



Historic Resources Survey Report

Mission Hills-Panorama City-North Hills Community Plan Area



Prepared for:

City of Los Angeles
Department of City Planning
Office of Historic Resources



Prepared by:



Architectural Resources Group, Inc.
Pasadena, CA

March 20, 2014

Table of Contents

Project Overview	1
SurveyLA Methodology Summary	1
Project Team	3
Survey Area	3
Designated Resources	12
Community Plan Area Methodology	14
Summary of Findings	16
Summary of Property Types	16
Summary of Contexts and Themes	18
Selected Bibliography	29

Appendices

- Appendix A: Individual Resources
- Appendix B: Non-Parcel Resources
- Appendix C: Historic Districts and Planning Districts

Project Overview

This Historic Resources Survey Report (Survey Report) has been completed on behalf of the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning's Office of Historic Resources (OHR) for the SurveyLA historic resources survey of the Mission Hills-Panorama City-North Hills Community Plan Area (CPA). This project was undertaken from May 2013 to March 2014 by Architectural Resources Group (ARG).

This Survey Report provides a summary of the work completed, including a description of the Survey Area; an overview of the field methodology; a summary of relevant contexts, themes and property types; and complete lists of all recorded resources. This Survey Report is intended to be used in conjunction with the **SurveyLA Field Results Master Report** (Master Report), which provides a detailed discussion of SurveyLA methodology and explains the terms used in this report and associated appendices. The Master Report, Survey Report, and Appendices are available online at www.surveyla.org.

SurveyLA Methodology Summary

Below is a brief summary of SurveyLA methodology. Refer to the Master Report discussed above for more information.

Field Survey Methods

- Properties surveyed for SurveyLA are evaluated for eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources and for local designation as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments (HCM) or Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZ), commonly known as historic districts.
- Field surveyors cover the entire area within the boundaries of a CPA. However, only resources that have been identified as significant within the contexts developed for SurveyLA are recorded.
- Consultants making resource evaluations meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards* in Architectural History, History, or a related field.
- Surveys focus on identifying significant resources dating from about 1850 to 1980.
- All surveys are completed from the public right-of-way (from vehicles or on foot as needed).
- Digital photographs are taken of all evaluated resources.
- Field surveys do not include:

- Individual resources and historic districts (including HPOZs) that are already designated (listed in the National, California or local registers).
- Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles (CRA/LA) surveys conducted within the last five years.
- Potential HPOZ areas which have been surveyed within the last five years and are in the process of being designated.

SurveyLA Resource Types

SurveyLA identifies individual resources, non-parcel resources, historic districts and district contributors and non-contributors. Each of these is described below. Appendices A, B, and C of this Survey Report are organized by resource type.

- **Individual Resources** are generally resources located within a single assessor parcel, such as a residence or duplex. However, a parcel may include more than one individual resource, if each appears to be significant.
- **Non-Parcel Resources** are not associated with Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs) and generally do not have addresses. Examples may include street trees, street lights, landscaped medians, bridges, and signs.
- **Historic Districts** are areas that are related geographically and by theme. Historic districts may include single or multiple parcels depending on the resource. Examples of resources that may be recorded as historic districts include residential neighborhoods, garden apartments, commercial areas, large estates, school and hospital campuses, and industrial complexes.
- **District Contributors and Non-Contributors** are buildings, structures, objects, sites and other features located within historic districts (such as residences, schools, and parks). Generally, non-contributing resources are those that are extensively altered, are built outside the period of significance, or do not relate to historic contexts and themes defined for the district.
- **Planning Districts** are areas that are related geographically and by theme, but do not meet eligibility standards for designation. This is generally because the majority of the contributing features have been altered, resulting in a cumulative impact on the overall integrity of the area and making it ineligible as a Historic District. The Planning District determination, therefore, is used as a tool to inform new Community Plans being developed by the Department of City Planning. These areas have consistent planning concepts, such as height, massing, setbacks, and street trees, which may be considered in the local planning process.

Project Team

The Mission Hills-Panorama City-North Hills CPA survey team included the following personnel from ARG: Charles E. Chase, Principal; and Katie Horak, Senior Associate and Architectural Historian and Preservation Planner; and Andrew Goodrich, Architectural Historian and Preservation Planner. Additional assistance was provided by interns Evanne St. Charles and Sandra Shannon. Katie Horak served as project manager.

Concurrent with ARG's survey of the Mission Hills-Panorama City-North Hills CPA, the additional Los Angeles CPAs of Arleta-Pacoima, Westlake, and Silver Lake-Echo Park-Elysian Valley were also surveyed by a team including ARG and the firms Historic Resources Group (HRG) and GPA Consulting (GPA). HRG conducted the survey of the Westlake CPA, and GPA conducted the survey of the Silver Lake-Echo Park-Elysian Valley CPA. Personnel from HRG also participated in some aspects of this project.

The project team also included Kevin Roderick, journalist, editor, and author of *The San Fernando Valley: America's Suburb*. Kevin provided valuable expertise and input regarding the San Fernando Valley and its significant resources throughout all phases of the project.

Survey Area

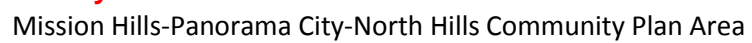
Description of the Survey Area

The boundaries of the identified Survey Area correspond with those of the Mission Hills-Panorama City-North Hills Community Plan Area. The Survey Area is located in the central and northern portions of the San Fernando Valley, approximately 20 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles. The area is irregular in shape. The northern boundary is defined by the junction of Interstate 405 San Diego (405 Freeway) and Interstate 5 Golden State (5 Freeway) Freeways and a section of Lassen Street. The western boundary follows the path of the 405 Freeway and Bull Creek. The southern boundary is formed by Roscoe Boulevard and the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks. The eastern boundary follows an irregular course that includes sections of the 5 Freeway, Laurel Canyon Boulevard, the Pacoima Wash, Woodman Avenue, Branford Street, the Pacoima Diversion Channel, and the Tujunga Wash. The Survey Area abuts the CPAs of Sylmar to the north, Granada Hills-Knollwood and Northridge to the west, Reseda-West Van Nuys and Van Nuys-North Sherman Oaks to the south, and Arleta-Pacoima and Sun Valley-La Tuna Canyon to the east. A portion of the Survey Area is bordered by the City of San Fernando to the east.

The Survey Area includes three distinct communities:

- **Mission Hills** is located in the northern section of the Survey Area. The community is generally bounded by the 405 Freeway to the west, Lassen Street to the south, and the 5 Freeway, Laurel Canyon Boulevard, and the Tujunga Wash to the east. The northern boundary is defined by the junction of the 405 and 5 Freeways. A section of the eastern boundary abuts the City of San Fernando. A focal point of Mission Hills is the Mission San Fernando Rey de España, which was established in 1797 as the seventeenth of 21 Franciscan missions in the present-day state of California. In addition to being one of the earliest development sites in the Southern California region, the property stands out as the only Franciscan mission located within Los Angeles city limits.
- **Panorama City** is located southeast of Mission Hills, in the southeastern section of the Survey Area. The triangular-shaped community is generally bounded by the Pacoima Wash to the west, the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks to the south, and the Tujunga Wash, Branford Street, and Woodman Avenue to the east. The northern boundary is defined by the intersection of Woodman Avenue and Lassen Street.
- **North Hills** is located in the central and western sections of the Survey Area. The community is bounded by Lassen Street on the north, Bull Creek on the west, Roscoe Boulevard on the south, and the Pacoima Wash on the east. The community is located southwest of Mission Hills and west of Panorama City.

SurveyLA



The Survey Area comprises 20,802 parcels, of which 19,789 were evaluated by the SurveyLA team. In accordance with SurveyLA methodology, properties not surveyed include buildings constructed after 1980 and resources designated under local, state and/or federal programs.¹

The Mission Hills-Panorama City-North Hills CPA comprises 7,528 net acres in the northeastern section of the San Fernando Valley. Aside from a small amount of varied, hillside terrain north of the Mission San Fernando Rey de España and a gently-sloping knoll near the intersection of Plummer Street and Woodley Avenue, the area is generally flat. The CPA is bisected and partially bounded by a network of waterways including the Pacoima and Tujunga washes, Bull Creek, and the Pacoima Diversion Channel. All of these waterways are channelized. At the eastern edge of the CPA are the Pacoima Spreading Grounds, at which water is diverted from adjacent waterways and allowed to percolate into the ground. The Spreading Grounds, first used in 1932, play an integral role in the replenishment of local groundwater supplies. A portion of the Spreading Grounds falls within the boundaries of the adjacent Arleta-Pacoima CPA.

Human-made features largely shape and define the CPA. In addition to the channelized creeks and groundwater replenishment facility, the area is partially bounded by the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks and the 5 and 405 Freeways. State Route 118 Ronald Reagan Freeway (118 Freeway) runs perpendicular to the 405 and 5 Freeways and bisects the community of Mission Hills. Since all three freeways were constructed above grade, ramps, overpasses, and interchanges physically and visually impact adjacent neighborhoods.

Most boulevards and arterial streets in the CPA adhere to an orthogonal grid. Secondary streets tend to be more irregular in character, with many terminating in cul-de-sacs. Residential streets adjacent to freeways are especially irregular in form. Exceptions to this general pattern include the core of Panorama City, which was planned and developed around a curvilinear street network; the north section of Mission Hills, which conforms to the area's varied topography; and the eastern sections of Panorama City and Mission Hills, which conform to the Spanish Colonial-era street grid that defines adjacent CPAs and the City of San Fernando. This grid, which is skewed 45 degrees of the cardinal directions, adheres to the Laws of the Indies used by the Spanish settlers in the platting of the missions.

Several arterial streets in the CPA historically served as major rail and automobile transportation routes. Prior to the completion of the 405 Freeway in 1962 and the 118 Freeway in 1979, Sepulveda Boulevard and Devonshire Street functioned as the area's major state highways.² Between 1911 and 1952, a Pacific Electric red car route traversed the CPA, connecting downtown Los Angeles with San Fernando by way of Van Nuys Boulevard, Parthenia

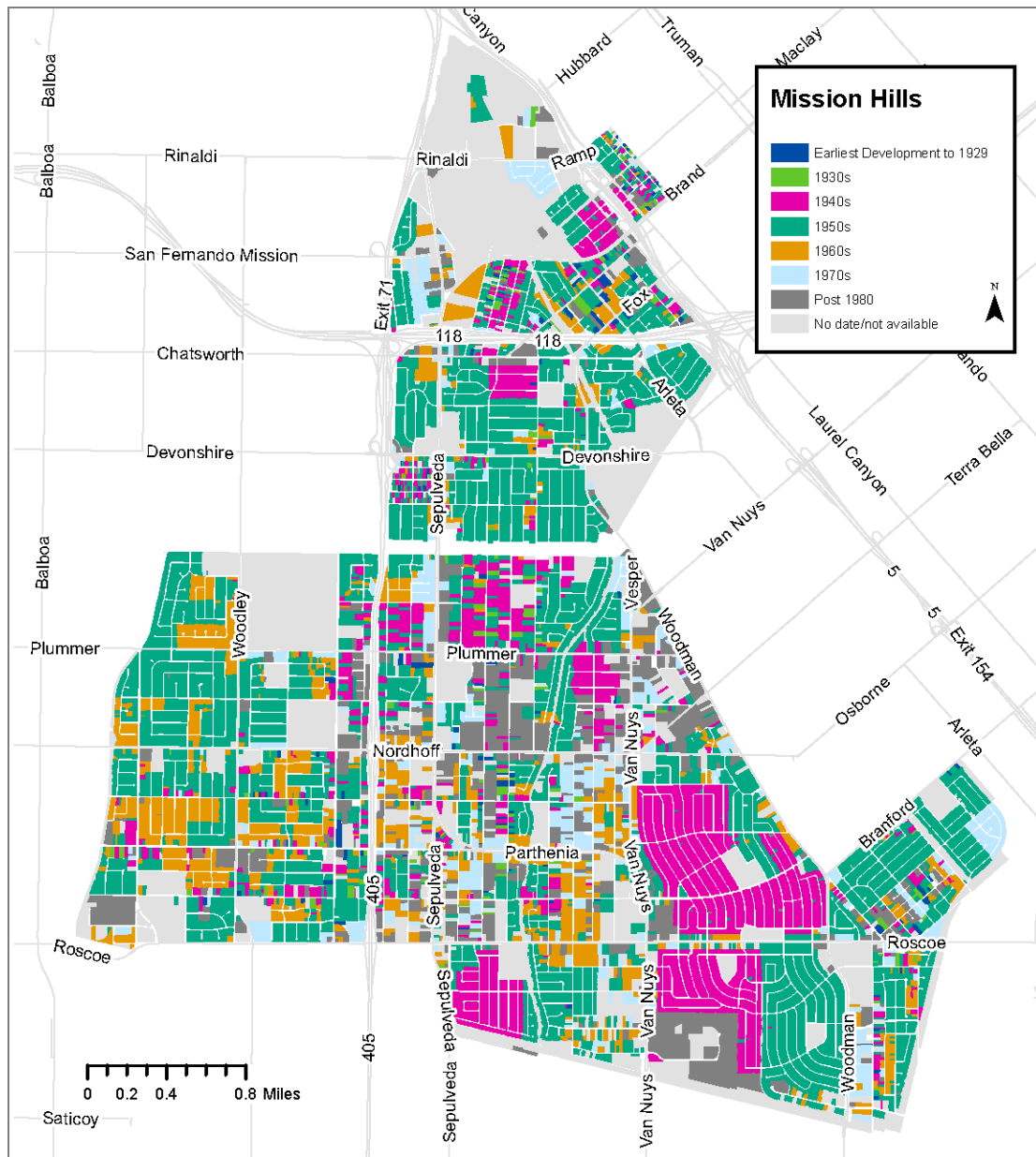
¹ For information on designated resources within the Mission Hills-Panorama City-North Hills CPA, please refer to the Designated Resources Map on page 13 of this report or online at www.preservation.lacity.org.

² Kevin Roderick, *The San Fernando Valley: America's Suburb* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Times Books, 2002), 108.

Street, Parthenia Place, Sepulveda Boulevard, and Brand Boulevard.³ Evidence of the streetcar route can be detected by the wide medians that still exist on several streets.

The major east-west arteries within the Survey Area are (from north to south): Rinaldi Street, San Fernando Mission Boulevard, Brand Boulevard, Chatsworth Drive, Chatsworth Street, Devonshire Street, Lassen Street, Plummer Street, Nordhoff Street, Parthenia Street, Branford Street, and Roscoe Boulevard. The major north-south arteries within the Survey Area are (from east to west): Woodman Avenue, Van Nuys Boulevard, Sepulveda Boulevard, Haskell Avenue, Woodley Avenue, and Hayvenhurst Avenue.

³ Richard Simon, "Red Car Memorial: Amid Rail Controversies, Historic Trolley Station About to be Declared a Landmark," 26 December 1988.



Chronology map of the Mission Hills – Panorama City – North Hills CPA (ARG 2013)

Development History

Development activity within the CPA corresponds to three distinct, yet disparate periods in California's history: the establishment of Spanish missions in the late 18th century, agricultural-related development corresponding with the expansion of the streetcar into the Valley in 1911 and the opening of the Los Angeles Aqueduct in 1913, and the proliferation of suburban development that took hold shortly after World War II.

European settlement in the CPA first occurred in 1797, when Franciscan missionaries founded Mission San Fernando Rey de España, the seventeenth in the chain of 21 Spanish missions that operated in Alta California. Located approximately halfway between two existing missions, San Buenaventura and San Gabriel Arcangel, Mission San Fernando stood out as the most visible landmark in the otherwise-barren San Fernando Valley. Primary buildings associated with the mission included the main church, constructed between 1804 and 1806, and the *convento*, constructed between 1810 and 1812. Only the *convento* is extant; the original church was razed and reconstructed after sustaining irreparable damage in the 1971 Sylmar earthquake. Native American converts, or *neofitos* were drawn from several nearby Tongva-speaking villages, Chumash lands located across the hills to the west, and settlements located further inland.⁴

Mission San Fernando was secularized in the 1830s, shortly after Mexico declared its independence from Spain. In the mid-19th century, the CPA was incorporated into the Rancho Ex-Mission San Fernando, a vast land grant that encompassed the majority of the San Fernando Valley. Per a complex arrangement between the rancho's owner and then-Governor Pio Pico, portions of the rancho were leased and later owned by the Pico family. During the Picos' tenure, the sprawling, open land that comprised the CPA was used for cattle and sheep ranching.⁵ Still standing near the mission is the Andres Pico Adobe, which was constructed in 1834 and remodeled by members of the Pico family in 1873. Portions of the Rancho Ex-Mission San Fernando were divided and sold off incrementally as the 19th century progressed.

Rail and streetcar lines expanded their reach into the northeast San Fernando Valley at the turn of the twentieth century. In 1893, the Southern Pacific Railroad constructed 21 miles of track between Burbank and Chatsworth, shaping the southern boundaries of present-day North Hills and Panorama City. The track became part of the SP Coast Main Line, which opened in 1904 and connected Los Angeles to San Francisco via the Santa Susana Pass.⁶ The Pacific Electric Railway opened an electric streetcar line in 1911 that connected Los Angeles and San Fernando by way of Van Nuys Boulevard, Parthenia Street, Parthenia Place, Sepulveda Boulevard, and Brand Boulevard.⁷ Day trips along the streetcar line to Mission San Fernando became popular excursions by the 1920s. Efforts to preserve and rehabilitate the mission, which had fallen into a state of disrepair in the late 19th century, also took root around this time. Included in these efforts was the improvement of Brand Park in the 1920s.

Ranches and agriculture represented the predominant land uses in the CPA during the first half of the 20th century, made possible largely by the completion of the Los Angeles Aqueduct in 1913. Citrus, which had been cultivated in the area since the late 19th century, was grown in abundance, although the sprawling, open land that comprised the CPA also supported

⁴ Marc Wanamaker, *San Fernando Valley* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2011), 22.

⁵ Wanamaker, 23.

⁶ "The Coast Line: A History," *The Ferroequinologist* (June 1984): 2-14.

⁷ Richard Simon, "Red Car Memorial: Amid Rail Controversies, Historic Trolley Station About to be Declared a Landmark," *Los Angeles Times*, 26 December 1988.

cultivation of such other crops as walnuts, wheat, and alfalfa. North Hills, which was previously named Mission Acres and later Sepulveda, was initially developed in the 1910s and 1920s with chicken ranches and fruit and vegetable farms.⁸ Scattered houses and neighborhood institutions were constructed in the community at this time. In the southeast section of the CPA was the Panorama Ranch, also known as Pellissier Ranch, a large dairy farm that was operated by the Los Angeles Creamery.⁹ Development was limited to a handful of modest residences which were built alongside orchards and ranches near present-day Mission Hills and North Hills, as well as to the east of the Panorama Ranch property.

The CPA experienced rapid physical and economic growth shortly after World War II. With its abundance of agricultural and ranch lands, the area was attractive to developers who were eager to capitalize on the increased demand for housing and employment in the postwar era. By the 1950s, large-scale suburban development had transformed the once-rural CPA into the residential, commercial, and industrial center of the North San Fernando Valley.

The development of Panorama City marked the beginning of this transformation. Plans for the community were conceived in 1947, when developer Fritz Burns and industrialist Henry Kaiser purchased 400 acres of the former Panorama Ranch and announced their intent to develop a master-planned community. Burns and Kaiser commissioned the renowned architectural firm of Wurdeman and Becket to develop the community's master plan, which called for the construction of over 4,000 homes, 31 acres of commercial development, 25 acres of parking, and a network of curvilinear streets. Construction commenced in 1947. New homes were sold and manufactured by Kaiser Community Homes, a branch of Kaiser's industrial empire, using mass-production principles that Kaiser had successfully applied to the manufacture of ships during World War II. Building single-family homes en masse using this method helped keep costs low; two-bedroom, 800-square foot homes with attached garages sold for less than \$10,000.¹⁰ Homes in Panorama City sold very quickly, which led to the rise of a near-instant community. Key elements of Wurdeman and Becket's master plan, including curvilinear streets, small houses, and proximity to commercial development, are still evident today.

Panorama City's rapid residential development was aided by the concurrent development of several large-scale industries nearby. General Motors had purchased a 100-acre portion of the Panorama Ranch in 1945, and began construction of a one-million-square-foot assembly plant near the junction of Van Nuys Boulevard and the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks. The assembly plant opened in 1948.¹¹ In 1953, the Carnation Company opened a food research laboratory across the street from the GM plant on Van Nuys Boulevard.¹² The following year, two large

⁸ Marty Altschul, "Tracts Replace Chicken Farms Which Flourished in Sepulveda," *Los Angeles Times*, October 26, 1969.

⁹ Greg Hise, *Magnetic Los Angeles* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 194.

¹⁰ Kevin Roderick, *The San Fernando Valley: America's Suburb* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Times Books, 2002), 127.

¹¹ Greg Hise, *Magnetic Los Angeles* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 195.

¹² "Plans to Increase Food Revealed by Carnation," *Los Angeles Times*,

breweries opened in the adjacent community of Van Nuys: a Joseph Schlitz brewery was located near Woodman Avenue and the Southern Pacific Railroad Tracks, and an Anheuser Busch brewery opened near the intersection of Roscoe Boulevard and the present-day route of Interstate 405.¹³ A number of smaller-scale industries concentrated in industrial tracts on Saticoy and Arminta streets. Industrial development provided ample employment opportunities for prospective homebuyers and provided the CPA with a strong and stable economic base.

Residential construction in Panorama City was accompanied by commercial and institutional development, which arose in the 1950s to serve the needs of the area's growing population. In addition to selling and constructing single-family homes, Burns and Kaiser embarked on the development of a 100-acre regional shopping center adjacent to their planned residential subdivision. Between 1955 and 1964, the Panorama City Shopping Center was developed with four major department stores: Broadway, Robinson's, Montgomery Ward, and Ohrbach's. The Panorama City Shopping Center thereafter emerged as the commercial heart of the North San Fernando Valley. Theaters, bowling alleys, food markets, banks, churches, schools, and post offices were constructed along major commercial corridors. In the 1960s, developers experimented with the construction of mid- and high-rise office towers on Van Nuys Boulevard, and in 1962 the Kaiser Foundation opened a 10-story hospital at the intersection of Roscoe Boulevard and Woodman Avenue.¹⁴ In a relatively short amount of time, Panorama City had come into being as a well-planned, self-sustaining suburban community with affordable homes, a strong employment base, and ample amenities.

Suburban development also occurred at an accelerated pace in the north and central portions of the CPA, in present-day North Hills (known as Sepulveda until 1992) and Mission Hills (known as Dennis Park until 1958). Large tracts of agricultural lands and ranches were incrementally purchased and developed into single-family neighborhoods in the 1950s and 1960s. However, unlike Panorama City, the development of these communities was not guided by a master plan, so subdivisions arose in a more piecemeal fashion. This wave of residential development was accompanied by commercial and institutional development along the area's primary thoroughfares. In 1955, the Veterans' Administration opened a psychiatric hospital on 160 acres in Sepulveda, reflecting the area's rapid growth and increased demand for services.¹⁵

The completion of the 5 and 405 Freeways in the 1960s and the subsequent construction of the 118 Freeway further bolstered suburban growth by providing the CPA with direct connections to major employment centers in central Los Angeles. The few remaining vacant parcels were developed with single-family and multi-family residences during this period. Like much of the San Fernando Valley, the CPA was almost entirely built out with a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional properties by the close of the 1960s.

¹³ "Schlitz Head Due Today to Dedicate Plant," *Los Angeles Times*, November 1, 1954.

¹⁴ "New 10-Story Hospital Opens Doors," *Los Angeles Times*, September 23, 1962.

¹⁵ "\$20,000,000 VA Hospital Dedicated at Rites Here," *Los Angeles Times*, April 15, 1955.

Structural changes in the American economy and a major earthquake spelled hard times for the CPA in the 1990s. In 1992, General Motors closed its assembly plant, citing the general decline of American auto manufacturing and rising costs of domestic labor. Closure of the plant left thousands unemployed. Two other major local employers, the Schlitz Brewery and the Carnation Research Laboratory, closed in 1990 and 1994, respectively. By the mid-1990s, the industrial backbone of the local economy had almost entirely disintegrated. These economic issues were compounded by the 1994 Northridge Earthquake, which jolted the CPA and damaged scores of buildings, some beyond repair. However, in the years since the earthquake many of these structures have been replaced, which accounts in part for the scattered post-1980 construction in the CPA. Other recent development projects, including the construction of a shopping plaza on the site of the GM assembly plant and Panorama High School on the site of the Carnation Research Laboratory, paint an optimistic economic picture of the CPA's future.

The CPA has experienced a dramatic demographic transformation over time. Like the majority of the San Fernando Valley, the area was wrought with restrictive covenants which prevented nonwhites from purchasing property. Rather, racial and ethnic minorities were "steered" to the neighboring communities of Pacoima and San Fernando, where covenants were generally not implemented, and the CPA was historically characterized by racial homogeneity and a relative lack of diversity. Discriminatory housing practices persisted into the postwar era in spite of the Supreme Court's landmark decision in 1948 that rendered restrictive covenants unenforceable in court. The development of Panorama City exemplified this trend; although its developer, Fritz Burns, encouraged occupational and class diversity within the planned development, new homes within the subdivision were marketed and sold to a predominantly white clientele.¹⁶ However, the implementation of fair housing laws and the integration of public schools in the 1960s and 1970s paved the way to make the CPA a more racially heterogeneous environment, and over time the CPA has become emblematic of the rich diversity within Los Angeles. Today, Mission Hills, Panorama City, and North Hills all feature majority Latino populations, although each community is composed of other racial and ethnic groups as well.¹⁷

Designated Resources

The following map depicts designated resources within the Mission Hills-Panorama City-North Hills CPA at the time of the survey. The CPA contains three HCMs: the Romulo Pico Adobe/Rancho Romulo (HCM # 7) at 10940 Sepulveda Boulevard; Mission San Fernando Rey de España (HCM # 23) at 15151 San Fernando Mission Boulevard; and the Sepulveda Unitarian Universalist Society Sanctuary, at times referred to as "The Onion," (HCM # 965) at 9550 N. Haskell Avenue. The Romulo Pico Adobe/Rancho Romulo and Mission San Fernando Rey de

¹⁶ Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 41.

¹⁷ "Mapping L.A.," *Los Angeles Times*.

SurveyLA
Mission Hills-Panorama City-North Hills Community Plan Area



Community Plan Area Survey Methodology

The survey of the Mission Hills-Panorama City-North Hills CPA was conducted using the methodology established by the OHR for SurveyLA which includes the citywide Historic Context Statement and customized mobile Field Guide Survey System (FiGSS).¹⁸ Concurrent with the survey of the Mission Hills-Panorama City-North Hills CPA, three additional community plan areas were also surveyed, including one in the north San Fernando Valley and two in central Los Angeles.

The field work was conducted in two phases: *reconnaissance* and *documentation*. The reconnaissance phase was conducted by the project managers and key staff of all four CPA surveys, all of whom meet the Secretary of the Interior's *Professional Qualifications Standards*. The reconnaissance team for the Mission Hills-Panorama City-North Hills CPA included Katie Horak of Architectural Resources Group, and Kari Fowler and Christine Lazzaretto of Historic Resources Group. This phase involved a detailed and methodical review of each neighborhood, street, and individual property within the Survey Area. It was during this phase that decisions were made about which properties and districts should be documented, and how those properties should be evaluated. During this initial reconnaissance phase, surveyors reviewed pre-loaded data submitted by community members to MyHistoricLA, identified concentrations of resources that might later be recorded as eligible historic districts and planning districts, and developed lists of pre-field research tasks that would help inform the field survey. By making these decisions up front and as a team, this methodology ensures a more thoughtful approach to resource identification and evaluation, creates greater consensus among the field survey teams, and produces more consistent survey results across CPAs. This approach also substantially streamlines the next phase of field survey, enabling the field teams to document large numbers of properties quickly and efficiently.

During the reconnaissance phase, ARG created Geographic Information Systems (GIS) maps of each neighborhood; these maps were printed for use in the field. A blank map showing only street names, address numbers, and parcel lines was used by surveyors in the field for notes and comments about resources identified during the reconnaissance phase. Another map featured parcels shaded by decade of building construction, which helped to illustrate chronological development patterns and concentrations of resources.

Once the reconnaissance phase was completed, the documentation phase began. During this phase, field work was conducted by teams of two. Properties that were identified during the previous phase, along with those that had significant associative qualities identified in pre-loaded data in FiGSS, were recorded and evaluated for potential historic, cultural, or architectural significance. Documentation included a digital photograph, recordation of historic features and subsequent alterations, and the reason for a property's potential historic

¹⁸ For more information about the SurveyLA methodology, see the ***SurveyLA Field Results Master Report***.

significance. It was also during this phase that contexts and themes were applied and evaluation status codes were assigned.

Surveyed properties included residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial buildings and important landscape features such as street trees and vernacular landscapes. All field work was conducted from the public right-of-way. Following the completion of field work, all survey data were reviewed in detail by a qualified survey professional to ensure accuracy and consistency throughout the data set.

Survey teams conducted research on individual properties and neighborhoods throughout the field survey process. When specific information was needed in order to complete an evaluation, additional research was conducted. Sources included building permits, historical newspapers and periodicals, Sanborn maps, and city directories. This research utilized the collections of the Los Angeles Public Library; Online Archive of California; University of Southern California (USC); University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA); and the Library of Congress archives. This research helped with the identification of historic tract names and boundaries, names of tract subdividers, dates of subdivision, and original building uses and footprints.

Summary of Findings

The following discussion of Property Types, Contexts, and Themes relates to the resources identified and recorded as eligible for designation.

Summary of Property Types

The Mission Hills-Panorama City-North Hills CPA is predominantly composed of single-family neighborhoods. Although a variety of other property types exist, the patterns of development in this area – primarily postwar suburbanization – were conducive to widespread single-family residential development.

Residential Properties

The survey identified a number of residential properties that are eligible for designation. Within the Survey Area is a limited amount of early residential development that is reflective of its pre-World War II agricultural roots. Ten intact early single-family residences, most of which date to the 1910s and 1920s and exhibit character-defining features of Craftsman or Period Revival style architecture, were identified in the survey as individually eligible. Generally, these early residences are located in residential neighborhoods that were later built out with postwar tract housing, and were evaluated on the basis of their relative rarity. The Survey Area also includes a rare example of an Arroyo Stone residence from the 1930s, which was identified for its creative use of this regional building material.

Detached single-family residences constructed after World War II account for the majority of residential development in the Survey Area. Thirteen single-family residences from the postwar era were identified as significant examples of Mid-Century Modern architecture. These residences were part of a larger residential subdivision designed by notable postwar architects Dan Saxon Palmer and William Krisel. Since the majority of the homes within the subdivision have been materially altered, the tract itself does not appear to meet the integrity thresholds for eligibility as a historic district, although the survey did identify the subdivision as a residential planning district.

Two additional residential historic districts were identified for their association with post-World War II suburbanization. One historic district accounts for the original Panorama City development, one of the earliest examples of a master-planned, mass-produced residential subdivision in Southern California. The other historic district encompasses groupings of mature street trees that form dramatic canopies and are significant as extant tract features associated with a large postwar residential subdivision.

The survey identified one multifamily residential property that was designed and owned by one of the north San Fernando Valley's most famous former residents, Jane Russell. The survey also identified two 1960s-era mobile home parks that may be significant examples of the property type; surveyors could not evaluate these properties due to limited access and visibility.

Commercial Properties

The Survey Area contains several intact examples of commercial properties that were built between the 1940s and 1960s. Most commercial properties that were identified in the survey are concentrated along the area's primary vehicular thoroughfares including Sepulveda, Van Nuys, and Roscoe Boulevards.

Eleven commercial properties were identified as individually eligible. Six of the individually-eligible properties, including two commercial office towers, two former financial institutions, a bowling alley, and a strip mall, were evaluated on the basis of their architectural merit and stand out as excellent examples of Post-War Modernism. Three department stores and a neighborhood theater that bear association with the early planned development of Panorama City are also identified in the survey. One property was identified as a long-term business that had been in continuous operation in the Survey Area for decades.

Three commercial properties (recorded as districts) were identified in the survey. Two are rare examples of motels that are associated with vehicular transportation prior to the construction of an expansive freeway network in the area. A 1960s-era automobile dealership was identified for its association with automobile culture and as an excellent example of the Mid-Century Modern style.

The survey also identified two intact commercial signs: one neon/incandescent bulb sign and one freestanding pole sign, each of which advertises its associated business.

Institutional Properties

The Survey Area contains a number of institutional property types that serve the local communities. Common eligible institutional properties include churches, schools, medical complexes, municipal parks, Department of Water and Power (DWP) facilities, and fire stations.

Four of the identified institutional resources are individually eligible as exemplary of the property type and/or their representative architectural styles. Seven eligible institutional districts were identified: three school campuses, a park, a church campus, a medical complex, and a rare example of a groundwater retention facility dating to the 1930s. Two postwar Department of Water and Power (DWP) facilities were also identified.

Industrial Properties

One industrial property, a motion picture studio dating from the 1920s, was identified as an extremely rare example of an entertainment industry-related resource in the Survey Area. In addition, the survey identified an early radio broadcasting facility and a Quonset hut.

Other Properties

Two cemeteries were identified in the Survey Area as significant landscapes. In addition, four non-parcel resources were identified in the Survey Area. These include three air raid sirens and the remnants of a stone dam associated with the original Mission San Fernando grounds.

Summary of Contexts and Themes

Many of the Contexts and Themes developed for the SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement are represented in the Mission Hills-Panorama City-North Hills CPA. The following is a representative sampling of some of the more common Context/Theme combinations used in the survey, as well as some examples that are specific to this part of the city. Each Context/Theme is illustrated with specific examples from the Survey Area.

For a complete list of all individual resources identified as meeting eligibility standards and criteria for the National Register, California Register, and/or HCM/HPOZ see Appendix A.

Appendix B contains a complete list of all non-parcel resources identified as meeting eligibility standards and criteria for the National Register, California Register, and/or HCM/HPOZ.

For a complete list of historic districts identified as meeting eligibility standards and criteria for the National Register, California Register, and/or HCM/HPOZ see Appendix C.

Residential Development and Suburbanization, 1850-1980

Theme: Early Residential Development, 1880-1930

Sub-Theme: Early Single-Family Residential Development, 1880-1930

Although the Survey Area is generally associated with post-World War II suburbanization, some residential development took place in the early 20th century and is reflective of the area's earliest settlement patterns. Properties identified under this Context/Theme consist of single-family residences, most of which date to the 1910s and 1920s. All of these properties predate surrounding development and are distinguished by their association with this early period of development.



Address: 15705 W. Chase St.

Date: 1926



Address: 11415 N. Acala Ave.

Date: 1917



Address: 15747 W. Rayen St.

Date: 1918



Address: 10932 N. Arleta Ave.

Date: 1920

Residential Development and Suburbanization, 1850-1980

Theme: Post-War Suburbanization, 1938-1975

Sub-Theme: Suburban Planning and Development, 1938-1975

Most residential development in the Survey Area took place in the post-World War II period and consists of large-scale, master-planned residential subdivisions. These subdivisions often include distinctive planning features, such as curvilinear street plans, concrete sidewalks, streetlamps, parkways, and regularly-spaced street trees. One subdivision, Van Nuys Gardens, was identified as retaining a particularly notable street tree planting plan, implemented by the developers to entice potential homebuyers. Mature trees form shady canopies over streets, and consistency of a small variety of species gives the subdivision a distinct sense of place.



District: Van Nuys Gardens Street Trees
Description: Camphor Trees on Broadleaf Avenue
Date: 1949-1950



District: Van Nuys Gardens Street Trees
Description: American Sweetgum Trees on Redbush Lane
Date: 1949-1950

Commercial Development, 1850-1980

Theme: Motels, 1925-1970

Prior to the construction of an expansive freeway network in Southern California, Sepulveda Boulevard was a primary vehicular thoroughfare in the San Fernando Valley that connected the Los Angeles basin with points to the north. While many motels once lined the boulevard, very few intact examples remain. This Context/Theme was used to evaluate two significant examples of early motels, a significant and rare property type in the Survey Area.



Address: 9247-9253 Sepulveda Blvd.

Name: Good Knight Inn

Date: 1945-1958



Address: 8931 Sepulveda Blvd.

Name: Sepulveda Motel

Date: 1947

Commercial Development, 1850-1980

Theme: Department Stores, 1920-1980

Rapid residential development in the Survey Area after World War II was accompanied by the development of commercial properties to serve the area's growing population, among which included several large department stores. This Context/Theme was used to evaluate three examples of former department store buildings that reflect the area's emergence as a regional commercial hub. Both the former Ohrbach's (upper left) and Broadway (upper right) buildings continue to serve commercial functions, albeit with new tenants; the former Montgomery Ward building (lower row) is currently vacant.



Address: 14650 W. Parthenia St.

Name: Ohrbach's Panorama City

Architect: Welton Becket and Associates

Date: 1964



Address: 8333 N. Van Nuys Blvd.

Name: Broadway-Valley Department Store

Architect: Welton Becket and Associates

Date: 1955



Address: 14665 W. Roscoe Blvd.

Name: Montgomery Ward

Architect: Robert E. Alexander

Date: 1961

Public and Private Institutional Development, 1850-1980

Sub-Context: Education, 1876-1980

Theme: Public Schools and the LAUSD, 1876-1980

Sub-Theme: Post WWII Schools, 1946-1966

In response to the need for new public school facilities associated with rapid residential growth in the post-World War II era, Los Angeles voters passed three bond measures in the 1940s and 1950s for the city's schools. The bond measures especially benefited the San Fernando Valley and helped finance new construction, improvements to existing facilities, and the purchase of land for future construction. New school facilities funded under the bond measures adhered to contemporary design principles and placed emphasis on fresh air, natural light, and the use of color. Accordingly, campuses were designed for outdoor learning and mobility with outdoor "classrooms," recreation areas, and inventive site plans that encourage outdoor circulation in exterior corridors. Due to the relatively common nature of these resources, only two examples that are highly intact in terms of buildings, site plan, and landscape were recorded as eligible.



Address: 15330 W. Plummer St.

Name: Francisco Sepulveda Junior High School

Architect: Arthur Froelich

Date: 1956-1960



Address: 9340 N. Noble Ave.

Name: Plummer Elementary School

Architect: E. R. C. Billerbeck

Date: 1952

Public and Private Institutional Development, 1850-1980

Sub-Context: Military Institutions and Activities, 1850-1980

Theme: Air Raid Sirens and Civil Defense, 1939-1960

Air raid sirens were installed throughout the City of Los Angeles during the World War II and Cold War periods for the purpose of civil defense. The sirens have remained largely untouched since then. Three examples were identified in the Survey Area, all of which were the “rotating” model and were installed on freestanding support poles.



Location: Ventura Canyon and Woodman avenues

Name: Air Raid Siren No. 103

Date: circa 1940



Location: SF Mission Blvd. and Stranwood Ave.

Name: Air Raid Siren No. 105

Date: circa 1940



Location: Plummer St. and Sepulveda Blvd.

Name: Air Raid Siren No. 109

Date: circa 1940

Architecture and Engineering, 1850-1980

Sub-Context: L.A. Modernism, 1919-1980

Theme: Post-War Modernism, 1946-1976

Sub-Theme: Mid-Century Modernism, 1945-1970

Mid-Century Modern architecture is a defining aspect of the San Fernando Valley's architectural landscape, and several excellent examples were identified in the Survey Area. A variety of property types are associated with this Context/Theme, including residential, commercial, and institutional. Many of the properties identified under this Context/Theme are associated with significant architects associated with the Mid-Century Modern style including Richard Dorman, W.A. Sarmiento, and Armet and Davis. Also identified was a Mid-Century Modern residential subdivision, named Storybook Village, whose homes were designed by noted architects Palmer and Krisel. Thirteen homes within the district were identified for their architectural merit.



Address: 13652 W. Cantara St.

Name: Kaiser Foundation Hospital

Architect: Clarence Mayhew and Associates

Date: 1962



Address: 8952 N. Langdon Ave.

Name: Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church

Architect: Armet and Davis

Date: 1954



Address: 15500 Roscoe Blvd.

Name: Galpin Square

Architect: Richard Dorman

Date: 1966



Address: 8201 N. Van Nuys Blvd.

Name: Great Western Savings Bank

Architect: W. A. Sarmiento

Date: 1957



Address: 9337 N. Sophia Ave.
Architect: Palmer and Krisel
Date: 1956



Address: 16345 W. Gledhill St.
Architect: Palmer and Krisel
Date: 1956



Address: 9330 N. Gothic Ave.
Architect: Palmer and Krisel
Date: 1956



Address: 9320 N. Debra Ave.
Architect: Palmer and Krisel
Date: 1956

Architecture and Engineering, 1850-1980

Sub-Context: L.A. Modernism, 1919-1980

Theme: Post-War Modernism, 1946-1976

Sub-Theme: Corporate International, 1946-1976

Within the Survey Area are two excellent examples of Corporate International architecture, reflecting developers' early vision of Panorama City as the San Fernando Valley's "center for business and industry." Common features include rectangular volumes, bands of windows and curtain walls, and recessed ground stories. At 177 feet, the Panorama Tower building (left), designed by Welton Becket and Associates, was the tallest building in the San Fernando Valley upon its completion in 1962. The Panorama Tower was planned to be the first of three high-rise buildings developed on the site, although the other two never came to fruition. Less than one block to the south is the Panorama Plaza Building (right), which was designed by Maxwell Starkman and exhibits a similar Corporate International architectural vocabulary.



Address: 8155 N. Van Nuys Blvd.

Name: Panorama Tower

Architect: Welton Becket and Associates

Date: 1962



Address: 8121 N. Van Nuys Blvd.

Name: Panorama Plaza

Architect: Maxwell Starkman

Date: 1967

Architecture and Engineering, 1850-1980

Sub-Context: L.A. Modernism, 1919-1980

Theme: Post-War Modernism, 1946-1976

Sub-Theme: Googie, 1935-1969

Two excellent examples of Googie architecture were identified in the Survey Area. In addition to their relative rarity, these commercial buildings are highly reflective of the area's automobile-oriented development. Common features include sharp angles, geometric ornamentation, and dramatic rooflines. Examples include a 1950s-era bowling alley designed by noted architect Martin Stern, Jr., and a 1960s-era commercial strip mall (right) designed by the firm of Clark and Montgomery.



Address: 10430 N. Sepulveda Blvd.

Name: Mission Hills Bowl

Architect: Martin Stern, Jr.

Date: 1957



Address: 15422 W. Chatsworth St.

Description: Commercial Strip Mall

Architect: Clark and Montgomery

Date: 1961

Selected Bibliography

Books and other published material:

- Avila, Eric. *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- Coast Line: A History. *The Ferroequinologist* (June 1984): 2-14.
- Creason, Glen. *Los Angeles in Maps*. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 2010.
- Hise, Greg. *Magnetic Los Angeles: Planning the Twentieth-Century Metropolis*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.
- Roderick, Kevin. *The San Fernando Valley: America's Suburb*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles Times Books, 2002.
- Wallach, Ruth, Dace Taube, Claude Zachary, Linda McCann, and Curtis C. Roseman. *Los Angeles in World War II*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011.
- Wanamaker, Marc. *San Fernando Valley*. Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2011.

Other sources of maps, photographs, periodicals, and other materials:

- Digital Sanborn Maps 1867-1970, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps*, accessed September 2013, <<http://sanborn.umi.com.ezproxy.lapl.org/>>.
- Los Angeles Public Library, *California Index*, accessed September 2013, <<http://www.lapl.org/collections-resources/visual-collections/california-index>>.
- Los Angeles Public Library Photographic Collection, *Historic Photographs*, accessed September 2013, <http://photos.lapl.org/carlweb/jsp/photosearch_pageADV.jsp>.
- Los Angeles Times*. \$20,000,000 VA Hospital Dedicated at Rites Here. 15 April 1955.
- Los Angeles Times*, Mapping L.A., accessed September 2013, <<http://maps.latimes.com/neighborhoods/>>.
- Los Angeles Times*. New 10-Story Hospital Opens Doors. 23 September 1962.
- Los Angeles Times*. Plans to Increase Food Revealed by Carnation.
- Los Angeles Times*. Red Car Memorial: Amid Rail Controversies, Historic Trolley Station About to be Declared a Landmark. 26 December 1988.

Los Angeles Times. Schlitz Head Due Today to Dedicate Plant. 1 November 1954.

Los Angeles Times. Tracts Replace Chicken Farms Which Flourished in Sepulveda. 26 October 1969.