

Appendix D



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Historic Resources Technical Report



Sunset Bronson Studios  
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November 2012

HISTORIC RESOURCES GROUP

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**November 2012**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this technical report is to determine if historic resources as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)<sup>1</sup> are present in the Sunset Bronson Project Site and, if so, to identify potential impacts to historic resources caused by the proposed Project. This report is intended to inform environmental review of the proposed Project.

Under CEQA the potential impacts of a project on historic resources must be considered. The purpose of CEQA is to evaluate whether a proposed project may have a significant adverse effect on the environment and, if so, if that effect can be reduced or eliminated by pursuing an alternative course of action or through mitigation measures.

The impacts of a project on an historic resource may be considered an environmental impact. CEQA states that:

*A project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment.<sup>2</sup>*

Thus, an evaluation of project impacts under CEQA requires a two-part

inquiry: (1) a determination of whether the project site contains or is adjacent to a historically significant resource or resources, and if so, (2) a determination of whether the proposed project will result in a “substantial adverse change” in the significance of the resource or resources. This report investigates the Sunset Bronson Studios property to determine if historic resources exist within its boundaries and analyzes project impacts for any adverse change in the significance of such resources. More specifically, the analysis contained in this report assesses the entire Sunset Bronson Studios property, including those portions of the site that are outside of the identified construction areas associated with the Proposed Project.

In doing so, this report provides a comprehensive review of the historic resources that could be directly impacted by development activities within the Proposed Project footprint, as well as a contextual assessment of the potential historic resources that are located on the studio property, but outside the Proposed Project footprint.

This report contains:

- A review of the existing properties located within the Sunset Bronson Studios site.
- A review of previous evaluations of the site through historic survey, evaluation, or other official actions.

<sup>1</sup> California PRC, Section 21084.1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## REPORT

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- Analysis and evaluation of any potential historic resources.
- Review of the required consideration of historic resources under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Preservation Planner and Christy Johnson McAvoy, Founding Principal. Both are qualified professionals who meet or exceed the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards.

This report was prepared using primary and secondary sources related to the history of the motion picture industry in Los Angeles and the site's development as a motion picture studio. The following documents were consulted:

- Historic permits for properties on the site
- Sanborn Fire Insurance maps
- Historic photographs, aerial photos and site plans
- Local histories
- Previous environmental evaluations of the site
- California State Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) for Los Angeles County
- 1989 Department of Parks and Recreation Historic Resources Inventory Forms
- Survey LA Draft Historic Context – Entertainment Industry 2010

Research, field inspection, and analysis were performed by Paul Travis, Senior

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## 2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION<sup>3</sup>

Sunset Bronson Entertainment Properties, LLC, the Project Applicant, is proposing the Sunset Bronson Studios Entertainment Center Project (Proposed Project) located at 5800 Sunset Boulevard in the Hollywood Community of the City of Los Angeles (City). The Proposed Project would provide new media and entertainment-related office and office production uses within a 4.36-acre portion of the existing approximately 10.55-acre Sunset Bronson Studios (SBS) campus (the Project Site). The approximately 10.55-acre media and entertainment campus serves as a multi-use property, including production, post-production, office space for media and entertainment-related tenants, and support facilities.

As shown below in Figure 1: Existing Site Plan, The 4.36-acre Project Site is currently developed with an asphalt-paved surface parking lot providing approximately 466 parking spaces, three studio-related ancillary buildings, two structural additions to the Executive Office Building (EOB), and several additional studio-related ancillary structures (i.e., satellite dishes and emergency generators), occupying a total of 14,499 square feet of building area. The the Proposed Project would

<sup>3</sup> Description of existing conditions and the proposed project as provided by the Applicant.

remove the existing surface parking lot and studio-related ancillary buildings and construct in their place a 13-story office building and a five-story production office building, both of which would be supported by a seven-story parking structure with two levels of subterranean parking. The Proposed Project would also include a replacement guard station along Van Ness Avenue, an outdoor seating area and café adjacent to the proposed production office building, and landscaping. These improvements would include approximately 391,018 square feet of net new building area.

The Proposed Project would also create a landscaped area at the Van Ness Gate to enhance the arrival area of the SBS campus and another 60-foot long landscaped setback area along Sunset Boulevard, in front of the proposed 13-story office building, which would be designed to enhance the pedestrian environment of the Project Site. In addition, the Proposed Project would provide an outdoor seating area with landscaping immediately adjacent to the proposed five-story production office building.

## 2.2 Project Location and Setting

### Project Location

The Proposed Project encompasses approximately 4.36 acres at the intersection of Sunset Boulevard and Van Ness Avenue, in the northeast portion of the approximately 10.55-acre

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SBS campus, as well as one non-contiguous area at the southeast corner of Sunset Boulevard and Bronson Avenue.

As shown below in Figure 2: Regional Project Location Map, the Project Site is located within the Hollywood Community Plan (the Community Plan) Area of the City of Los Angeles, approximately five miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles and approximately 12 miles east of the Pacific Ocean. The Project Site is irregular in shape and is generally bounded by Sunset Boulevard to the north, Van Ness Avenue to the east, and the SBS campus to the south and west. The overall SBS campus is bounded by Sunset Boulevard to the north, Van Ness Avenue to the east, Fernwood Avenue to the south, and Bronson Avenue to the west.

#### Surrounding Uses

The Project Site is located in an urbanized area that is developed with a diverse mix of land uses. In general, the major arterials in the Project vicinity, including Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood Boulevard, Santa Monica Boulevard, Western Avenue, and Vine Street are lined with commercial, industrial, and some residential uses, with residential neighborhoods interspersed between the major arterials.

Land uses in the immediate Project area include a mix of light industrial, commercial, residential, and educational

uses with associated parking. As mentioned above, the Project Site is a part of the overall SBS campus, and studio facilities are located immediately adjacent to the south and west side of the Project Site. Land uses to the north, across Sunset Boulevard, are commercial in nature and include surface parking lots, a Mobil gas station, and the Metropolitan apartments. Land uses to the east, across Van Ness Avenue, consist of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Bernstein High School campus, with the US-101 Freeway located further to the east. Land uses to the south, across Fernwood Avenue, consist of the LAUSD Joseph Le Conte Middle School campus, followed by residential development. Land uses to the west, across Bronson Avenue, include single- and multi-family residential developments, with commercial land uses located adjacent to the south side of Sunset Boulevard. Properties directly north, fronting Sunset Boulevard, are designated Commercial; Bernstein High School directly east of the Project Site is designated Industrial; Joseph Le Conte Middle School, directly south of the Project Site is designated for Public Facilities; and the commercial, restaurant, and residential uses directly west are designated Industrial and Multiple Family Residential land uses by the Hollywood Community Plan.

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## Description of Proposed Project

### Overview of the Proposed Development

The Proposed Project involves the development of a 13-story office building and five-story production building, supported by a proposed seven-story parking structure that would include two levels of subterranean parking. These improvements would be developed in place of an existing surface parking lot, which current provides 466 parking spaces, and ancillary studio-related buildings located on an approximately 4.36 acre portion of the 10.55-acre SBS campus. As shown below in Table 1 : Project Development Summary Table, the Proposed Project would result in the addition of approximately 391,018 square feet of net new building area within the Project Site. The 13-story office building would be designed to provide approximately 314,495 square feet of building area, while the five-story production office building would be designed to provide approximately 90,304 square feet of building area. In addition, the seven-story parking structure would be designed to provide approximately 1,635 parking spaces. The Proposed Project would also include a replacement guard station along Van Ness Avenue, an outdoor seating area and café adjacent to the proposed production office building, and landscaping. The following

describes in greater detail each of the Proposed Project's key features.

#### *(1) Office Building*

As shown below in Figure 3: Conceptual Project Development Plan, the proposed 13-story office building is anticipated to be located within the northeast corner of the Project Site. The top floor of the 13-story office building would reach a building height of approximately 200 feet. The office building would be of a contemporary design that would feature a distinctive glass and concrete panel façade. This façade would utilize energy efficient glass to bring natural light into the building, as well as to reduce energy demands and reduce glare. The energy efficient glass would be a part of the Proposed Project's energy-efficient design, which would target LEED Silver certification. The office building would include approximately 314,495 square feet of building area and each of the office building's 13 floors would be designed to provide approximately 25,000 square feet of flexible, column-free leasable space. The penthouse floor would offer additional ceiling height and access to exterior terraces. Pedestrian access to the office building would be provided through a pedestrian-friendly landscaped plaza entrance on Van Ness Avenue, with lobbies and amenities at the plaza level. One level of subterranean parking would be provided below the office building.

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**Table 1  
Project Development Summary Table**

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Existing Development</b>	<b>To Be Removed</b>	<b>Proposed Development</b>	<b>Net New Development</b>
Office	6,870 sf <sup>a</sup>	(6,870) sf	404,799 sf <sup>b</sup>	397,929 sf
Support	7,629 sf <sup>c</sup>	(7,629) sf	718 sf <sup>d</sup>	(6,911) sf
Stage	0 sf	0 sf	0 sf	0 sf
<b>Total Building Area</b>	<b>14,499 sf</b>	<b>14,499 sf</b>	<b>405,517 sf</b>	<b>391,018 sf</b>
Parking	466 sp	(401) sp	1,735 sp <sup>e</sup>	1,399 sp <sup>f</sup>
<b>Total Parking Spaces</b>	<b>466 sp</b>	<b>(401) sp</b>	<b>1,735 sp</b>	<b>1,399 sp</b>

<sup>a</sup> Includes the 4,757 square foot Gene Autry Wing to the EOB and the 2,113 square foot northern addition to the EOB.

<sup>b</sup> Includes 314,495 square feet of office space in the proposed office building and 90,304 square feet of production office space in the proposed production office building.

<sup>c</sup> Includes the 7,259 square foot scenic shop, the 293 square foot guard station, and the 77 square foot restroom.

<sup>d</sup> Includes a 136 square foot replacement guard station at the Van Ness Gate and a 582 square foot support office in the proposed parking structure.

<sup>e</sup> Includes 1,635 spaces in the proposed parking structure, 100 spaces in a single level of subterranean parking below the proposed office building.

<sup>f</sup> Includes the net 1,334 (1,735 – 401) spaces to be provided by the Proposed Project plus the 65 existing surface parking spaces that would remain.

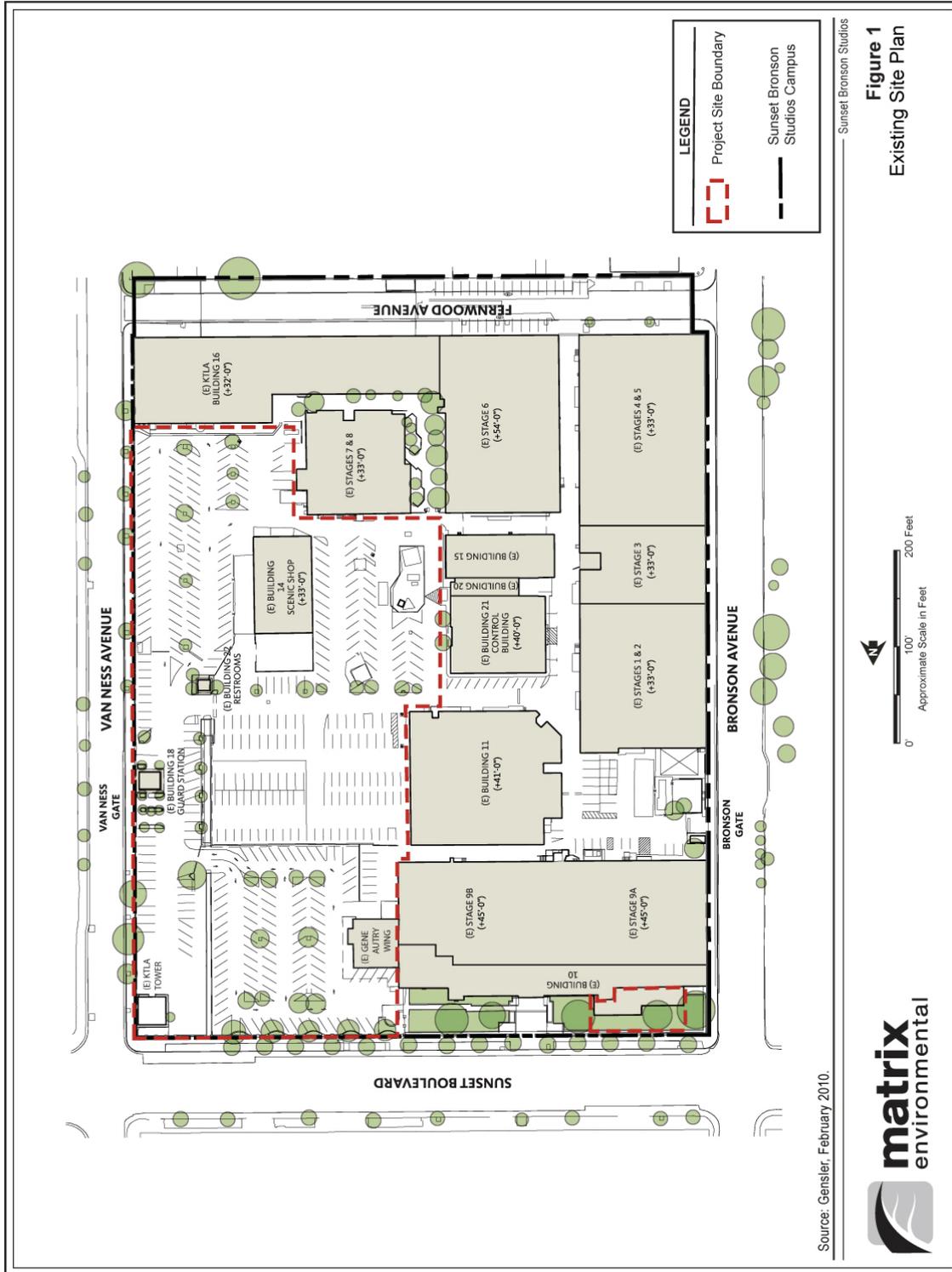
Source: Gensler, April 2010.

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Figure 1: Existing Site Plan



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Figure 2: Regional Project Location Map

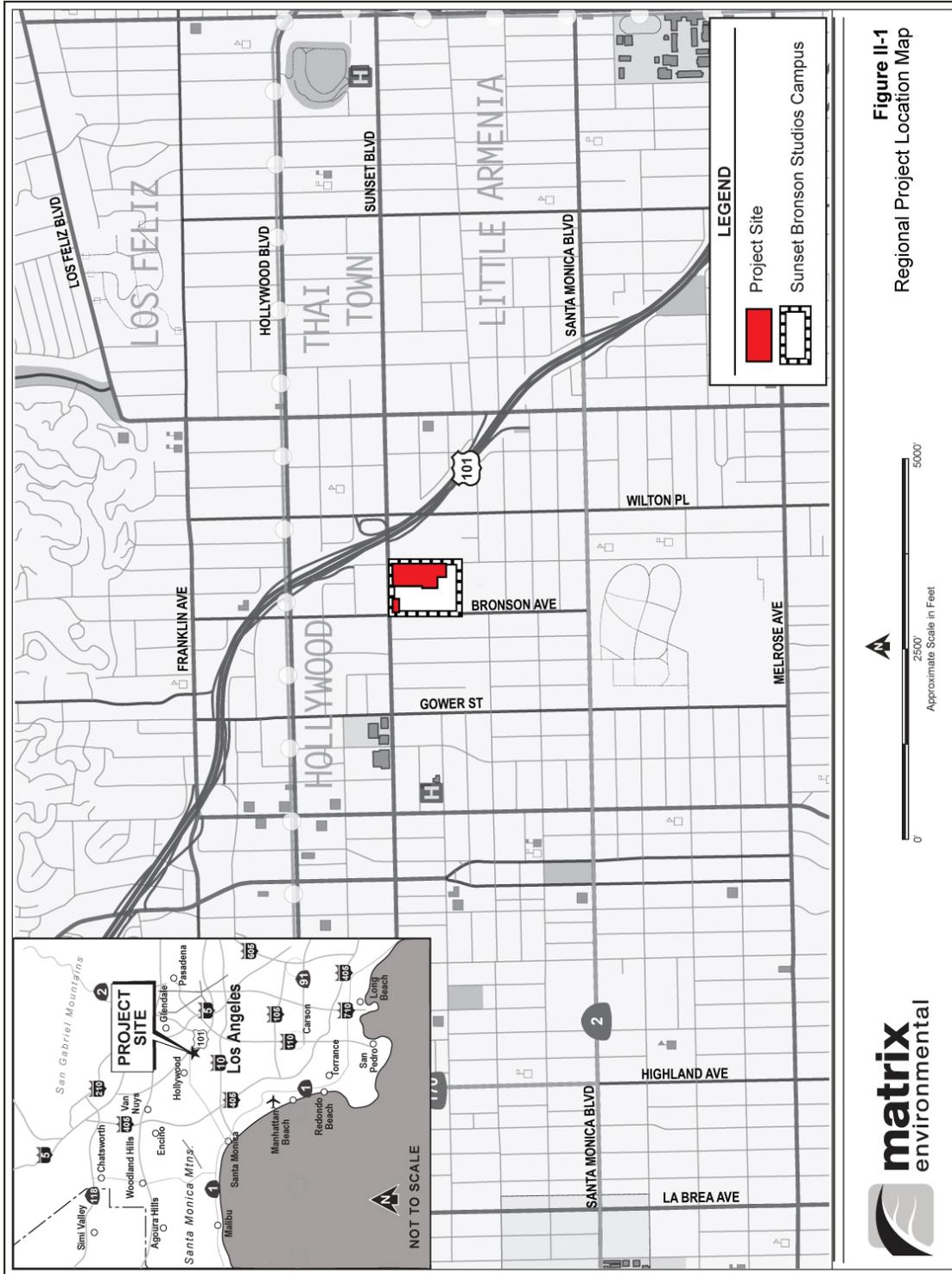


Figure II-1  
Regional Project Location Map

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Source: Thomas Bros. Maps, 2009; Matrix Environmental, 2011

## *(2) Production Building*

As shown in the Conceptual Project Development Plan, the five-story production building is anticipated to be located near the center of the Project Site. The production building would have a maximum building height of approximately 73 feet.

The production building would be located immediately adjacent to the west side of the proposed parking structure, creating the visual appearance of a single building with a production office component and a parking component. The proposed production building would be positioned to take advantage of its location in the heart of the SBS campus, immediately adjacent to the SBS's existing 10 active production stages. The production building would include approximately 90,304 square of enclosed interior space and would be designed to offer highly flexible, easily sub-divisible production media-related office and support space. The proposed production building would wrap a partially enclosed outdoor courtyard space that would include a fabrication shop and access to a ground level café with outdoor seating.

### Design Standards

#### *(1) Historic Sensitivity*

As mentioned above, the off-site EOB is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Proposed Project would be designed to complement and

improve the sightlines to the immediately adjacent EOB. For instance, by removing the Gene Autry Wing and northern addition that were subsequently added to the original EOB over time, the Proposed Project seeks to restore the original facade of the EOB. In addition, the proposed office building would be set back from Sunset Boulevard and landscaping would be kept low to enhance views of the historic façade. To complement the existing EOB, the proposed office building would feature a soffit (decorative molding) on the building's third floor that would align with the eave line of the EOB, establishing a scale relationship between the buildings.

Further, the proposed office building would feature landscaping and decorative architectural features (e.g., free-standing columns atop decorative bases) along the Sunset Boulevard street frontage, to mimic the design and cadence of the historic colonnade and masonry fence line found along Sunset Boulevard. The glazed and transparent glass utilized on the first floor of the proposed office building would be recessed along Sunset Boulevard to allow the detailed, articulated façade of the EOB to be visually prominent. Lastly, the KTLA Tower, currently on the Van Ness Avenue corner, would be relocated in front of the west wing of the EOB, to its original on-site location.

#### *(2) Rehabilitation of Existing Buildings*

The Proposed Project would remove the Gene Autry Wing and the awkward northern addition to the historic EOB.

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The EOB is immediately adjacent to the Project Site on the SBS campus and fronts Sunset Boulevard, and is currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Both the Gene Autry Wing and the northern addition were added to the EOB after its initial construction in 1922-1923 and after its recognized period of historic significance (1923-1938). The northern addition was added in the 1940s, while the two-story Gene Autry was added in 1968. Further, the northern addition is inconsistent with the architectural design of the remainder of the EOB structure and contains little architectural ornamentation.

Rehabilitation of those portions of the EOB disturbed by construction would conform to the Secretary of the Interior Standards and as a result, the Proposed Project would restore the disturbed portions of the EOB to the protect the EOB's original design and visual architectural integrity.

As indicated above, the Proposed Project would also relocate the KTLA Tower from its current location at the northeast corner of the Project Site to its original position in front of the western side of the EOB building. Therefore, the Proposed Project would visually restore the EOB and the KTLA Tower to be more consistent with their original architectural design elements. The functionality of the rehabilitated structures would remain in their current capacity, with the EOB continuing to be used for office space and the KTLA Tower continuing to serve as an ornamental visual historic element of

the Project Site. Additionally, these features would be fully integrated with the other structures proposed on-site through the use of landscaping, particularly between the EOB and the proposed office building.

### *(3) Landscaping*

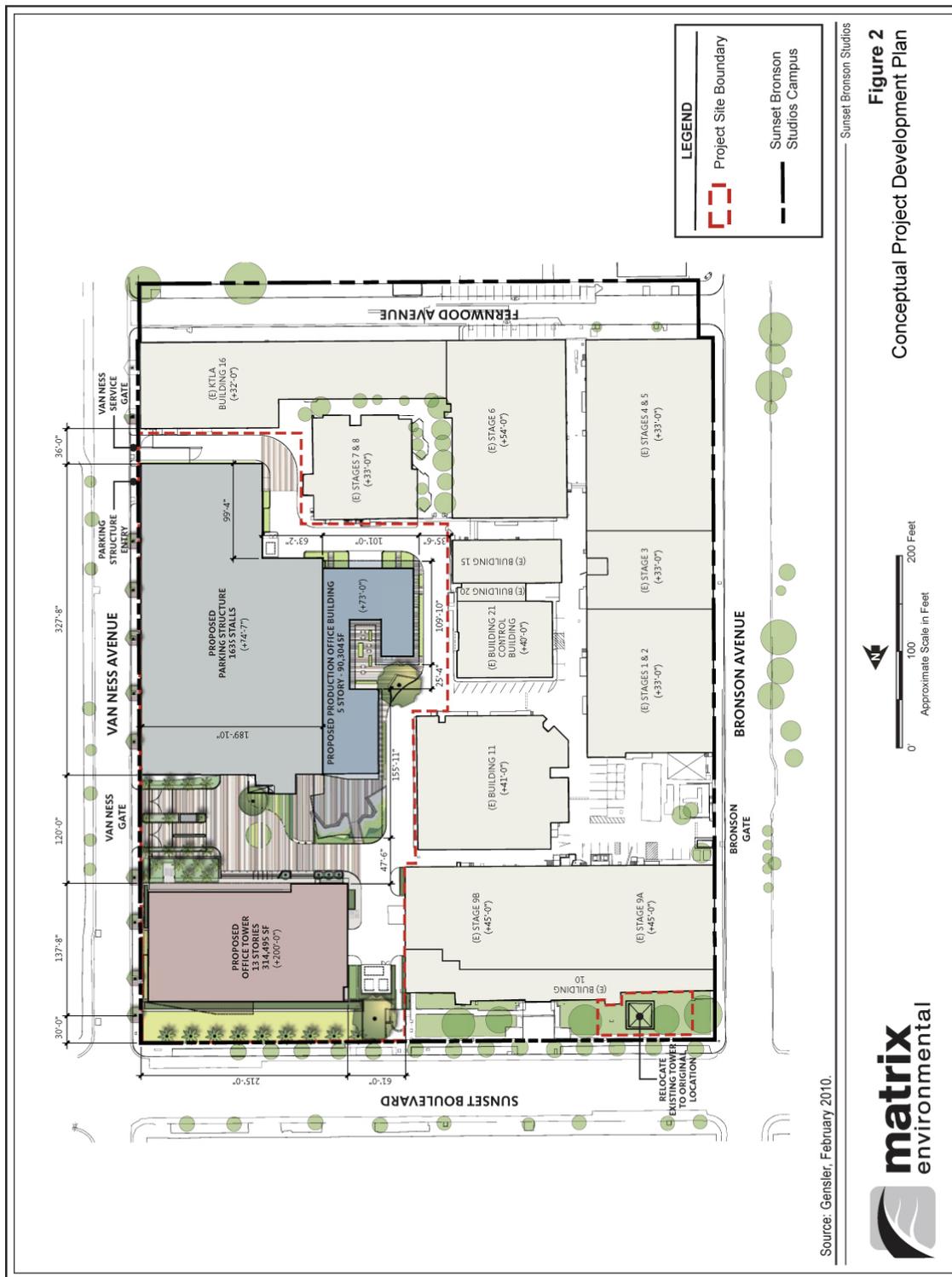
The Proposed Project would provide a landscaped area at the Van Ness Gate and another 60-foot-long landscaped setback area along Sunset Boulevard, in front of the proposed office building. Additionally, the Proposed Project would provide an outdoor seating area with landscaping immediately adjacent to the proposed production office building. The landscaped area at the Van Ness gate would be designed to enhance the SBS's arrival area and would be accentuated by a large oak tree. The landscaped setback area along Sunset Boulevard would be designed to enhance the pedestrian environment of the Project Site by providing additional landscaping along the Sunset Boulevard streetscape. In total, the Proposed Project would add approximately 21,500 square feet of new landscaping and open space. The landscaping would feature species native to California and include efficient watering devices.

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Figure 3: Conceptual Project Development Plan



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### 3.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### 3.1 Site Description

The Project is located on the Sunset Bronson Studios property which occupies an entire block in the Hollywood area of Los Angeles. The property is bordered by Sunset Boulevard on the north, Van Ness Avenue on the east, Fernwood Avenue on the south, and Bronson Avenue on the west. The Hollywood Freeway is located just east of the studio. Sunset Boulevard is characterized by heavy traffic and primarily commercial buildings of varying types and heights. Directly north, across Sunset Boulevard are commercial buildings ranging from one to eleven stories in height. East of the studio, across Van Ness Avenue are the athletic fields of Helen Bernstein High School. The school campus includes several buildings rising up to five stories in height. Directly south, across Fernwood Avenue is the Le Conte Junior High School campus. Low-rise multi-family apartment complexes occupy the lots directly west of the studio, along Bronson Avenue.

The site contains twelve (12) buildings and four (4) structures including a radio antennae tower, guard structures and a restroom pavilion.<sup>4</sup> The following

<sup>4</sup> Two portable office trailers are also located at the northeast corner of the site but are not described here.

building and structure descriptions are keyed to the studio plan shown in Figure 4. Buildings and structures are listed below in the relative order of their original construction. The building's historic name, when different from the current name, is included in parenthesis. Current photographs can be found in Appendix A.

#### *1. Stages 9A and 9B (Stage 1)*

Constructed in 1922-23, this stage building is attached to the rear of the Executive Office Building. It is the site of the filming of *The Jazz Singer*, the first feature-length film to incorporate synchronized singing and dialogue. From 1939 to 1948, the building was used as a bowling alley, the "Sunset Bowling Center."

This wood-framed building is approximately four stories in height and rectangular in plan with a flattened gambrel roof. Exterior walls are clad in smooth stucco. A three-story wing on the south façade houses restrooms, dressing rooms, and storage. One-over-one, double-hung, wood sash windows originally ran along the upper wall of the wing. The original windows have since been replaced with tinted, fixed, single-pane windows. An elevator tower has been added to the approximate center of the south façade. Two large doors on the east façade provide access to the stages. Stage 10 was recently converted from a prop room.

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## *2. Building 10 (Executive Office Building)*

Constructed in 1922-23, the Executive Office Building housed the main offices of Warner Brothers until the executive staff moved to their Burbank studio facility in 1930. From 1939 to 1948, it was used as a café and soda fountain related to the "Sunset Bowling Center" bowling alley that occupied Stage 9 to the rear.

The two-story, wood-frame building is symmetrical in form with a flat roof and designed in a Neo-Classical style. The north façade features a second story colonnade of Doric columns connected by a balustrade fronting a recessed balcony. The colonnade is topped with an entablature. A simple cornice rises above the roofline.

The fenestration is symmetrical and consists of large, multi-pane windows. The east and west ends of the building were originally one story in height. In 1929, the west end was expanded to include a second story. A second story was added to the east end in 1931. Many of the design elements in the central section of the building were continued across these sections. A single-story addition was made to the west end in the 1940s. The majority of this addition is separated from the main building by a narrow courtyard. A two-story addition was made to the east façade of the building in 1968 to house

an office and private dining room for Gene Autry.

## *3. Stages 1, 2 & 3 (Stage 2)*

Stages 1, 2, and 3 were constructed circa 1924 as a single building. Many Warner Brothers films were shot here between 1924 and 1938. During the 1940s the building was used as a roller skating rink. In later years many television production companies used the studio lot, including the *Gunsmoke* television series, which recreated its Western town in these stages.

The wood-framed building is approximately four stories in height and rectangular in plan with a flattened, gambrel roof. The exterior walls are clad in stucco. A three-story shed roof wing extends for approximately 20 feet along the entire east façade, creating technical support and dressing room areas for the adjacent sound stages. Access to the stages from the exterior is provided through large sliding doors on the east façade of the wing. The top level of the wing was originally an open loggia that provided open space for the adjacent dressing rooms. The loggia has since been enclosed and the openings replaced with tinted, fixed, single-pane windows. The north and west facades have no doors or windows. The south façade joins Stage 4. A new roof was added in 1991.

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#### 4. KTLA Tower (KFWB Radio Tower)

The KTLA Tower is one of two matching towers that originally flanked the Executive Office Building. They were erected in 1925 to transmit radio station KFWB programs. In the 1950s, this tower was relocated to its present location at the corner of Sunset and Van Ness, and the other was removed.

The tower is a four legged steel-skeleton structure. The base is approximately 30 feet square and rises approximately 160 feet in height. The letters KTLA and the number 5 have been attached and read vertically on all four sides. Two electronic message boards are attached near the base of the tower facing Van Ness Avenue and Sunset Boulevard.

#### 5. Stages 4 & 5 (Stage 7)

Stages 4 & 5 were constructed in approximately 1928 as a single building. They are attached to the south end of Stage 3, separated by a concrete firewall. During the 1940s the building was used as badminton courts. Later, many television production companies used the studio lot, including the *Guns* television series, which used these stages to store rolling stock and as a stable for horses.

This wood-framed building is approximately four stories in height and rectangular in plan with a flattened gambrel roof. The exterior walls are clad in smooth stucco. Access to the stages from the exterior is provided

through large sliding doors on the east façade. Windows on the west and south façades have been covered over. New dressing rooms were added to Stage 5 in 1991 within the existing building envelope.

#### 6. Stage 6 (Historic Stage 6)

Constructed in 1928, Building 6 served as one of several sound stages on the studio lot. This steel-frame building is approximately three stories in height and rectangular in plan with a flattened gambrel roof. Exterior walls are clad in stucco. Two-story shed roof wings extend along the north and south façades. The south end houses dressing rooms and storage, while the north end contains the electrical vault and utility rooms. The main access from the exterior is centered on the north façade and consists of a 12 x 18 foot six panel sliding wood door. Several tinted, fixed, single-pane windows are present on the north façade.

#### 7. Stages 7 & 8 (Stages 4 & 5)

Constructed in 1928-29, these sound stages were constructed as a single building by Warner Brothers to handle the increased production of sound films. In the 1940s they were used by KFWB radio. Later they were used as television studios.

The two-story, wood-framed building is rectangular in plan, and sheathed in stucco. Stage 7 occupies a side gabled wing to the west. To the rear of this

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wing is a two-story flat roofed addition with a one-story shed roof wing attached to the west. Tinted, fixed, single-pane windows and modern doors have been added. In 1978, office spaces were installed on the second floor within the existing building envelope.

*8. Building 11 (Production Offices and Property Storage)*

Identified on the 1950 Sanborn map as the "Wardrobe Stage," this building incorporates the original Stage 1, or "the Barn" and attached shops and offices which were constructed in 1920.<sup>5</sup> Alterations and additions between 1927 and 1929 transformed the building into a three-story office and property storage facility. A portion of the building was occupied by Looney Tunes in the 1930s and 40s. It is identified on the 1950 Sanborn map as the Wardrobe Stage.

Substantially altered in 1989, the box-like building has a flat roof and stucco exterior. Multiple tinted, fixed, single-pane windows are now distributed evenly across all four facades.

<sup>5</sup> Wanamaker, Marc. *1991 Building Inventory*. While conclusive evidence of the construction and location of "the barn" was not discovered for this report, historic photos appear to corroborate the 1991 finding.

*9. Building 14 – (Relocated portion of original Mill Building)*

This shop and mill building was originally part of a much larger building that was located northeast of its current site. That structure was originally an L-shaped building located on the east side of the lot near Van Ness Avenue. According to the 1991 Building Inventory, the original mill building was cut into parts between 1949 and 1952. One section was moved to the present location of Building 14 and the other section was moved to the present location of the Technical Center Building. A 1955 map from the Paramount Pictures Engineering Department is marked to show the dividing of the original mill and relocation of the two portions.

The current building occasionally functions as a shop to construct sets, but is mostly used for storage and as an automobile washing and servicing area for certain existing studio tenants. It is approximately two stories in height, has a gabled roof, and a stucco exterior. The north and south facades feature multi-paned steel sash windows and tall sliding corrugated metal doors.

*10. Building 15 (Vitaphone Recording)*

Constructed in 1928, this building was originally used for Vitaphone recording. The building is a single-story reinforced concrete building with multi-paned steel sash windows on the south facade and a flat roof. A sliding metal door

provides access to the basement. The windows have been covered or painted over.

*11. Building 16 (Vitaphone Administration)*

This building was constructed in 1929 as administrative offices for Vitaphone, Warner Brothers pioneering sound synchronization system. After Warner Brothers moved to its Burbank facility in 1930, the building was used as the offices of radio station KFVB and the studios and offices for Leon Schlesinger's *Looney Tunes* and *Merry Melodies* cartoon series. It is now used as offices for KTLA television.

The building is rectangular in plan with a shallow-pitched gabled roof. Massing consists of a two-story central section flanked by single-story wings. The west end of the building shares a wall with Stage 6. The Van Ness Avenue façade features quoins and a small oval vent beneath the apex of the gable. These classical details originally embellished an entrance on Van Ness Avenue which has since been vacated.

In 1991, the building was altered. Tinted, fixed, single-pane windows replaced the original multi-paned steel sash. In 2005, the building was again altered when a single-story addition with a shed roof was constructed on the north façade of the building's eastern portion.

*12. Building 19 – Bronson Gate Guardhouse*

Constructed in 1956, this one-story wood-framed building functions as the guardhouse for the Bronson Avenue entrance to the studio lot. The building is rectangular in shape with a stucco exterior. The flat roof has wide overhanging eaves. Windows have been replaced with steel-framed fixed windows.

*13. Building 18 – Van Ness Gate Guardhouse*

Constructed in 1967, this one-story wood-framed building functions as the guardhouse for the Van Ness Avenue entrance to the studio lot. It mimics the design of the Bronson Gate. The building is rectangular in shape with a stucco exterior. The flat roof has wide overhanging eaves. Windows have been replaced with steel-framed fixed windows.

*14. Building 22 – Restrooms*

This 1974 restroom facility is one story in height, rectangular in shape, and sheathed in stucco. The flat roof has wide overhanging eaves. There are two slab doors on the north façade to the men's and women's rooms.

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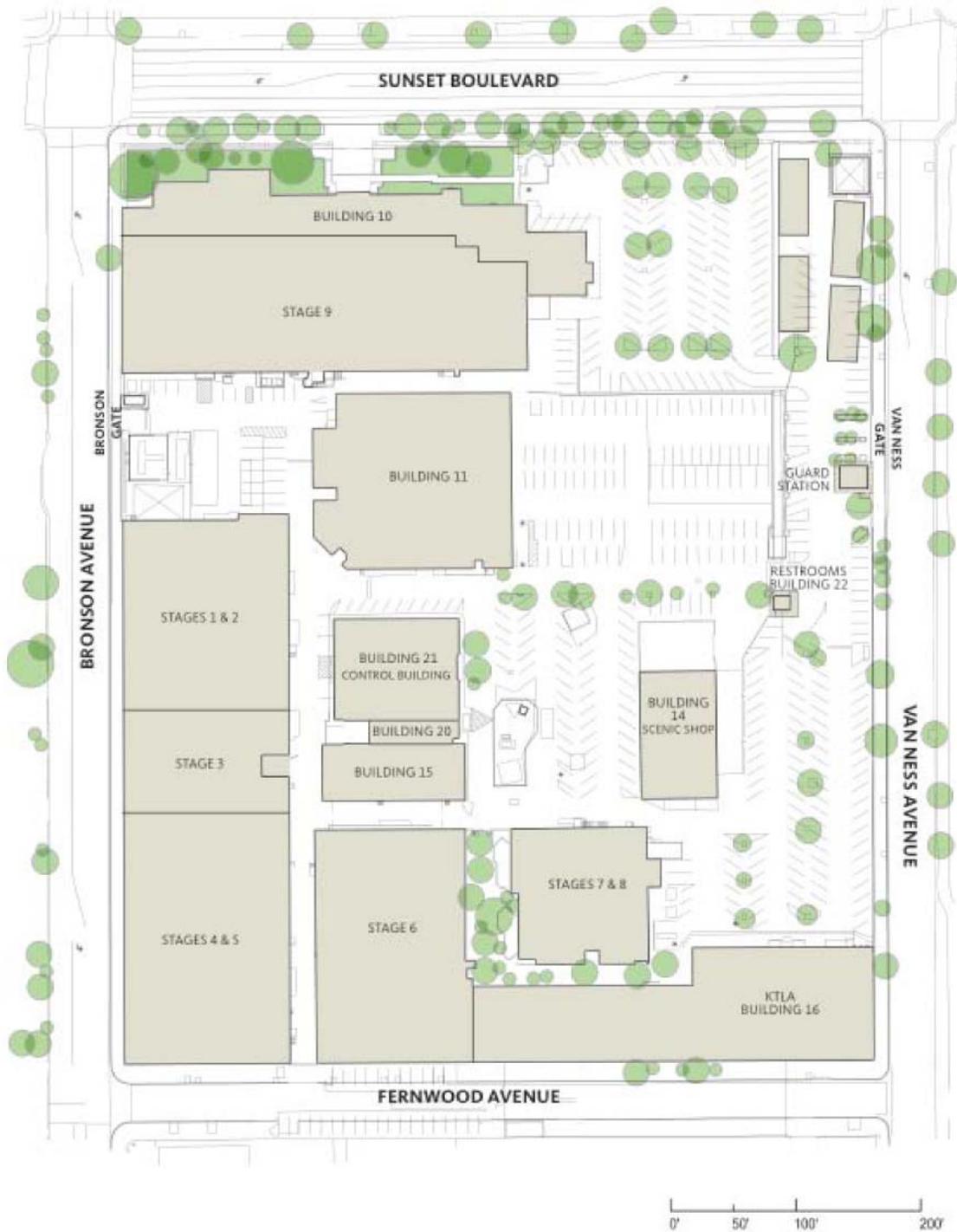
### *15. Building 20 – Videotape Library*

Constructed in 1978, the Videotape Library is a single-story stucco clad building located between Buildings 21 and 15. There is a loading dock on the west facade.

### *16. Building 21 – Control Building*

Constructed in 1981, Building 21 houses editing suites and engineering facilities as well as offices. The three-story steel framed building is rectangular in plan with a flat roof. The roof has a decorative band along the parapet. The west façade is symmetrically organized around a central bay. At the first story is a recessed main entrance, at the second story is a balcony, and at the third story is a bank of windows. Fenestration is tinted, fixed, single-pane windows.

Figure 4: Existing Studio Plan



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#### 4.1 Historic Resources under CEQA

CEQA requires that environmental protection be given significant consideration in the decision making process. Historic resources are included under environmental protection. Thus, any project or action which constitutes a substantial adverse change on a historic resource also has a significant effect on the environment and shall comply with the State CEQA Guidelines.

When the California Register of Historical Resources was established in 1992, the Legislature amended CEQA to clarify which cultural resources are significant, as well as which project impacts are considered to be significantly adverse. A “substantial adverse change” means “demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration such that the significance of a historical resource would be impaired.”

CEQA defines a historic resource as a resource listed in, or determined eligible for listing, in the California Register of Historical Resources. All properties on the California Register are to be considered under CEQA. However, because a property does not appear on the California Register does not mean it is not significant and therefore exempt from CEQA consideration. All resources determined eligible for the California Register are also to be considered under CEQA.

The courts have interpreted CEQA to create three categories of historic resources:

- *Mandatory historical resources* are resources “listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources.”
- *Presumptive historical resources* are resources “included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in subdivision (k) of Section 5020.1, or deemed significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (g) of Section 5024.1” of the Public Resources Code, unless the preponderance of the evidence demonstrates that the resource is not historically or culturally significant.
- *Discretionary historical resources* are those resources that are not listed but determined to be eligible under the criteria for the California Register of Historical Resources.<sup>6</sup>

To simplify the first three definitions provided in the CEQA statute, an historic resource is a resource that is:

<sup>6</sup> *League for the Protection of Oakland's Architectural and Historic Resources vs. City of Oakland*, 52 Cal. App. 4<sup>th</sup> 896, 906-7 (1997)

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- Listed in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register);
- Determined eligible for the California Register by the State Historical Resources Commission; or
- Included in a local register of historic resources.

Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3) supplements the statute by providing two additional definitions of historical resources, which may be simplified in the following manner. An historic resource is a resource that is:

- Identified as significant in an historical resource survey meeting the requirements of Public Resources Code 5024.1 (g);
- Determined by a Lead Agency to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California. Generally, this category includes resources that meet the criteria for listing on the California Register (Pub. Res. Code SS5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4852).

The fact that a resource is not listed in, or determined eligible for listing in, the

California Register, not included in a local register of historic resources, or not deemed significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (g) of Section 5024.1, does not preclude a lead agency from determining that the resource may be an “historic resource” for purposes of CEQA.

Properties formally determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places are automatically listed in the California Register. Properties designated by local municipalities can also be considered historic resources. A review of properties that are potentially affected by a project for historic eligibility is also required under CEQA.

#### **4.2 Historic Designations**

A property may be designated as historic by National, State, and local authorities. In order for a building to qualify for listing in the National Register or the California Register, it must meet one or more identified criteria of significance. The property must also retain sufficient architectural integrity to continue to evoke the sense of place and time with which it is historically associated.

#### National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is 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

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destruction or impairment.<sup>7</sup> The National Park Service administers the National Register program. Listing in the National Register assists in preservation of historic properties in several ways including: recognition that a property is of significance to the nation, the state, or the community; consideration in the planning for federal or federally assisted projects; eligibility for federal tax benefits; and qualification for Federal assistance for historic preservation, when funds are available.

To be eligible for listing and/or listed in the National Register, a resource must possess significance in American history and culture, architecture, or archaeology. Listing in the National Register is primarily honorary and does not in and of itself provide protection of an historic resource. The primary effect of listing in the National Register on private owners of historic buildings is the availability of financial and tax incentives. In addition, for projects that receive Federal funding, a clearance process must be completed in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Furthermore, state and local regulations may apply to properties listed in the National Register.

The criteria for listing in the National Register follow established guidelines for determining the significance of properties. The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects:

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. That embody 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; or
- D. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to meeting any or all of the criteria listed above, properties nominated must also possess integrity of

<sup>7</sup> 36CFR60, Section 60.2.

<sup>8</sup> 36CFR60, Section 60.3.

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*location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.*

### California Register of Historical Resources

The California Register is an authoritative guide in California used by State and local agencies, private groups, and citizens to identify the State's historic resources and to indicate what properties are to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse change.<sup>9</sup>

The criteria for eligibility for listing in the California Register are based upon National Register criteria. These criteria are:

1. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.
2. Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history.
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values.

4. Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

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 includes the following:

- California properties formally determined eligible for (Category 2 in the State Inventory of Historical Resources), or listed in (Category 1 in the State Inventory), the National Register of Historic Places.
- State Historical Landmarks No. 770 and all consecutively numbered state historical landmarks following No. 770. For state historical landmarks preceding No. 770, the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) shall review their eligibility for the California Register in accordance with procedures to be adopted by the State Historical Resources Commission (commission).
- Points of historical interest which have been reviewed by the OHP and recommended for listing by

<sup>9</sup> California PRC, Section 5023.1(a).

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the commission for inclusion in the California Register in accordance with criteria adopted by the commission.<sup>10</sup>

Other resources which may be nominated for listing in the California Register include:

- Individual historic resources.
- Historic resources contributing to the significance of an historic district.
- Historic resources identified as significant in historic resources surveys, if the survey meets the criteria listed in subdivision (g).
- Historic resources and historic districts designated or listed as city or county landmarks or historic properties or districts pursuant to any city or county ordinance, if the criteria for designation or listing under the ordinance have been determined by the office to be consistent with California Register criteria.
- Local landmarks or historic properties designated under any municipal or county ordinance.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> California PRC, Section 5023.1(d).

<sup>11</sup> California PRC, Section 5023.1(e).

### Local Designation Programs

The Los Angeles City Council designates Historic-Cultural Monuments on recommendation of the City's Cultural Heritage Commission.

Chapter 9, Section 22.171.7 of the City of Los Angeles Administrative Code defines an historical or cultural monument as:

*"... a Historic-Cultural Monument (Monument) is any site (including significant trees or other plant life located on the site), building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles, including historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified; or which is identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history; or which embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period, style or method of construction; or a notable work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age."*

Designation recognizes the unique architectural value of certain structures and helps to protect their distinctive qualities. Any interested individual or group may submit nominations for Historic-Cultural Monument status. Buildings may be eligible for historical

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cultural monument status if they retain their historic design and materials. Those that are intact examples of past architectural styles or that have historical associations may meet the criteria in the Cultural Heritage ordinance.

#### 4.3 Hollywood Community Plan

The City of Los Angeles Planning Department released a version of the Draft Hollywood Community Plan Update in July of 2010. This draft revised an earlier version of the draft text released in June of 2009. The Hollywood Community Plan is one of thirty-five Community Plans that comprise the Land Use Element of the City of Los Angeles' General Plan. The General Plan is the City's fundamental policy document, directing the City's future growth and development.

The protection and conservation of historic resources is a stated goal of the Hollywood Community Plan.<sup>12</sup> The Plan details policies to protect cultural resources, historic neighborhoods, and neighborhood character. These include the promotion of infill development that "matches the scale of historic resources" within historic districts (Policy LU.1.6); maintaining "height limitations on commercial zones which

border recognized historic neighborhoods (Policy LU.1.7); and encouraging the design of new buildings that "respect and compliment the character of adjacent historic neighborhoods" (Policy LU.1.7).

The Hollywood Community Plan Update was approved by the City Council in June of 2012.

#### 4.4 Historic Significance and Integrity

##### Significance

The definition of historic significance used by the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) in its administration of the California Register is based upon the definition used by the National Park Service for the National Register:

*Historic significance is defined as the importance of a property to the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture of a community, state, or the nation.<sup>13</sup> It is achieved in several ways:*

- *Association with important events, activities or patterns*
- *Association with important persons*
- *Distinctive physical characteristics of design, construction, or form*

<sup>12</sup> Hollywood Community Plan Update p. 57. November 2011.  
[http://cityplanning.lacity.org/cpu/hollywood/CPC20056082CPU\\_Exhibits/ExhibitC.pdf](http://cityplanning.lacity.org/cpu/hollywood/CPC20056082CPU_Exhibits/ExhibitC.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> *National Register Bulletin 16A. How to Complete the National Register Registration Form.* Washington D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1997. (3)

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- *Potential to yield important information*

A property may be significant individually or as part of a grouping of properties.

### Historic Integrity

*Historic integrity* is the ability of a property to convey its significance and is defined as the “authenticity of a property’s historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property’s historic period.”<sup>14</sup> The National Park Service defines seven aspects of integrity: *location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association*. These qualities are defined as follows:

- *Design* is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.
- *Setting* is the physical environment of a historic property.
- *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.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

- *Workmanship* is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.
- *Feeling* is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
- *Association* is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.<sup>15</sup>

### **4.5 Period of Significance**

The National Park Service defines the period of significance as “the length of time when a property was associated with important events, activities or persons, or attained the characteristics which qualify it for... listing” in National, State or local registers. A period of significance can be “as brief as a single year... [or] span many years.” It is based on “specific events directly related to the significance of the property,” for example the date of construction, years of ownership, or length of operation as a particular entity.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. Washington D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior, 1995.

<sup>16</sup> *National Register Bulletin 16A. How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*. Washington

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#### 4.6 Historic Districts

Standard preservation practice evaluates collections of buildings from similar time periods and historic contexts as historic *districts*. The National Park Service defines a historic district as “a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.”<sup>17</sup> A historic district derives its significance as a single unified entity.

According to the National Park Service, “a district can comprise both features that lack individual distinction and individually distinctive features that serve as focal points. It may even be considered eligible if all of the components lack individual distinction, provided that the grouping achieves significance as a whole within its historic context. In either case, the majority of the components that add to the district's historic character, even if they are individually undistinguished, must possess integrity, as must the district as a whole.” Some examples of districts include business districts, college campuses, large estates, farms, industrial

complexes, residential areas and rural villages.<sup>18</sup>

Resources that have been found to contribute to the historic identity of a district are referred to as *district contributors*. Properties located within the district boundaries that do not contribute to its significance are identified as *non-contributors*.

D.C.: National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior, 1997. (42)

<sup>17</sup> *National Register Bulletin 15*. How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. Washington D.C.: National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior, 1997. (5)

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

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## 5.0 HISTORIC CONTEXT

The motion picture industry has played a significant role in the economic and cultural development of Los Angeles, and a large part of the city's identity is tied to its role as a center of the entertainment industry.

The history of the motion picture industry and the properties associated with that history are unique to Los Angeles, where the industry matured as a primary form of popular entertainment in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In Los Angeles, motion pictures would become an important consumer product involving manufacture, distribution, marketing and a specific working lifestyle for those involved in the industry.

As the original location of Warner Brothers West Coast Studios, the Sunset Bronson Studio site is one of the few remaining studio properties in Hollywood that dates from the early period of the motion picture industry in Southern California. The site contains buildings and structures specific to motion picture production that were constructed prior to 1930.

### 5.1 "Hollywood" – The Motion Picture Industry

#### Early History of the Industry 1907-1913

Film production in Southern California was initiated in 1907 when the Selig Polyscope Company sent a film crew from Chicago to Los Angeles. Within

two years, several motion picture companies had set up shop in Southern California, where predictable weather and a wide variety of nearby landscapes provided ideal conditions for film making. Initially, film companies leased existing warehouses and storage facilities and filmed on outdoor platforms they called "stages". Occasionally these platforms were partially enclosed to provide for production in inclement weather. Several companies expanded on these somewhat primitive arrangements, building their own production facilities or "studios", which were tailored specifically to the myriad needs of film making process. Among these were the New York Motion Picture Company located on Allesandro Street in Edendale in 1909, and the Biograph Company at Pico and Georgia streets in Downtown Los Angeles in 1910.

Film production began in Hollywood in 1911 when the Nestor Company leased a small roadhouse known as the Blondeau Tavern on the northwest corner of Sunset Boulevard and Gower Street. The Blondeau property contained a barn, corral, twelve single-room structures and a five-room bungalow, all of which were quickly adapted for film making. Other companies soon followed Nestor to Hollywood including Universal Film Manufacturing Company in 1912 which briefly used the Nestor site before relocating to a large property and the Famous Players Company in 1913, which leased a barn and quickly

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built additional facilities on the property.

The early studios were often not much more than a ramshackle collection of utilitarian buildings set on open land and surrounded by a high wall or fence. Some of the more sophisticated plants were distinguished by “signature” main buildings and/or entrance gates designed in the popular architectural styles of the day.

#### Formation of the Leading Studios 1913-1925

Early film production was focused primarily on “short” features (thirty minutes or less). By the late 1910s, “feature-length” films (sixty minutes or more) were the dominant form. The 1910s also saw the rise of the “star system,” where popular actors were promoted as personalities to attract film viewers. Screen favorites were able to command large salaries. Studios struggled to develop and keep not only popular performers but also talented directors and technicians. As the film business became more competitive, smaller companies were subsumed into larger companies through merger and acquisition. By 1920, the American film industry was controlled by fewer than ten companies. Among them were Famous Players-Lasky (later Paramount), Fox, Warner Brothers, United Artists, RKO, Columbia, Metro (later Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer), and Universal.

As profits from feature-length silent films grew, these corporations built more substantial physical facilities. Resembling large industrial plants, a typical studio property was several acres in size and enclosed by perimeter walls. Contained inside were facilities for all aspects of film production. In addition to the large, enclosed stage buildings, film studios included set and costume production shops, makeup and hairdressing facilities, dressing rooms, production and administration offices, screening rooms, storage facilities, and post-production areas.

The major studios produced films targeted for the first-run market. In order to ensure outlets for their product, the most powerful studios bought, built, or gained control of first-run theater chains. These theater chains operated the largest and most prestigious theaters in all the major cities. The first-run market offered the greatest potential for profit because it attracted the largest audiences, charged the highest ticket prices, and provided direct access to the nation’s most important radio stations and print media.

#### The Advent of Sound 1926-1929

Throughout the silent era, films were accompanied by music performed live in the theater. The largest and most prestigious theaters maintained full orchestras. Small, neighborhood theaters might make do with a single organ or piano. In the early 1920s, film makers began to experiment with

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adding synchronized sound to motion pictures. The earliest attempts at sound pictures were confined to short subject films featuring stage performers. Warner Brothers was a pioneer in combining sound with film and began using a synchronized disc recording process called the Vitaphone system developed by Western Electric. In 1927, the smash success of Warner Brother's "The Jazz Singer" – the first feature-length film to contain synchronized speaking and singing scenes – changed the course of film making

Sound pictures required new technology for both producing films and their presentation in theaters. Every production facility needed to be sound-proofed and fitted with recording equipment while every theater in America had to be adapted for sound. Major investments were needed by the entire industry to keep its product viable. As Dr. Edwin Palmer, a Hollywood historian stated:

*"The effect [of sound] on Hollywood can hardly be appreciated. All studios required double walls for sound-proofing. Directors, so vociferous before, became dumb. Actors and actresses were compelled to talk. Schools of voice and diction sprang up everywhere. Tourists were no longer welcome in studios. The pantomimic beauties found themselves out of positions. Popular actors from the legitimate stage flocked to Hollywood. The world's best musicians, both vocal*

*and instrumental, and the earth's renowned authors came."*<sup>19</sup>

Major renovations took place on most studio lots beginning in 1928 following the advent of sound. In this phase of studio development, the studios retrofitted and expanded facilities to accommodate the new technology. Physical plants became more organized. The stages formed the heart of the production area with set building, editing rooms, storage and other technical facilities located close by. Support spaces, offices, dressing rooms, make-up, costume and art departments were concentrated in areas further removed from the production facilities.

#### The Studio Era: Hollywood's "Golden Age"

While during its formative years, the film industry had been characterized by experimentation and competition among many small independent production companies, by the mid-1920s, successful film companies were seeking greater profits and market control. The industry began a process of consolidation during which business models were established and production processes were standardized. The necessary investments to accommodate sound technology further accelerated this consolidation by

<sup>19</sup> Edwin Palmer, *History of Hollywood: Narrative Vol. I*, (Hollywood: Arthur H. Cawston, Publisher, 1937), 257-258.

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favoring the most successful and highly capitalized studios. By 1930, the American film industry was dominated by eight companies.

Leading this group were five companies that controlled the first-run market through corporate ownership of both production facilities and the premier American theater chains. These five “major” studios were Metro-Goldwyn Mayer (MGM), with production facilities located in Culver City; Paramount Pictures, located in Hollywood; Fox Studios (later Twentieth Century-Fox), located in Hollywood and West Los Angeles; Warner Brothers, located in Hollywood and Burbank; and RKO, the smallest of the five, also located in Hollywood.

In addition to the “majors” were three “minor” studios: Universal Pictures with production facilities in North Hollywood; Columbia Pictures in Hollywood; and United Artists which functioned largely as a host studio for independent producers. These three companies did not own theater chains and were therefore limited in their access to theater bookings. In some cases, the major and minor studios differed in the quality of their product. Major studios tended to focus on higher-budget feature films subsidized to some extent by lower-budget feature films. The output from the minor

studios was mostly “B” feature, with a supporting slate of “A” feature films.<sup>20</sup>

For nearly two decades, these eight companies controlled 95 percent of film revenues in the United States and set the standard for film production throughout the world.<sup>21</sup> Their rise to dominance began what is now referred to as “The Studio Era” or Hollywood’s “Golden Age” during which production, distribution and (in the case of the major studios, exhibition), were all integrated under a single corporate entity. Films were produced on an industrial model with each studio functioning as a self-contained film factory. Actors, directors, designers, writers, producers, and technicians were contracted employees of the studios, supported by a large complement of facility, office and service workers. The studios maintained all the necessary facilities for the production of films and support of their workforce.

Despite serious financial troubles associated with the Depression, the film studios continued to grow and develop throughout the 1930s to become one of Southern California’s primary industries. Movie theaters provided an inexpensive escape from the struggle of

<sup>20</sup> A third tier of film studio, devoted almost exclusively to producing B-feature and lower, also developed. Of these, Monogram Studios and Republic Studios were the most successful.

<sup>21</sup> Douglas Gomery, *The Hollywood Studio System, A History* (London: British Film Institute, 2005), p. 2

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economic hardship. Film attendance grew during World War II as films proved the perfect vehicle to boost morale and cheer the Allied Forces to victory. The motion picture companies of the Studio Era hit their peak of profitability in 1946 when the five major studios posted profits that would not be matched again (in real dollar terms) until the 1970s.<sup>22</sup>

#### End of the Studio Era

In 1949, the five major studios were ordered to divest themselves of their theater chains after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that continued ownership of the theaters was in violation of Federal anti-trust laws.<sup>23</sup> Although several years passed before all companies would comply with the divestiture, the decision signaled the end of the Studio Era.

Television presented a formidable challenge to the film industry. With the advent of widespread television ownership in the 1950s, movie audiences declined as more people were able to enjoy entertainment in their own home. The studios were forced to downsize and concentrate their resources on differentiating the cinematic experience from television. New widescreen and color processes were developed, production values were improved, and budgets were

increased. Specialized technologies such as 3-D were also experimented with as a way to attract audiences.<sup>24</sup>

The smaller studios began supplying television programming, both by converting their facilities for television production and by selling or leasing their old features and shorts for presentation on television. Both Universal and Columbia created subsidiaries to produce advertisements for television in the late 1940s. By 1951 Columbia was producing its first television series, and the major studios soon followed suit. By 1958 all of the major studios were producing television series and leasing facilities to television production companies. Several movie studio plants were converted to exclusive television production including the original Warner Brothers Studios in Hollywood (now Sunset Bronson), and RKO Studios in Hollywood which was sold to Desilu in 1957.

Throughout the 1950s, the film industry became increasingly focused on independent production. Non-studio affiliated producers would develop and produce films with the studios providing production facilities, financing, and distribution. Independent producers had always been part of the film industry but during the Studio Era, their

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p 79

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p 79

<sup>24</sup> Ethan Mordden, *The Hollywood Studios*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), p. 370.

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contribution was only a small percentage of total film output. As overall film output declined in the 1950s and 1960s, independent production became the norm, and the film studios no longer needed to support all aspects of film making internally.

By the mid-1960s, a new business model had been established. Major studios financed and distributed films but did not necessarily develop them in house. Television was fully embraced, not only through television production but by exploiting television advertising, and licensing studio film libraries to television. By the 1970s, pay-TV, and home video were important profit centers as well. Ancillary rights for retail licensing, music and books provided additional revenue.

Today, film corporations are part of media conglomerates that produce a wide array of media products and services. By leveraging the strengths of their various businesses, these companies continue to dominate market share on a global scale.

### **5.2 Warner Brothers Studios**

Warner Brothers Studios has its origins in the early development of motion pictures, making significant contributions to the silent film era, and played a key role in the development of sound motion pictures, as it matured into one of the eight major American film studios.

### Early Years

The company name “Warner Brothers” refers to these four founding brothers: Harry, Albert, Sam, and Jack. Like many of the founders of the American film industry, the Warner family was of Eastern European Jewish ancestry. The three elder brothers began in the movie theatre business with the acquisition of a movie projector with which they showed films in the mining towns of Pennsylvania and Ohio. They opened their first theater, the Cascade, in New Castle, Pennsylvania in 1903.<sup>25</sup>

Though business was good, the four brothers realized that real moneymaking potential lay not just in screening films, but also in distributing them. In 1907, they moved to Pittsburgh and entered the motion picture exchange business. By 1908, they had amassed 200 film titles and serviced theaters all over western Pennsylvania. They then opened additional exchanges in Virginia and Georgia.

Their success came to an abrupt halt when Thomas Edison, one of the pioneers of motion pictures, convinced the major filmmakers to band together to form the Motion Picture Patents Company, collectively known as the Trust. The object of the Trust was to prevent independent producers from

<sup>25</sup> Hirschhorn, Clive. The Warner Bros. Story. Crown Publishers, Inc. 1979 (9-12)

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making films without a license and film exchanges from distributing their products. The Warner Brothers' nascent business could not combat the power of the Trust and they sold their exchanges.

Discouraged, the Warners pooled their combined resources to begin producing films. After relocating to St. Louis, the brothers began making two-reelers in a studio converted from an abandoned foundry.

At the same time the Warners entered the production business, Carl Laemmle was devising a way of breaking the stranglehold of the Trust. Soon to become head of Universal Pictures, Laemmle had formed the Independent Motion Picture Company for distribution through his own and other private exchanges. In 1912, the brothers decided to join Laemmle and reenter the exchange business.

#### West Coast Studio Establishment

Sam and Jack Warner relocated to California while Harry moved to New York and continued producing films. In 1918, Warner Brothers produced their first feature-length film, *My Four Years in Germany*. When the film grossed an impressive \$1,500,000, the brothers finally had the resources to establish themselves in the fast growing film industry in Los Angeles.

In 1920, Sam and Jack purchased ten acres of land in Hollywood to construct their own studio. This land was bounded by Sunset Boulevard to the

north, Van Ness Avenue to the east, Fernwood Avenue to the south, and Bronson Avenue to the west. It was named Warner Brothers West Coast Studio.

With the construction of their own studio, the Warner Brothers became immersed in the fast-growing and highly competitive film industry that had coalesced in and around Los Angeles. The company struggled for profitability in the first years of the 1920s, and did not earn consistent profits until 1923 with the production of "Where the North Begins" starring a dog named Rin Tin Tin. The movie was so successful that Jack Warner signed the dog to a multi-year contract. Rin Tin Tin quickly became an international sensation and Warner Brother's top star at the studio.

Increased profits allowed Warner Brothers to hire more expensive talent and improve the production values of their films. In 1924, Warner Brothers signed actor John Barrymore to the lead role in a lavish production of "Beau Brummel." Barrymore was then at his artistic peak having triumphed in acclaimed stage productions of Shakespeare's *Richard III* and *Hamlet*. "Beau Brummel" proved so successful that Barrymore was signed to a generous long-term contract at Warners, where he became a top film star of the silent era, solidifying his reputation as one of the greatest actors of his generation.

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By the end of 1924, Warner Brothers had a proven track record producing successful films that utilized top talents, but it still couldn't compete with the larger studio's corporately owned theater chains and national distribution systems. As the studio prospered, it gained backing from Wall Street, and in 1924 Goldman Sachs arranged a major loan. With this new money, the Warners bought the pioneer Vitagraph Company which had a nation-wide distribution system. Soon after the Vitagraph acquisition, Warners also made investments in two new technologies that would have profound effects on the entertainment industry.

#### KFWB Radio

In 1925, Warners established a radio station, KFWB, on site at the studio property. In Warner Brothers' view, the radio station would serve as a powerful means of promoting films. As historian Michele Hilmes explains:

"Hollywood's awareness of radio's potential as a medium for film publicity grew rapidly in the late 1920's, and Warner Brothers led the way. Sam Warner, whose interest in radio's technological strides put him in contact with Western Electric's regional manager Nathan Levinson, purchased Western Electric radio transmitting apparatus and set up station KFWB... in March of 1925. Warner Brothers used

this station to promote the current Warner Brother line-up of films and stars..."<sup>26</sup>

Harry Warner proposed that the entire motion picture industry set up radio stations in 1925. Warner Brothers was apparently so pleased with KFWB that it established a second station in New York City in 1926 and organized a cross-country tour with a portable transmitting device later that year.

Radio had spread quickly around the country since the first broadcasts in 1920. Indeed, the Warner Brothers' new station KFWB was not the first radio station in Los Angeles. The first major radio stations in the Los Angeles area were stations KNX, KHJ, and KFI, all three of which were established in 1922.

These early radio stations used large steel towers to transmit their broadcast signal. At KFWB, two skeleton-frame steel radio towers were installed on either side of the EOB. During the 1920's, the letters KFWB were added to the upper portion of the towers to advertise the station. The letters were arranged vertically with the letter "K" near the top of the tower and the letter "B" at a point about one-third of the way down the tower. Other radio stations in Los Angeles followed the same practice of attaching call letters to

<sup>26</sup> Hilmes, (33-34)

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their radio towers. Strings of small electrical light bulbs were attached to the four sides of each tower for illumination at night.

Radio towers were erected in a number of locations around Los Angeles, some on top of buildings and others on either side of the broadcasting station. These towers reflect early radio history. Their shape and size identify them as AM radio towers. All of the early radio stations broadcast in AM during this period. AM (amplitude modulation) carrier waves are emitted from a transmitter in a pattern of variations in amplitude. FM (frequency modulation) carrier waves are emitted in a pattern of variations in frequency. Broadcasting transmitters use either amplitude or frequency modulation. FM radio did not become widespread until after World War II.

The location of towers at the site of broadcast is unique to the early period in radio history. By the late 1920s, towers no longer had to be located at the broadcast site because telephone lines could be used to carry signals and towers could be relocated to more remote locations like hilltops. Telephone lines were also used at this time to link stations together into networks, a major development which created the possibility of nationwide broadcasts and a nationwide audience.

At least two of the major stations were located in Hollywood during this time. Prior to the establishment of KFWB on

the Warner lot, station KNX began regular broadcasting from the Studebaker Sales Building at 6116 Hollywood Boulevard in 1924. These stations were the precursors of the later development of Hollywood as a radio center.

One of the major developments that would lead to the later creation of Hollywood as a radio center was the creation of the network system. Using telephone lines under a contract with the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T), two new radio networks were created in 1926 to link stations across the country. The first network to form was the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) founded by the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) in 1926. It was soon joined by the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) network which was formed in 1927.

Hollywood stations quickly joined the developing networks. KFI joined the NBC network in 1927 and KHJ joined CBS in 1929. After the “disorganized experimentation” of the early days, radio was developing during this period into a “thriving entertainment industry controlled by some of the largest and most powerful corporations in America.”<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Hilmes 1990 (33)

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Although Warner Brothers' radio station KFWB did not join a network, it was still a major player in the industry, promoting young film stars and developing new radio talent. One element of the company's strategy was to broadcast radio programs from movie theaters and invite the public free of charge. One of the locations Warner Brothers used for such radio broadcasts was the Warner Theater on Hollywood Boulevard, located just over a mile away from the station's headquarters. The theater opened in 1928. In 1929, Warner Brothers installed radio towers on the roof of the building. It appears that KFWB broadcast from both its original location and the theater throughout the 1930s.

By the late 1930s, Hollywood had become a center for radio with operations centered on Vine Street and the surrounding blocks of Sunset and Hollywood Boulevard. Hollywood talent became a regular feature of radio programming. The result was a powerful concentration of radio production and broadcasting facilities less than a mile from the KFWB studios.

Warner Brothers sold KFWB in 1950 and the station moved off the Warner Brothers Hollywood lot. The station continues today as a subsidiary of CBS Radio.

#### Development of Sound Motion Pictures

In 1925, Warner Brothers established a partnership with Western Electric for the purposes of developing sound

motion pictures. In 1926, the Vitaphone Corporation was established to research sound technology with 70% of the stock held by Warner Brothers. Warner Brothers' interest in sound development was initially focused on duplicating the sound of a full orchestra accompaniment in smaller theaters that would normally make do with an organ or piano. The technology developed by Vitaphone was a sound on disc system synchronized to the images on film.<sup>28</sup> Warner Brothers produced numerous Vitaphone short subject films featuring musicians, and singers as well as some speakers. In 1926, Warners released *Don Juan* starring John Barrymore using the Vitaphone process. Filmed at Warner Brothers West Coast Studio and scored in New York, it was the first feature-length film utilizing a recorded synchronized film score and sound effects.<sup>29</sup>

In 1927, Warner Brothers took the next step and released *The Jazz Singer* starring Al Jolson which contained several singing sequences and a few minutes of dialogue. The film was a

<sup>28</sup> Fox Studios was developing their own sound process at about the same time which was eventually called "Movietone." The Fox process recorded sound directly on the film, eliminating the need for a separate disk. Although Warners' Vitaphone disk process was the first to be realized successfully, sound-on-film technology would eventually become the industry standard.

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sensation and Jolson was put on contract to make additional films at Warner Brothers. The success of *The Jazz Singer* signaled the beginning of the era of "talking pictures" and the twilight of the silent era. In 1928, Warner Brothers released *Lights of New York*, the first all-talking feature. By the end of 1929, all the major studios were exclusively making sound films. In addition to Al Jolson, Warner Brothers continued to contract popular stage performers to star in films.<sup>30</sup>

Warner Brothers' successful gamble on sound films moved the studio into the top ranks of film studios in Hollywood. Warner Brothers were able to greatly expand studio operations and market share by acquiring the Stanley Corporation, a major theater chain. This purchase gave them a share in rival First National Pictures, of which Stanley owned one-third. In 1928, Warner Brothers bought additional First National shares to acquire a controlling interest, simultaneously assuming control of the First National Studio property in Burbank. To avoid antitrust issues, First National was initially maintained as a separate company and continued to produce films under the First National name.

<sup>30</sup> Performers included Ziegfeld stars Marilyn Miller and Fanny Brice. Veteran stage actor George Arliss was cast in the title role of *Disraeli* (1929) at the age of 69 for which he received an Academy Award for best actor. Arliss would go on to star in nine films for Warner Brothers.

In 1929, Warner Brothers released *On with the Show*, the first color sound picture using Technicolor's two-color, die-transfer process. Warner Brothers would go on to release a large number of color films from 1929 to 1931. In addition to these, scores of features were released with Technicolor sequences as well as a numerous variety of short subjects.

The onset of the Great Depression caused severe financial troubles for the film industry including Warner Brothers. The Warner Brothers and First National Studios were merged and Warner Brothers moved the majority of its production activity to the First National lot in Burbank. Though the companies merged, the Justice Department required Warner to produce and release a few films each year under the First National name until 1938. For 30 years, certain Warner productions were identified (mainly for tax purposes) as "A Warner Brothers – First National Picture."

In 1929, Warner Brothers instituted a major restructuring and the majority of film production was transferred to the First National studio in Burbank. The Hollywood studio was referred to as the "Warners Hollywood Annex" and was used largely for sound engineering and technical development. Offices and recording studios for Vitaphone also remained on the lot. Filming at the original Hollywood studio continued for special productions with major stars such as James Cagney and John

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Barrymore as well as short subjects. In addition, KFVB continued to broadcast from the site.

In 1930, the executive offices were moved to the First National lot in Burbank. Thus the Burbank lot became the headquarters for the company and primary location for film production. The original Hollywood studio became the home of Leon Schlesinger Productions in 1933, where “Looney Tunes” and “Merrie Melodies” were produced.

With the executive offices and most film production concentrated at the Burbank facility, space within the original Hollywood studio became available for other uses. By 1939, much of the Hollywood lot was transformed into a recreation center by Harry Charnas, the husband of the Warner Brother’s sister, Rose Stage 1 (or Building 9) became a 52-lane bowling alley, and the ground floor of the EOB became a café and soda fountain. During World War II, the bowling alley was open 24 hours a day. Other stages were used as badminton courts and a roller skating rink. Ancillary studio uses such as short subject production, cartoon production, and sound engineering continued to operate along side the recreational uses.

#### Warner Brothers Cartoon Division

Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, and Porky Pig are three of the animated cartoon characters that have become central to the corporate image of Warner Brothers

Warner's cartoon unit had its roots in the independent Harman and Ising Studio. From 1930 to 1933, Disney alumni Hugh Harman and Rudolf Ising produced a series of musical cartoons for Leon Schlesinger, who sold the shorts to Warner Brothers. Harman and Ising created the “Looney Tunes” cartoon series, and a sister series, “Merrie Melodies,” in 1931.

Harman and Ising broke away from Schlesinger in 1933 due to a contractual dispute. As a result, Schlesinger started his own studio, Leon Schlesinger Productions, which he located on the Warners Hollywood lot, and continued to produce the Merrie Melodies and Looney Tunes series. By the end of the decade, a new Schlesinger production team, including directors Friz Freleng, Tex Avery, Robert Clampett, and Chuck Jones was formed. Schlesinger's staff developed a fast-paced, irreverent style that made their cartoons immensely popular worldwide.

In 1936, Avery directed a string of cartoons, starring Porky Pig, which established the character as the studio's first bona fide cartoon star. In addition to Porky Pig, Warner Brothers cartoon characters Daffy Duck (who debuted in the 1937 short *Porky's Duck Hunt*) and Bugs Bunny (who debuted in the 1940 short *A Wild Hare*) also became enormously popular. By 1942, the Schlesinger studio had surpassed Walt Disney Studios as the most successful producer of animated shorts in the

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United States. Warner Bros eventually bought Schlesinger's cartoon unit in 1944 as a division, renaming it Warner Brothers Cartoons. Cartoons continued to be produced at Warners Hollywood studio until the property was sold in the mid-1950s.

Warner Brothers Cartoons continued, with intermittent interruptions, until 1969 when it was dissolved when the parent company ceased film short production entirely. Regardless, characters such as Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Tweety Bird, Sylvester, and Porky Pig became central to the company's image.

#### Later Years

After consolidating their operations at the Burbank plant, feature-length film production largely ended at Warner's Hollywood studio by the early 1930s. Warner Brothers would continue to produce short subjects, cartoons and locate sound engineering at the Hollywood location into the mid-1950s.

Headquartered in Burbank, Warner Brothers would continue to thrive as one of the most important American film studios into the 1950s. In the early 1930s, Warner Brothers found success with a series of gritty crime dramas based on the real-life rise of organized crime during prohibition. Films such as *Little Caesar*, (1930) and *The Public Enemy* (1931). They also triumphed with series of musicals including *42<sup>nd</sup> Street* (1932) and *The Gold Diggers of 1933* (1933) directed and

choreographed by Busby Berkeley that would become classics and redefine how musical numbers were conceived for film.

Warners imported new stage-trained talent and developed a crop of new stars including Paul Muni, James Cagney, Joan Blondell, Edward G. Robinson, Warren William, Barbara Stanwyck, Bette Davis, and Humphrey Bogart. Errol Flynn and Olivia deHavilland also became top stars for the studio.

Record attendance figures during World War II years made the Warner brothers rich. The gritty Warner image of the 1930s gave way to a glossier look, especially in women's pictures starring Davis, de Havilland, and Joan Crawford. The 1940s also saw the rise of Bogart. In the post-war years, Warner Brothers continued to create new stars, like Lauren Bacall and Doris Day. Warner Brothers prospered greatly after the war. By 1946, company payroll reached \$600,000 a week and net profits of \$19.4 million. By the end of 1947, the studio reached a record net profit of \$22 million but this dropped 50% the following year.

Warner Brothers was a party to the United States v. Paramount Pictures, Inc. anti-trust case of the 1940s. This action, brought by the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission, claimed the five integrated studio-theater chain combinations restrained competition. The Supreme

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Court heard the case in 1948, and ruled in favor of the government. As a result, Warner and four other major studios were forced to separate production from exhibition. In 1949, the studio's net profit was only \$10 million.

studio stock shortly after producing the film adaptation of Lerner & Loewe's stage musical *Camelot*. The sale yielded, after capital gains taxes, about \$24 million. Jack Warner would officially retire from the Studio in 1969.

In the early 1950s, television production and viewing had grown exponentially. To combat the threat to movie making, Warner Brothers made successful 3D pictures and shifted the studios major releases to the widescreen CinemaScope format. These innovations enabled the studio to show profits but by 1956, the studio was again losing money. In 1956, Jack Warner sold the rights to all of the studio's pre-1950 films.

In May 1956, the Jack, Harry and Albert Warner announced they were putting Warner Brothers Studios on the market. Jack, however, secretly organized a syndicate to purchase the majority of shares. After the three brothers sold, Jack joined the syndicate and bought back all his stock, 200,000 shares making him the company's largest stockholder. Shortly after the deal was closed, Jack Warner made himself president of the company. Harry Warner would never speak to his brother Jack again.

By the mid-1960s, Jack had tired somewhat of making films, and he sold a substantial amount of his studio stock to Seven Arts Productions in 1966. Warner sold his 1.6 million shares of

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### 6.1 Site Development

As noted above, the property currently occupied by Sunset Bronson Studios was acquired by Warner Brothers in 1920. The ten acres of land was purchased from the Beesemeyer family. According to the 1991 building inventory and site history, the first building constructed by Warner Brothers on the site was a main stage building referred to as “the Barn.” It was constructed in 1920 immediately after Warner Brothers acquired the property. “The Barn” consisted of a 50 by 100 foot, two-story, wood frame stage building with flattened gambrel roof. A single story extension on the north and east facing faces housed attached shops, dressing rooms. In addition, a power plant was constructed to provide lighting and electricity to the stages and buildings on the lot.

In 1922, Warner Brothers began construction of the Colonial Revival style EOB at the southwest corner of Bronson and Sunset. At the same time, Stage 1, a large, 250 by 88 foot stage building, (present-day Stage 9) was constructed directly behind (and attached to) the EOB. The 22,000 square foot stage building could accommodate several productions shooting simultaneously.

By March of 1923 the Warner Brothers West Coast Studio was fully incorporated and was renamed Warner Brothers Pictures. During this period the

Warner Brothers purchased the radio station KFWB. A transmitter and studio were constructed at the corner of Sunset Boulevard and Van Ness Avenue. A Laboratory building was also constructed in 1923. This building included a Film Vault. In 1924, Stage 2 (present-day Stages 1, 2, and 3) was constructed along Bronson south of the EOB and Stage 1. That same year, twin radio towers were erected on the lot in front of the EOB. A building housing Wardrobe facilities and Casting offices (no longer extant) was also constructed during this time.

The success of Warner Brother’s experiments with sound and film precipitated a major expansion of the Warner Brothers Studio facilities. Between 1928 and 1930, three new stages were constructed. These included Stage 3 (no longer extant), Stages 4 and 5 (present-day Stages 7 and 8), Stage 6 (present-day Stage 6) and Stage 7 (present-day Stages 4 and 5). Other buildings constructed during this time include a Vitaphone recording building (present-day Building 15), the Cutting Building (no longer extant), a Mill Building (no longer extant), a Scene Dock (no longer extant), and Administrative Offices for Vitaphone (present-day Building 16). By 1929, the original 1920 “Barn” had either been demolished or completely retrofitted as

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a three-story office and property storage building. (Present-day Building 11).<sup>31</sup>

In 1930, the executive offices and cutting departments were moved to the Burbank studio and the Hollywood studio was referred to as “Warners Hollywood Annex.” Filming at the original Hollywood studio continued for special productions with major stars such as James Cagney and John Barrymore as well as short subjects. Offices and recording studios for Vitaphone also remained on the lot. The original Hollywood studio also became the home of Leon Schlesinger Productions, where Loony Tunes and Merrie Melodies were produced.

With the executive offices and most film production concentrated at the Burbank facility, the original Hollywood studio became available for other uses. By 1939, most of the lot was transformed into a recreation center by the Warner Brother’s brother-in-law, Harry Charnas. Stage 1 (present-day Stage 9) became a 52-lane bowling alley, and on the ground floor of the EOB there was a café and soda fountain. Stage 7 (present-day Stages 4 & 5) were used as badminton courts and Stage 2 (present-day Stages 1, 2 & 3) became a roller skating rink during this period. These uses continued

<sup>31</sup> Historic photographs and maps show that the building currently located on the site maintains the same basic footprint and massing.

through World War II and into the late 1940s. During this period, radio KFVB continued on the lot as did Leon Schlesinger’s “Loony Toons” cartoon unit.

In 1954 the lot was purchased by Paramount Pictures as an annex for their main studio on Melrose Avenue, and was renamed the Paramount Sunset Studio. Paramount used the studio primarily as a television production facility. The facilities were rented out to independent producers for the production of various television shows. In 1957, Paramount moved its television station, KTLA, onto the lot.

Several buildings were demolished during the 1950s. These include the Laboratory Building (leaving the Film Vault portion); a Wardrobe and Casting Building located at the present-day location of the Bronson Gate; a radio stage (Stage 3); and a Scene Dock. The Mill building was divided into two main portions as this time. One portion was moved to the approximate location of present-day Building 21 and the other became present-day Building 14.

In 1964 Golden West Broadcasting Corporation, which was owned by Gene Autry, purchased the KTLA television station and the studio lot from Paramount Pictures. During this period an addition was constructed on the east side of the EOB. This addition was the location of Autry’s office and private dining room.

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In 1982 Golden West Broadcasting sold KTLA television and the lot to Kohlberg, Kravis, Roberts and Company. In 1985, KTLA and the studio lot were bought by the Chicago Tribune Company. In the 1990s, the Cutting Building, Generator, and the Film Vault were demolished. Since 2008, the property has been owned by Sunset Bronson Studios Entertainment Properties LLC (and its affiliated predecessors), a wholly owned subsidiary Hudson Pacific Properties, LLC.

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**1920** Sam and Jack Warner purchase ten acres of land in Hollywood.

A 50 by 100 foot “main stage” is constructed with offices, shops dressing rooms attached on two sides. The building is referred to as “the barn.”

Site is officially referred to as the Warner Brother’s West Coast Studio.

**1921** Generator or Powerhouse is constructed.

**1923** Warner Brothers West Coast Studio is incorporated as Warner Brothers Pictures.

The Executive Administration Building is constructed at Sunset and Bronson.

Stage 9 is constructed at the back of the Administration building.

Laboratory Building including the Film Vault is constructed.

Warner Brothers purchase radio station KFVB. A radio station and transmitter is constructed at the corner of Sunset Boulevard and Van Ness Avenue.

**1924** Buildings 1, 2 and 3 (Historic Stage 2) is constructed on the site.

Warner Brothers West Coast Studio includes a small backlot with a contemporary “city street” set and a “western street” set.

**1925** Twin radio towers are erected on the lot in front of the EOB.

**1926** “Don Juan,” filmed at Warner Brothers West Coast Studio and the first feature-length motion picture with a synchronized score and sound effects, debuts at the Warner Brothers Theater in New York City.

**1927** “The Jazz Singer” is released.

**1928** Building 6 (Historic Stage 6); Buildings 4 and 5 (Historic Stage 7); Building 15 (Vitaphone Recording Building); Buildings 7 and 8 (Historic Stages 4 and 5); and the Cutting Building are constructed.

A fire destroys “backlot” sets.

**1929** The “old barn” studio building is remodeled as offices and a third story is added. ( Building 11)

Building 16 (Vitaphone Administration Offices) are constructed.

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**1930** Mill Building, Laboratory Building, Wardrobe and Casting Building, Radio Stage, and Scene Dock are all constructed by 1930 (actual construction dates unknown)

Warner Brothers West Coast Studios is fully built out.

Warner Brothers executive staff is moved from the Warner-Sunset studio to Burbank.

Filming at Warners Sunset continues for productions with major stars such as James Cagney and John Barrymore.

**1933** Leon Schlesinger locates his cartoon studio on the Warner-Sunset Studio where “Looney Tunes and “Merrie Melodies” are produced.

**1938** Laboratory activities removed from the Sunset studio to Burbank.

**1939** Building 9 is transformed into a 52-lane bowling alley. The ground floor of the EOB converted to a soda fountain and café. Stages 1, 2, and 3 are converted to a roller skating rink. Stages 4 and 5 are converted to a badminton court.

**1954** Warner Sunset Studio is purchased by Paramount Pictures as an annex to their main studio in Hollywood. The studio property is retrofitted for television production.

**1955** Laboratory Building (except Film Vault) and the Wardrobe and Casting Building are demolished after 1950 but prior to 1955.

Mill Building located on eastern edge of site is divided and the two parts are relocated. One portion remains as today’s Building 14.

**1956** Bronson Gate guard house is constructed.

Radio tower relocated from the front of the EOB to northeast corner of the property.

**1957** KTLA production is moved to the Paramount Sunset studio.

**1964** Gene Autry’s Golden West Broadcasting purchases the studio property and KTLA from Paramount.

Autry constructs an addition to the Administration Building for his personal offices.

**1967** Van Ness Gate guard house is constructed.

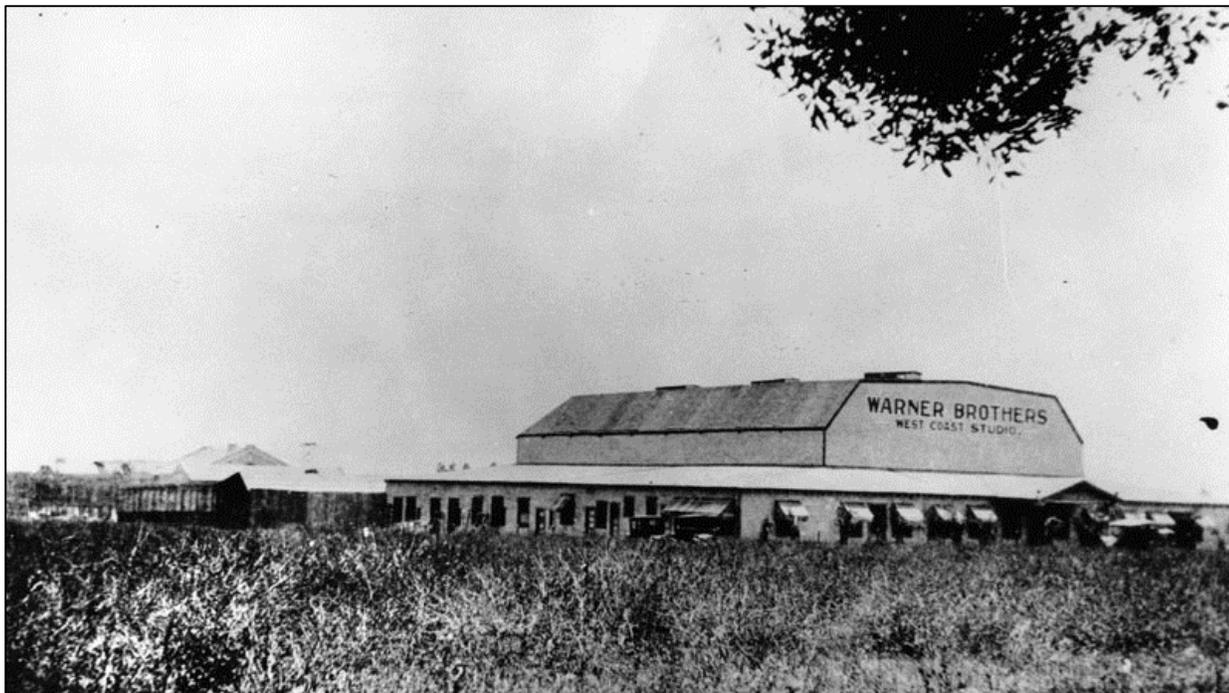
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- 1974** Audience shelter and free-standing restroom building are constructed.
- 1978** Video Tape Library (Building 20) is constructed.
- 1981** Golden West Broadcasting constructs a three-story videotape production building (Building 21) on the lot. The first major building constructed on the lot in 50 years.
- 1982** Autry sells KTLA along with other television holdings of Golden West Broadcasting and the Sunset studio.
- 1989** Radio Stage demolished sometime between 1955 and 1989.  
Building 11 substantially remodeled.
- 1991** Building 16 substantially remodeled.
- 1992** Film Vault and the Cutting Building are demolished sometime after 1991.
- 1995** Generator (Powerhouse) demolished.

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"The Barn" 1920

*Los Angeles Public Library Collection*

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HISTORIC RESOURCES GROUP





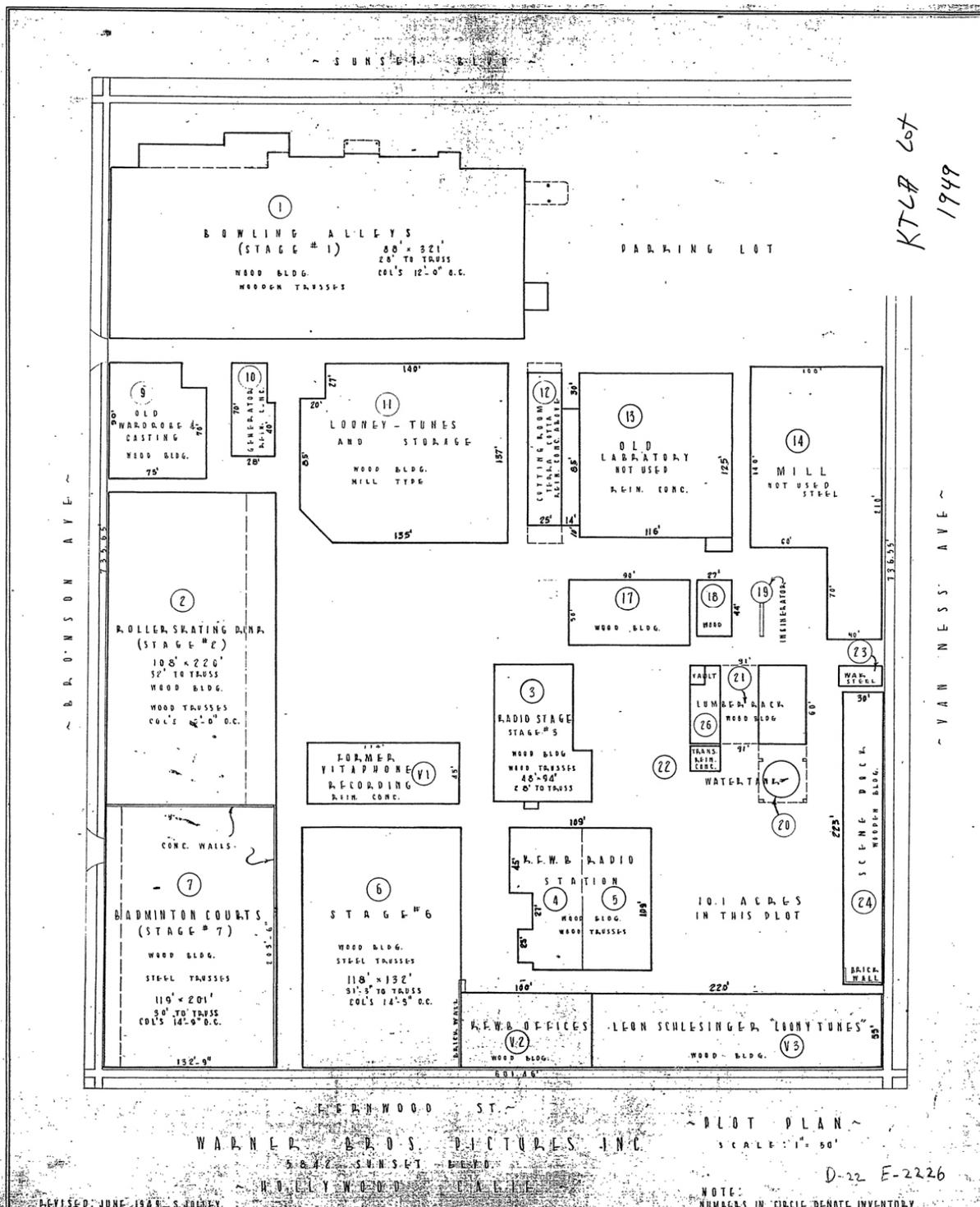
Aerial circa 1930  
*Corbus Images*

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HISTORIC RESOURCES GROUP

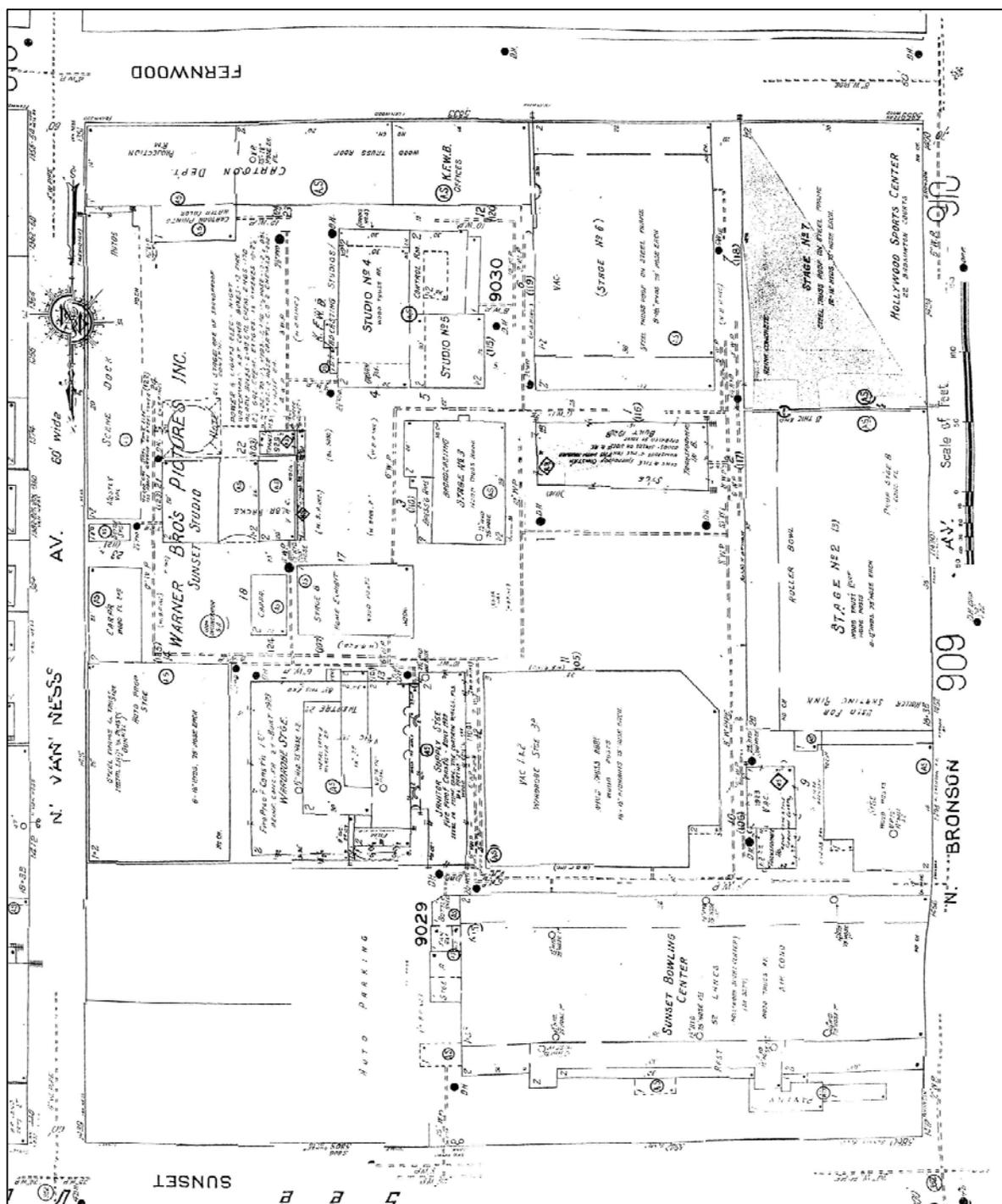


Studio Site Plan 1949

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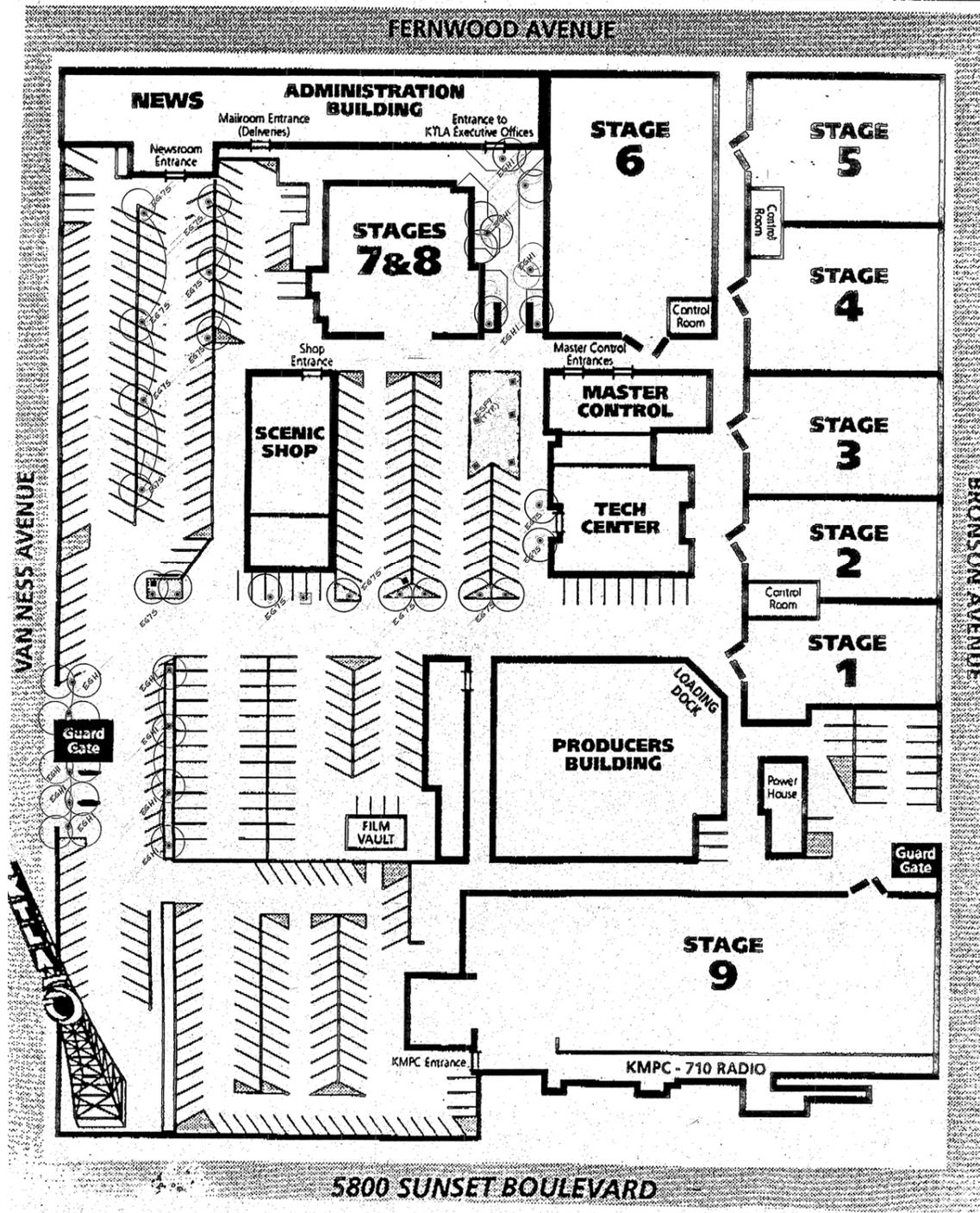


Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1950

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Studio Site Plan 1992

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## 7.0 PREVIOUS HISTORIC EVALUATION

Since the late 1970s, the Sunset Bronson Studios property has been subject to previous historic designation and listings on historic registers, as well as historic evaluations, surveys and studies for planning purposes. These previous investigations indicate a long-standing recognition of the historic importance of the site

Previous designation, listings, and historic study of the Sunset Bronson property are reviewed in this section.

### 7.1 Designations and Listings

In 1977, the entire studio property was designated as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument #180 as the "Site of the Filming of the First Talking Feature Film."<sup>32</sup> The designation specifically recognized the filming of *The Jazz Singer* in 1927 as the basis for designation but did not differentiate individual buildings located on the site.

In 2002 the EOB (Building 10) was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It was found significant under Criterion A for its "strong association with Warner Brothers Pictures, which has played a significant role in the history and development of

the motion picture industry."<sup>33</sup> The National Register nomination form includes the EOB only noting that the boundary "was drawn to include the building and its immediate setting and to exclude non-historic buildings and surface parking lots." The period of significance for the EOB was determined to be 1923-1938.<sup>34</sup>

By virtue of being listed in the National Register, the EOB is also listed in the California Register of Historical Resources.

The Sunset Bronson property is listed in the State Historic Resources Inventory as "Warner Brothers West Coast Studios" with a status code of 2S3 or "Individual property determined eligible for the National Register by Part 1 Tax Certification." It also has a previous listing as 3S or "Appears eligible for the National Register as an individual property through survey evaluation." Previous surveys conducted in 1978, 1986, 2003, and 2009 have identified the property as a 3S. The EOB is listed with a status code of 1S or "Individual property listed in the National Register by the Keeper. Listed in the California Register."

<sup>32</sup> Letter to Golden West Broadcasters from Ileana Welch, Coordinator for the Cultural Heritage Board, September 7, 1977.

<sup>33</sup> *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the Executive Office Building, Old Warner Brothers Studio*, prepared by Teresa Grimes, March 20, 2002.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

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## 7.2 Other Evaluations

### 1990 Memorandum of Understanding

Individual buildings on the studio lot were documented as part of a legally non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) dated December 12, 1990 between The Thirteenth Council District Office, The Office of Motion Pictures/Television Affairs of the City of Los Angeles, Hollywood Heritage, The Los Angeles Conservancy, and participating studios.<sup>35</sup> The signatories of the MOU were referred to collectively as the "Hollywood Studios Preservation Coalition."<sup>36</sup>

The Coalition "agreed to adopt the National Register Criteria for Evaluation as a general framework." Final assessments of individual buildings, however, were based upon a more informal classification system developed by the Preservation Coalition. Each building was ranked based on its presumed historic value. The categories developed were:

*Category 1: Structures of Preservation Priority* – These structures have the highest level of public interest and public value for preservation. They are

the structures possessing the greatest historical significance, and have greatest public value as representing the history of the studios.

*Category 2: Older Structures of Lesser Significance* – These are structures that were constructed at early periods in the history of the studio, but which are of lesser significance for preservation purposes because:

- 1) Their exterior appearance has been greatly altered or modified.
- 2) They lack distinguishing architectural features.
- 3) There exist higher quality examples of this building type at other locations on this studio lot or at other studio locations that are a party to this agreement.

*Category 3: Structures Facing Imminent Replacement* - The structures in this category are of a lesser degree of historical, cultural, or architectural significance, and are under consideration for possible demolition within a two-year time period of the date of the MOU. A separate category, 3B, may be used for structures in this category that have no significance.

*Category 4: Modern Structures* – These are structures which relate to the modern era. (as interpreted in 1991) They have not acquired any historical or cultural value.

<sup>35</sup> Tribune California Properties, a previous owner of the Sunset Bronson Studio property, was signatory to the MOU.

<sup>36</sup> *Memorandum of Understanding, Hollywood Studios Preservation Coalition*, December 12, 1990.

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These categories do not correspond to the methodology established for evaluating historic resources by the State Office of Historic Preservation, the National Park Service and contemporary standards of preservation practice. As such, they have little meaning outside of the context of the Hollywood Studios Preservation Coalition MOU. The 1991 building inventory prepared in compliance with the MOU does represent the first documentation of individual buildings on the project site.

Of the buildings inventoried in 1991, three have since been demolished. Two buildings, the EOB and the attached Studio 9 were evaluated as Category 1. Four buildings were evaluated as Category 2. These are Studios 1, 2 and 3; Studios 4 and 5; Building 6; and Building 15. Six buildings were evaluated as Category 3B and one building was evaluated as Category 4. One building and two structures were not evaluated. A list of the MOU evaluations is included in Table 2.

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**Table 2: 1991 MOU Building Evaluations**

	Date	Historic Name	Current Name	1991 MOU Evaluation
1	1921	Powerhouse (demolished)	n/a	2
2	1922-23	Stage 1	Stage 9	1
3	1922-23	EOB	Building 10	1
4	1923	Film Vault (demolished)	n/a	3
5	1924	Stage 2	Stages 1,2 and 3	2
6	1924	KTLA Radio Tower 1	KFWB Tower	None assigned
7	1928	Stage 6	Stage 6	2
8	1928	Stage 7	Stages 4 and 5	2
9	1928	Vitaphone Recording	Building 15	2
10	1928	Cutting Building (demolished)	n/a	3B
11	1928-29	Stages 4 and 5	Stages 7 and 8	3B
12	(1920?) 1929	Property Storage ("the Barn")	Building 11	3B
13	1929	Vitaphone Administrative Offices	Building 16	3B
14	1956	Mill	Building 14 (Scenic Shop)	3B
15	1956	Bronson Gate Guard House	Bronson Gate Guard House	3B
16	1967	Van Ness Gate	Van Ness Gate	3B

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		Guard House	Guard House	
17	1974	Restrooms	Restrooms	None assigned
	1974	Audience Shelter	Audience Shelter	None assigned
18	1978	Video Tape Library	Building 20	None assigned
19	1981	Technical Center	Building 21	4

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### SurveyLA Historic Context Outline

SurveyLA<sup>37</sup> has developed a Historic Context Statement (HCS) that provides a framework for completing the city-wide historic resources surveys. The SurveyLA HCS uses the “Multiple Property Documentation” approach developed by the National Park Service. This approach organizes the themes, trends and patterns of history shared by properties into historic contexts; identifies and describes historic resources or property types that represent the contexts; and provides specific standards to guide the evaluation of significance.

Motion picture studio properties developed by one of the “Big Eight” Studios during the Studio Era, have been identified in the SurveyLA HCS<sup>38</sup> as a significant property type for their association with the Entertainment Industry in Los Angeles.

<sup>37</sup> The City of Los Angeles is engaged in a multi-year effort to complete a citywide historic resources survey. The project -- named *SurveyLA the Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey Project* -- is managed by the staff of the Office of Historic Resources (OHR) within the Department of City Planning (DCP). The 2009 CRA survey effort used the context developed by SurveyLA in its analysis.

<sup>38</sup> *SurveyLA Historic Context Outline*, Office of Historic Preservation, Los Angeles Planning Department

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## 8.0 IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL HISTORIC RESOURCES

Individual buildings and structures located on the Sunset Bronson property are examined in the following analysis for the purposes of identifying potential historic resources. As a framework for this assessment, HRG examined the entire Sunset Bronson property, inclusive of buildings and structures that are within the development footprint and could be directly impacted by the Project.

To present a thorough assessment, buildings and structures located on the Sunset Bronson property are considered for their collective potential historic significance in addition to potential significance as individual resources.

### 8.1 Historic District Assessment

As noted in Section 4.6 of this report, the National Park Service defines “a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development” as a *historic district*.<sup>39</sup> The Park Service also lists “industrial complex” as a potential example of a district. Because the Sunset Bronson Studios property contains a grouping of related buildings and structures, and was constructed as an industrial

complex for the production of motion pictures, consideration of the property as an historic district is the appropriate analytical framework for its evaluation.<sup>40</sup>

As noted in Section 7 of this report, previous historic resource evaluations of the property did not specifically examine the property as a potential historic district.<sup>41</sup> For example, the 1977 designation of the property as HCM #180 encompasses the entire property but does not differentiate specific buildings or features that contribute to the historic significance of the site. Similarly, the 1991 MOU evaluations focused on individual buildings and their respective individual importance but did not consider the building’s potential significance as a collective. And the 2002 National Register listing is for the EOB only and does not address other buildings or features on the property.

#### Historic Significance

The property contains a distinctive configuration of buildings and structures that appears to be significant for its association with the development of the motion picture industry in the United States and the concentration of the industry’s production facilities in Southern California. The property is

<sup>39</sup> *National Register Bulletin 15*. How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. Washington D.C.: National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior, 1997. (5)

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> The 1978, 1986 and 2009 historic surveys did identify a site with multiple buildings.

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important as the original Hollywood location of Warner Brothers, one of the leading film studios responsible for developing the motion picture as a commercial entertainment form that would have a significant impact on popular culture in the United States and throughout the world.

The period of significance for the former Warner Brothers Studio property extends from 1920, when the Hollywood property was first developed as a film location, to 1954, when the Warner Brothers property was sold to Paramount Pictures.

This timeframe includes Warner Brothers' initial establishment of motion picture production facilities in Hollywood and its development as a significant film studio during the silent and early sound eras. The property was an important location for Warner Brothers' landmark innovations in sound technology for motion pictures in the late 1920s. Following Warner Brothers' relocation of administrative staff and the majority of its film production to its Burbank studio, Warners continued to use the property as an "annex" studio during its maturation as one of eight leading film studios of the Studio Era. In addition to producing Warner Brothers short subjects and sound engineering, the "annex" studio was also the home of Leon Schlesinger Productions, producers of the classic "Looney Tunes" and "Merrie Melodies" cartoon series.

The property was built out as a studio complex during the Warner Brothers period and changes to the property have largely consisted of demolition of buildings to provide for surface parking. With the exception of a handful of small buildings and structures, only one significant building -- Building 21 built in 1981 -- has been constructed on the site since 1930.

Warner Brothers sale of the studio property in 1954 was five years after the 1948 Supreme Court anti-trust case which found that corporate control of both film production and exhibition was in violation of anti-trust laws. Full compliance with the Court's ruling would take several years. 1954 also coincides with widespread television ownership and the decline in movie attendance as more people were able to enjoy entertainment in their own home. These two forces are closely associated with the end of the Studio Era.

Motion picture studio lots in Hollywood that date from the Silent and Studio eras are considered a finite and increasingly rare resource. While many of the earliest studio lots are no longer extant, others have continued to operate, although with considerably reduced physical plants. All have demolished at least some of their original buildings and have undergone considerable renovation.

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The largest and most extensive studio in Hollywood is Paramount Pictures, located due south of Sunset Bronson at Melrose and Van Ness avenues. Paramount's current lot encompasses the RKO Hollywood lot, which was acquired by Paramount in 1967. The Paramount lot has undergone extensive renovation, but it still retains representative examples from each major period in its development.

Other studio properties in Hollywood include the former Columbia Studios property (now Sunset Gower Studios) located just east of Sunset Bronson at and Sunset and Gower Street; the former Vitagraph, and later Warner Brothers studio (now Prospect Studios) located at Prospect and Talmadge avenues; the former Christie Films studio (Hollywood Center Studios) at Santa Monica Boulevard and North Las Palmas Avenue; Red Studios (originally constructed by Metro Pictures) at Cahuenga Boulevard and Willoughby Avenue; the former Chaplin Studios (now Henson Recording Studios) at La Brea and Sunset; and the former United Artists Studios (The Lot) at Santa Monica Boulevard and Formosa Avenue in West Hollywood.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> While these studio properties may present characteristics of historic districts (i.e., significant concentrations of buildings united historically by plan), and several have been identified as historic districts, none have been formally designated as a historic district.

### Character-Defining Features

First and foremost, the property contains a concentration of buildings and structures dating from the period of significance. The majority of these remain in their original locations, retaining spatial relationships and circulation areas that have not changed since the late 1920s. Buildings from the period of significance include representative property types including offices, sound stages, construction facilities, and storage facilities that are typical of motion picture studios from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Sunset Bronson Studios property retains its original perimeter defined by building walls, fences and controlled access points. The property's location and size has remained unchanged since the period of significance. It has never been subdivided nor has the perimeter wall been expanded to encompass additional adjacent land.

The program and design of the studio plant has retained its original interior focus with minimal public engagement. Despite some alteration to most of the original buildings, the studio retains its original utilitarian and industrial feel.

### Contributing Elements

Ten (10) buildings and one (1) structure have been identified as remaining from the period of significance. All have experienced some level of alteration and/or relocation since their original construction. However, a greater degree

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of alteration is acceptable for this property type given the finite number of examples that remain extant.

The eleven buildings and structures dating from the period of significance are listed in Table 3. This table includes an assessment of historic integrity for each building or structure. Those that have retained substantial historic material are given an assessment of *good*. Buildings or structures that have undergone alteration but still retain enough historic material to convey their historic identity are given an assessment of *fair*. Buildings or structures that no longer convey their historic identity due to substantial alteration are given an assessment of *poor*. Of the eleven buildings and structures, nine have been assessed as either good or fair and maintain sufficient material integrity to convey their historic identity.

Existing buildings and structures from the period of significance that also retain sufficient integrity (evaluated as Good or Fair) are considered contributing resources to the potential historic district. Two buildings that date from the period of significance – Building 11 and Building 16 -- have seriously compromised integrity due to the level of alteration they have sustained and are not considered contributing resources.

As shown on Figure 5: Map of Historic Resources, the property contains a total of twelve (12) buildings and five (5)

structures.<sup>43</sup> As listed in Table 3: Historic Status of Buildings and Structures, out of seventeen (17) buildings and structures on the property, nine (9) are considered contributing.

Non-contributing buildings include Building 11 and Building 16, which are two buildings that date from the period of significance but are not considered contributing due to poor integrity. These two buildings have retained the majority of their original massing and remain in their original locations. As such, they continue to convey the original plan and spatial relationships associated with the Warner Brothers period but ultimately lack the integrity to be considered contributors. Two additional non-contributing buildings are Building 20 and Building 21 both constructed after the period of significance.

Four structures have a very small presence on the property and do not contribute the historic significance. These include the two guard buildings at the Bronson and Van Ness gates, a small restroom pavilion and a shelter for waiting television audiences. These structures are very minor in terms of their presences on the property or how they define the overall site plan.

<sup>43</sup> Minor structures and mobile trailers are not counted here.

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Boundaries for the potential historic district are shown on the map in Figure 5. A listing of the district's contributing and non-contributing buildings, structures and features are listed in Table 4.

#### Evaluation of the Potential Historic District for the National Register

The potential historic district appears to be significant under National Register Criterion A for its association with the development of the motion picture industry in the United States. It is important as an largely intact group of resources that dates from Warner Brothers' development as a motion picture studio during the silent and early sound eras, and was an important location for Warner Brothers' landmark innovations in sound technology for motion pictures in the late 1920s.

The potential historic district has retained integrity of *location, design, setting, feeling, and association*. While integrity of *materials* and *workmanship* have been somewhat compromised by alterations, the potential historic district has retained sufficient integrity to convey its significance.

For all of these reasons, the potential historic district appears to meet the criteria for listing on the National Register of Historical Places.

#### Evaluation of the Potential Historic District for the California Register

The potential historic district appears to be significant under California Register Criterion 1 for its association with the development of the motion picture industry in the United States. It is important as an largely intact group of resources that dates from Warner Brothers development as a motion picture studio during the silent and early sound eras, and was an important location for Warner Brothers' landmark innovations in sound technology for motion pictures in the late 1920s.

The potential historic district has retained integrity of *location, design, setting, feeling, and association*. While integrity of *materials* and *workmanship* have been somewhat compromised by alterations, the potential historic district has retained sufficient integrity to convey its significance.

For these reasons, the potential historic district appears to meet the criteria for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources.

#### Local Evaluation of the Potential Historic District

As noted above, the Sunset Bronson Studios property was designated as HCM #180 in 1977. The site has retained integrity of *location, design, setting, feeling, and association* and continues to meet the criteria for listing as and HCM.

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## 8.2 Assessment of Individual Resources

One building and one structure meet the criteria for individual historic resources.

### Executive Office Building

As noted above, the EOB (Building 10) is listed in the National and California Registers. The building continues to retain its integrity and retains eligibility for both registers. The single-story addition from the 1940s is not character-defining. The 1964 Gene Autry addition was constructed outside of the period of significance.

### KTLA Tower

The KTLA Tower is eligible for listing in the National and California Registers for its association with early radio in Los Angeles. The KTLA Tower was erected in 1925 for KFWB radio, which was owned by Warner Brothers. It was one of two towers that flanked the entrance to the Executive Office Building (or Building 10). The tower was moved to its present location around 1957, while the other tower was removed from the studio lot.

**Table 3: Historic Status of Buildings and Structures**

	Date	Historic Name	Current Name	Integrity	Status
1	1922-23	Stage 1	Stage 9	Good	Contributor
2	1922-23	EOB	Building 10	Good	Contributor/Individual Resource
3	1924	Stage 2	Stages 1,2 and 3	Good	Contributor
4	1924	KTLA Radio Tower 1	KFWB Tower	Good	Contributor/Individual Resource.
5	1928	Stage 6	Stage 6	Good	Contributor
6	1928	Stage 7	Stages 4 and 5	Good	Contributor
7	1928	Vitaphone Recording	Building 15	Fair	Contributor
8	1928-29	Stages 4 and 5	Stages 7 and 8	Fair	Contributor
9	(1920?) 1929	Property Storage ("the Barn")	Building 11	Poor	Non-Contributor
10	1929	Vitaphone Administrative Offices	Building 16	Poor	Non-Contributor
11	1956	Mill	Building 14 (Scenic Shop)	Fair	Contributor
12	1956	Bronson Gate	Guard House	n/a	Non-Contributor
13	1967	Van Ness Gate	Guard House	n/a	Non-Contributor
14	1974	Restrooms	Restrooms	n/a	Non-Contributor
15	1974	Audience Shelter	Audience Shelter	n/a	Non-Contributor
16	1978	Video Tape Library	Building 20	n/a	Non-Contributor
17	1981	Technical Center	Building 21	n/a	Non- Contributor

**WARNER BROTHERS HOLLYWOOD STUDIO POTENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT**

**Character-Defining Features**

1. Retains original perimeter defined by walls, fences and controlled access points.
2. Contains a concentration of buildings and structures dating from the period of significance.
3. Building types from the period of significance include offices, sound stages, construction facilities, and storage.
4. Retains much of the original spatial relationships of buildings to each other and the circulation areas between buildings.
5. The program and design of the studio plant has an interior focus with minimal public engagement.
6. Utilitarian and industrial in feeling.

**Contributing Resources**

1. Stage 9 (Stage 1)
2. Building 10 (EOB)
3. Stages 1, 2 and 3 (Stage 2)
4. KFWB Tower (KTLA Radio Tower)
5. Stage 6 (Stage 6)
6. Stages 4 and 5 (Stage 7)
7. Building 15 (Vitaphone Recording)
8. Stages 7 and 8 (Stages 4 and 5)
9. Building 14 (Portion of the Mill)

**Non –Contributing Resources**

1. Building 11 (“the Barn”, Property Storage)
2. Building 16 (Vitaphone Administrative Offices)
3. Bronson Gate Guard House
4. Van Ness Gate Guard House
5. Restroom Pavilion
6. Audience Shelter
7. Building 20 (Videotape Library)
8. Building 21 (Technical Center)

Figure 5: Map of Historic Resources



### 9.1 Significance Threshold

The City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide (2006, p. D.3-2) states that a project would normally have a significant impact on historic resources if it would result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource. A substantial adverse change in significance occurs if the project involves:

- Demolition of a significant resource;
- Relocation that does not maintain the integrity and (historical/architectural) significance of a significant resource;
- Conversion, rehabilitation, or alteration of a significant resource which does not conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings; or
- Construction that reduces the integrity or significance of important resources on the site or in the vicinity.

In addition to this guidance provided by the City of Los Angeles, the State Legislature, in enacting the California Register, also amended CEQA to clarify which properties are significant, as well as which project impacts are considered to be significantly adverse.

A project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment.<sup>44</sup> A substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource means demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of a historical resource would be materially impaired.<sup>45</sup>

The Guidelines go on to state that “[t]he significance of an historic resource is materially impaired when a project... [d]emolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for, inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources... local register of historic resources... or its identification in a historic resources survey.”<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> *CEQA Guidelines*, section 15064.5(b).

<sup>45</sup> *CEQA Guidelines*, section 15064.5(b) (1).

<sup>46</sup> *CEQA Guidelines*, section 15064.5(b)(2).

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## 9.2 Impact Analysis Using Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds

The following analysis uses the thresholds provided in the City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide.

### 1. Would the Project involve the demolition of a significant resource?

As discussed below, the Project would not involve the demolition of a significant historic resource.

The Project would demolish Building 14, which is a portion of the original Mill Building that was constructed sometime in the 1920s. In 1956, the original Mill Building was cut up and two portions were relocated to other areas of the lot. Building 14 survives today as a remnant of the original Mill Building.

Building 14 is not considered to be individually significant, and demolition of Building 14 will not result in the demolition of an individually significant historic resource.

Building 14 is considered to be a contributor to the potential historic district, and demolition of Building 14 will reduce the total number of contributing resources on the property. However, despite this loss, the property will retain the majority of contributing resources from the period of significance, all in their original locations. Because Building 14 represents only a small portion of the original Mill Building that was relocated after the period of significance, it is not

critical to retaining the significance of the historic district.

The property will still contain a concentration of buildings and structures dating from the period of significance after the demolition of Building 14, as well as the remaining spatial relationships and circulation pattern. The potential historic district will continue to be eligible for National, State and local listing after demolition of Building 14.

The Project does not propose the demolition of any other contributing or individually significant buildings or structures. Therefore, the Project does not involve demolition of a significant resource.

### 2. Would the Project involve relocation that does not maintain the integrity of a significant resource?

The Project does not include the relocation of any individually significant buildings or buildings that contribute to the potential historic district. The Project does, however, anticipate the relocation of the KTLA Tower, currently located on the northeast corner of the lot. The KTLA Tower has been identified as a historic structure, individually significant for its association with early radio in Los Angeles.

The KTLA Tower is also considered a contributing structure to the potential historic district on the property.

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The KTLA Radio Tower was originally constructed in 1925 as one of two radio towers positioned in front of the Sunset Boulevard façade of the EOB. It was relocated to its current location in 1956. The Project proposes to return the KTLA Radio Tower to its original location in front of the EOB. Therefore, the Project has the potential to enhance the integrity of the KTLA Tower and the historic district by returning the tower to its original location.

Similarly, the Project would maintain the integrity of all other individually significant historic resources on the property, and maintain the integrity of the potential historic district, because no other buildings or structures would be relocated as part of the Project.

3. Would the Project involve conversion, rehabilitation or alteration of a significant resource which does not conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings?

The Proposed Project would remove the 1963 Gene Autry Wing and the 1940s northern addition to the historic EOB. As noted in the Project Description, rehabilitation of those portions of the EOB disturbed by construction activities would conform to the Secretary of the Interior Standards. As a result the EOB would retain its original design and architectural integrity.

The Proposed Project would also relocate the KTLA Tower from its current location at the northeast corner of the Project Site to its original position in front of the western side of the EOB building. Therefore, the Proposed Project would restore the KTLA Tower to its original location. The functionality of the rehabilitated structures would remain in their current capacity, with the EOB continuing to be used for office space and the KTLA Tower continuing to serve as an ornamental visual historic element of the Project Site.

Therefore, no portion of the Project has the potential to involve conversion, rehabilitation or alteration of a significant historic resource which does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

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4. Would the Project involve construction that reduces the integrity or significance of important resources on the site or in the vicinity?

The Project will construct a thirteen-story office building at the corner of Sunset Boulevard and Van Ness Avenue, a five-story production office building at the center of the lot, and a seven-story parking structure on Van Ness Avenue.

The Project will alter the immediate surroundings of historic resources on the Project Site by constructing new low-rise and high-rise structures. Alteration of the immediate surroundings of a historic resource such that its significance would be materially impaired constitutes a substantial adverse change according to CEQA guidelines.<sup>47</sup> The significance of an historical resource is materially impaired when a project: demolishes or materially alters in a adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources or in a local register of historical resources.<sup>48</sup>

Because the Project will potentially add height and density in areas primarily

<sup>47</sup> *CEQA Guidelines*, section 15064.5(b) (1).

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, Section 15064.5(b)(2).

used for surface parking the immediate surroundings of the on-site historic resources discussed above will be altered. In order for this alteration to be considered a substantial adverse change, however, it must be shown that the integrity and/or significance of the historic resources would be materially impaired by the proposed alteration. As discussed below, the Project will not materially impair the significance of any of the historic resources located on the property.

Potential Impacts to the Historic District

Motion picture studios from the Studio Era were largely designed as walled industrial compounds with only minimal orientation to the outside. Focused inward, the studio wall contained a collection of utilitarian buildings constructed largely for function and internal use. With the exception of outward-facing administration buildings and ceremonial gates, presentation to the world outside the studio was not considered advantageous.

The proposed new construction will be confined to the eastern portion of the lot, currently occupied by surface parking and small buildings and structures. New construction will have the biggest visual impact along Van Ness Avenue and Sunset Boulevard. The Fernwood and Bronson Avenue facades of the studio property will remain unchanged.

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The construction of a thirteen-story office building and seven-story parking structure will substantially change the studio's Van Ness Avenue face. This area of the studio, however, has been significantly altered since the period of significance because several original buildings have been demolished and replaced with surface parking. Therefore, the Van Ness Avenue face of the studio property does not significantly contribute to the property's historic significance. The proposed new development, although adding considerable height and density, will not substantially impact the integrity of the studio property. The proposed new construction will complete the perimeter enclosure of the property along Van Ness Avenue. Enclosure along the perimeter (either by walls or building facades) is a character-defining feature of motion picture studios from the Studio Era.

After implementation of the Project, the property will still contain a concentration of buildings and structures dating from the period of significance as well as the remaining spatial relationships and circulation pattern. Therefore, the Project will not materially impair the historic district resources on the property.

#### Potential Impacts to the EOB

The property's most important and character-defining façade is the EOB facing Sunset Boulevard which was specifically constructed by Warner Brothers to create a memorable public face for the studio. Because a thirteen-story office building is proposed for the northeast corner of the site, the proposed building's height and density has the potential to block important views and obscure public sight lines to the EOB from Sunset Boulevard particularly from the east.

However, the Project includes setting the proposed office building back from Sunset Boulevard at a distance equal to the setback of the EOB. This setback will ensure that sightlines to the EOB from Sunset Boulevard are preserved

The design of the new office building also has the potential to be incompatible with the north façade of the EOB, diminishing its presence on Sunset Boulevard. The EOB has been a prominent presence on Sunset Boulevard since 1923. The design of the new office building recognizes the significance of the EOB and is setback from Sunset Boulevard to preserve sightlines. As a result, the new office building does not materially affect the EOB's ability to convey its historic significance.

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### **9.3 Summary of Potential Impacts to Historic Resources**

Using the CEQA thresholds discussed above, the project has the potential to:

- 1) Adversely affect the EOB during the removal of the non-historic additions and restoration of the facades that could be disturbed during construction.
- 2) Adversely affect the KTLA Radio Tower during its relocation and restoration.

Implementation of the following mitigation measures will reduce impacts of the Project to historic resources on the property. The following mitigation measures are recommended.

1. The Project will include a shoring plan to ensure the protection of adjacent historic resources during construction from damage due to underground excavation, general construction procedures and mitigate the possibility of settlement due to the removal of adjacent soil.
2. The portions of the EOB disturbed by construction activities will be rehabilitated and preserved in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The Project design team will consult with a preservation architect or other qualified professional throughout the rehabilitation.
3. The KTLA Radio Tower will be relocated to its original location and preserved in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The Project design team will consult with a preservation architect or other qualified professional throughout the rehabilitation.

## 11.0 CONCLUSIONS

The Project would demolish Building 14, which is not considered an individually significant historic resource. Building 14 is a contributor to the potential historic district, and its demolition would reduce the total number of contributing resources located on the property. The potential historic district, however, will retain the majority of contributing resources, and will retain its historic significance after demolition of Building 14.

In addition, the Project would relocate the KTLA tower, which is considered both an individually significant historic resource, and a contributing structure to the potential historic district. The KTLA tower would be moved to its original location and the relocation process will comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Thus, the Project will improve the integrity of both the KTLA tower and the potential historic district.

Finally, the Project would alter the EOB by removing the Gene Autry Wing and the northern additions of the 1960s. These portions of the EOB are not considered historically significant. Alterations of the EOB would comply with the Secretary of Interior Standards while altering the EOB. As a result, the Project will improve the integrity of the EOB by returning it to its original form associated with the period of significance.

Therefore, based on project design features, and compliance with the mitigation measures recommended in this report, the Project will have a less than significant impact on historic resources located on the property.

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*California Code of Regulations*, (Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000-15387).

California State Department of Parks and Recreation Historic Resources Inventory Forms

City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources website,  
<http://www.preservation.lacity.org/monuments>

*Code of Federal Regulations*, (Title 36, Part 60)

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**Building 10 (Executive Office Building)**  
North façade facing Sunset Boulevard



**Building 10 (Executive Office Building)**  
Looking southeast from Van Ness Ave.



**Building 10 (Executive Office Building)**  
Gene Autry addition to eastern façade.



**Building 10 (Executive Office Building)**  
Office addition to north façade.

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**Stage 9 (Stage 1)**  
Looking northeast from Van Ness Avenue



**Stage 9 (Stage 1)**  
South facade



**Stages 1, 2 and 3 (Stage 2)**  
Looking southeast from Van Ness Avenue.



**Stages 1, 2 and 3 (Stage 2)**  
Looking northwest

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**KTLA Tower (KFWB Radio Tower)**  
Looking north



**Stages 6 (Stage 6)**  
North facade



**Stages 6 (Stage 6)**  
Looking northeast from Fernwood Avenue.

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HISTORIC RESOURCES GROUP



**Building 15 (Vitaphone Recording)**  
East facade



**Stages 7 & 8 (Stages 4 & 5)**  
East facade



**Stages 7 & 8 (Stages 4 & 5)**  
North facade



**Building 11 (Property Storage, "the Barn")**  
East facade

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**Building 11 (Property Storage, "the Barn")**  
South facade



**Building 11 (Property Storage, "the Barn")**  
North facade



**Building 16 (Vitaphone Administration)**  
North facade



**Building 16 (Vitaphone Administration)**  
South facade

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**Building 14 (Mill Building portion)**  
West facade



**Building 14 (Mill Building portion)**  
Looking southwest



**Bronson Gate Guardhouse**  
Looking northwest



**Van Ness Gate Guardhouse**  
Looking northwest from Van Ness Ave.

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**Restroom Pavilion**  
North facade



**Building 20 (Video Tape Library)**  
East Facade



**Building 21 (Technical Center)**  
East Facade



**Building 21 (Technical Center)**  
Looking southeast

# Sunset Bronson Studios

## *Historic Resources Technical Report*

### November 2012