Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments (LAHCMs) for the City. According to the ordinance (Los Angeles Administrative Code, Section 22.130), LAHCMs are sites, buildings, or structures of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles in which the broad cultural, political, or social history of the nation, state, or City is reflected or exemplified, including sites and buildings associated with important personages or which embody certain distinguishing architectural characteristics and are associated with a notable architect. These LAHCMs are regulated by the City's Cultural Heritage Commission, which reviews permits to alter, relocate, or demolish these landmarks.

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⁶ Ibid.

⁷ California Public Resources Code § 5024.1(e).

III. RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

A. HISTORIC CONTEXT

A variety of development factors, features, organizations, and individuals have contributed to the historical setting of the subject property.

1. Los Angeles/West Los Angeles⁸

Prior to the arrival of the Spanish in California, the Los Angeles area was inhabited by the Gabrielino Indians. The earliest explorers arrived in the region in 1769 with the Gaspar de Portola Expedition. In 1781, settlers from Mexico under the direction of Spanish Governor Felipe de Neve founded El Pueblo de La Reina de Los Angeles. The original division of the area west of the pueblo into four ranchos was accomplished through Spanish and Mexican land grants. Rancho San Jose de Bueno Ayres, in which the subject property is located, included the area of present-day Westwood between the City of Beverly Hills and the Veterans Administration complex, north of Pico Boulevard. Granted in 1819 to Maximo Alanis and Jose Polanco, and regranted to Alanis in 1843, the rancho changed hands many times in the midnineteenth century and was patented by Benjamin D. Wilson in 1866.

In 1850, California was admitted as the 31st state in the Union and, in the same year, the City of Los Angeles was formally incorporated. During the 1860s and 1870s, land to the west and north of the present-day Harbor Freeway (State Highway 110) was settled as Los Angeles began to expand, and such growth was made possible by new railroad and streetcar lines.

The 2,000 acre Rancho San Jose de Buenos Ayres had been purchased by John Wolfskill in 1884. Wolfskill located his ranch house near the center of his property on the site of what is now the Mormon Temple on Santa Monica Boulevard. Plans for a town site called "Sunset" never materialized and six years after Wolfskill's death in 1913, the entire property was purchased by wealthy retailer Arthur Letts who was the founder of the Broadway Department Store. Under Letts and his successors, the primary form of development in the area was residential subdivisions, which included the Rancho Park district west of the subject property. Additionally, large land uses in the vicinity included country clubs, golf courses, large private ranches (including the subject property), public parks, and reservoirs. Sections of the former

Excerpted from "Historic Context Statement: The Central Los Angeles Subregional Planning Area of the City of Los Angeles," prepared by Historic Resources Group for the Los Angeles Conservancy. Revised September 14, 1990.

rancho were annexed to the City of Los Angeles beginning in 1916 when the area's residents were motivated to seek access to Los Angeles' water for residential and agricultural use. After completion of the Owen's Valley Aqueduct in 1913, annexation was required before outlying areas could receive surplus water from the City of Los Angeles.

During the first quarter of the 20th century, the success of the motion picture business, discovery of oil within the region, a successful citrus industry, and a booming real estate market continued to entice immigrants, particularly Midwesterners, to the Los Angeles region. By the late 1920s, Hollywood, Sawtelle, Venice, the San Fernando Valley, San Pedro, Laurel Canyon, Westwood and many other municipalities and unincorporated areas, including the subject property, were consolidated into the City of Los Angeles. Other smaller annexations continued to occur into the late 1970s.

2. Century City

The 280-acre parcel that had been part of the original Rancho San Jose de Buenos Ayres, 176 acres of which would become Century City, was purchased by silent film star Tom Mix as his private ranch in the 1910s. During this period, the adjacent City of Beverly Hills to the east began to grow in population and status as other movie stars settled in the area. Following the purchase of Mix's ranch in 1928 by Fox Film Corporation (later known as 20th Century Fox following its merger with 20th Century Pictures in 1935), the value of the property continued to increase as the studio site became surrounded by upscale development, including exclusive country clubs on its north and south boundaries.

In January 1958, it was announced in the *Los Angeles Times* that a \$400,000,000 hotel, apartment and office building community would be developed on the 20th Century Fox Studio (Fox) back lot. According to Fox, increasing land values motivated the decision to convert the property to uses other than motion picture production while retaining 80 acres for Fox studio uses. As described in the announcement, the new community would be bounded on the north by Santa Monica Boulevard and on the south by Pico Boulevard. The Beverly Hills city limits would form the property's eastern boundary, and the rear property lines of existing West Los Angeles residential and commercial properties would constitute the western boundary, (with the Fox studio facility located on the southwest corner of the property). According to the announcement, the entire community would be bisected on a north-south line by a 175-foot-wide highway to be known as the *Champs-Élysées*. To be fashioned after the famed Paris thoroughfare, it would be landscaped and divided by a series of fountains.

Los Angeles Times, "\$400,000,000 City to Rise on Film Studio's Lot," January 8, 1958. p.1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2, column 7.

Welton Becket and Associates, a large Los Angeles-based architectural firm, was chosen by Fox to plan the new community and design its buildings. The initial concept for Century City was depicted in architectural renderings and models created by Becket's firm.¹¹ The initial concept was presented and published in Los Angeles Times articles in early 1958.¹² The Champs-*Élysées* was later renamed Avenue of the Stars in tribute to the film personalities who once worked on the site. The Avenue of the Stars, which now fully bisects the property, would have originally deviated north of Olympic Boulevard along a "dog-leg" road which would have terminated in a freeway interchange at the northern edge of the property. In the models and illustrative plans, a grade-separated freeway interchange provided the primary access and connection from the Century City road grid to a depressed freeway located where Santa Monica Boulevard is today.¹³ Side streets now known as Century Park West and Century Park East would flank Avenue of the Stars near the project's west and east boundaries, respectively. One east-west street, Olympic Boulevard (crossed by a new bridge at Avenue of the Stars), completed Century City's arterial grid. Additionally, the mature trees that dotted the former back lot would be saved and replanted once Century City's infrastructure was in place. The buildings depicted in the three-dimensional model, both commercial and residential, displayed a mixed palette of influences, inspired in some places by International Style Modernism and in other places by prewar Streamline Moderne.

In the master planning process, concept development is often the first major step in the design process. It is based upon an overall vision for a site, usually developed by the architect in consultation with the client. The opportunities and constraints presented by a particular site are then carefully analyzed as a part of the planning process, to establish the basis from which a master plan is later developed. The 1958 plan established the basic layout, functional areas, and arterial grid of Century City and clearly presented the concept of the design as a "City within a city." However, the architectural approach, circulation and land use was still not fully developed at this stage.

In May of 1959, in contrast to Fox's original strategy, it was announced that the company would relinquish title to both its proposed Century City site and the land upon which the remaining Fox studio would continue to operate, a combined total of 260 acres. The buyer was William Zeckendorf's New York-based real estate investment company Webb & Knapp (later

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Los Angeles Public Library Photo Archives, Welton Becket Collection: http://jpgl.lapl.org/pics46/00042843.jpg; and http://jpgl.lapl.org/pics46/00042845.jpg.

[&]quot;\$400,000,000 City to Rise in Film Studio Lot," <u>Los Angeles Times</u>, January 8, 1958; "Plans Picture Creation of \$400,000,000 Project," <u>Los Angeles Times</u>, January 12, 1958, p.F1; "Reports Unconfirmed by Huge Realty Deal, \$400,000,000 Transaction for 176 Acres on 20h Century-Fox Studio Lot Rumored," <u>Los Angeles Times</u>, November 22, 1958.

Los Angeles Public Library Photo Archives, Welton Becket Collection: http://jpg1.lapl.org/pics46/00042843.jpg, and http://jpg1.lapl.org/pics46/00042845.jpg.

Zeckendorf Property Corporation). Under the terms of the agreement, Zeckendorf paid approximately \$43,000,000 for the 260-acre site with Fox retaining the right to continue operating on the approximately 75 acres of the property (the property's southwest corner) via a long-term lease agreement. Fifteen months later, following several unsuccessful attempts at arranging development financing, Zeckendorf entered into a joint venture agreement with the Aluminum Company of America (Alcoa) whereby Alcoa would receive a substantial share of Century City in exchange for guaranteeing the project's financing. In announcing the agreement, Alcoa claimed that one of its motivations for participating in the Century City project was the opportunity for developing new uses for aluminum that the project would provide. At the time, Century City was described as the largest privately financed commercial and residential project ever undertaken.¹⁴

By late 1961, a revised master plan for Century City favored by Alcoa had been developed, once again under the auspices of Welton Becket and Associates. The overall concept had been extensively reworked in the revised plan to meet the vision and requirements of the The architectural approach was updated to reflect innovations in design, particularly in relation to the use of aluminum, which was incorporated into the new, Modern International Style now favored by Becket and Alcoa for the development. In addition, the density of development throughout the site was significantly increased. The land-use and circulation concept of the 1961 master plan was similar to the 1958 plan, but was now more fully developed. The 1961 plan regularized the original master plan's road layout and organized the project into quadrants, divided east-west by Avenue of the Stars (which now included a central fountain) and north-south by Olympic boulevard. An ensemble of monumental office blocks were proposed in the western portion of the site, and residential high-rises were proposed in the southeastern corner. A shopping center occupied the northwestern corner, and the cultural/entertainment studio complex was in the southwestern corner. The form and massing of the buildings within the site were defined by smooth monumental volumes that contrasted with plazas, green spaces and views of the surrounding city.

Of the buildings depicted in a model of the 1961 master plan, 1801 Avenue of the Stars and 1800 Avenue of the Stars, a pair of identical 13-story office buildings to be situated on opposite corners of Avenue of the Stars at Santa Monica Boulevard, were to be the first high-rise office buildings constructed in Century City. With their height, corner location, and fountains, the two buildings were intended to be the anchors, or gateway buildings to Century City. According to a *Los Angeles Times* article of December 10, 1961, the building at 1801 Avenue of

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Los Angeles Times, "High Rise Building to Signal Start of Century City Project," January 22, 1962. p.B1. "Alcoa Buys Big Share in Century City," Los Angeles Times, August 26, 1960, p. B1. The closing of the deal did not occur until 1961, after Alcoa agreed to invest in the project. Alex Garvin, The American City: What Works, What Doesn't, McGraw-Hill Professional, 2002, pp. 349-351.

Los Angeles Times, "Contract for 1st Century City Unit Signed," December 10, 1961. p.14.

the Stars was to be know as "Gateway West" while the building across the way was to be known as "Gateway East." Consistent with Alcoa's intentions, the buildings were to be sheathed in aluminum and glass, and aluminum was to be employed at every opportunity in the construction of the buildings. By virtue of their location, lined up along the heavily-traveled Santa Monica Boulevard, these identical buildings allowed Alcoa to quickly create prominent visibility for the project, even while the center of the property was still largely vacant. At the southern end of the property, the same approach was also employed wherein the first buildings to be constructed were the twin Century Park Towers, designed by I. M. Pei and Welton Becket and Associates, which created a street frontage and visibility along Pico Boulevard. Other buildings planned over the following eight to 12 years included as many as 50 buildings, many of them to be skyscrapers.

Preceding the Century City master plan, the California State Highway Commission had already identified Santa Monica Boulevard as a potential route for the planned Beverly Hills Freeway (CA-2) which would have connected the San Diego Freeway (I-405) on the west to the Hollywood Freeway (CA-101) on the east.¹⁷ Had this been constructed, its connection with the Century City surface may have been similar to the interchange shown on the original 1958 model; such a configuration would have funneled most inbound- and outbound-traffic for the freeway, Century City, Cheviot Hills and other neighborhoods to the south through this 'gateway' at Santa Monica Boulevard. The Beverly Hills freeway would have been an extension of the existing Glendale Freeway and would have connected to that freeway's never completed Echo Park portion. In the absence of a limited-access Beverly Hills Freeway, the inbound- and outbound-traffic today is more diffuse, utilizing more routes. Thus, this 'gateway' at Santa Monica Boulevard is less important with visibility that is dramatically lessened.

Despite great intentions, the 1961 master plan as originally envisioned was only partially completed. Following the completion of the 1801 and 1800 Avenue of the Stars office buildings in 1963 and 1964, respectively, a pair of high-rise luxury apartment buildings (the Century Park Towers) and a regional shopping center referred to as the Century Square Shopping Center were constructed. Anchoring Welton Becket and Associate's Century Square shopping center was a three-level Broadway department store. Minoru Yamasaki designed the horizontally curved 800-room Century Plaza hotel that opened in 1965 on the west side of Avenue of the Stars. A decade later, he also designed Century City's twin Century Plaza Towers, the triangular-footprint buildings that have become Century City's iconic high-rise office buildings.

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¹⁶ Ibid. The title blocks on the construction drawings for the two buildings also read "Gateway East" and "Gateway West."

¹⁷ Ray Herbert, "Heart Of Beverly Hills Freeway Recommended" Los Angeles Times, 20 Aug 1965: A1. The final route for the Beverly Hills Freeway was adopted in 1965 and would have replaced Santa Monica Boulevard, Little Santa Monica, and the railroad tracks that previously ran along the corridor.

Over the decades, Century City has witnessed the completion of numerous low-, midand high-rise office and commercial structures, residential buildings, hotels, a culturalentertainment center and a hospital, many by respected architectural firms. In practice, however, only the broadest outlines of Welton Becket and Associates' Century City master plan of 1961 have been followed. Although the plan is still evident in the general locations for residential development, office buildings, the shopping center, and the cultural-entertainment facility, the massing, scale and architectural characteristics of the development presently bears little relationship to the plans and models produced by Welton Becket and Associates in 1961. The organization of skyscrapers, landscape and circulation presented in the 1961 plan was only partially completed and was later altered by new construction that is inconsistent with the 1961 plan. Construction has proceeded over the span of the latter twentieth century to meet the financial and functional requirements of the subsequent property owners, later city planning requirements, and changes in fashion, resulting in substantial departures from and additions to the master plan, beginning relatively soon after the completion of the first group of buildings. The type and scope of these deviations were already clear in 1969 with Minoru Yamasaki's design for the twin Century Plaza Towers, which replaced a single, taller "Theme Tower" which had originally been shown in that location in the master plan (and for which Welton Becket and Associates had already produced a schematic design).¹⁸ Following completion of the project's street grid, infrastructure, early office buildings, and shopping center in the mid-1960s, the Becket firm had minimal involvement with Century City's subsequent growth¹⁹. In the ensuing decades, Century City's owners sold off many of the parcels to developers with the result that Century City was developed in piecemeal rather than a unified manner. Consequently, Century City as it exists today does not fully embody Becket's vision. Though the identical towers at 1800 and 1801 Avenue of the Stars do conform to the plan's over-arching organization of functional uses, building heights, landscaping, and circulation, as presented in the 1961 plan, this occurs at such a functional and general level as to underscore just how little else in the final development was actually the result of the Welton Becket and Associates master plan.

Over the 42 years of its history, Century City has not been extensively published in architectural literature and has rarely been a topic of architectural discussion. However, on the occasion of its 25th anniversary in 1988, a critique of Century City by writer John Pastier in *Architecture* magazine examined the legacy of the "city within a city" up to that point in time. Writing from the perspective of late 1980s Postmodernism, Pastier concluded that there were several reasons for the architectural community's critical indifference. "Although its very earliest and latest buildings [as of 1988] are well designed, the overwhelming majority are

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William Dudley Hunt Jr., <u>Total Design: Architecture of Welton Becket and Associates</u> (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1972), p. 224.

After Welton Becket's death in 1969, his firm also designed the Northrup office building at 1800 Century Park East which opened in 1983 (source: Gebhard, 134)

Pastier stated that Becket's outdated planning ideas, based on Modern-movement and urbanrenewal notions about unformed space, monumental scale, and sparse ground coverage, were
fundamentally flawed. Furthermore, once Century City was planned, its implementation was not
systematically carried out by the subsequent owners, resulting in even greater fragmentation.
According to Pastier, Century City's location on the suburban west side of Los Angeles gave it
neither an urban context nor a strong local urban value system to guide project planning
decisions. The issue of traffic further complicated the issue--neither the planned freeway nor the
anticipated rapid transit line ever materialized. Pastier observed: "In its treatment of vehicles,
pedestrians, shopping and housing, Century City combined urban densities with suburban
values."²¹

Of the earliest buildings constructed in Century City, Pastier focused on I.M. Pei's Century Park Towers apartments (later condominiums) as setting a strong design standard and "...represent[ing] a milestone in local high-rise housing design." In contrast, Pastier minimized the importance of Century City's other early buildings, including the subject property, because they "did not measure up to Pei's work but were still solid, respectable efforts in the context of their time." Pastier was particularly harsh in his review of Minoru Yamasaki's Theme Towers (now Century Plaza Towers), built in 1975. He also was highly critical of the residential sector's utterly suburban character that did not interact with the surrounding commercial or office buildings in any meaningful way.

More recently, the 2003 revised edition of David Gebhard and Robert Winter's book, *An Architectural Guidebook to Los Angeles*, first published in 1965 and updated in 1977, 1985, and 1994, agreed with Pastier's 1988 assessment of Century City, with the subjective critical evaluation that: "The governing idea [of Century City] seems to have been to inspire awe of corporate America via wide avenues and over-scaled architecture. If you accept the effort to impress, then the attempt, even at this stage, has been successful." They conclude, "You have the strange feeling that this city was planned not for people but for architectural photography."²⁴

The period of significance for Century City is 1958-1975, which includes the completion of the initial plan in 1958, the completion of the 1961 master plan, and the subsequent construction of a number of existing buildings in Century City from the Modern period.

²⁰ John Pastier, "Century City After a Quarter Century," <u>Architecture</u>, January, 1988, p.60.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

David Gebhard and Robert Winter, <u>An Architectural Guidebook to Los Angeles</u>, edited and updated by Robert Winter (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 2003), p. 161.

However, the presence of so many buildings constructed within the past 30 years significantly compromises the historical associations and architectural relationships between the components completed during the period of significance.²⁵ Thus, while certain organizational elements of the 1961 Master Plan do exist, the Century City of today does not achieve Becket's vision of a "city within a city."

3. Master Planned Communities

Following the Second World War, residential and commercial developers began experimenting with master planned communities that were larger and more comprehensive in their scope than the projects attempted prior to 1945. In Southern California, successful apartment housing projects based upon garden city principles included a commercial component on the project's periphery. Additionally, the promoters of large scale single-family housing developments such as Westchester (1941-43) incorporated commercial strips. But it was not until such projects as Lakewood, California (1950) that the contemporary concept of a thoroughly planned community began to be realized. In Lakewood, in addition to thousands of homes, the project included recreational parks, schools, and a large shopping center as part of the overall "master plan" for the community.

As the 1950s progressed, the definition of a master planned community evolved to be understood as a self-contained unit of business, recreation, and housing for residents and the community at large; in essence, a "mini-city." From the late 1950s through the 1970s, numerous master planned developments, or "new communities" appeared throughout the United States. Outside of California, these communities included Columbia, Maryland; Reston, Virginia; The Woodlands, Texas; and Schaumburg, Illinois. In Southern California, examples included Irvine, Warner Center, and Century City. Ranging in population from about 10,000 to 500,000, the best of these new communities were planned to be phased, coordinated, socially balanced, environmentally sensitive, and economically efficient. By avoiding many of the problems of unplanned incremental growth, developers imagined both improving urban areas and creating products that would sell.²⁶

Century City was to be a master planned "city within a city" of office buildings, a shopping center, apartment buildings, hotels, landscaped boulevards, and recreational facilities, all within 180 acres. Situated in the upscale Beverly Hills/West Los Angeles area, Century City

Century City's period of significance, 1958-1975, corresponds with the initial conception and implementation of Century City's master plan and the conclusion of the first phase of construction with the completion of Minoru Yamasaki's Century Plaza Towers.

²⁶ Ann Forsyth, "Planning Lessons From Three U.S. New Towns of the 1960s and 1970s: Irvine, Columbia and the Woodlands," <u>Journal of the American Planning Association</u>, Vol. 68, No. 4, Autumn 2002, pp. 387-416.

was planned to be a glamorous new metropolitan center of daring Modern architecture, spectacular office towers, high-end shopping, first-class hotels, and luxurious apartments connected via both a new freeway and rail transit to the rest of the city²⁷. In contrast with most master planned communities, Century City's residential focus was limited. In fact, Century City was primarily designed to be an upscale commercial center with a relatively isolated residential sector occupying less than one-quarter of its total acreage. Additionally, unlike other master planned communities of the period that were constructed on the periphery of a major metropolitan area, Century City was built amidst the urban fabric of Los Angeles. As a consequence, Century City's appeal was not based upon a desire to retreat from the urban area or existing municipalities, but upon its mix of modern offices, shopping, and entertainment that were desirable to adjacent and nearby residential communities.

4. Regional Shopping Centers

From 1920 until World War II, the evolution of retailing was predicated on the increasing acceptance of the automobile as the transportation of choice for shoppers and the decline in dominance of a downtown as the locus of retail activity. In the Los Angeles region and elsewhere in the United States, department stores were among the first major retailers to construct costly new branch locations further removed from their downtown flagship stores along major thoroughfares and located closer to residential communities. During this period in Los Angeles, retailers such as Bullock's, the May Company, Coulter's and others built impressive new department store branches along Wilshire Boulevard, each with a large parking lot and entrance situated at the property's rear for convenient motorcar access. Following the Second World War, large new suburban residential communities designed to satisfy the country's enormous demand for single-family housing were constructed on the periphery of older urban areas throughout the United States. The scale of many of these new suburban communities was so enormous that entire commercial zones needed to be designed and built from scratch. It was this demand for new and extensive suburban retail districts that led inexorably to the emergence of an entirely new property type – the regional shopping center. 28 Of the west coast architectural firms working on plans to replace the traditional main street shopping experience with a new concept, the Los Angeles-based firms of Albert C. Martin and Associates, Welton Becket and Associates, Pereira and Luckman, and, in particular, Victor Gruen Associates were pioneers in the field.

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Reference to original Planning Commission approval in: Doug Smith, "Developers Angered by Century City Plan" <u>Los Angeles Times</u> 16 July 1972, WS1.

²⁸ Richard Longstreth, "<u>City Center to Regional Mall: Architecture, the Automobile, and Retailing in Los Angeles, 1920-1950,"</u> The MIT Press, 1997.

Shopping center design generally was based upon a promenade of stores carefully placed in relation to the others as part of a contained, inward-looking landscape. A key element in this concept was the mall's "anchor" department store which was located so as to draw shoppers through the mall and past the other in-line stores. The layout reinforced customer perceptions of the shopping mall as a cohesive entity, thereby intensifying the need for careful coordination among tenants and a willingness of retailers to work as a group. The center's inward orientation encouraged movement throughout the premises. Once divorced from their cars and walking amid what seemed like an entirely different world, customers tended to spend greater blocks of time meandering, meeting friends, having meals, and buying goods. With a generally even distribution of parking spaces around the complex, the distance from the extremities of the lot to the stores was kept to a minimum. Additionally, the inward-looking orientation of the mall enhanced the reputation of these complexes as destinations. By the mid-1950s, the single department store-anchor shopping mall had evolved into dual department store-anchors, one at each end of the mall, anchoring a barbell of one or two levels of stores in between.²⁹

Notable examples of the numerous shopping centers that opened across the Los Angeles region included Anaheim Plaza (1954-57, Welton Becket and Associates), Eastland in West Covina (1955-57, A.C. Martin and Associates), and Fashion Square in Santa Ana (1957-58, Pereira and Luckman). By 1964, when Welton Becket and Associates' Century Square was completed, the regional shopping mall was a well-established retail concept throughout the United States.

5. Corporate Modernism

In the post-World War II period in America, the predominant idiom applied to corporate architecture was the International Style, which came to be known as Corporate Modernism. Deriving from the 1920s origins of Modernism in Europe, the International Style was characterized by rectilinear forms, flat roofs, open floor plans, use of steel and glass, and lack of applied ornamentation. During the 1950s and 1960s, distinct and broadly identifiable stylistic variants of the International Style evolved, including the Miesian Style which was influenced by the work of German architect, Mies Van der Rohe; as well as Formalism, which abstracted and reinterpreted fundamental classical forms using modern materials and technology. It was not uncommon for an architectural firm or individual architect to work in a variety of idioms, the selection of which was generally related to the proposed building's functional use, the design of the surrounding urban fabric and the client's own stylistic preferences. In the case of Welton Becket and Associates, there was a wide gulf between the rationalized Miesian minimalism of their office towers (such as 1801 Avenue of the Stars, completed in 1963), and the classical

²⁹ *Ibid*.

formalistic expressionism of their public and institutional projects (such as the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, which opened in 1964).

In particular, commercial office tower architecture of the 1950s-1960s era is generally characterized by a tight integration of materials, construction systems and aesthetic minimalism that is conceptually indebted to the work of Mies van der Rohe, who perfected the glass office tower as a corporate building type. The Miesian Style is best exemplified by Mies Van der Rohe's Seagram Building in New York City, completed in 1958. The formal elements of the Miesian Style include an open pedestrian plaza, ground-floor glass weather walls set back behind outer piers, curtain walls, uninterrupted vertical lines, and the frank expression of materials including concrete, steel and glass. The integration of structural and aesthetic goals is most apparent in the articulation of the curtain wall where the economies of scale in the design and manufacture of architectural elements resulted in the uniformity and regularity apparent in the external articulation. For a generation, the Miesian variant of Corporate Modernism became the accepted look for America's office buildings based upon a stylistic preference for its perceived modernity and practicality, as well as its inherent overall economy of construction. In plan, the regular structural grid enabled the creation of large spaces with few interruptions and made them flexible enough to accommodate a variety of functions. Such adaptability was particularly welcome in office buildings where tenants changed frequently and interior partition walls could be erected, altered, or removed based upon the tenant's requirements.

During this period in the Los Angeles region the three largest locally-based architectural firms - Welton Becket and Associates, Pereira and Luckman (after 1958, known individually as William Pereira and Associates and Charles Luckman Associates), and Albert C. Martin and Associates - designed numerous high-rise office buildings in this vein. Welton Becket and Associates was responsible for one of Los Angeles' earliest Corporate Modern buildings, the Standard Federal Savings and Loan Association building (1953, now 601 Wilshire Boulevard building) in downtown Los Angeles. Typical period examples of the idiom erected in Century City include 1900 Avenue of the Stars (1968, Albert C. Martin and Associates), 1901 Avenue of the Stars (1967, Hellmuth, Obata, Kassabaum and Charles Luckman Associates), and the ABI Tower (1971, 10100 Santa Monica Boulevard, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill), in addition to 1801 and 1800 Avenue of the Stars.

6. Welton Becket and Associates

Welton Davis Becket, FAIA (b. Seattle, Washington, 1902; d. 1969) studied architecture at the University of Washington and did a year of graduate study at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. He arrived in Los Angeles in 1931 and in 1933 launched a practice that was to become one of the most influential in the development of the City, and one of the nation's largest

architectural firms.³⁰ Along with his classmate, Walter Wurdeman, Becket formed a partnership with an older established Los Angeles architect, Charles F. Plummer. They worked for six years with Plummer, a solid commercial architect of shops, cafeterias, drive-in restaurants, and markets. But even in the difficult days of the Depression, Wurdeman and Becket were planning tomorrow's city. This progressive vision won them the design competition that put them on the architectural map: the Pan Pacific Auditorium in 1935 (now demolished). The Pan Pacific was a vivid interpretation of the Moderne, of progress, of all that was new and hopeful. Its effortlessly fluid pylons became an iconic image of the Streamline Moderne architectural style, and of Los Angeles.³¹

After Plummer's death in 1939, the firm incorporated as Wurdeman and Becket. They continued to design projects that would become iconic, including the Prudential Center (1947) on Wilshire Boulevard and the General Petroleum (1946) building in downtown Los Angeles. Wurdeman died unexpectedly in 1949 and Becket bought out his partner's heirs, assuming sole leadership of the firm that then became known as Welton Becket and Associates.³²

Around 1940, Wurdeman and Becket embraced a philosophy of "Total Design," a concept that became integral to their work about this time and would guide the firm for years to come. This philosophy embraced all requirements demanded of an architectural problem: preliminary research, site selection, economic analysis, traffic surveys, and the actual design of the building or complex of buildings, for which Becket employed his own team of architects, mechanical and electrical engineers, landscape architects, and interior designers. True to its name, "Total Design" attempts to control every detail of a commission that concerns design. The versatile designs of this firm are not identified with a particular style, but attempt instead to articulate each client's character and needs.³³

Welton Becket and Associates was headquartered in Los Angeles, with offices in San Francisco, New York, Houston, and Chicago. Welton Becket's success is attributed to both his design sense and his business mentality. He was able to estimate projects accurately and this brought him repeat clients. His philosophy of Total Design allowed him to offer a broader range of services than other architects. He adjusted his designs to each client's needs and taste. With this formula, the firm grew to be one of the largest in the world with more than 400 employees.

³⁰ Excerpted from Margarita J. Wuellner, "Historic American Landscape Survey, Parker Center, 150 North Los Angeles Street, Los Angeles, California," Prepared for the City of Los Angeles, Department of Public Works, 2005.

Excerpted from the introduction to "Built by Becket," by the Los Angeles Conservancy's Modern Committee, 2003. Introduction by historian, author, and architectural critic Alan Hess.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid. See William Dudley Hunt, Jr., <u>Total Design: Architecture of Welton Becket and Associates</u>, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972.

In 1950, Welton Becket was presented with the Honor Award of the VII Pan American Congress of Architects for the design and execution of Prudential Square (with his partner W. Wurdeman), and in 1952 he was made Fellow of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for excellence in design (*Architectural Record* 1969).³⁴ Following his death in 1969, the firm continued for 20 years before being purchased by Minneapolis-based Ellerbe Architects and becoming part of the renamed firm, Ellerbe-Becket, which continues as a nationally recognized architectural firm.³⁵

The firm was involved with all types of projects including commercial, institutional, and residential. One of Wurdeman and Becket's first large projects in Los Angeles was a commission to design the Bullock's Pasadena department store in 1946. The store was to reflect the suburbs as the new center of urban gravity and the new informality of post-World War II life. Subsequently, the General Petroleum Building in downtown Los Angeles and Prudential Square on Wilshire Boulevard designed by the firm in 1947 and 1948, respectively, explored different solutions to the workplace and the need for flexibility. A few years later, in 1953, what was described as Los Angeles' first "glass skyscraper," Becket's nine story Standard Federal Savings and Loan Association office building, was constructed on Wilshire Boulevard at Grand Avenue in downtown Los Angeles.³⁶

Becket's firm was also involved in master planning projects including the Los Angeles International Airport (in concert with Paul Williams and William Pereira), the Center for Health Sciences at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), as well as Century City.³⁷ Although little has been published specifically focusing on the firm's master planning work, a review of the published record on the firm's architectural work shows that master planning was consistently and widely incorporated into the firm's practice from the late 1950s and 1960s onward as part of their "Total Design" approach.

William Hunt's corporate history of Welton Becket and Associates, *Total Design*, provides a full resume of the firm's projects. Public plazas and designed urban landscapes were consistently incorporated into their projects from the 1940s through the 1960s. Examples of the incorporation of Modern designed landscapes by Welton Becket and Associates in Los Angeles include the Bullock's, Inc., department stores in Pasadena (1947), Westwood (1950), Sherman Oaks (1963), Lakewood (1965), and La Habra (1969); Prudential Square (1948); the Los Angeles Memorial Sports Arena (1959); the Center for Health Sciences (1961-1970) at the

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ *Ibid*.

³⁶ Los Angeles Times, "Downtown Facility Sold to Empire Life," May 6, 1966. p.B17.

³⁷ Hunt. 1972.

University of California, Los Angeles; Security Pacific Bank Building (Tishman Airport Center) (1963); and the Equitable Life Building (1969).³⁸

In addition to the large number of generally undistinguished office and commercial projects, the firm also completed a significant number of regionally and nationally notable projects including: Hollywood's circular Capitol Records office tower, the nearby Cineramadome movie theater, downtown Los Angeles' Music Center complex (including the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Mark Taper Forum, and Ahmanson Theatre), Santa Monica's Civic Auditorium, and the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills.

In the retail arena, Bullock's Pasadena was followed by a succession of shopping centers evolving the type: Bullock's Westwood and Northridge in Los Angeles, Seibu Department Store on Wilshire Boulevard (now the Peterson Museum), malls such as Fashion Island in Newport Beach (substantially altered in 1989 by the Jerde Partnership and SWA Group), and dozens of others. Fashion Island (1967) featured landscaped outdoor pedestrian plazas and was one of the first shopping centers in the United States to do away with the vast areas of asphalt considered unacceptable aesthetically and no longer economically justifiable in a time of soaring land values. This new era of regional shopping center design was part of a trend aimed at revitalizing and strengthening downtown cores as well as new towns in metropolitan regions, to be served by improved transportation and enhanced by pedestrian areas.³⁹

As master planner for UCLA, Welton Becket and Associates designed much of the UCLA Medical Center, several dormitory and classroom buildings, and Pauley Pavilion. The Music Center complex, emblematic of the modern era, proved that Los Angeles had arrived as a major capital. As an example of the multi-nodal city, Century City turned the old movie studio back lot into a new type of downtown.⁴⁰

Becket's long career took his firm overseas to design an embassy in Warsaw; Hilton Hotels in Havana, Cairo and Manila; towers for the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas; pavilions for Ford and General Electric at the 1964 New York World's Fair; the Contemporary and Polynesian hotels at Walt Disney World; and office buildings and shopping centers throughout the United States and abroad. Although the precise total number of structures designed by Welton Becket and Associates is not known, it probably ranges into the thousands with well over one hundred projects having sufficient notability to be recognized in the published literature. To accomplish this level of productivity, Becket had to reorganize a traditional architecture office on a new

10101.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid. See also Hess, "Built by Becket."

⁴⁰ Hess, "Built by Becket," http://www.laforum.org/forum issue 7 late moderns/built by becket by alan hess.

corporate footing. As Welton Becket and Associates grew into the nation's largest architecture office in the 1960s, Becket developed the methods for the architecture profession to address the larger scale and complexity of commercial and institutional projects. The new era demanded a new sophistication in the organizational scope of an office, the services it provided, which Becket pioneered through the means of "Total Design," mobilizing his firm to deliver a consistent architectural product to the growing U.S. economy.⁴¹

As Alan Hess characterizes Becket's career, "Yet for all the national and international scope of his work, Becket remained a Los Angeles architect. From the beginning of his career he was designing the City of Tomorrow." Los Angeles was shaped by the forces of technology, commerce and popular culture; Becket understood them and welded them into a popular product. Without the pressure or aspiration to high art, such a designer was not likely to excite the interest of most critics of the time. He did not invent and promote a theory of design or planning so much as recognize the trends at work in society, business and technology and respond to them with pragmatism and innovative thinking. Since Welton Becket's death in 1969, his contributions to the Los Angeles region have become recognized for their primary role in defining the character and fabric of the region during the Modern period.⁴³

7. Ralph D. Cornell

Ralph D. Cornell, FASLA (b. Holdrege, Nebraska, 1890, d. 1972), was a partner in the Los Angeles firm of Cornell, Bridgers, Troller and Hazlett, landscape architects and environmental planners (founded in 1928, and continuing today as Troller Mayer Associates) and was responsible for the landscape plan of Century City, including the design and planting plan for 1801 Avenue of the Stars. A graduate of Pomona College and Harvard University, Cornell ran an active practice in Los Angeles specializing in landscape of parks, grounds of public buildings and college campuses. He was supervising landscape architect for UCLA from 1937 until 1972. A designer of fine gardens, he also conceived master plans for such major projects as Elysian Park in Los Angeles, the Torrey Pines Reserve in San Diego, Beverly Gardens in Beverly Hills, and the community park in Claremont, for which he won a national award. He developed or redesigned parks for seventeen cities in southern California. Two of his major contracts were for the Atomic Energy Commission at Los Alamos, New Mexico, and the Ford Motor Company Office Building in Dearborn, Michigan. With Theodore Payne, Cornell developed the grounds of Occidental College and a number of parks and residences. As a result

⁴¹ Hunt, 1972.

⁴² Hess, "Built by Becket," http://www.laforum.org/forum issue 7 late moderns/built by becket by alan hess.

⁴³ Ibid.

of his horticultural interests, Cornell published *Conspicuous California Plants, with Notes on their Garden Uses* (1938).⁴⁴

Cornell's frequent collaboration with Welton Becket first came about when Becket was named master planner for UCLA in 1948. At UCLA, Welton Becket worked closely with Cornell, and they also collaborated on a number of other projects, such as the Pomona Civic Center and the Ford Motor Co. in Dearborn. Cornell's notable works include the landscape design for Pomona College, 1937-1939; the Carmelitos Housing Project, a community living project in Long Beach, 1939-1940; and the master plan for Griffith Park, completed for the City of Los Angeles Parks and Recreation Department, 1939-1940. On the Pueblo del Rio housing project in Los Angeles, which was completed in 1942 and is now eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, Cornell collaborated with some of the most prominent and influential architects of their time, including Southeast Housing Architects, Associated: Paul R. Williams, chief architect; Richard J. Neutra, Adrian Wilson, Walter Wurdeman, Welton Becket and George B. Kaufmann.⁴⁵

8. Bernard Rosenthal, Sculptor

Bernard J. (Tony) Rosenthal, sculptor, created the unique aluminum mural in the entrance lobby to 1801 Avenue of the Stars, which was designed as part of the original architectural program of the building as shown on the original construction drawings (dated September 15, 1961). Rosenthal was born in Highland Park, Illinois, in 1914. He graduated from the University of Michigan in 1936, continuing his studies at the Chicago Art Institute School and the Cranbrook Academy of Art. He was in the Corps of Army Engineers from 1942 to 1946. He moved to Los Angeles in 1946 and taught at the California School of Art from 1947 to 1948 and at UCLA in 1953. His works are characterized by their abstract minimalism, geometric forms, and large scale and his primary medium is metalwork. He has had more than a dozen one-man exhibitions nationally, including exhibits at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. 46

9. 1801 Avenue of the Stars building

One of the subject properties, the 1801 Avenue of the Stars building is situated at the southwest corner of Santa Monica Boulevard and Avenue of the Stars in the Century City district of the City of Los Angeles. The property consists of an approximately 300-foot by 350-foot lot

⁴⁴ From Wuellner, "Historic American Landscape Survey, Parker Center," 2005.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

improved with a large, 13-story office building that has a rectangular footprint and approximately 300,000 square feet of floor space. The building is surrounded by a large concrete plaza raised above street grade. Relatively limited landscaping on the property consists of a lawn and several mature Moreton Bay Fig trees that buffer the plaza from the street on the parcel's east and north sides. A four-level underground parking garage contains space for 542 automobiles. The property is bordered on the west by the Century City Shopping Center and on the south by a parcel improved with the 1901 Avenue of the Stars high rise office tower. A pedestrian bridge crossing Avenue of the Stars is located near the parcel's southeast corner and connects 1801 Avenue of the Stars with an identical building, 1800 Avenue of the Stars, on the opposite side of the wide thoroughfare. The Los Angeles Country Club is situated on the north side of Santa Monica Boulevard.

1801 Avenue of the Stars is in many respects a typical office building of its era; it uses typical structural and glazing systems and exhibits little unique articulation. The 13-story building has a reinforced concrete frame and is clad with a mullion-less, sealed-unit curtain-wall system where each glass panel and its lower aluminum spandrel panel are encased in a single frame. On the ground floor, the glass weather-wall is set back behind the outer piers, though it does use a similar glazing system as the levels above. The construction drawings for 1801 Avenue of the Stars suggest that the details of the structural system, exterior and interior plans and elevations, interior furnishings and hardware, as well as the landscape setting were all original elements of the project.

Welton Becket and Associates designed the building, teaming again with landscape architect Ralph D. Cornell, who designed the associated landscape and fountain. The San Francisco firm of Haas & Haynie was awarded the \$7,000,000 construction contract. Construction of 1801 Avenue of the Stars, a joint-ownership project of Zeckendorf Property Corporation and Alcoa, began in 1962 and was completed in June, 1963. During construction, the identical building across the street, also designed by Welton Becket and Associates, broke ground. In keeping with the marketing intentions of co-owner Alcoa, both 1800 and 1801 Avenue of the Stars buildings featured extensive use of aluminum for the curtain-wall glazing units and other non-structural building elements and were included in display advertisements at the time. The aluminum sculptural relief in the lobby at 1801 Avenue of the Stars was designed by artist Bernard Rosenthal. The *Los Angeles Times* published frequent articles chronicling the progress of Century City, noting the construction of the 1801 and 1800 Avenue of the Stars buildings.

As the first high rise office building in the area, 1801 Avenue of the Stars took advantage of its height and Beverly Hills-adjacent location. A display advertisement printed in the December 11, 1962 edition of the *Los Angeles Times* emphasized spectacular views available from its offices, "The windows of 1801 Avenue of the Stars mirror the sea not far in the distance. They look down upon the fairways of the Los Angeles Country Club across the street. They

reflect the quiet charm of her neighbor Beverly Hills. 1801 Avenue of the Stars is a building of offices like no other in Los Angeles." By late 1964, however, the Beverly Hills views were already obstructed by 1800 Avenue of the Stars and by 1975 its southerly views were largely obstructed by high-rise buildings to the south; however, the northern and western views are generally still extant. Despite the early attention it received in the popular press at the advent of Century City, the building has not been the recipient of recognition among Beckets' notable works. But for its association with Century City, it goes unnoticed in architectural literature, one building amongst the huge volume of output produced by Welton Becket and Associates.

The first major tenant signed for 1801 Avenue of the Stars was United California Bank, which, in 1962, leased the entire 26,000 square foot ground floor space for its Century City branch. Gulf Oil Corporation was another prominent early tenant of the 1801 Avenue of the Stars building. As anticipated, corporate headquarters and branch offices, investment companies, real estate firms, and professionals in a variety of fields occupied the building following its 1963 opening and continue to do so today.⁴⁷

10. Century City Shopping Center (formerly Century Square)

A large 15-acre regional shopping center had been planned for Century City as early as 1958 when the details of the massive project were first announced. At that time, Welton Becket and Associates' master plan and models depicted an expansive shopping center to be situated near Santa Monica Boulevard approximately where the 1801 Avenue of the Stars building is currently located. The 1961 master plan, however, sited the shopping center further west where it is located today. Welton Becket and Associates was responsible for the shopping center's plan and the design of all of its initial buildings. When it opened in October 1964, the Century City Shopping Center, (then known as Century Square) consisted of a large three-level Broadway department store at the center of the complex surrounded by six, one-story "pavilion" buildings containing a variety of retail stores, restaurants, and other tenants, and the freestanding "Century House" Restaurant. Beneath the complex were two levels of parking. Facing the shopping center along Santa Monica Boulevard was a landscaped area consisting of a grassy lawn and trees, and a perpendicular driveway leading to the covered parking garage.

Consistent with the design of regional shopping malls throughout Southern California, Century Square was an open-air promenade with an anchor tenant, the Broadway department store, serving as a prominent beacon rising from the center of the complex. Designed by Welton

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In addition to United California Bank and Gulf Oil Corporation display advertisements in 1964 editions of the Los Angeles Times announced tenant agreements for 1801 Avenue of the Stars with such companies as Clevite Corp., George A. Fuller Construction Co., Hayden Stone & Co., Investor's Diversified Services, Inc., Milton Meyer & Company Realtors, Morehart Land Co., Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Co., Planalog, Inc., Standard & Poor's Corp., and the Wilshire Oil Company of California.

Becket and Associates with interior design by Charles Luckman Associates, the 240,000 square foot Broadway store was the 15th unit in the chain and represented a \$12,000,000 investment at the time. Of Modern architectural design, the flat-roofed Broadway department store originally consisted of ground floor plate glass display windows and glazed entrances sheltered by deep overhanging eaves supported by projecting beam-ends on all four sides of the building. In contrast, its upper two stories were windowless and sheathed in stucco incised with a grid of vertical panels. Deeply recessed from its north, east, and west elevations, a tall parapet supporting "The BROADWAY" name on its four sides shielded the building's rooftop mechanical equipment and fourth floor penthouse from view.

Initially, the one-story Century House Restaurant building, square in plan and capped by a low-slung roof made up of four hyperbolic segments was situated between the Broadway department store and Santa Monica Boulevard; this entire building has since been demolished. Six other larger buildings that surrounded the Broadway store on all sides were one-story and rectangular in plan with entrances facing the wide open-air promenades between the buildings. Since the 1960s, the shopping center has been substantially altered as the original tenants have been replaced with new tenants, several buildings have been demolished, and multiple new buildings have been added.

11. 1930 Century Park West building (formerly the Prudential Savings and Loan Association building)

Initially known as the Prudential Savings and Loan Association building when constructed in 1966, the property is situated at the northeast corner of Constellation Boulevard and Century Park West. The Pasadena-based firm of Ladd and Kelsey, Architects, designed the five-story, 62,000 square foot office building. When completed, the building displayed balconies on the upper north- and south-facing elevations (since enclosed), a "Prudential Savings" sign on the mechanical penthouse facing Constellation Boulevard (since removed), and cast aluminum exterior panels (still visible on the east and west facades).⁴⁸

Based in San Gabriel with branches in Alhambra and Hacienda Heights, Prudential Savings and Loan Association's desire to open a Los Angeles branch to serve the area's growing upper income Westside population was fulfilled by its selection of Century City for its new branch location. The company opened a temporary branch within the Century Square shopping mall in late 1964 while waiting for its new five-story branch/office building to be completed. One year later, Prudential Savings announced that it had over \$17,000,000 in savings accounts and nearly 5,000 account holders - record growth for a new branch office according to company

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⁴⁸ David Wesley, ed., <u>Ladd & Kelsey, Architects, Engineers and Planners, Pasadena, California,</u> Pasadena, California: Ladd & Kelsey Architects, 197.

management. In later years, Prudential Savings vacated the property. Today, the investment banking firm of Houlihan Lokey Howard and Zukin occupies the building.

Architects Thornton Ladd and John Kelsey formed their partnership in 1959 in Pasadena, California. Of the two architects, Thornton Ladd was the better known having established his reputation as a Modern architect with the design of the Lyon Residence in Pasadena (1951) while he was still a student at the University of Southern California School of Architecture. Ladd gained his practical experience working first for a general contractor and later for two Los Angeles-based architects. The firm designed a number of notable buildings throughout Southern California prior to dissolving their partnership in 1980. Some of the firm's better-known buildings include Herrick Chapel in Eagle Rock (1964), the Pasadena Art Museum (1969, now the Norton Simon Museum), and the California Institute of the Arts campus (1969-70).

12. 1901 and 1999 Avenue of the Stars Buildings

In fulfilling Century City's destiny as a high-rise office center, the two adjacent buildings located at 1901 and 1999 Avenue of the Stars on the east boundary of the subject property were constructed in 1967 and 1990, respectively.

According to a March 6, 1966 article in the *Los Angeles Times*, increased demand for office space in Century City led to the decision to erect a 19-story office building at 1901 Avenue of the Stars on the adjacent parcel south of 1801 Avenue of the Stars. Designed by the St. Louis-based architectural firm of Hellmuth, Obata and Kassalbaum with Los Angeles-based Charles Luckman Associates serving as consulting architects, the approximately 400,000 square foot office building was set back from Avenue of the Stars to "harmonize with the Century City master plan calling for a 'spacious and beauteous' environment." With the completion of the building in 1967, the total office space in Century City, including the 1801 and 1800 Avenue of the Stars buildings, was approximately 1.0 million square feet.

Twenty-two years after the completion of the 1901 Avenue of the Stars building, the 1999 Avenue of the Stars office building was announced for the northwest corner parcel of the Avenue at Constellation Boulevard. Continuing demand for Century City office space resulted in the decision to construct the 38-story tower for Chicago-based JMB/Urban Development. Designed by architect Scott Johnson of Johnson Fain & Pereira Associates in the postmodern architectural style popular during the 1980s, the 738,200 square foot office tower was described by Johnson as representing a "next generation" of buildings due to its curved corner and variation of flat and faceted surfaces on the facade.⁵⁰

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^{49 &}lt;u>Los Angeles Times</u>, "\$15 Million Office Building Announced," March 6, 1966. p. I2.

Los Angeles Times, "Century City Tower Features Curved Profile," January 15, 1989. Real Estate Section p.8.

B. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

In analyzing the historic significance of properties located within the survey study area, the criteria of significance for designation under federal, state, and local landmark programs were considered and applied. These criteria are quite consistent from agency to agency and in some instances are virtually duplicative. Additionally, the OHP survey methodology and instructions were used to evaluate the relative significance of properties.

1. National Register of Historic Places Criteria

To be eligible for listing in the National Register, a resource must be significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. Districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of potential significance must also possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Four criteria have been established to determine the significance of a resource:⁵¹

- A. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- B. It is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- C. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;
- D. It yields, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

A property eligible for the National Register must meet one or more of the above criteria. In addition, unless the property possesses exceptional significance, it must be at least fifty years old to be eligible for National Register listing. However, the National Register does not prohibit the consideration of properties less than fifty years in age whose exceptional contribution to the development of American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture can be clearly demonstrated.

As defined in National Register Criteria Consideration G: Properties that have Achieved Significance with the Past Fifty Years, a property achieving significance within the past fifty

How to Complete the National Register Registration Form, National Register Bulletin, U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, 1997. This bulletin contains technical information on comprehensive planning, survey of cultural resources and registration in the National Register of Historic Places.

years is eligible only if it is of *exceptional importance*, or if it is an integral part of a district that is eligible for listing in the National Register.⁵²

In addition to meeting the criteria of significance, a property must also have integrity. "Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance." According to the *National Register Bulletin*, the National Register recognizes seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity. To retain historic integrity a property will always possess several, and usually most, of these seven aspects. Thus, the retention of the specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance. The seven factors that define integrity are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The following is excerpted from the *National Register Bulletin, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, which provides guidance on the interpretation and application of these factors:

- Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.⁵⁵
- Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.⁵⁶
- Setting is the physical environment of a historic property.⁵⁷
- Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.⁵⁸

National Register Bulletin: Guidelines for Evaluating and Nominating Properties that have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1979, Revised 1990, 1996, 1998.

⁵³ How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, National Register Bulletin, U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, 1997. p. 44.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

[&]quot;The relationship between the property and its location is often important to understanding why the property was created or why something happened. The actual location of a historic property, complemented by its setting is particularly important in recapturing the sense of historic events and persons. Except in rare cases, the relationship between a property and its historic associations is destroyed if the property is moved." Ibid.

⁵⁶ "A property's design reflects historic functions and technologies as well as aesthetics. It includes such considerations as the structural system; massing; arrangement of spaces; pattern of fenestration; textures and colors of surface materials; type, amount, and style of ornamental detailing; and arrangement and type of plantings in a designed landscape." Ibid.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p.45.

- Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.⁵⁹
- Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. 60
- Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.⁶¹

In assessing a property's integrity, the National Register criteria recognize that properties change over time, therefore, it is not necessary for a property to retain all its historic physical features or characteristics. The property must retain, however, the essential physical features that enable it to convey its historic identity.⁶²

For properties which are considered significant under National Register Criteria A and B, the *National Register Bulletin, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* states that a property that is significant for its historic association is eligible if it retains the essential physical features that made up its character or appearance during the period of its association with the important event, historical pattern, or person(s).⁶³

In assessing the integrity of properties which are considered significant under National Register Criterion C, the *National Register Bulletin, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* provides that a property important for illustrating a particular architectural style or

[&]quot;The choice and combination of materials reveals the preferences of those who created the property and indicated the availability of particular types of materials and technologies. Indigenous materials are often the focus of regional building traditions and thereby help define an area's sense of time and place." Ibid.

⁵⁹ "Workmanship can apply to the property as a whole or to its individual components. It can be expressed in vernacular methods of construction and plain finishes or in highly sophisticated configurations and ornamental detailing. It can be based on common traditions or innovative period techniques." Ibid.

⁶⁰ "It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character." Ibid.

[&]quot;A property retains association if it is the place where the event or activity occurred and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. Like feeling, association requires the presence of physical features that convey a property's historic character. . . Because feeling and association depend on individual perceptions, their retention alone is never sufficient to support eligibility of a property for the National Register." Ibid.

⁶² *Ibid*, p.46.

⁶³ Ibid.

construction technique must retain most of the physical features that constitute that style or technique.⁶⁴

2. California Register of Historical Resources Criteria

To be eligible for the California Register, a historic resource must be significant at the local, state, or national level, under one or more of the following four criteria:

- 1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
- 2. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
- 3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
- 4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Additionally, a historic resource eligible for listing in the California Register must meet one or more of the criteria of significance described above and retain enough of its historic character or appearance to be recognizable as a historic resource and to convey the reasons for its significance. Historical resources that have been rehabilitated or restored may be evaluated for listing.⁶⁵

Integrity is evaluated with regard to the retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The resource must also be judged with reference to the particular criteria under which it is proposed for eligibility. It is possible that a historic resource may not retain sufficient integrity to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register, but it may still be eligible for listing in the California Register.⁶⁶

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[&]quot;A property that has lost some historic materials or details can be eligible if it retains the majority of the features that illustrate its style in terms of the massing, spatial relationships, proportion, pattern of windows and doors, texture of materials, and ornamentation. The property is not eligible, however, if it retains some basic features conveying massing but has lost the majority of the features that once characterized its style." Ibid.

⁶⁵ California Code of Regulations, California Register of Historical Resources (Title 14, Chapter 11.5), § 4852(c).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

3. Los Angeles Historic - Cultural Monuments (LAHCM) Criteria

The Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Ordinance (Los Angeles Administrative Code, Section 22.130) establishes criteria for designating local historic resources and/or historic districts (historic preservation overlay zones) as LAHCMs. These properties must reflect one of the following elements:

- The proposed site, building, or structure reflects or exemplifies the broad cultural, political, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or City (community); or
- The proposed site, building, or structure is identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, state, or local history; or
- The proposed site, building, or structure embodies certain distinguishing architectural characteristics of an architectural-type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction; or
- The proposed site, building, or structure is a notable work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age.

4. Evaluation of Resources Less than Fifty Years Old

The survey process undertaken for purposes of this evaluation was conducted per OHP instructions, which gives a 45-year threshold for surveying properties for significance. During the current survey, one (1) on-site post-1960 building, 1801 Avenue of the Stars, was identified within the study area and was documented because of its potential to exhibit the exceptional significance necessary for National Register eligibility under Criterion Consideration G: Properties That Have Achieved Significance within the Past Fifty Years. This threshold is not concrete, but was chosen as a reasonable span of time after which a professional evaluation of historical value can be made. Both the California Register and the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Ordinance reflect the lead of the National Register and utilize the fifty-year threshold. The National Register guidelines indicate that any building less than fifty years of age must be considered under Consideration G, which states that "a property (which has achieved) significance within the past fifty years is eligible if it is of exceptional importance."

⁶⁷ How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, National Register Bulletin. p. 41.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

The explanation of the guideline is as follows:

Fifty years is a general estimate of the time needed to develop historical perspective and to evaluate significance. Criteria Consideration G guards against the listing of properties of passing contemporary interest and ensures that the National Register is a list of truly historic places.⁶⁹

Properties that are less than fifty years old must meet Criteria Consideration G, as must "a property that continues to achieve significance into a period less than 50 years before the nomination." Both of these conditions apply to the subject property for National Register evaluation purposes.

C. HISTORIC RESOURCES IDENTIFIED

The historic resources survey area (study area) is defined as the three subject lots of Tract 26196 in the City of Los Angeles, Assessor's Parcel Numbers 4319-003-061, 4319-003-064, and 4319-003-063 and addressed as 1801 Avenue of the Stars, the Century City Shopping Center at 10250 Santa Monica Boulevard, and 1930 Century Park West. Two high-rise office towers, 1901 and 1999 Avenue of the Stars, border, but are not part of, the subject property east of the shopping center.

A records search was conducted by the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) at California State University, Fullerton to identify previously recorded prehistoric and historic resources in and around the subject property. This search included a review of the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) and its annual updates, the California Historical Resources Inventory database maintained by the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), and the City of Los Angeles Historic - Cultural Monuments register. The records search indicated that there are currently no previously identified federal or State level designated or eligible prehistoric or historic resources within or near the subject property.

The survey assessed three specific properties within the project site for their historic and architectural significance against the applicable criteria:

•	1801 Avenue of the Star	s Building (designed b	by Welton Becket and	l Associates)
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69	Ibid.		

- Century City Shopping Center (original design by Welton Becket and Associates with later additions by Welton Becket and Associates; Ben Thompson Associates; Kohn, Pederson, Fox; and others)
- 1930 Century Park West Building (designed by Ladd and Kelsey)

1. 1801 Avenue of the Stars building

Architectural Description

1801 Avenue of the Stars is situated at the southwest corner of Santa Monica Boulevard and Avenue of the Stars in the Century City district of Los Angeles. The identical building, 1800 Avenue of the Stars, is located opposite the subject property on the east side of Avenue of the Stars; in most aspects of their design, material systems, workmanship, and architectural-historical value, these buildings are identical. These buildings were completed in 1963 and 1964, respectively, and both were designed by the architectural firm of Welton Becket and Associates, Coordinating Architects Engineers. The structural engineer was Stacy & Skinner, Structural Engineers, Los Angeles, California. The towers were a joint development by Webb and Knapp, Inc., and the Aluminum Company of America.⁷⁰ The landscape design, including the gardens, fountains, and planting plan for these buildings was designed by Cornell, Bridgers, Troller and Hazlett, A.S.L.A., Landscape Architects, Los Angeles, California.⁷¹

The subject property contains a 13-story high-rise office building with a rectangular footprint surrounded by a wide concrete plaza, which is raised above street grade. An unadorned vertical slat aluminum railing encloses the plaza on its street-facing sides. A relatively small amount of landscaping consisting of a lawn and several mature Moreton Bay Fig trees buffers the plaza from the street. A steep grass-covered berm separates the subject property from a multi-story high-rise office tower on the south parcel line. The Century City Shopping Center abuts the subject property's concrete plaza on the west property line. Concrete entrance steps leading from the sidewalk at Avenue of the Stars to the plaza are flanked on the south by landscaping and on the north by a two-level concrete and blue mosaic tile fountain. An elongated vehicle turnout from Santa Monica Boulevard located on the north side of the parcel is also landscaped with grass, shrubs, and mature Moreton Bay Fig trees. Occupying the parcel's full dimensions beneath the building, plaza, fountain, and landscaping is a four-level underground parking garage with access driveways situated near the parcel's southeast corner. A curved concrete pedestrian bridge which is structurally independent from and not a part of the

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 $^{^{70}}$ As-built plans, September 15, 1961. On file in the building engineer's office, 1801 Avenue of the Stars.

Planting Plan, January 24, 1963, Gateway Building West, Century City. On file, building archives, 1801 Avenue of the Stars.

1801 Avenue of the Stars property, straddles the parking garage entrance, and crosses Avenue of the Stars to connect the 1801 and 1800 Avenue of the Stars buildings (this bridge is a later addition).

The building is a representative example of a mid-century Corporate Modern office building which includes use of aluminum throughout. It is a symmetrical office building of reinforced-concrete construction topped with a high parapet clad in aluminum panels with a flat roof. Thick concrete piers covered in anodized aluminum segment the east and west elevations into nine bays, and the north and south elevations into four bays. The structural frame establishes the symmetrical, modular pattern of bays throughout the exterior elevations of the building. The ground floor (with mezzanine level) is set back on all four sides with exterior elevations divided into individual elongated plate glass windows within aluminum frames. The 1801 Avenue of the Stars building has no true mullions--only frames--though they read as if they have mullions from a distance. The façade of the upper floors is made of a sealed-unit curtain wall system. Each window and its spandrel panel below are encased in an aluminum frame and installed as a single-unit. This system continues at the corners with special corner units. From a distance, the deep reveals between the frames of the glazed units contrast with the glazing and light-colored spandrels, giving the elevations some visual depth, thereby suppressing the visual impact of the structural frame.

Primary entrances are centered on the east and west elevations and lead to a central lobby, elevator core, and interior entrances to ground floor offices. A large aluminum sculptural relief by sculptor Bernard J. Rosenthal is located on the building's east-facing interior lobby wall and was part of the original design of the building (there is no sculpture in the lobby of 1800 Avenue of the Stars). Entrance doors include aluminum frames, and the exterior metal elements of the building are surfaced in anodized aluminum. The building's address "1801" and "Gateway West" are rendered in aluminum letters in a period typeface and are attached to the spandrel above the east entrance. Floor surfaces within the setback area consist of light-colored terrazzo. Aluminum flagpoles are located near the east end of the plaza adjacent to the fountain. A low, landscaped concrete planter is located near the southwest corner of the plaza. A larger rectangular planter (that previously contained a fountain) is located near the plaza's northwest corner. Large metal-framed letters spelling "Westfield Century City" are attached to the tall parapet near the north end of the building's west and east elevations (both are later additions).

Assessment of Integrity

Historic photographs, comparison of the construction plans with existing conditions, and visual inspection reveals that exterior alterations and modifications since the construction of 1801 Avenue of Stars in 1963 include the filling in of a fountain originally located within a large planter near the northwest corner of the plaza behind the building with earth and covered with grass. However, the existing earth berm, trees and decorative Malibu rocks in the planter are

shown on the 1963 planting plan and are original landscape features. The original sign at the top of the building has also been replaced with the current rear-lit lettering "Westfield Century City" on the east and west-facing parapets. In addition, a bank teller machine has been installed on the first floor of the north elevation. The primary features of the original landscape plan, including the fountain at the front of the building, landscaped plaza and street plantings are intact. The concrete walkway connecting 1801 and 1800 Avenue of the Stars is a 1970s addition by the City, and was not designed by Welton Becket and Associates.

Characteristic features of type and style such as the building's reinforced-concrete construction; flat roof with parapet; symmetrical, modular pattern of bays; a sealed-unit curtain wall glazing system; anodized aluminum metal elements; and the ground and second floor setbacks remain in good condition. Overall, the exterior appearance of the subject property indicates a high degree of integrity in terms of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The interior has been repeatedly remodeled to accommodate changes in tenants. However, in comparison with the construction plans, the public areas such as the entrance lobby, parking garages, elevator lobbies and stairwells retain their distinctive character defining features. The original recessed lighting, door types, hardware, and signage also appear intact. Thus, a considerable part of the historic fabric of the exterior from the mid-1960s at 1801 Avenue of the Stars remains.

Assessment of Significance

Neither the 1801 Avenue of the Stars building nor the identical building at 1800 Avenue of the Stars have been important or noteworthy exemplars of architectural types or styles, nor have they been acknowledged as exceptionally significant built works by the architectural firm of Welton Becket and Associates in architectural or historical literature or discourse. The firm of Welton Becket and Associates has not been the focus of significant interest or research within the larger body of architectural or historical literature or discourse and neither Welton Becket's nor the firm's architectural work has been the subject of sustained or widespread scholarly, historical or architectural inquiry.⁷² This absence of demonstrated, sustained research or discourse is important in evaluating the significance of the subject property, since the federal, state and local evaluation criteria all have at least one criterion that establishes a threshold of significance for the work of master builders, designers, architects, or creative individuals, which must be assessed within the larger context of the architect's or firm's overall work and the

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⁷² cf. Theodore Prudon, "Judging Becket with Stone." Docomomo-US newsletter Winter 2004: pp. 1,8., & Alan Hess, "Built By Becket" http://www.laforum.org/forum issue 7 late moderns/built by becket by alan hess (accessed 9 May 2007). The only monograph on Becket's office, Hunt's Total Design, is primarily a corporate history and does not situate or evaluate his work within a larger historiographical or academic context. It also was written over thirty years ago and thus, has commensurately less relevance regarding discussions of Becket's long-term importance, nor the present-day preservation issues and evaluations.

significance of their contributions to the larger development of architecture, history, scholarship, or culture. The National Register and California Register both have two separate criteria that are applicable: is the building "associated with the lives of persons significant in our past" or does it represent "the work of an important creative individual," while the City of Los Angeles' criteria evaluates whether "[t]he proposed site, building, or structure is a notable work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age." Though the level of current interest, research, and dialog into a particular designer's work, life, and production is not an absolute judgment of historical and cultural value, it is, nevertheless, highly indicative of whether the specific building at hand is exemplary of its age, type, style, or milieu.

The published record shows that the Century City master plan and associated individual buildings built-out under the master plan were not widely recognized or admired at the time of their completion and have not achieved exceptional importance within the last fifty years. Intended to pioneer new trends in architecture, little of the ambition of the master plan has been realized as only the most basic framework of the 1961 Century City master plan exists today, namely the underlying street grid and general distribution of land uses. However, when they were initially constructed in a largely low-rise setting surrounding the still-vacant and undeveloped Century City, the 1801 and the 1800 Avenue of the Stars buildings did reflect Welton Becket and Associates' original design intention to create a symbolic gateway from Santa Monica Boulevard into (the as-yet unbuilt) Century City, which was the first large scale, master planned corporate and commercial center of the post-war era in Southern California. By the time of their completion in the early 1960s, Welton Becket and Associates had become an internationally respected firm with thousands of buildings worldwide to its credit, including many throughout Southern California. Neither the Century City master plan, nor the 1801 Avenue of the Stars building, are important or exceptional works by the firm, nor can they be directly associated with Welton Becket, himself. Additionally, both have outlasted the context in Century City for which they were designed and built. Thus, the 1801 Avenue of the Stars building does not meet the threshold of significance for listing in the National Register under Consideration G either as an individual resource of exceptional importance or within the context of the Century City master plan.

On the state level, with regard to listing on the California Register, the building is representative of a design type, a corporate Modern curtain-wall, high-rise office building exhibiting Miesian stylistic influences characteristic of a particular period (1950s-1960s) in state architectural history, and the building is also the product of an important creative individual's firm, Welton Becket and Associates. Numerous other office buildings completed by the architectural firm of Welton Becket and Associates during the 1950s-1960s also exhibit formal

⁷³ NPS "Guidelines".

⁷⁴ Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Ordinance (LAMC §22.130).

Miesian-style influences such as the California Federal Savings and Loan (1950), Los Angeles, California; Ford Division Offices (1957), Dearborn, Michigan; the Bethlehem Steel Company (1960), San Francisco, California; the Southland Center, Dallas, Texas (1960); the Kaiser Center (1960), Oakland, California; and the Humble Oil & Refining Co. (1963), Houston, Texas. Furthermore, 1801 Avenue of the Stars is not a widely recognized or noteworthy example within the Becket firm's body of work, it cannot be directly associated with Welton Becket, himself, and has outlasted the context in Century City for which it was designed and built. Notwithstanding the foregoing points of detraction, however, the building and its associated contributing features and objects are, for purposes of conservative assessment, considered potentially eligible for the California Register under Criterion 3.

At the local level, a conservative assessment may conclude that the building may be considered potentially eligible as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument under a combination of the City's third and fourth criteria, though it does not appear to fully satisfy either one. It does include certain distinguishing architectural characteristics of an architectural-type specimen. In particular, it is a representative example of a corporate Modern commercial office building in the context of the first large scale master planned corporate and commercial center in post war Southern California. However, it cannot be argued that it is inherently valued for a study of period, style or method of construction, as it is representative but not a notable example of its type. And while it is the work of a prolific architect's firm, it is not recognized as an exceptionally important work of the firm or the architect within the last fifty years. Nonetheless, a conservative assessment may conclude that the building may be considered potentially eligible as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.

Due to potential eligibility for listing in the California Register under Criterion 3 and potential eligibility as a City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument, 1801 Avenue of the Stars may be considered a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA pursuant to Section 15064.5(a) (2) of the CEQA Guidelines.

2. Century City Shopping Center (formerly Century Square)

Architectural Description

The Century City Shopping Center consists of a two-level parking structure topped by an open-air promenade and anchored by a pair of three-level department stores. The larger of the department stores (Bloomingdale's) is a housed in the heavily remodeled and seismically-retrofitted original Broadway building. On the exterior, the 1990s renovation (designed by

William Dudley Hunt, Jr., Total Design: Architecture of Welton Becket and Associates (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972), pp. 13, 15, 17, 20, 183-217.

Shelton Fox of the New York firm, Kohn, Pederson, Fox) substantially changed the Becket design; the ground floor façade now consists of forward-leaning panels, metal-framed opaque storefront windows, glazed entrances, round columns sheathed in brushed metal. The concrete projecting beam-ends were clad in metal. The building's second and third stories are sheathed in stucco incised with a pattern of vertical panels interrupted by grids of opaque windows on the primary (north) elevation and on several corners. Behind this blind façade, large shear panels were constructed as part of the structure's seismic upgrade. Topping the store's flat roof is a deeply recessed parapet that shelters mechanical equipment, some fourth level office space, and supports the "Bloomingdale's" sign on its north, east, and south elevations. Directly east, northeast, and south of Bloomingdale's are one-story retail buildings with numerous and varied glazed storefronts.

The old Marketplace food court building, situated between Santa Monica Boulevard and Bloomingdale's, is housed in a one-story building with a corrugated metal gable-on-hip roof. This building is located where the Century House Restaurant originally stood and is not an original portion of the Welton Becket design. It was added in 1984 (design by Ben Thompson Associates, of Boston) and in the past six years, it has been heavily remodeled and portions demolished. To the east of the old Marketplace building on Santa Monica Boulevard is the shopping center's primary parking structure entrance that is flanked by a grassy lawn and covered by a one-story retail building with its back to Santa Monica Boulevard. Fronting Constellation Boulevard on the south end of the shopping center is the windowless and neo-Brutalist three-level Macy's department store building, designed by Becket's office in 1974 after his death; it is sheathed in white-painted brick with glazed entrances on its east, north, and south ground floor elevations. The Constellation Boulevard entrance to the shopping center's parking structure is located beneath Macy's south elevation. A large, four-level, multi-screen motion picture theater complex has recently been completed directly west of the Macy's building.

Situated on the west portion of the shopping center are two buildings: on the southern end of the frontage, there is a three-story (including the Gelson's supermarket in the basement) retail and restaurant block; and on the northern end, the former theater has been renovated into a two-story restaurant and retail building.

Assessment of Integrity

Visual inspection, historic photographs, original plans, and newspaper articles reveal that the Century City Shopping Center has undergone numerous additions, alterations, and demolitions since it first opened in 1964. Additions to the complex include the 1974 Macy's department store and the extension of the east retail building south to Constellation Boulevard; the construction of the Marketplace building (which involved the demolition of the original restaurant building) and the construction of the original theater in place of one of the original pavilions; the construction of the new AMC Theater building and restaurant terrace near the

northwest corner of the property; and the renovation of the theater building into shops and restaurants. Alterations to the former Broadway department store building (now Bloomingdale's) include the replacement of the entire ground floor façade, the addition of opaque fenestration and shear-panels to the building's upper stories, and modifications to its parapet. Additionally, extensive remodeling of the promenade-facing storefronts and storefront canopies on the remaining retail buildings has occurred multiple times over the years.

In summary, the only remaining elements of Century City Shopping Center that are consistent with Welton Becket and Associates' design when the complex opened in 1964 are the locations and skeletons of the anchor department store and the two, one-story retail buildings along the north and east edges of the property;⁷⁶ pedestrian circulation patterns; open-air promenades; two-level covered parking garage; and the northern parking garage entrance. Given the extent of modifications to the shopping center, there is little historic fabric associated with the property remaining.

Assessment of Significance

The period of significance for the Century City Shopping Center is 1958-1964, the period in which the shopping center was conceived, designed and constructed. It is thematically associated with the work of Welton Becket and Associates, Century City and the local history of master planning, and the development of shopping centers as an architectural type. The shopping center was evaluated as an individual resource within the context of the 1961 master plan for Century City, and against the associated thematic contexts.

While the complex retains integrity of location, setting, and some sense of feeling and association due to its continued function as an open-air shopping center within its original boundaries, the overall physical integrity of the shopping center in terms of design, materials, and workmanship has been significantly compromised. In addition, within the history of shopping center design and the work of Welton Becket, the Century City Shopping Center does not stand out as a work of distinction or importance. The shopping center does not retain sufficient integrity to be considered potentially eligible for listing in the federal or State registers, nor does the shopping center meet the criteria for listing as a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument.

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The current one-story building along the eastern edge of the property actually includes the structure of two of the original pavilion buildings—substantially altered and now joined together by the Ann Taylor store.

3. 1930 Century Park West building

Architectural Description

The five-story office building located at 1930 Century Park West, designed in 1966 by the Pasadena firm of Ladd and Kelsey, is a Formalist-style derivative of the Corporate Modern style. The rectangular building is capped by a flat roof with recessed parapet. Of reinforced concrete construction, the building has two floors of underground parking and is situated near the northeast corner of Century Park West and Constellation Boulevard. The nine-square structural grid of the building is exposed on the ground floor which is recessed beneath the cantilevered upper stories. The circumference of the building is delineated by stout round concrete support columns embellished with projecting concrete fins. Within each of the three ground floor bays on each elevation, fenestration consists of tinted plate glass windows framed by dark aluminum mullions. A terrazzo walkway surrounds the building, which is raised slightly above street level. The building's primary entrance, which has been altered, is centered on the north elevation facing a paved parking area and consists of an outward-curving sequence of vertical glass panels interrupted by a pair of glazed double entrances framed by thick marble surrounds. Additional entrances are located on the south and east elevations.

The building's upper four floors on north and south elevations feature uninterrupted horizontal bands of tinted glazing with aluminum mullions which are later alterations, replacing the original concrete balconies and recessed strip windows. In contrast, east and west elevations are characterized cast aluminum panels featuring an abstract pattern in relief. Landscaping adjacent to the building's west and south elevations consists of grassy lawns, clipped hedges, potted shrubs, and several mature trees.

Assessment of Integrity

Historic photographs of 1930 Century Park West and a period rendering of the building, along with original descriptions of the property's exteriors and visual inspection reveals that the building has been altered since its construction in 1966. Specifically, the upper stories of the north and south elevations originally consisted of recessed balconies accessible from offices on each floor. All of the balconies have been enclosed by horizontal bands of tinted glazing within a framework of aluminum mullions. On the building's ground floor, the outward-curving main entrance area located on the north elevation is not original, and the drive-thru teller window has been removed. The design and materials of the dual entrances, glass panels, and entrance surrounds appear to have been installed in the 1990s.

Assessment of Significance

Overall, while the office building located at 1930 Century Park West retains integrity of location, setting, and feeling, it no longer retains its association with Prudential Savings and Loan Association. Additionally, due to the loss of substantial historic fabric on the building's upper stories, the original drive through bank, and the building's primary entrance area, the property's physical integrity relative to design, materials, and workmanship has been significantly compromised since its construction. The 1930 Century Park West building is not thematically associated with Century City because it was not clearly planned as a specific component of the 1961 master plan; however, it does fall within the 1958-1975 period of significance for the master plan. It should be noted that both the 1958 and the 1961 master plans depicted smaller, approximately six- to ten-story buildings along the southern edge of the shopping mall. Thus, 1930 Century Park West would appear to generally conform to the overall master plan concept. The primary thematic context for 1930 Century Park West is the architecture of the Modern period in Los Angeles, particularly in association with the development of Century City. The property cannot be placed under a historic milieu, nor can it be associated with a significant person or the work of a master architect. Additionally, although it is a product of a notable local architectural firm, Ladd and Kelsey, it is does not appear to be a distinctive or outstanding work by the firm.⁷⁷

The building itself, when evaluated as an individual resource within the larger context of Century City and Los Angeles, lacks sufficient integrity and significance to be recommended eligible for listing in the federal or state registers. In addition, the building does not meet the criteria for listing as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.

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David Wesley, ed., <u>Ladd & Kelsey, Architects, Engineers and Planners, Pasadena, California.</u> Pasadena, California: Ladd & Kelsey Architects, 197-.

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V. PREPARERS

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APPENDIX A

Current Photographs

Historic Photographs

Tax Assessor Map

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps



Context view, Santa Monica Boulevard, looking east, subject property on right.



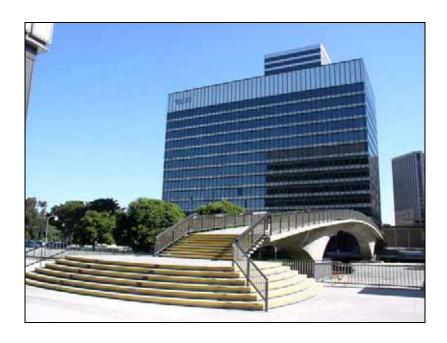
Context view, Avenue of the Stars, looking south, subject property on right.



1801 Avenue of the Stars, south elevation, looking northwest.



1801 Avenue of the Stars, north elevation, looking south.



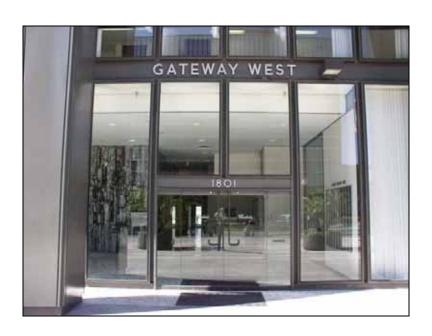
Pedestrian bridge, 1800 Avenue of the Stars, west elevation, looking northeast.



1801 Avenue of the Stars, fountain, east elevation, looking southwest.



1801 Avenue of the Stars, entrance steps, east elevation, looking west.



1801 Avenue of the Stars, entrance, west elevation.



1801 Avenue of the Stars, underground parking garage entrance, looking west.



1801 Avenue of the Stars, curtain wall, north elevation.



1801 Avenue of the Stars, window and lighting details.



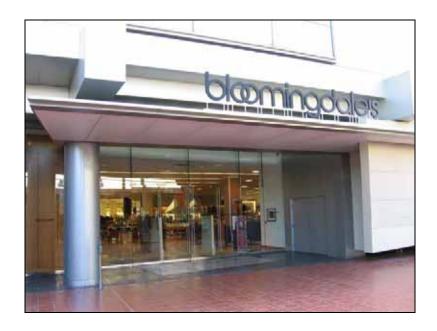
1801 Avenue of the Stars, signage, west elevation.



1801 Avenue of the Stars, mature Moreton Bay Fig tree.



Context view, Santa Monica Boulevard, looking east.



Century City Shopping Center, Bloomingdales' north entrance detail, looking southwest.



1930 Century Park West, west and south elevations, looking northeast.



1930 Century Park West, north and west elevations, looking southeast.



1930 Century Park West, north entrance, looking southwest.

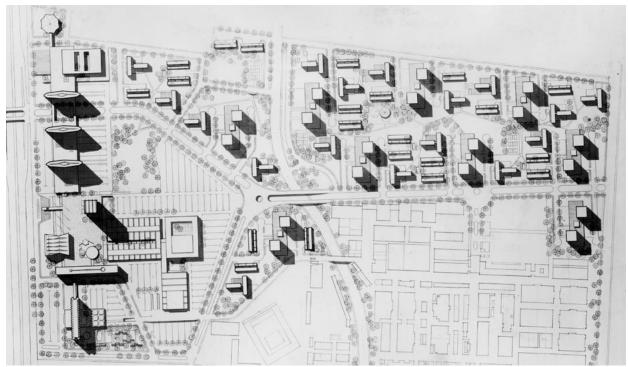


1930 Century Park West, west elevation details.

Historic Photographs



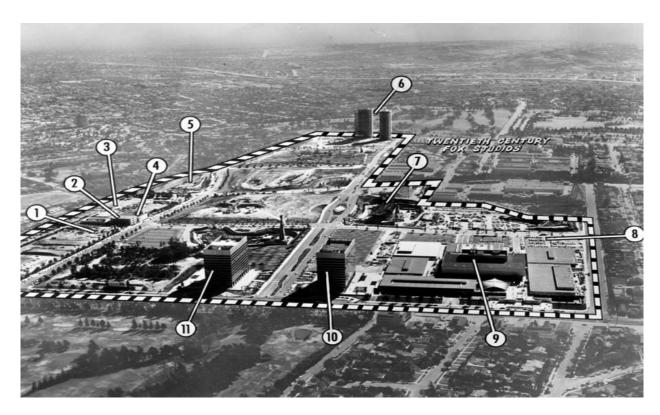
Photomontage showing the original 1958 Century City Plan (Los Angeles Public Library).



The original 1958 Century Plan (Los Angeles Public Library).



Model of revised 1961 Century City Plan, looking southwest along Avenue of the Stars (Los Angeles Public Library).



1966 Aerial Photo (Los Angeles Public Library).



View from Century City Shopping Center looking northeast towards the 1801 Avenue of the Stars building, about 1966 (Los Angeles Public Library).



Aerial Photo showing completed Gateway buildings and the Shopping Center (Los Angeles Public Library).

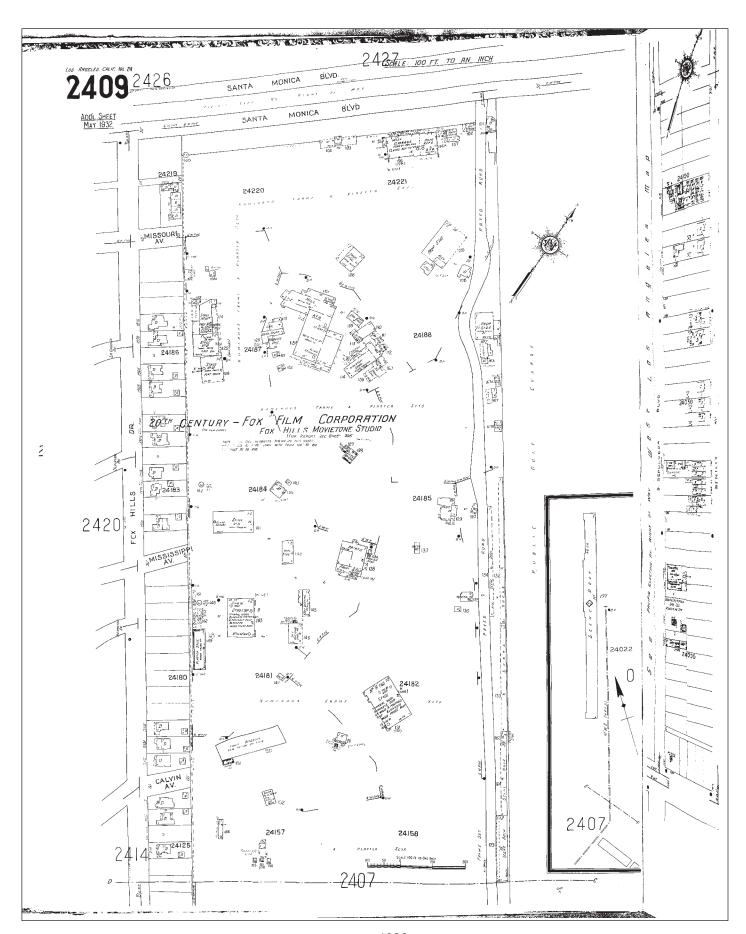


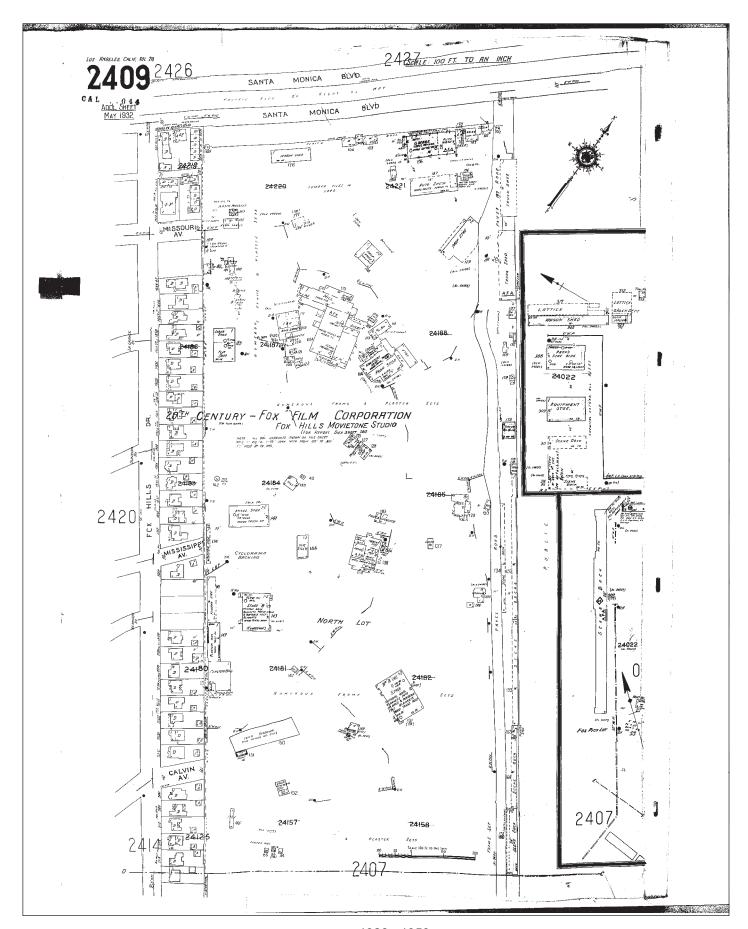
1930 Century Park West
(http://www.johnkelseyarchitect.com/image.php?iID=96&gID=commercial&page=1)

Tax Assessor Map

Tax Assessor Map

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps





1926 - 1950