



MIRACLE MILE HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY REPORT *DRAFT*

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Prepared for:

Miracle Mile Residential Association

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Figure 1. Street view, proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ (ARG, 2015)

1. INTRODUCTION

In March of 2015, the Miracle Mile Residential Association contracted with Architectural Resources Group, Inc. (ARG) to assist with the completion of a historic resources survey of the proposed Miracle Mile Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) in the City of Los Angeles, California. The survey area is located in the central portion of Los Angeles adjacent to the stretch of Wilshire Boulevard known as “Miracle Mile,” about six-and-a-half miles west of downtown; it contains both single-family and multi-family residences, as well as institutional and small-scale commercial properties. The proposed HPOZ, which comprises 1,347 properties, is roughly bounded by Wilshire Boulevard to the north, San Vicente Boulevard to the south, La Brea Avenue to the east, and Fairfax Avenue to the west.

This report reflects the results of the historic resources survey for the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ. HPOZs and historic resources surveys are under the jurisdiction of the City of Los Angeles Planning and Cultural Heritage Commissions. The survey was completed between April 2015 and July 2015 by a team of qualified architectural historians at Architectural Resources Group, Inc.

Upon completion of the historic resources survey, ARG has concluded that the Miracle Mile survey area meets the criteria for HPOZ designation due to its association with patterns of residential development as an automobile suburb in Los Angeles, its importance as an early enclave of Jewish residents, and its architectural distinction, primarily representing Period Revival styles popular during the first half of the 20th century. The majority of individual properties retain high levels of integrity and meet the threshold of “Contributing” structure.

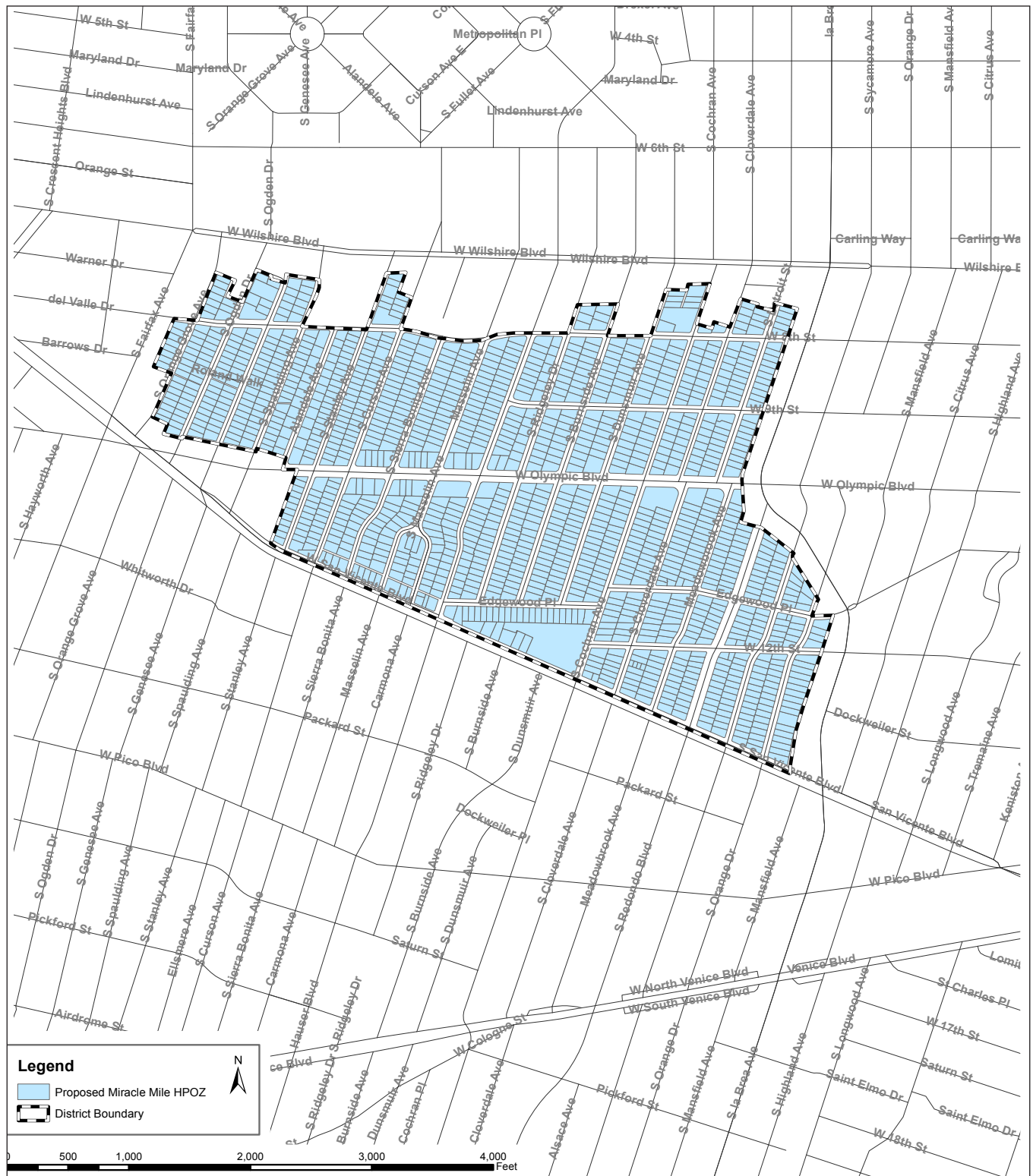


Figure 2. Proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ study area (Map created by Architectural Resources Group, 2015)

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Background

The proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ is generally dominated by one-story single-family residences in the northern portion (between Olympic Boulevard and Wilshire Boulevard) and one- and two-story multi-family residences in the southern portion (between Olympic Boulevard and San Vicente Boulevard); construction dates for properties within the district range from 1921 to 2015, although the dominant period of development is the 1920s, '30s and '40s, corresponding with widespread westward expansion of the city of Los Angeles during this time. The Period of Significance is 1921 to 1953, capturing the resources relating to the period of development which has been identified as significant in the historic context statement.

Most buildings in the proposed HPOZ were constructed in styles associated with the Period Revival mode of architecture, corresponding with styles popular during the dominant period of development, including Spanish Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Mediterranean Revival, French Revival, and American Colonial Revival. Minimal Traditional-style buildings and Mid-Century Modern apartment buildings are present as well. The district is characterized by the consistency of building styles and massing, as well as its spatial and landscape features such as concrete sidewalks, mature trees, relatively consistent lot sizes, uniform setbacks, and a skewed orthogonal street pattern.

2.2 Historic Preservation Overlay Zones: Definition and Purpose

The City of Los Angeles established the HPOZ ordinance in 1979. The ordinance was revised in 1997, 2000 and 2004.

According to §12.20.3.B.17 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC), a *Preservation Zone* is “any area of the City of Los Angeles containing buildings, structures, Landscaping, Natural Features or lots

having Historic, architectural, Cultural or aesthetic significance and designated as a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone under the provisions of this section.”

The purpose of a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone is described in §12.20.3.A of the LAMC as follows:

1. Protect and enhance the use of buildings, structures, Natural Features, and areas, which are reminders of the City’s history, or which are unique and irreplaceable assets to the City and its neighborhoods, or which are worthy examples of past architectural styles;
2. Develop and maintain the appropriate settings and environment to preserve these buildings, structures, Landscaping, Natural Features, and areas;
3. Enhance property values, stabilize neighborhoods and/or communities, render property eligible for financial benefits, and promote tourist trade and interest;
4. Foster public appreciation of the beauty of the City, of the accomplishments of its past as reflected through its buildings, structures, Landscaping, Natural Features, and areas;
5. Promote education by preserving and encouraging interest in cultural, social, economic, political and architectural phases of its history;
6. Promote the involvement of all aspects of the City’s diverse neighborhoods in the historic preservation process; and
7. To ensure that all procedures comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

2.3 Designation Process

The Procedures for Establishment, Boundary Change or Repeal of a Preservation Zone are described in §12.20.3.F of the LAMC.

Essentially, an HPOZ can be initiated by either: City Council, the City Planning Commission, the Director of Planning and the Cultural Heritage Commission; or by application, typically initiated by owners or renters of property within the boundaries of the proposed or existing Preservation Zone. In both cases, a historic resources survey is required. Once the historic resources survey has been completed, the application for HPOZ designation goes before the Cultural Heritage Commission in a public hearing. Then it must go before the City Planning Commission, the Planning and Land Use Management Committee of the City Council, and the full City Council before becoming a Los Angeles HPOZ.

2.4 Historic Resources Survey

The historic resources survey is a vital tool in determining the eligibility of a neighborhood or area for HPOZ status. The purpose and requirements of the historic resources survey are described in §12.20.3.F of the LAMC as follows:

Purpose

Each Preservation Zone shall have a Historic Resources Survey, which identifies all Contributing and Non-Contributing Elements and is certified as to its accuracy and completeness by the Cultural Heritage Commission.

Context Statement

In addition to the requirements above, the historic resource survey shall also include a context statement supporting a finding establishing the relation between the physical environment of the Preservation Zone and its history, thereby allowing the identification of Historic features in the area as contributing or non-contributing. The context statement shall represent the history of the area by theme, place, and time. It shall define the various

Historical factors which shaped the development of the area. It shall define a period of significance for the Preservation Zone, and relate Historic features to that period of significance. It may include, but not be limited to, Historical activities or events, associations with Historic personages, architectural styles and movements, master architects, designers, building types, building materials, landscape design, or pattern of physical development that influenced the character of the Preservation Zone at a particular time in history.

Additionally, the historic resources survey will delineate boundaries of the proposed HPOZ, a period of significance, and findings of contribution. The methodology for determining contribution will be described in the following section.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Previous Designations and Surveys

One building within the Miracle Mile survey area has been formally designated as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument: the Buck House at 5950-5958 W. 8th Street (LA-122), designed by Rudolph Schindler and completed in 1934.

The proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ lies within the Wilshire Community Plan Area (CPA), which was surveyed by ARG on behalf of the Los Angeles Department of City Planning's Office of Historic Resources (OHR) in 2014.¹ This work was conducted as part of SurveyLA, the City's comprehensive historic resources survey. In the Wilshire survey, ARG identified five potential historic districts within the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ area: the Orange Grove Avenue-Spaulding Avenue Residential Historic District, the Alande Avenue Multi-Family Residential Historic District, the Curson Avenue-

¹ For additional information, see Architectural Resources Group, Inc., *SurveyLA Historic Resources Survey Report: Wilshire Community Plan Area and Appendices* (prepared for the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning Office of Historic Resources, 2015). Available at <http://preservation.lacity.org/surveyla-findings-and-reports#Wilshire>.

Hauser Boulevard Residential Historic District, the Burnside Avenue-Cloverdale Avenue Residential Historic District, and the South Detroit Street Multi-Family Residential Historic District. None of these identified potential districts has been adopted as an HPOZ; each was identified as being potentially eligible for listing in the National Register, California Register, and as a local HPOZ through survey evaluation.

The survey of the Wilshire CPA also identified seven properties within the Miracle Mile survey area as individually eligible against National Register,

California Register, and local eligibility criteria. As with the identified potential historic districts, none of them has been formally designated. The seven properties identified as individually eligible are listed in the table below (Figure 3).

Two buildings in the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ appeared in the state's Historic Resource Inventory (HRI) as of 2010: 712-714 S. Stanley Avenue and 718-720 S. Stanley Avenue. Both are two-story multi-family residential buildings assigned the California Historical Resource Status Code 7N (needs to be re-evaluated).

Address	Name	Type and Style	Date
741 S. Burnside Ave.		Apartment House, Chateausque	1931
1137 S. Cochran Ave.	Mackey Apartments	Apartment House, International Style	1939
749 S. Burnside Ave.		Apartment House, Spanish Colonial Revival	1931
740 S. Dunsmuir Ave.	Cathedral Chapel Parish School	School, Spanish Colonial Revival	1930
724 S. Genesee Ave.		Apartment House, Art Deco	1931
5750 W. Olympic Blvd.	Bethel Lutheran Church	Church, Spanish Colonial Revival with Late Gothic elements	1948
5870 S. Olympic Blvd.	Westside Jewish Community Center	Community Center, Mid-Century Modern	1954

Figure 3. Properties within the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ that were identified as individually eligible for listing in the National Register, California Register, and as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments (HCMs) as part of SurveyLA.

3.2 Archival Research

The research design and methodology for the project was outlined by ARG during the course of the project and incorporated guidelines recommended by *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation Planning and Developing Historic Contexts*. The following National Register Bulletin was consulted: *National Register Bulletin 24: Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning*.

Additionally, the following collections were consulted:

- Collections of the Los Angeles Public Library
- ARG's in-house library of architectural reference books and other materials
- Various internet sites and digital archives
- Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety for building and alteration permits
- Historic Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps
- Historic tract maps from the Los Angeles Department of Public Works

3.3 Field Survey

An essential component of a historic resources survey is the completion of fieldwork, which informs the historic context statement and provides property-specific data necessary for the identification of Contributors and Non-Contributors to the potential HPOZ. For Miracle Mile, an intensive survey was completed. According to *National Register Bulletin 24*, an intensive survey is defined as “a close and careful look at the area being surveyed... designed to identify precisely and completely all historic resources in the area.”²

ARG surveyors used tablet PCs loaded with a Microsoft Access database custom-designed for the survey, to record all relevant details about each property within the proposed HPOZ. Information recorded included property type, building form,

² U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 24: Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1977), 12.

features, materials, and alterations. Digital photographs were taken of all resources, and all work was completed from the public right-of-way. The surveyors drafted a historic context statement for the Miracle Mile survey area, using the SurveyLA citywide historic context statement as a basic framework, and vetted the findings of the field survey against the eligibility standards. The historic context statement and eligibility evaluation were completed by ARG staff who meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for architectural history and history: Katie E. Horak, Principal and Project Manager; Mary Ringhoff, Associate; and Evanne St. Charles. Additional survey assistance was provided by ARG intern Christina Park and consultant Roberta O'Donnell.

3.4 Criteria and Eligibility Standards

Pursuant to the HPOZ Ordinance, the City of Los Angeles has three potential designations for individual buildings within an identified HPOZ: 1) Contributor, 2) Altered Contributor, and 3) Non-Contributor.

Contributor

A Contributor is “any structure identified in the Historic Resources Survey as contributing to the historic significance of the HPOZ” (Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) §12.20.3). To be contributing, a resource within the study area shall meet one or more of the following criteria set forth in Article F.3 of the LAMC:

1. Adds to the historic architectural qualities or historic associations for which a property is significant because it was present during the period of significance and possesses historic integrity reflecting its character at that time.
2. Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, the property represents an established feature of the neighborhood, community, or city.
3. Retaining the structure would help preserve and protect a historic place or area of historic interest in the city.

Altered Contributor

The Altered Contributor category was created to conform to the definition of Contributing Structure in the HPOZ ordinance, and to include structures “which have been altered, where the nature and extent of the alterations are determined reversible by the Historic Resources Survey” (LAMC §12.20.3 B.6).

ARG used *National Register Bulletin 15* and the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation* to inform the evaluation process for properties that were built during the period of significance but had been altered. The relevant text in *National Register Bulletin 15* providing guidance for evaluating altered structures is as follows:

“A property important for illustrating a particular architectural style or construction technique must retain most of the physical features that constitute that style or technique. A property that has lost some historic materials or details can be eligible [read: contributing] if it retains the majority of the features that illustrate its style in terms of the massing, spatial relationships, proportion, pattern of windows and doors, texture of materials, and ornamentation. The property is not eligible [read: contributing], however, if it retains some basic features conveying massing but has lost the majority of the features that once characterized its style...If the historic exterior building material is covered by non-historic material (such as modern siding), the property can still be [contributing] if the significant form, features, and detailing are not obscured.”³

Buildings that are altered but still convey their historic architectural style according to the guidance set forth in *National Register Bulletin 15* were assigned the status of Altered Contributor in the Miracle Mile historic resources survey.

Federal guidance has also been provided for ways to alter and rehabilitate historic buildings in a sensitive

³ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1990), 47 and 48.

manner. Alterations that meet the relevant *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation* [36 CFR ‘68.3(b)] would allow a building to contribute to the HPOZ. Alterations or additions that do not destroy important character-defining features or that have been undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property remains intact are considered reversible. The applicable *Standards* regarding additions and alterations are as follows:

(9) New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, and proportion and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

(10) New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Consequently, a building may qualify as an Altered Contributor if the alterations are limited to an addition that is compatible with the historic property, and, in the view of the survey, does not substantially diminish the contribution of the original building to the HPOZ.

Non-Contributor

A Non-Contributor is a “structure identified on the Historic Resources Survey as not contributing to the historical significance of the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone” (LAMC §12.20.3 B.13). A building within the Miracle Mile study area was identified as a Non-Contributor if it:

- was built after the HPOZ’s historic and architectural periods of significance and has no known overriding significance;
- lacks integrity as a result of irreversible alterations;

- is incompatible in style, scale, or use and is a visual intrusion with nearby HPOZ contributors; and/or
- has been moved from its original site outside the HPOZ and does not contribute to the historic or architectural significance of the HPOZ.

3.5 Miracle Mile HPOZ Contribution Thresholds

The proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ comprises buildings constructed over several decades and representing a wide range of architectural styles and typologies. In order to be considered a Contributor to the proposed HPOZ, a building must first meet the following standards:

- It must have been constructed within the period of significance, identified as 1921-1953;
- It must represent one or more of the themes identified in the historic context statement; and
- It must retain sufficient integrity to convey its significance.⁴

Integrity is the authenticity of a historical resource's physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance. A test of integrity is whether a contemporary would recognize the building, site or district. According to *National Register Bulletin 15*, there are seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.⁵ An eligible resource will exhibit most of these aspects of integrity, although the elements that are most important will vary with the property type

⁴ The single-family residence at 802 S Sierra Bonita Ave. has been identified as a Contributor to the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ, even though its 1959 construction date puts it outside the period of significance. According to Article F.3 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code, the property is eligible as a contributor to the proposed HPOZ because it represents an established feature of the neighborhood, due to its Mid-Century Modern style applied to a single-family residence designed by architect Jack Chernoff.

⁵ National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15*, 44.

and with the historic context that defines the resource's significance.

In the case of an HPOZ, ARG applies the seven aspects of integrity to evaluate the overall integrity of the district. Additionally, the retention of physical integrity plays a major role in the identification of Contributors and Non-Contributors within the potential HPOZ. In order to make judicious determinations regarding the contributing status of all properties surveyed, ARG uses the seven aspects of integrity as a guide in the identification of Contributors, Altered Contributors, and Non-Contributors.

Contributors

ARG determined that Contributors should retain nearly all of the seven aspects of integrity, particularly those related to a building's physical characteristics, which are design, materials, and workmanship. Contributors will retain essentially all original features and will have endured no major alterations.

Altered Contributors

ARG identified a number of alteration considerations that may not preclude a property's status as Contributor to the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ. Generally, alterations that are additive, where elements have been appended without destroying original material, can be reversed and are considered minor alterations. Major alterations which are subtractive, in which architectural features and materials have been removed, are typically considered irreversible and might exclude the building from Contributor status. The following is a list of examples of alteration considerations which may result in the status of Altered Contributor:

- Porches which have been enclosed without damaging the original porch configuration, floor or supports
- Windows which have been replaced within original openings, without altering the placement,

size and fenestration patterns of the building's façade

- Addition of faux historic or incompatible elements which can be removed
- Non-original cladding, such as stucco or asbestos, which may cover original cladding

Non-Contributors

Finally, ARG has identified a number of Non-Contributors to the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ.

As previously mentioned, buildings that were constructed outside of the period of significance or do not represent the contexts and themes identified in the historic context statement are given the status of Non-Contributor. Additionally, buildings that do not retain sufficient integrity to portray their significance will be identified as Non-Contributors.

- ARG determined that the following alterations would generally result in the status of Non-Contributor:
- Removal of elements and features which identify a building's architectural style
- Alterations to a building's original fenestration patterns, such as placement, resized openings, and the removal of historic frames
- Substantial change to a building's overall massing or footprint, such as rooftop additions and other structural additions
- At times, a combination of several alterations identified above as considerations for the status of Altered Contributor may result in a finding of Non-Contributor

4. HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT

According to *National Register Bulletin 24*, historic contexts are defined as “broad patterns of historical development in a community or its region that may be represented by historic resources.”⁶ Historic resource surveys are not complete without linking resources to their associated historic contexts; the establishment of historic contexts is vital to targeting survey work effectively. In addition, contexts are necessary to make future significance evaluations for resources and to evaluate the potential for historic districts. Historic contexts provide the framework for interpreting historical developments and grouping properties that share a common theme, geographical area, and time period. The establishment of these contexts provides the foundation for decision-making concerning the planning, identification, evaluation, restoration, registration, and treatment of historic properties, based upon comparative significance. Contexts can be developed for all types of resources including, but not limited to, buildings, structures, objects, sites, and historic districts.

The contexts and themes for Miracle Mile are:⁷

- *Context:* Residential Development and Suburbanization, 1921-1953
 - Theme:* Automobile Suburbanization, 1921-1953
 - Theme:* Ethnic Enclaves, 1921-1953
 - Theme:* Multi-Family Residential, 1921-1953
- *Context:* Architecture, 1921-1953
 - Theme:* Period Revival Styles, 1921-1950

The following property types comprise the Miracle Mile HPOZ:

- Single-family residences
- Multi-family residences
- Institutional buildings
- Commercial buildings

The Period of Significance has been identified as 1921-1953.

The project study area is located in the Mid-Wilshire community of central Los Angeles approximately six-and-a-half miles west of downtown, immediately south of the segment of Wilshire Boulevard known as Miracle Mile. The Mid-Wilshire neighborhood is generally considered to be bounded by Crenshaw Boulevard, Pico Boulevard, Fairfax Avenue, and Wilshire Boulevard. Punctuated by dense commercial development along Olympic Boulevard, San Vicente Boulevard, Pico Boulevard, and Wilshire Boulevard (including part of Miracle Mile), this neighborhood is dominated by subdivisions of single- and multi-family residences from the 1920s to the 1940s. It includes the Windsor Village HPOZ (adopted in 2010).

The proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ is a highly intact residential district with distinct visual character. Almost entirely subdivided by various parties between 1920 and 1923 as a series of unrelated tracts, the district represents the rapid growth of the western part of Los Angeles during this time period; its development was directly related to the establishment of Wilshire Boulevard, its rise to prominence as a commercial corridor, and the pervasive influence of the automobile on the growth of Los Angeles. Construction in the district's tracts began soon after they were subdivided, and the neighborhood was largely built out by World War II.

Although the development of the Miracle Mile HPOZ spans several decades and a variety of architectural styles are represented, the district retains a unified design and sense of place as an automobile suburb with both single-family and multi-family residences. Planning features such as consistent lot sizes and setbacks, concrete sidewalks with curb cuts, and mature street trees continue to characterize the

⁶ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 24: Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1977), 14.

⁷ This context/sub-context/theme structure directly corresponds with the citywide historic context statement being developed as part of the SurveyLA program.

area. The range of architectural styles is largely defined by the time period during which the residences were constructed, and primarily represents styles of the Period Revival mode. Later construction from the late 1930s to the early 1950s, including many of the multi-family residences in the last tract to develop (Alandele Avenue in 1937), tended to be in the Minimal Traditional style.

4.1 Background: Early History of Miracle Mile

Like much of Los Angeles, the area known today as Mid-Wilshire was originally inhabited by members of the Tongva tribe, who resided in villages connected by foot trails. The trails also led to known sources of food and materials, which included the nearby La Brea tar pits, a much-used site providing tar for waterproofing everything from canoes to water carriers. The early Spanish settlers in El Pueblo de Los Angeles used the trails as well, and referred to a major trail leading west from the village known as Yang-Na (where the Los Angeles Civic Center is now) to the tar pits as El Camino Viejo, or “old road.” It was also commonly known as the La Brea Road. During the Spanish period, this old road served as the dividing line between Rancho La Brea on the north and Rancho Las Cienegas on the south. It later became Wilshire Boulevard, the backbone of the area and one of the most iconic and influential commercial corridors in the nation.

The mission system established under late 18th century Spanish rule slowly disintegrated after Mexico obtained its independence in 1821, and former mission lands were granted to individuals in favor as ranchos. The area containing today’s Miracle Mile was largely part of the Rancho Las Cienegas, with a smaller portion at its west end belonging to the Rancho Rodeo de las Aguas. The Rancho las Cienegas was granted to Francisco Avila in 1823, and the Rancho Rodeo de las Aguas was granted to Maria Rita Quinteros Valdez de Villa in the 1840s. When Mexico ceded California to the United States after the Mexican-American War, the land grants were honored, and the heirs of the original rancho owners retained their land.

The Rancho Rodeo de las Aguas was sold to Major Henry Hancock and Benjamin D. Wilson in the 1850s; Hancock, who later developed a large portion of the Rancho la Brea on the north side of Wilshire Boulevard, later sold his share. The land passed on to various owners and was eventually subdivided into ever-smaller portions, including several tracts in the western portion of the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ. In the 1860s, the Rancho las Cienegas was partitioned into multiple shares, with one of the larger shares going to Henry H. Gird and a smaller one going to Antonio Urquidez; at least six of the dozen-plus tracts subdivided in the 1920s into what would become the Miracle Mile HPOZ area were part of either Gird’s or Urquidez’s allotments.

Before the subdivisions of the 1920s, though, the remnants of the ranchos remained largely unpopulated and undeveloped. Ranchers grazed cattle and sheep in open pastures, and farmers grew crops like barley and wheat. While the city of Los Angeles expanded rapidly from the east and beachfront communities like Santa Monica grew in the west, the space in between remained rural. It was not until the land speculation boom of the 1880s that the first seeds of development in the Wilshire area were planted. The first visionary was Henry Gaylord Wilshire, a charismatic entrepreneur from Ohio who with his brother William purchased 35 acres at the western edge of Los Angeles in 1887 and subdivided the land in 1895.⁸ The Wilshire brothers envisioned a luxurious subdivision designed for Los Angeles’ wealthy, anchored by a wide, graveled boulevard.

In 1897, the western boundary of Los Angeles moved west from Hoover Street to Vermont Avenue, and Wilshire Boulevard was extended to meet it; the road angled away from its original direction in line with the downtown street grid to instead orient toward the cardinal directions, a shift in the street grid which shaped all future development of the area.⁹ Between the wide streets, wealthy inhabitants, and streetcar

⁸ Kevin Roderick and J. Eric Lynxwiler, *Wilshire Boulevard: Grand Concourse of Los Angeles* (Santa Monica: Angel City Press, 2005), 17.

⁹ Roderick and Lynxwiler, *Wilshire Boulevard*, 38-39.

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restrictions, the stage was set for Wilshire Boulevard to become what historian Kevin Roderick calls “the showcase drive of the Automobile Age.”¹⁰ The subsequent residential growth of the area extended far beyond the great boulevard, but its beginnings were rooted in the same place.

Beckoned by open space and the grand new boulevard, wealthy Angelenos flocked to the prestigious new district starting at the turn of the century. Residential and commercial development continued moving west through what is now the Wilshire CPA for the next 30 years, both along and well beyond Wilshire Boulevard itself, but few people at the turn of the century predicted the development of the western reaches of Wilshire Boulevard. The area that would become the Miracle Mile HPOZ was thought of by most as laughably distant from Los Angeles. One of the few non-agricultural occupants of that area was the Page Military Academy, moved to Cahuenga Boulevard (later Cochran Avenue), at the corner of San Vicente Boulevard, from West Adams in 1915.¹¹ Its location was chosen partially because of its remoteness from both Los Angeles and Santa Monica.

One developer, A.W. Ross, foresaw a grand commercial destiny for western Wilshire Boulevard earlier than anyone else. In the early 1920s, Ross began buying up land along Wilshire Boulevard between La Brea Avenue and Fairfax Avenue, a pursuit some referred to as “Ross’s Folly.” He envisioned a destination shopping district that would lure customers from Beverly Hills as well as Hollywood and downtown Los Angeles, and encouraged the construction of architecturally distinctive commercial buildings. Ross’s development gamble along the western part of Wilshire Boulevard paid off in spades from the late 1920s and through the 1930s, as “Ross’s Folly” became known as Miracle Mile. The area housed large retailers like Desmond’s, Silverwoods, and the May Company, and even supermarkets like Ralph’s boasted flashy architecture on a grand scale. Ross

¹⁰ Roderick and Lynxwiler, *Wilshire Boulevard*, 21.

¹¹ *Los Angeles Times*, Page Military Academy Near Quarter-Century, 28 August 1932.



Figure 4. Miracle Mile, Wilshire Boulevard with May Company in the background, view east, circa 1940 (courtesy of USC Digital Library)

remained a major force in the development of Wilshire Boulevard until the 1960s, seeing the boulevard lure the city’s population ever westward.



Figure 5. Aerial view of the intersection of Wilshire Boulevard and Fairfax Avenue, view east, circa 1920. The area that became Miracle Mile was largely composed of oil fields and agricultural land until the 1920s (courtesy of USC Digital Library)

4.2 Context: Residential Development and Suburbanization, 1921-1953

Themes: Automobile Suburbanization and Multi-Family Residential, 1921-1953

Residential development in the western portion of the Wilshire area including the Miracle Mile HPOZ began its boom in the 1920s and 1930s. The boom was partly a result of the explosive commercial development of Wilshire's Miracle Mile, but was also a response to the massive population influx Los Angeles experienced at that time. Facilitated by the rising prominence of the automobile, the city spread in all directions to accommodate its new residents. Wide new streets for car travel opened up farther-flung areas to suburban development and expanded perceptions of just how large a city could be. Just as the success of Wilshire Boulevard as a commercial corridor depended

largely on the automobile, so did the success of the area's adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The Mid-Wilshire neighborhood, stretching west to Fairfax between Wilshire and Pico, had its share of earlier subdivisions like Oxford Square (1907) and Fremont Place (1911), but the bulk of its residential construction happened in the 1920s, corresponding with an immense population and real estate boom. Although the boom of the 1880s was, proportionately, the greatest period of growth in the history of Los Angeles, the boom of the 1920s arguably did more to shape the modern city as it appears today. It was during the twenties that the greater Los Angeles area reached a million inhabitants, making it the fifth largest city in the United States.¹² According to historian Kevin Starr, by 1930, "Los Angeles had a population of 1,470,516, which represented a tripling of its population over

¹² Kevin Starr, *Material Dreams: Southern California Through the 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 69.



Figure 6. Aerial view of the intersection of Wilshire Boulevard and San Vicente Boulevard, view east, circa 1926. By the mid-1920s, residential development of the neighborhoods comprising Miracle Mile had begun in earnest (courtesy of USC Digital Library)

[a period of] ten years.”¹³ New construction met the needs of the growing population; in 1918, 6,000 new building permits were issued in Los Angeles. In 1919, that figure more than doubled to 13,000, increasing to 37,000 in 1921, and 47,000 in 1922. 1923 was the peak year of the boom, with an astonishing 62,500 new building permits for an estimated \$200 million in construction.¹⁴

During this time, the streets south of Wilshire Boulevard quickly filled with street after street of one-story houses and two-story apartment buildings in fashionable Period Revival styles. Multi-family and single-family neighborhoods alike were heavily advertised by local developers in the *Los Angeles Times*. Street trees, street lights, sidewalks, paved roads, and

other amenities were marketed throughout the area. Although built in relative proximity to streetcar lines, these neighborhoods largely catered to the automobile; detached rear garages and driveways with curb cuts were characteristic of these automobile suburbs. Multi-family residential neighborhoods (later including Minimal Traditional properties along with the dominant Period Revival) boasted an array of duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, apartment houses and courtyard apartments.

The proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ area was a microcosm of the larger Wilshire area’s residential development, developing as a series of adjacent automobile suburbs, with commercial and institutional properties lining the major streets binding the residential areas. Unlike the exclusively wealthy and primarily single-family neighborhoods of Windsor

¹³ Starr, 69.

¹⁴ Starr, 69.

Square and Hancock Park, the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ area contained a mix of both single-family and multi-family housing from its beginning. Although its garages, driveways, curb cuts, and overall layout indicate it was primarily envisioned as automobile-centric, the Miracle Mile area was also relatively well served by public transportation. The Pacific Electric Railway's Westgate line provided streetcar service along San Vicente Boulevard at the south edge of the proposed HPOZ. This route was originally established by the Los Angeles Pacific Railway in 1906 and became part of Pacific Electric's system during the 1911 consolidation that combined a number of local companies. The Westgate line provided service between downtown Los Angeles and Santa Monica, and saw heavy traffic; in the 1920s, raised viaducts were constructed at Pico Boulevard and La Brea Avenue to ameliorate the increasing problem of competing streetcar and automobile traffic at busy intersections.¹⁵ The Westgate line was decommissioned in 1940.

Following the general pattern of the larger Wilshire area, the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ was mostly subdivided as a series of tracts between 1920 and 1923. As noted above, a number of the tracts were subdivisions of the Henry Gird and Antonio Urquidez portions of Rancho las Cienegas. All of the area's tracts featured lots of fairly uniform, modest size, largely set on streets fitting into the area's rectilinear grid. A few tracts featured curvilinear streets, like Tract 5798's horseshoe-shaped Masselin Avenue-Carmona Avenue split (1923).¹⁶ The tracts' subdividers represented a diverse group of developers, none of which appeared to have assigned formal names to their new tracts immediately upon their subdivision.

Several of the area's tracts, including its largest two, Tract 5798 (bounded by Wilshire Boulevard, the east parcels of Hauser Boulevard, parcel lines north

¹⁵ Pacific Electric Railway Historical Society, Western District: Pico and San Vicente Boulevards in 1927, <http://www.pacificelectric.org/pacific-electric/western-district/pico-and-san-vicente-boulevards-in-1927/>, accessed 6 April 2015.

¹⁶ Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, Tract No. 5798 map (1923).

Wilshire Vista

Only One
Wilshire Vista

Only One!
In All Los Angeles!
In All California!
In All The Country!

There is only ONE Wilshire Vista

There can never be another. It's the crest of WILSHIRE—the top of the hill—the last of the high ground in bon-ton Los Angeles. City, valley and sea are beneath WILSHIRE VISTA. The view by day or by night is wondrously fine.

Easily reached—the red car line from Fourth and Hill streets; by auto only a few minutes' drive out Wilshire or Pico just beyond Cahuenga; the promised P. E. Subway, the Vineyard bore with its 11-minute schedule to downtown, emerging to the surface only a short distance from the tract.

Four great boulevards—Wilshire, San Vicente, Pico and Country Club Drive—splendid streets, all improvements—and—

Prices Astonishingly Low

—lower than have been asked for building lots in other subdivisions that could not pretend to compare with WILSHIRE VISTA in any of the points we have just mentioned—location, altitude, sightlines, accessibility, improvements, general desirability.

Consider this outstanding fact regarding Wilshire Vista—WILSHIRE VISTA FRONTS ON PICO BOULEVARD ON ONE SIDE AND ON WILSHIRE BOULEVARD ON THE OTHER. Remember that Wilshire, with the plans that are going forward for the improving and beautifying of this nationally-famous boulevard—is the de luxe residential boulevard of all the Southland—and nothing on Wilshire can compare with WILSHIRE VISTA'S frontage on this great thoroughfare.

WILSHIRE VISTA lots are going fast. They sell themselves. Choice, close-in residential lots in Los Angeles are in big demand. There is only one WILSHIRE—ONLY ONE WILSHIRE VISTA. Discerning buyers know this and they are buying WILSHIRE VISTA lots so fast that it is certain they soon will be all sold.

HOW TO GET THERE

Take Red car at 4th and Hill to Fair Market Station. Our salesman are there. Drive out WILSHIRE BLVD. just beyond La Brea to WILSHIRE VISTA gate. Drive out V. 11th to Cahuenga, south to Tract 5798. Our salesman are there. Drive out P. E. just beyond Cahuenga. Our salesman are there.

Walter G. McCarty John A. Vaughn
Main Office: 1100 South Cahuenga Road
Tel. 762-188 or 762-359

Figure 7. Wilshire Vista advertisement in the *Los Angeles Times*, 10 December 1922 (courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library)

of Edgewood Place, and the east parcels of Curson Avenue) and Tract 4464 (bounded by parcel lines south of Wilshire, the west parcels of Cochran Avenue, parcel lines north of Edgewood Place, and the west parcels of Ridgeley Drive), were advertised as being part of a much larger development, Wilshire Vista. Developers Walter G. McCarty and John A. Vaughn acquired these tracts soon after their subdivision and began advertising them as part of Wilshire Vista, bounded roughly by Wilshire Boulevard, Cahuenga Boulevard (now Cochran Avenue), Pico Boulevard, and Spaulding Avenue. Wilshire Vista was marketed in the *Los Angeles Times* as being in proximity to both streetcar lines and newly improved roads and for

September 4, 2015



Judge by comparison

Note the Superior Advantages of Mansfield Knoll and Wilshire Highlands:

Better Location In the close-in Wilshire district, which means these tracts are in the best part of town. Not only that, but they are across the street from the built up section.

Improvements Advancing Wilshire Highlands and Mansfield Knoll are ready for homes, as the bulk of the slow grading work is finished. Domestic utilities are being rapidly installed.

More Important Thorofares Nowhere else can you find such a remarkable number of prominent boulevards. They are measured in miles, not blocks. Find them on the map.

Lower Prices These lots are being sold direct from original owner to purchaser, without the customary middlemen to inflate the prices. Homesites can be bought on reasonable terms, \$1800, \$2000, \$2200.

Nearer to Los Angeles High School Mansfield Knoll and Wilshire Highlands are close to the splendid Los Angeles High School, which means that the lots will remain in steady demand, and that income property will rent for more.

Close to P. E. Subway Note on the sketch the car line from the proposed subway running through this property. Think what the construction of this subway will mean to lots in Wilshire Highlands and Mansfield Knoll.

Over a million dollars' worth of lots have been bought in these tracts. You are not the first to make this comparison, but with prompt action you may be one of those to profit by it.

David Barry & Company

Main Office, Phone 605-69
1125 Van Nuys Bldg.
Eight offices in the Wilshire District.

Motor on West Pico Street to our branch offices at Highland Ave., or at Cahuenga Ave., or motor on Wilshire Blvd. to our branch office at Highland Ave. Take West 11th or Pico cars, get off opposite Los Angeles High School, and inquire at any of our branch offices.

Live in the Best Part of Town—It Costs No More
Build for Income in the Best Part of Town—It Will Bring You More

Figure 8. Mansfield Knoll/Wilshire Highlands advertisement in the Los Angeles Times, 28 January 1923 (courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library)

having improvements such as sewer lines and concrete sidewalks.

At least two other major named developments were located wholly or partially within the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ: Mansfield Knoll (Tract 5070) and Wilshire Highlands (Tract 5069), both subdivided in 1922.¹⁷ Mansfield Knoll was bounded by Country Club Drive (later Olympic Boulevard), Highland Avenue, 12th Street, and Cahuenga Boulevard (S. Cochran Avenue); Wilshire Highlands was bounded by 12th Street, Highland Avenue, Pico Boulevard, and Cahuenga Boulevard (S. Cochran Avenue). The two subdivisions were managed and advertised in tandem by notable real estate developers David Barry & Company, a company very active in the 1920s development of the Wilshire area. Other subdivisions developed by Barry & Company included Wilshire Crest (subdivided 1920) and Rimpau Hill (subdivided 1921), both just east of the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ.¹⁸

Like Wilshire Vista, Mansfield Knoll and Wilshire Highlands were marketed as suburbs easily reached by new streets as well as streetcar lines. A typical David Barry & Company advertisement in the *Los Angeles Times* touted the developments as “a veritable gridiron of important thoroughfares,” “splendid investments” with “great actual and potential value of such importance that they become more than just homesites.”¹⁹

Within the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ, construction began within a year or two of subdivision. The variety of housing plans and styles suggests that empty lots were sold to prospective homeowners (who hired their own architects/designers and builders) as well as to local builders who then constructed houses

¹⁷ Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, Tract No. 5070 and 5069 maps (1922).

¹⁸ ARG, SurveyLA Historic Resources Survey Report: Wilshire Community Plan Area Appendix Report: Historic Districts, Planning Districts and Multi-Property Resources (prepared for the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning Office of Historic Resources, 2015). Available at <http://preservation.lacity.org/survey-la-findings-and-reports/#Wilshire>.

¹⁹ Display advertisement, *Los Angeles Times*, 10 December 1922.

and sold them to individuals. The parts of the Wilshire Vista development within the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ contained predominantly single-family housing north of Olympic Boulevard and multi-family housing south of Olympic Boulevard (with the exception of the blocks between W. 8th Street and Wilshire Boulevard, which were dominated by multi-family residences). Likewise, the Mansfield Knoll and Wilshire Highlands developments, both south of Olympic, contain single-family residences but were dominated by multi-family properties. The pattern of multi-family development may have been more pronounced in the southern portion of the HPOZ because of its proximity to the streetcar line along San Vicente Boulevard.

After the most intense period of the Miracle Mile HPOZ's development from 1922 to 1930, construction was slow but steady, seeing a drop during World War II and a postwar spike until eventually leveling off in the early 1950s. By 1953, development of the neighborhood was largely complete, with a few examples of infill occurring through the 1950s and 1960s, and sporadic demolition/replacement of original buildings starting in the late 1950s through the present.

Theme: Ethnic Enclaves, 1921-1953

A review of the 1930 and 1940 Federal Census data provides a snapshot of the people who lived in the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ during its earliest years. In both census years, residents were generally middle- to upper-income, with common occupations including clerk, salesman, banker, contractor, broker, office worker, and housewife. A few people worked in the oil industry or in the motion picture industry (including crew members, directors, producers, actors, and musicians). A notable number of the households, including some living in multi-family properties, had live-in servants, from cooks to nurses. The most common household configuration was the nuclear family, followed closely by extended families; only a few households included roomers or lodgers. The district contained a mix of owners and renters, with

home ownership more common in single-family residences and renting more common in multi-family.

There do not appear to have been significant changes in the area's demographics between 1930 and 1940, with the exception of the proportion of foreign-born to native-born residents. In 1930, an estimated 20 to 30 percent of the area's residents were born in another country, most commonly Canada, Russia, England, Germany, Austria, and eastern European nations including Poland, Hungary, and Romania. The most common native languages besides English were Russian, Yiddish, and German. Many of the native-born residents were from the Midwest or the East, much more commonly than from the West or California in particular. In 1940, only about 10 to 15 percent of the residents were foreign-born, with the same most common countries of origin and native languages as in 1930. That year's census also saw an increase in the number of California-born residents compared to those born elsewhere in the United States, reflecting the growing number of younger household members born in Los Angeles.

In both census years, the district was an exclusively white community, with the exception of some servants living in white households; this reflects the likelihood of restrictive housing covenants being in force at those times. The presence of numerous residents with traditionally Jewish surnames, owners as well as occupants, suggests that codified exclusion of Jewish residents was not part of the neighborhood's development history, as it was in many other neighborhoods with restrictive covenants in place. A sampling of information from the 1930 and 1940 federal census data and building permits from the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety indicates the area had a significant Jewish presence from its earliest development.

Building permits for both single-family and multi-family properties in Miracle Mile between 1921 and 1930 commonly show owners with traditionally Jewish surnames, suggesting a fairly high rate of property ownership during the earliest years of the

neighborhood's development; additional research would be required to determine exactly how many of these owners actually lived in their Miracle Mile properties, but comparison with the 1930 census data indicates a substantial number of Jewish owners as well as renters in the proposed HPOZ. While religion was not an item recorded by census-takers, reasonable guesses can be made as to a household's religious and ethnic background based on country of origin, native language, and surname.²⁰ When viewed together, these points of data suggest that in 1930, Miracle Mile's 1930 population had a minimum of 7% Jewish households. This number includes only those households in which Yiddish was listed as the language spoken at home in their countries of origin—the most reliable, but least common/representative, measure of Jewish affiliation in the 1930 census data. An estimate based on countries of origin and surname suggests the neighborhood may have had up to 29% Jewish households. This number includes all households with at least one member born in a European country with a historically large Jewish population during the pre-World War II period.

This may not seem like a high proportion of Jewish residents, especially given the diversity of the Miracle Mile today, but for the pre-World War II period it was indeed substantial. Most of west-central Los Angeles did not have a large Jewish population until after World War II, except in small pockets around the Beverly-Fairfax neighborhood. In the early 20th century, the largest portion of the city's Jewish community lived in central and east side neighborhoods like the culturally diverse Boyle Heights. Many of these Angelenos were first-generation Americans, immigrating to the U.S. at

²⁰ This approach has obvious limitations. For example, Los Angeles had plenty of native-born Jewish residents by 1930, so country of origin is only useful in terms of more recent immigration. The European nations from which Jewish immigrants are most likely to have come, including Russia, Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Austria, delivered to the U.S. people of diverse religious backgrounds, not just Judaism. And only a subset of European Jewish immigrants would have spoken Yiddish as their native tongue, as opposed to the dominant languages of their countries of origin, from Russian to German. ARG's estimates proceeded with these limitations and data biases in mind.

the turn of the century; increased numbers arrived in Southern California after World War I. Another wave of Jewish immigrants arrived in Los Angeles after World War II, joining second-, third-, and even earlier generation Jewish Americans as the diaspora dispersed itself more widely across the city. The expansion of the Jewish community reflected the general expansion of the city's population as a whole, taking advantage of new developments extending as far as the San Fernando Valley.

Community amenities increased during the 1930s through 1950s, as evidenced by the development of a largely Jewish commercial district on nearby South Fairfax Avenue just south of Olympic Boulevard (today's "Little Ethiopia"), as well as a larger Jewish commercial district on North Fairfax at Beverly Boulevard.²¹ Building permits and the 1950 Sanborn maps show several additional Jewish institutions built in and near the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ from the late 1940s to the early 1950s. These included Temple Beth Zion at the corner of South Dunsuir Avenue and Olympic Boulevard (constructed 1946 and still in active operation within the proposed HPOZ), Rulef Sholom Synagogue at 1214 South Fairfax Avenue, to the southwest of the proposed HPOZ, and the Westside Jewish Community Center, constructed at 5870 Olympic Boulevard in 1954.

The 1940 census data is less useful than the 1930 data in estimating percentages of Jewish households in the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ, since foreign-born residents were by that time far outnumbered by native-born (primarily their children born and raised in Los Angeles), making country of origin a less common marker. The 1940 census did not ask for language spoken at home in respondents' native land, so Yiddish speakers were no longer specifically enumerated. Traditionally Jewish surnames were still evident in building and alteration permits as well as census data,

²¹ ARG, *SurveyLA Historic Resources Survey Report: Wilshire Community Plan Area Appendix Report: Historic Districts, Planning Districts and Multi-Property Resources* (prepared for the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning Office of Historic Resources, 2015). Available at <http://preservation.lacity.org/survey-la-findings-and-reports/#Wilshire>.

suggesting a substantial Jewish population remained in the neighborhood. But the largest likely Jewish population in Miracle Mile, representing those people born in the U.S., with a wider variety of surname types than those most commonly recognized as Jewish, remains difficult to ascertain from the available data. Given the known history of the Jewish diaspora in Los Angeles through the 1940s and 1950s and the evidence for increasing numbers of Jewish institutional and commercial amenities in the immediate vicinity during that time, it is likely that the Jewish population of the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ remained about the same or (more likely) increased during this postwar period. It is clear that Jewish owners and residents were a crucial part of the neighborhood during its period of significance, and that the Miracle Mile area was an enclave of the Jewish community that predated most in west-central Los Angeles.

Character-defining Features

The proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ retains the following character-defining features displaying its significance relating to residential development in Los Angeles (from 1905-1940):

- Largely single-family residential makeup north of Olympic Boulevard and predominantly multi-family residential makeup south of Olympic Boulevard
- Skewed rectilinear, gridded street pattern
- Uniform setbacks
- Concrete sidewalks
- Driveways with curb cuts
- Detached rear garages
- Mature shade trees, including ficus, jacaranda, and sycamore

4.3 Context: Architecture, 1921-1953

The architecture of the Miracle Mile HPOZ is largely within the Period Revival idiom, including styles like Spanish Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Mediterranean Revival, French Revival, and American Colonial Revival. During the late 1930s to 1950, the architecture of the district expanded to include Minimal Traditional-style and Mid-Century Modern residences, including post-World War II apartment buildings lining Alandale Avenue between Olympic Boulevard and W. 8th Street, as well throughout the survey area south of Olympic Boulevard. A few Craftsman-style residences were found in the survey area; two were moved to the area from elsewhere when it was first subdivided, and one property was a late example of the style.

Buildings and complexes within the HPOZ were designed by a number of architects and builders; in some cases, multiple buildings or complexes were designed by a single architect and/or constructed by a single builder. Prominent contractors in the neighborhood included B.W. Sherwood, the Commercial Construction Co., the Lorber-Heltzer Building Co., Pacific Ready-Cut Homes, and the Wilshire Vista Construction Company. Particularly notable architects whose work can be found in the HPOZ include S. Charles Lee, Edith Northman, R.M. Schindler, Louis Selden, Paul R. Williams, and Morgan, Walls, & Clements.

Theme: Period Revival Styles (1921-1950)

By the mid-1910s, Period Revival styles prevailed in residential developments across Los Angeles. A range of European and Colonial American residential styles inspired Period Revival architecture in the 20th century. As Miracle Mile was developed during the height of the Period Revival-style movement, Spanish Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Mediterranean Revival, American Colonial Revival, and French Revival architecture dominate the residential designs of the survey area.



Figure 9. Example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style (this and all subsequent photos were taken by ARG, 2014-2015)

Spanish Colonial Revival

The Spanish Colonial Revival style was one of the most prevalent residential styles in Southern California, following the 1915 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego. Its popularity coincided with the population boom Los Angeles experienced in the 1920s. The versatility of the style, allowing for builders and architects to construct buildings as simple or lavish as money would allow, helped to further spread its popularity throughout the city.²² Spanish Colonial Revival architecture is by far the most common residential architectural style in the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ.

Common character-defining features of the Spanish Colonial Revival style include:

- One or two stories in height
- Gable, hipped, and/or flat roof
- Clay tile roof or roof trim
- Stucco exterior walls (rarely, brick or cast stone)
- Incorporation of patios, courtyards, loggias or covered porches, and/or balconies
- Single and multi-paned windows, predominantly casement in type

²² City of Los Angeles, Office of Historic Resources, *Architecture and Designed Landscapes, Revival Architecture Derived from Mediterranean and Indigenous Themes*, final draft, 4 June 2010, 13.

- Exhibition of quality design through distinctive features such as:
 - Use of secondary materials, including wrought iron, wood, cast stone, terra cotta, polychromatic tile, terra cotta tile pavers
 - Complex massing, resulting from turrets, towers, corbelled overhangs, multiple and often asymmetrically organized wings, exterior staircases
 - Use of arches of a variety of shapes, for windows, doors, niches, openings in wing walls, and other features
 - Distinctively shaped and capped chimneys
 - Coved, molded, or wood-bracketed eaves
 - Occasional use of embellished door and window surrounds
 - Wooden plank or carved doors with prominent hinges and hardware
 - Window grilles, rejas (wrought iron screens/grilles), and pierced stucco screens
 - Windows with hoods
 - Leaded or colored glass window embellishments
 - Attic vents of clay tiles or pipe
 - Corbeled overhangs
 - Buttressed corners and wing walls
 - Porte cochères, detached garages of complementary design
 - Mediterranean or tropical gardens, fountains
 - Borrowings from Churrigueresque, Italian Villa Revival, Gothic Revival, Moorish, or Art Deco styles²³

²³ City of Los Angeles, Office of Historic Resources, *Architecture and Designed Landscapes, Revival Architecture Derived from Mediterranean and Indigenous Themes*, final draft, 4 June 2010, 19.

Mediterranean Revival

Like the Spanish Colonial Revival style, Mediterranean Revival architecture became increasingly prevalent in Los Angeles during the 1920s. The style became popular in Southern California because of California's identification with the region as having a similar climate, and the popularity of Mediterranean-inspired resorts along the Southern California coast. Loosely based on 16th century Italian villas, the style is more formal in massing than the Spanish Colonial Revival style; symmetrical façades and grand accentuated entrances characterize Mediterranean Revival architecture. Mediterranean Revival single- and multi-family residences are common throughout the survey area.

Common character-defining features of the Mediterranean Revival style include:

- Two stories in height
- Rectangular plan
- Symmetrical façade
- Dominant first story, with larger fenestration than upper stories and grand entrances
- Low-pitched hipped roofs
- Clay tile roofing
- Boxed eaves with carved brackets
- Stucco exteriors
- Entrance porches
- Arched entryways and window openings
- Decorative wrought iron elements
- Eclectic combination of stylistic features from several countries of the Mediterranean

Monterey Revival

The Monterey Revival style represented a merging of two other stylistic traditions – the California colonial architecture developed by Spanish and Mexican settlers and American colonial architecture brought to the state by emigrants from the East and Midwest. The style reached its height in popularity by the late



Figure 10. Example of the Mediterranean Revival style



Figure 11. Example of the Monterey Revival style



Figure 12. Example of the English Tudor Revival style

1920s in Los Angeles, when Period Revival styles were widespread among residential designs.²⁴ There were a handful of properties in the proposed HPOZ that were designed in the Monterey Revival style.

Common character-defining features of the Monterey Revival style include:

- Two stories in height
- Rectangular or L-shaped plan
- Low-pitched gabled or occasionally hipped roofs, either wood-shingled or tiled
- Rafters or brackets exposed in the eaves
- Stucco, brick, and wood exteriors, usually in combination
- Relatively restrained, second-story porches with square or turned posts
- Flat-headed, multi-paned windows, either casement or double-hung sash, often grouped in pairs
- Shutters
- Paired or single flat-headed doors
- Colonial Revival window and door surrounds²⁵

²⁴ City of Los Angeles, Office of Historic Resources, *Architecture and Designed Landscapes, Revival Architecture Derived from Mediterranean and Indigenous Themes*, final draft, 4 June 2010, 45-46.

²⁵ City of Los Angeles, Office of Historic Resources, *Architecture and*

English Tudor Revival

English Tudor Revival architecture was also popular in residential developments during the 1920s population boom in Los Angeles. The style was applied to a variety of buildings in the city, from large estates and middle-class houses to apartment buildings and small-scale commercial properties. Early examples are often more rustic and eclectic compared to the refined later versions.²⁶ English Tudor Revival architecture was the second most common architectural style in Miracle Mile, with numerous representative examples. The Storybook style, a more exaggerated variation of the English Tudor Revival style with many of the same features, is also present in the proposed HPOZ.

Common character-defining features of the English Tudor Revival style include:

- One or two stories in height
- Irregular building forms
- Steeply pitched, usually multi-gabled roofs
- Massive chimneys that are a prominent visual element
- Predominantly brick or stucco exteriors, or a combination
- Decorative half-timbering
- Tall, narrow, multi-paned casement windows arranged in groups
- Entrance vestibules with arched openings²⁷

Designed Landscapes, Revival Architecture Derived from Mediterranean and Indigenous Themes, final draft, 4 June 2010, 46-47.

²⁶ City of Los Angeles, Office of Historic Resources, *Architecture and Engineering, Arts and Crafts Movement: 1895-1929*, 29 April 2010, 21.

²⁷ City of Los Angeles, Office of Historic Resources, *Architecture and Engineering, Arts and Crafts Movement: 1895-1929*, 29 April 2010, 25-56.

American Colonial Revival

American Colonial Revival architecture experienced a resurgence in Los Angeles in the 1920s. The style used elements from a variety of earlier classically-based architectural modes, including Neoclassical, Federal and Georgian. Early examples of the style constructed in Los Angeles were typically single-family residences; by the 1930s and early 1940s, the style was often employed in the design of multi-family residential and small-scale commercial properties as well.²⁸ A number of American Colonial Revival-style residences were found in the proposed HPOZ, several of which also convey the influences of Craftsman architecture.

Common character-defining features of the American Colonial Revival style include:

- Typically one or two stories in height
- Simple building forms
- Hipped or gable roofs, typically with boxed eaves
- May display multiple roof dormers
- Symmetrical façade with entryway as the primary focus
- Clapboard or brick exteriors
- Multi-paned double-hung sash windows
- Paneled front door, sometimes with sidelights and transoms
- Details may include pediments, columns or pilasters, and fixed shutters²⁹

French Revival

A variety of architectural styles inspired by various periods of French architecture appeared in the United States during the 1910s. During the 1920s population boom in Los Angeles, the style was commonly applied to multi-family apartment buildings as well as larger



Figure 13. Example of the American Colonial Revival style



Figure 14. Example of the French Revival style

²⁸ City of Los Angeles, Office of Historic Resources, *Architecture and Engineering, American Colonial Revival: 1895-1960*, working draft, 2 June 2015, 10-15.

²⁹ City of Los Angeles, Office of Historic Resources, *Architecture and Engineering, American Colonial Revival: 1895-1960*, working draft, 2 June 2015, 12-16.



Figure 15. Example of the Chateausque style



Figure 16. Example of the Minimal Traditional style

single-family residences. Earlier examples were typically more eclectic and ornate than refined versions that developed later. A number of French Revival residences, most of which were multi-family properties, were found throughout the survey area.

Character-defining features of French Revival architecture include:

- One or two stories in height
- Steeply-pitched, hipped roofs
- Eaves commonly flared upward
- Stucco, stone, or brick exteriors
- Massive chimneys
- Casement or double-hung sash windows
- French doors
- Range of architectural detailing including quoins, pediments, and pilasters

Chateausque

The Chateausque style is a variation of French Revival architecture. The style is most often applied to multi-family duplexes and apartment buildings. Chateausque-style residences are characterized by vertical elements such as turrets, towers, pinnacles, and spires, and classical detailing such as quoins, pediments, and other types of applied ornamentation. A handful of Chateausque-style multi-family properties were identified in the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ.

Character-defining features of the Chateausque style include:

- Two stories in height
- Steeply-pitched, hipped roofs
- Eaves commonly flared upward
- Stucco exteriors (sometimes brick or stone)
- Dormers
- Multi-paned casement or double-hung sash windows
- Arched entryways

- Vertical elements such as spires, pinnacles, turrets, and towers
- Range of architectural detailing including quoins, pediments, and pilasters

Minimal Traditional

The Minimal Traditional style emerged in the late 1930s and early 1940s and became the dominant residential building style in the United States through the early 1950s. Often referred to as a “compromise style,” Minimal Traditional buildings reflect the form of Period Revival houses but have less stylistic and ornamental detailing. The style was well-suited to the pre- and post-World War II era, as its simplicity was sympathetic to the restraint of the Depression years and conducive to the mass production of houses in postwar subdivisions. Although most often thought of as a single-family residence style, Minimal Traditional apartment buildings are also quite common. Minimal Traditional architecture dominated the residential designs in the Miracle Mile HPOZ leading up to and directly following World War II.

Character-defining features of the Minimal Traditional style include:

- Low-pitched hipped roofs, typically with narrow eaves
- Stucco cladding; a combination of stucco with stone, brick and/or clapboard is not uncommon
- Steel casement windows
- Minimal applied ornament

4.4 Subsequent History (1953-Present)

After steady residential growth through the 1920s and 1930s, the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ saw little development during World War II, paralleling the dramatic slowdown in commercial development on Wilshire Boulevard itself. In the postwar years, Wilshire’s commercial growth exploded again, with luxurious department stores, clubs and restaurants joined by large office buildings housing high-profile corporations. Wilshire Boulevard quickly gained a new

reputation as a business center, and some residents of the Miracle Mile area found themselves commuting to work in the new business center instead of downtown. The 1957 lifting of the city’s 150-foot height limit restriction led to towering skyscrapers, bringing a fundamental change to the area’s landscape. The Wilshire area also witnessed a major influx of new institutional buildings during the postwar period, most visibly in the new Los Angeles County Museum of Art complex in 1965. All of these changes during the postwar period meant a shift in the area’s architectural identity, with many commercial and institutional buildings exhibiting sleek Modern styles rather than the more extravagant styles of previous decades.

The postwar construction boom changed the face of the commercial corridors surrounding the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ, but had only minor effects on the residential architectural character of the neighborhood. The single-family and multi-family residences built as infill during the 1950s and 1960s tended to fit within the overall scale of the area, including Minimal Traditional and Mid-Century Modern houses and apartment buildings. The exception was the large 1963 multi-building apartment complex constructed on the triangular parcel at San Vicente Boulevard and Cochran Avenue that once held the Page Military Academy. The character of the district changed slightly between the 1970s and the 1990s, when a few larger apartment complexes spanning multiple parcels were constructed in several places; sited in several blocks between 8th Street and Wilshire Boulevard, as well as along the Olympic Boulevard commercial corridor, these complexes had minimal visual effect on the rest of the district.

5. SURVEY RESULTS

5.1 Finding of Significance

Upon completion of this historic resources survey, ARG recommends that the Miracle Mile survey area is eligible for HPOZ adoption. It meets the local criteria for designation and retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance. All buildings within the proposed HPOZ boundaries were evaluated against the delineated eligibility standards, and it was determined that a large majority are Contributing resources to the HPOZ. Specifically, of the 1,347 structures within the Miracle Mile survey area, 1,076 (80%) were found to be Contributing and 271 (20%) were found to be Non-Contributing. Of the 1,076 Contributors, a large majority (794) were given a status of Altered Contributor due to the presence of minor, reversible alterations.

In keeping with standard California Office of Historic Preservation practices, each property was assigned a California Historical Resource (CHR) Status Code.³⁰ Contributors and Altered Contributors were assigned a CHR Status Code of 5D3 (appears to be a contributor to a district that appears eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation), and Non-Contributors were assigned a CHR Status Code of 6Z (found ineligible for National Register, California Register, or Local designation through survey evaluation).

5.2 Period of Significance

According to *National Register Bulletin 16a*, period of significance is defined as follows:

Period of significance is the length of time when a property was associated with important events, activities, or persons, or attained the characteristics which qualify it for National Register listing. Period

³⁰ California State Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Parks and Recreation, *Technical Assistance Bulletin #8: User's Guide to the California Historical Resource Status Codes & Historic Resources Inventory Directory* (Sacramento: California State Office of Historic Preservation, November 2004).

of significance usually begins with the date when significant activities or events began giving the property its historic significance; this is often a date of construction.³¹

The Period of Significance for the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ is 1921-1953; it begins with the construction date of the first residence in the district. Since the district was largely developed by the early 1950s and the little construction that occurred after that time is not reflective of its development history, the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ's period of significance ends in 1953.

5.3 HPOZ Boundary Justification

The proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ is roughly bounded by Wilshire Boulevard to the north, San Vicente Boulevard to the south, La Brea Avenue to the east, and Fairfax Avenue to the west, all of which are major thoroughfares that form a logical HPOZ boundary. The area was originally subdivided by multiple parties into multiple tracts between 1920 and 1937; all but one, a 1937 tract on Alande Avenue, were subdivided between 1920 and 1923.

5.4 Integrity Assessment

As noted above, *National Register Bulletin 15* defines seven elements of integrity which can be used to evaluate whether resources retain sufficient integrity to convey their historical significance. Using the Bulletin 15 framework, the following is an assessment of the integrity of the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ:

Location

Location is the place where the historic property or district was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.

The Miracle Mile survey area is located in the Mid-Wilshire community of central Los Angeles, within

³¹ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin #16a: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1977, rev. 1986, 1991, and 1997), 42.

the Wilshire CPA, approximately six-and-a-half miles west of downtown. Its location has not changed since its original subdivision and subsequent development. Thus, the study area retains integrity of location.

Design

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property or district.

Most of the buildings in the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ were constructed prior to World War II, and architectural styles primarily include those of the Period Revival mode. A vast majority of individual buildings within the district are mostly unaltered and convey their original design intent. The district is composed of multiple tracts subdivided between 1920 and 1937. Improvements to the tracts varied, but generally included the installation of paved streets, concrete sidewalks, driveways with curb cuts, and a variety of tree species. Despite some infill that occurred after World War II and later, the proposed HPOZ still retains the physical features of its individual buildings as well as the neighborhood as a whole. Thus, integrity of design remains intact.

Setting

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property or district, constituting topographic features, vegetation, manmade features, and relationships between buildings or open space.

The proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ is located in central Los Angeles in an area with nearly flat topography. From the turn of the 20th century to the years before World War II, the neighborhood was developed with single- and multi-family residences, as well as institutional properties and small-scale commercial buildings along its larger corridors. The study area is bounded by large commercial and institutional properties along Wilshire Boulevard to the north, single-family residences that comprise the Carthay Circle HPOZ to the west, and single- and multi-family properties as well as smaller commercial and institutional buildings of the rest of the Mid-

Wilshire neighborhood to the south and east.

With the exception of commercial and institutional properties dating from the postwar period along Wilshire Boulevard, most of the surrounding areas were developed during the same time period as the proposed HPOZ. Although the study area and adjacent neighborhoods endured some infill during the postwar period to the present and development on and adjacent to Wilshire Boulevard continues to encroach into the proposed HPOZ from the north, the street patterns, street features, and scale of development are largely intact. Therefore, the setting of the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ retains integrity of setting.

Materials

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 or district.

Buildings in the survey area were generally constructed with wood shingle or clay tile roofing, stucco siding, and wood sash or casement windows. Many of the properties within the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ have endured alterations to their materials, including replacement of wood windows with aluminum or vinyl windows; recladding of façades with sprayed stucco; and/or the replacement of wood shingle or clay tile roofing with composition shingles. However, most of these altered properties retain more of their original materials than they have lost, and in many cases replacement materials have been appropriate or in-kind; as a result, original materials of the majority of the study area's buildings are still apparent. Furthermore, the district's tract features retain most of their original materials, including paved streets, concrete sidewalks, and concrete driveways. The proposed HPOZ retains integrity of materials.

Workmanship

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture, people, or artisan during any given period in history or prehistory.

Contributing properties within Miracle Mile retain the physical evidence of the crafts of their time period, ranging from arched windows and hand-textured stucco on Spanish Colonial Revival buildings to rolled eaves and batten wood doors on Tudor Revival residences. Even the altered properties within the district typically retain enough of their original character to convey the original intent of their designers and builders, and as a result they continue to evoke the aesthetics and values of a particular period. For these reasons, the survey area retains integrity of workmanship.

Feeling

Feeling is a property's or district's expression of the aesthetic or historical sense of a particular period of time.

Due to Miracle Mile's high design quality, intact setting and large number of contributors with moderate to high levels of integrity, the proposed HPOZ retains its integrity of feeling.

Association

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property or district.

Miracle Mile is significant for its association with patterns of residential development in the city, related to early automobile suburbanization. It also retains a significant concentration of resources designed in various Period Revival modes of architecture, and was historically associated with the early westward movement of the Jewish community in Los Angeles. The proposed HPOZ retains many of its character-defining features relating to early automobile suburbs in Los Angeles, such as paved streets, relatively consistent lot sizes, uniform setbacks, concrete sidewalks, driveways with curb cuts, and mature trees. Thus, the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ retains integrity of association.

In summary, the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ retains a high level of integrity relating to its significance.

6. CONCLUSION

Upon completion of the historic resources survey, ARG has concluded that the Miracle Mile survey area is significant for its association with early patterns of residential development as an automobile suburb in Los Angeles; for its architectural distinction, representing a wide range of Period Revival styles; and as an early ethnic enclave associated with the Jewish community. Of the 1,347 buildings within the study area, 1,076 (80%) retain high levels of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, and meet the threshold of "Contributing" structure. Therefore, ARG recommends that the proposed Miracle Mile HPOZ meets eligibility criteria pursuant to the HPOZ Ordinance and retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance.

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