

ARBY'S SIGN ON SUNSET BOULEVARD

5914-5924 W. Sunset Boulevard;
1478 N. Tamarind Avenue
CHC-2024-4603-HCM
ENV-2024-4604-CE

Agenda packet includes:

1. [Final Determination Staff Recommendation Report](#)
2. [Commission/ Staff Site Inspection Photos—August 8, 2024](#)
3. [Categorical Exemption](#)
4. [Cultural Heritage Commission Initiation Letter Dated July 23, 2024](#)
5. [Materials Submitted by Owner's Representative](#)
6. [Historic-Cultural Monument Application](#)

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Los Angeles Department of City Planning

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

CASE NO.: CHC-2024-4603-HCM
ENV-2024-4604-CE

HEARING DATE: November 21, 2024
TIME: 10:00 AM
PLACE: City Hall, Room 1010
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
and via Teleconference (see
agenda for login information)

Location: 5914-5924 W. Sunset Boulevard;
1478 N. Tamarind Avenue
Council District: 13 – Soto-Martinez
Community Plan Area: Hollywood
Land Use Designation: Limited Manufacturing
Zoning: [Q]C4-1
Area Planning Commission: Central
Neighborhood Council: Hollywood Studio
District
Legal Description: Grider and Hamilton
Hollywood Tract, Lot FR 96

EXPIRATION DATE: November 30, 2024

PROJECT: Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the
ARBY'S SIGN ON SUNSET BOULEVARD

REQUEST: Declare the property an Historic-Cultural Monument

OWNERS: Sunset Pacific I LLC c/o Blake Megdal
252 Beverly Drive, Suite C
Beverly Hills, CA 90212

Honey Shusett, Trustee
Howard M. Shusett Residual Trust (Et Al)
101 Giant Oak Avenue
Thousand Oaks, CA 91320

Honey Shusett, Trustee
Howard & Honey Shusett Living Trust
4735 Heaven Avenue
Woodland Hills, CA 91364

APPLICANT: City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission
200 N. Spring Street, Room 272
Los Angeles, CA 90012

PREPARER: Office of Historic Resources
Los Angeles City Planning
221 N. Figueroa Street, Ste. 1350
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RECOMMENDATION **That the Cultural Heritage Commission:**

1. **Declare the subject property** an Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.7.
2. **Adopt** the staff report and findings.

5914-5924 W. Sunset Boulevard; 1478 N. Tamarind Avenue

Attachments: Cultural Heritage Commission Initiation Letter dated July 23, 2024
Commission/Staff Site Inspection Photos–August 8, 2024
Historic-Cultural Monument Application

FINDINGS

- The Arby's Sign on Sunset Boulevard "exemplifies contributions to the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, state, city, or community" as an excellent example of 1960s illuminated commercial signage on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood.

CRITERIA

The criterion is the Cultural Heritage Ordinance which defines a historical or cultural monument as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon), building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles if it meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. Is identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community;
2. Is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history; or
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.

SUMMARY

The Arby's Sign on Sunset Boulevard is a commercial sign located on the southeast corner of Sunset Boulevard and Tamarind Avenue in Hollywood. Constructed in 1968, the subject sign was designed by Peskin Sign Co. and constructed by B.L. Prenovich to resemble a large brown cowboy hat for the Arby's restaurant chain. The Arby's Sign on Sunset Boulevard was erected following the 1968 construction of the Arby's restaurant building that originally had a covered wagon design but has been significantly altered throughout the years. Structures and signs designed to resemble giant or miniature non-architectural objects that reflect the name or general spirit of the commercial enterprise are often referred to as Programmatic/Mimetic. Signs and structures using Programmatic/Mimetic forms were common along roadsides during the 1920s and 1930s, but despite largely falling out of use by the 1950s, many national and international corporations and roadside chains adopted large signage to advertise their businesses in the 1960s and 1970s. The neon and incandescent cowboy hat sign design was installed at Arby's locations from its founding in 1964 until 1969 when the Arby's brand phased it out in favor of a smaller and simplified backlit sign for new locations and redesigns of earlier restaurants. In June 2024, the Arby's restaurant on Sunset Boulevard announced its closure and is currently occupied by a drive-thru pizza restaurant.

The subject sign is of steel construction with metal paneling. The east- and west-facing sign faces are symmetrical and feature a 30-foot tall, ten-gallon cowboy hat designed in a minimal line style that reads "ARBY'S ROAST BEEF SANDWICH DRIVE THRU" along the shaft of the hat and "IS DELICIOUS" along the brim. The slab-serif letters and outline of the hat are lined with neon tubing. Directly beneath the cowboy hat is a plain letter board sign. Overall, the sign is approximately 53 feet tall with 289 square feet of coverage.

The prominence of commercial signage in Los Angeles has grown with the consumer and car-centric culture that has defined much of the city's history. The earliest electronically illuminated

signs in Los Angeles arose in the early 1900s as variety theaters utilized incandescent bulbs to advertise their names along with sponsors. In the following decades, many of Los Angeles's commercial corridors were soon dominated by illuminated commercial signage: Downtown Los Angeles in the 1900s, Sunset Boulevard in the 1910s, and Pasadena Avenue (now Figueroa Street) in the 1920s. In the 1950s and 1960s, commercial signs began to grow exponentially in size, scale, and symbolism employing a broader range of colors and shapes to be easier read from fast-moving automobiles. At the same time, there was a trend of corporate chains creating attractively lit and easy-to-identify signage. These signs were designed and best suited for placement along large vehicle thoroughfares and commercial strips like Sunset Boulevard. Despite the often iconic silhouettes and imagery of this era of corporate signage, in the 1970s and 1980s, many companies began phasing out and replacing their illuminated signs in favor of modernized and simplified brand images.

Starting in the late 1800s and early 1900s, Sunset Boulevard provided access to the then-Hollywood agricultural settlement before becoming a significant route servicing the entertainment industry beginning in the 1910s. Later, Sunset Boulevard was where early drive-in restaurants such as the Pig Stand (1931, no longer extant) and the John Lautner-designed Googie's (1949, no longer extant) were located. In 1936, the Crossroads of the World (HCM #134), an outdoor shopping center featuring an early Programmatic and Streamline Moderne design utilizing ship-like motifs, was constructed on Sunset Boulevard, further drawing in vehicle and pedestrian traffic. By the 1960s and 1970s, Sunset Boulevard was well established as a cultural and commercial corridor in Hollywood with varying establishments to serve both industry workers and tourists. From motion picture studios, to record labels, and the many venues that served them, Sunset Boulevard is the home of numerous landmarks and a notable concentration of illuminated commercial signage in Los Angeles. Lined with palms, Sunset Boulevard is also an iconic Hollywood landmark in its own right.

Arby's was founded in Boardman, Ohio in July 1964 by brothers Forrest and Leroy Raffel. The Raffel brothers—or RBs, pronounced as Arby's—wanted to create a more premium alternative to 10- and 15-cent burgers popularized by McDonald's by serving slow-roasted beef sold at 69 cents a sandwich. Many of the original 1960s Arby's restaurants were designed in a Mimetic form that resembled a covered wagon and featured an accompanying neon and incandescent 10-gallon cowboy hat sign. In the 1960-1970s, the Arby's brand spread throughout the United States in part due to successful franchises. Over the years, ownership of the Arby's Restaurant Group passed from the Raffel family to various corporate owners before the brand began acquiring its own subsidiaries such as Buffalo Wild Wings and Baskin-Robbins, and reorganizing under the umbrella of Inspire Brands in 2018. Since 1964, Arby's has had four major logos utilized at its restaurants: the neon and incandescent 10-gallon cowboy hat from 1964-1969, a simplified plastic backlit cowboy hat sign that only reads "Arby's" from 1969-2012, and minor redesigns of the simplified logo in 2012 and 2013.

The subject sign has experienced minimal alterations that include the addition of a 6x8 letter board sign below the primary cowboy hat sign in 1969 as well as the replacement of the original incandescent light bulb outline with a neon outline at an unknown date.

The subject sign was identified in the 2020 Hollywood Redevelopment Project Area Historic Resources Survey conducted by Architectural Resources Group as individually eligible for local designation as an excellent example of 1960s commercial signage.

DISCUSSION

The Arby's Sign on Sunset Boulevard meets one criterion for designation under the Cultural Heritage Ordinance: it "exemplifies contributions to the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, state, city, or community" as an excellent example of 1960s illuminated commercial signage along Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood. The Mimetic sign in the shape of a western 10-gallon hat, along with the original covered wagon Mimetic-designed restaurant, were intended to be eye-catching for people driving along Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood. While the original restaurant design is no longer extant, the subject sign's large size and centered placement along the edge of the property at the sidewalk have made it a continuous and prominent sight for motorists traveling in both directions of Sunset Boulevard over the past 55 years. The location was next door to the Paramount and KTLA studios (the former Warner Bros. Studio Lot, HCM #180), which drew vehicle and foot traffic past the sign. Today, the subject sign stands a block away from Netflix headquarters and is a prominent feature on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood. The subject sign is the only remaining illuminated sign dating to the 1960s along Sunset Boulevard that has been identified through SurveyLA as eligible for designation.

There are only three other Arby's signs remaining in the City of Los Angeles that were constructed in 1969. They are located in the Canoga Park, Mission Hills, and Reseda neighborhoods. None of these signs have as strong an association with a major commercial and automobile thoroughfare as the Arby's Sign on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood. Additionally, the Arby's restaurant in Canoga Park is currently scheduled for redevelopment and the fate of the accompanying sign is unknown. Many of the other original Arby's signs, regionally and nationally, are currently threatened or have disappeared due to the closure of the accompanying restaurant or to redesigns that updated the signage to more contemporary Arby's logos.

The subject sign retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association to convey its significance as an illuminated commercial sign along the major thoroughfare of Sunset Boulevard.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT ("CEQA") FINDINGS

State of California CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 "*consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment.*"

State of California CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Section 15331, Class 31 "*consists of projects limited to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic buildings.*"

The designation of the Arby's Sign on Sunset Boulevard as an Historic-Cultural Monument in accordance with Chapter 9, Article 1, of The City of Los Angeles Administrative Code ("LAAC") will ensure that future construction activities involving the subject sign are regulated in accordance with Section 22.171.14 of the LAAC. The purpose of the designation is to prevent significant impacts to an Historic-Cultural Monument through the application of the standards set forth in the LAAC. Without the regulation imposed by way of the pending designation, the historic significance and integrity of the subject sign could be lost through incompatible alterations and new construction and the demolition of an irreplaceable historic site. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for

Rehabilitation are expressly incorporated into the LAAC and provide standards concerning the historically appropriate construction activities which will ensure the continued preservation of the subject sign.

The City of Los Angeles has determined based on the whole of the administrative record, that substantial evidence supports that the Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 and Class 31, and none of the exceptions to a categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 applies. The project was found to be exempt based on the following:

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 8 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals of maintaining, restoring, enhancing, and protecting the environment through the imposition of regulations designed to prevent the degradation of Historic-Cultural Monuments.

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 31 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals relating to the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction of historic buildings and sites in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Categorical Exemption ENV-2024-4604-CE was prepared on August 9, 2024.

BACKGROUND

On July 18, 2024, the Cultural Heritage Commission initiated consideration of the subject sign as an Historic-Cultural Monument worthy of preservation. On August 8, 2024, a subcommittee of the Commission consisting of Commissioners Kanner and Buelna conducted a site inspection of the property, accompanied by staff from the Office of Historic Resources. In accordance with LAAC Section 22.171.10, on August 26, 2024, the property owner requested up to a 60-day extension to the time for the Commission to act.









COUNTY CLERK'S USE

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
200 NORTH SPRING STREET, ROOM 395
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

(PRC Section 21152; CEQA Guidelines Section 15062)

Filing of this form is optional. If filed, the form shall be filed with the County Clerk, 12400 E. Imperial Highway, Norwalk, CA 90650, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21152(b) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15062. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21167 (d), the posting of this notice starts a 35-day statute of limitations on court challenges to reliance on an exemption for the project. Failure to file this notice as provided above, results in the statute of limitations being extended to 180 days.

PARENT CASE NUMBER(S) / REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

CHC-2024-4603-HCM

LEAD CITY AGENCY

City of Los Angeles (Department of City Planning)

CASE NUMBER

ENV-2024-4604-CE

PROJECT TITLE

Arby's Sign on Sunset Boulevard

COUNCIL DISTRICT

13

PROJECT LOCATION (Street Address and Cross Streets and/or Attached Map)

☐ Map attached.

5914-5924 W. Sunset Boulevard; 1478 N. Tamarind Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90028

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

☐ Additional page(s) attached.

Designation of the Arby's Sign on Sunset Boulevard as an Historic-Cultural Monument.

NAME OF APPLICANT / OWNER:

N/A

CONTACT PERSON (If different from Applicant/Owner above)

Andrez Parra

(AREA CODE) TELEPHONE NUMBER

213-756-1698

EXT.

EXEMPT STATUS: (Check all boxes, and include all exemptions, that apply and provide relevant citations.)

STATE CEQA STATUTE & GUIDELINES

☐ STATUTORY EXEMPTION(S)

Public Resources Code Section(s) _____

☒ CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION(S) (State CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15301-15333 / Class 1-Class 33)CEQA Guideline Section(s) / Class(es) 8 and 31☐ OTHER BASIS FOR EXEMPTION (E.g., CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) or (b)(4) or Section 15378(b))

JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT EXEMPTION:

☐ Additional page(s) attached

Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 of the State's Guidelines applies to where project's consists of "actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment." Class 31 applies "to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Buildings." Designation of the **Arby's Sign on Sunset Boulevard** as an Historic-Cultural Monument will assure the protection of the environment by the enactment of project review regulations based on the Secretary of Interior's Standards to maintain and preserve the historic site.

☒ None of the exceptions in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 to the categorical exemption(s) apply to the Project.☐ The project is identified in one or more of the list of activities in the City of Los Angeles CEQA Guidelines as cited in the justification.

IF FILED BY APPLICANT, ATTACH CERTIFIED DOCUMENT ISSUED BY THE CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT STATING THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAS FOUND THE PROJECT TO BE EXEMPT.

If different from the applicant, the identity of the person undertaking the project.

CITY STAFF USE ONLY:

CITY STAFF NAME AND SIGNATURE

Andrez Parra

[SIGNED COPY IN FILE]

STAFF TITLE

Planning Assistant

ENTITLEMENTS APPROVED

N/A

FEE:

N/A

RECEIPT NO.

N/A

REC'D. BY (DCP DSC STAFF NAME)

N/A

DISTRIBUTION: County Clerk, Agency Record

Rev. 3-27-2019

DEPARTMENT OF
CITY PLANNING
200 N. SPRING STREET, ROOM 532
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-4801

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

BARRY A. MILOFSKY
PRESIDENT

GAIL KENNARD
VICE PRESIDENT
PILAR BUELNA
DIANE KANNER
RICHARD BARRON

COMMISSION OFFICE
(213) 978-1300

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
CALIFORNIA



KAREN BASS
MAYOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICES
200 N. SPRING STREET, ROOM 525
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-4801
(213) 978-1271

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP
DIRECTOR

SHANA M.M. BONSTIN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

HAYDEE URITA-LOPEZ
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

ARTHI L. VARMA, AICP
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

LISA M. WEBBER, AICP
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

CERTIFIED MAILING - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Date: **JUL 23 2024**

Honey Shusett, Trustee
Howard M. Shusett Residential Trust Et al
101 Giant Oak Avenue
Thousand Oaks, CA 91320

Howard M. Shusett, Trustee
Howard and Honey Shusett Living Trust
UDT 10-28-86
4735 Heaven Avenue
Woodland Hills, CA 91364

Sunset Pacific I LLC
c/o Blake Megdal
252 S. Beverly Drive, Ste. C
Beverly Hills, CA 90212

ARBY'S SIGN; 5914 – 5924 WEST SUNSET BOULEVARD AND 1478 NORTH TAMARIND AVENUE; CHC-2024-4603-HCM; ENV-2024-4604-CE; CD - 13

Pursuant to Section 22.171.10(d)(2) of the Los Angeles Administrative Code (LAAC), on July 18, 2024, the Cultural Heritage Commission adopted a motion by a vote of 4 - 0, to initiate consideration of the property located at 5914-5924 West Sunset Boulevard and 1478 North Tamarind Avenue as an Historic-Cultural Monument and direct staff from the Office of Historic Resources to prepare an Historic-Cultural Monument application for review and consideration by the Commission.

Pursuant to LAAC Section 22.171.8, a subcommittee of the Commission along with Department staff have been scheduled to conduct a site visit of the property on **August 8, 2024**. The purpose of the site visit is to inspect or investigate the site, including touring or reviewing photographic or video graphic records. The Director or his designee will thereafter prepare a report and recommendation on the proposed designation. The Commission will then hold a public hearing to determine whether the property conforms with the definition of a Monument as defined in LAAC Section 22.171.7. You will be notified of the date, time and place of the public hearing. The matter will then be referred to the City Council for final determination.

You are hereby advised that pursuant to LAAC Section 22.171.12, no permit for the demolition, substantial alteration or removal shall be issued; and the site, building or structure regardless of whether a permit exists, shall not be demolished, substantially altered or removed, pending final determination by the Commission and City Council on whether the proposed site, building, object or structure shall be designated a Monument. The Commission shall notify the Department of Building and Safety not issue permits for the demolition, alteration or removal of a building or structure. Furthermore, regardless if a permit has already been issued or exists, all work involving the

demolition, substantial alteration or removal of the site, building or structure shall cease immediately pending final determination by the Council.

If you have questions, please contact Melissa Jones, Office of Historic Resources at (213) 847-3679 or via email at melissa.jones@lacity.org or Lambert Giessinger, Office of Historic Resources at (213) 847-3648 or via email at lambert.giessinger@lacity.org.



Ari Briski, Commission Office Manager
Cultural Heritage Commission

Enclosures: Cultural Heritage Ordinance

cc: Emma Howard, Planning Director, 13th Council District
Ted Walker, Planning Deputy, 13th Council District
Ken Bernstein, Principal City Planner, Office of Historic Resources
Lambert Giessinger, Senior Architect, Office of Historic Resources
Shannon Ryan, Senior City Planner, Office of Historic Resources
Melissa Jones, City Planner, Office of Historic Resources
Betty Dong, Geographic Information System Chief, Los Angeles City Planning
Victor Cuevas, Assistant Deputy Superintendent, Department of Building and Safety
Pascal Challita, Chief, Department of Building and Safety, Inspection Bureau

MEMORANDUM

Teresa Grimes | Historic Preservation
Teresa.Grimes@icloud.com
323-868-2391

Date: August 29, 2024

For: Melissa Jones, Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources

Subject: 5914-20 W. Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles

On behalf of Sunset Pacific LLC which is the owner of the above-referenced property, I have been asked to provide my findings to you. It is my understanding that the Cultural Heritage Commission has initiated a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) nomination for the Arby's Roast Beef Sign at 5914 W. Sunset Boulevard. It is also my understanding that the franchise has closed, and another tenant will soon occupy the building.

Arby's is a fast-food restaurant chain founded by brothers Forrest and LeRoy Raffel in 1964. "Arby's" is a phonetic pronunciation of the letters R and B for Raffel brothers. Based in Ohio, the restaurant spread throughout the U.S. through franchises. Early Arby's locations across the country featured a neon pole sign designed to resemble a cowboy hat with the text "Arby's roast beef sandwich is delicious." The solid brown cowboy hat became the logo for the chain, but for no apparent reason other than to trade on the popularity of western films during the period. In 1969, the logo changed for the first time to just "Arby's" with a cowboy hat outlined in red on a white background.

Historic properties may include buildings, structures, objects, sites, and district. SurveyLA evaluations for pole signs recorded them as "objects" and specifically explained that they pertained to the signs only if the buildings had been significantly altered. The integrity considerations for the pole sign property type state "Sign may have been moved within the property lines of the building; for local preservation, sign may have been moved off site to avoid demolition, for parallel (i.e., consistent) use elsewhere, or for artistic display." Thus, the designation of the Arby's sign at 5914 W. Sunset Boulevard should not preclude its relocation.

Preservation Brief No. 25: The Preservation of Historic Signs (October 1991, <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/preservation-brief-25-signs.pdf>) recognizes the challenges of preserving historic signs when businesses on a property have changed. Three options are discussed:

- Keeping the sign unaltered, however, it may be necessary to move the sign elsewhere to accommodate a new one.
- Relocating the sign to the interior of the associated building such as the lobby where it will still be visible for artistic display but not confused as advertising for current tenants.
- Modifying the sign for the current tenants; however, this is not always possible

without destroying the essential features.

- If none of these options are possible, the sign may be donated to a local museum, preservation organization, or other group.

The owner is concerned about the commercial viability of the property as the sign is in a very prominent location. Unless it is modified or relocated it would result in confusion as to who the tenant is and what food is available in the building. Given the size of the sign in relation to the building, relocation to the interior is not feasible. Further, the very distinctive shape is not compatible with future tenants' needs or logos. To address that, the sign would need to be altered in a manner that would destroy its essential features.

The most realistic solution to accommodate the legitimate advertising needs of future tenants would be to allow off-site relocation and or donation to a museum or another appropriate organization. As the sign was not specifically designed for the current location, it would continue to retain significance if it were moved.

TERESA GRIMES | Historic Preservation

Teresa.Grimes@icloud.com
323-868-2391

Teresa Grimes has 30 years of experience in the field of historic preservation. She is widely recognized as an expert in the identification and evaluation of historical resources having successfully prepared dozens of landmark and historic district applications for a wide variety of property types. Teresa graduated from the University of California with a Master of Art degree in Architecture and has worked in the private, public, and non-profit sectors. Teresa has extensive experience in the preparation of environmental compliance documents in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act including the identification of historical resources, analysis of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts, and development of mitigation measures. Her many projects throughout Southern California include the Art Center College of Design Master Plan, Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza, Cinerama Dome Entertainment Center, City of Hope Master Plan, Claremont Graduate University Master Plan, Claremont McKenna College Master Plan, John Anson Ford Theatres, Oakwood School Master Plan, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Times Mirror Square, Sunset Las Palms Studios, and Sunset Bronson Studios.

Educational Background

- M.A., Architecture, University of California, Los Angeles, 1992
- B.A., Political Science, University of California, Los Angeles, 1986

Qualifications

- Meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for history and architectural history pursuant to the Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR Part 61, Appendix A.

Professional Activities

- Friends of Residential Treasures of Los Angeles Board Member, 2024-Present
- Pasadena Heritage Board Member, 2008-2012
- Highland Park Heritage Trust Board Member, 1996-1998
- West Hollywood Cultural Heritage Advisory Board, 1990-1994

Professional Experience

- Teresa Grimes | Historic Preservation, Principal, 2020 - Present
- GPA Consulting, Principal Architectural Historian, 2009-2020
- Christopher A. Joseph & Associates, Senior Architectural Historian, 2006-2009
- Teresa Grimes | Historic Preservation, Principal, 1999-2005, 1993-1994, 1991-1992
- Historic Resources Group, Architectural Historian, 1994-1998
- Getty Conservation Institute, Research Associate, 1992-1993
- Los Angeles Conservancy, Preservation Officer, 1988-1991



HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

1. PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION

Proposed Monument Name:		Boulevard			
Other Associated Names:					
Street Address:			Zip:	Council District:	
Range of Addresses on Property:			Community Name:		
Assessor Parcel Number:	Tract:		Block:	Lot:	
Identification cont'd:					
Proposed Monument Property Type:	Building	Structure	Object	Site/Open Space	Natural Feature
Describe any additional resources located on the property to be included in the nomination, here:					

2. CONSTRUCTION HISTORY & CURRENT STATUS

Year built:	Factual	Estimated	Threatened?		
Architect/Designer:			Contractor:		
Original Use:			Present Use:		
Is the Proposed Monument on its Original Site?		Yes	No (explain in section 7)	Unknown (explain in section 7)	

3. STYLE & MATERIALS

Architectural Style:		Stories:	Plan Shape:
<i>FEATURE</i>	<i>PRIMARY</i>	<i>SECONDARY</i>	
CONSTRUCTION	Type:	Type:	
CLADDING	Material:	Material:	
ROOF	Type:	Type:	
	Material:	Material:	
WINDOWS	Type:	Type:	
	Material:	Material:	
ENTRY	Style:	Style:	
DOOR	Type:	Type:	



HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

4. ALTERATION HISTORY

List date and write a brief description of any major alterations or additions. This section may also be completed on a separate document. Include copies of permits in the nomination packet. Make sure to list any major alterations for which there are no permits, as well.

5. EXISTING HISTORIC RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION (if known)

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places	
Listed in the California Register of Historical Resources	
Formally determined eligible for the National and/or California Registers	
Located in an Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)	Contributing feature Non-contributing feature
Determined eligible for national, state, or local landmark status by an historic resources survey(s)	Survey Name(s):
Other historical or cultural resource designations:	

6. APPLICABLE HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT CRITERIA

The proposed monument exemplifies the following Cultural Heritage Ordinance Criteria (Section 22.171.7):

1. Is identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community.
2. Is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history.
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.



HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

7. WRITTEN STATEMENTS

This section allows you to discuss at length the significance of the proposed monument and why it should be designated an Historic-Cultural Monument. Type your response on separate documents and attach them to this form.

A. Proposed Monument Description - Describe the proposed monument's physical characteristics and relationship to its surrounding environment. Expand on sections 2 and 3 with a more detailed description of the site. Expand on section 4 and discuss the construction/alteration history in detail if that is necessary to explain the proposed monument's current form. Identify and describe any character-defining elements, structures, interior spaces, or landscape features.

B. Statement of Significance - Address the proposed monument's historic, cultural, and/or architectural significance by discussing how it satisfies the HCM criteria you selected in Section 6. You must support your argument with substantial evidence and analysis. The Statement of Significance is your main argument for designation so it is important to substantiate any claims you make with supporting documentation and research.

8. CONTACT INFORMATION

Applicant

Name:		Company:	
Street Address:		City:	State:
Zip:	Phone Number:	Email:	

Property Owner

Is the owner in support of the nomination?

Yes

No

Unknown

Name:		Company:	
Street Address:		City:	State:
Zip:	Phone Number:	Email:	

Nomination Preparer/Applicant's Representative

Name:		Company:	
Street Address:		City:	State:
Zip:	Phone Number:	Email:	

HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM



9. SUBMITTAL

When you have completed preparing your nomination, compile all materials in the order specified below. Although the entire packet must not exceed 100 pages, you may send additional material on a CD or flash drive.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Nomination Form | 5. Copies of Primary/Secondary Documentation |
| 2. Written Statements A and B | 6. Copies of Building Permits for Major Alterations (include first construction permits) |
| 3. Bibliography | 7. Additional, Contemporary Photos |
| 4. Two Primary Photos of Exterior/Main Facade (8x10, the main photo of the proposed monument. Also email a digital copy of the main photo to: planning.ohr@lacity.org) | 8. Historical Photos |
| | 9. Zimas Parcel Report for all Nominated Parcels (including map) |

10. RELEASE

Please read each statement and check the corresponding boxes to indicate that you agree with the statement, then sign below in the provided space. Either the applicant or preparer may sign.

<input type="checkbox"/>	I acknowledge that all documents submitted will become public records under the California Public Records Act, and understand that the documents will be made available upon request to members of the public for inspection and copying.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I acknowledge that all photographs and images submitted as part of this application will become the property of the City of Los Angeles, and understand that permission is granted for use of the photographs and images by the City without any expectation of compensation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I acknowledge that I have the right to submit or have obtained the appropriate permission to submit all information contained in this application.

Andrez Parra

10/31/2024

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Mail your Historic-Cultural Monument Submittal to the Office of Historic Resources.

Office of Historic Resources
Department of City Planning
221 N. Figueroa St., Ste. 1350
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Phone: 213-874-3679
Website: preservation.lacity.org

Statement A: Architectural Description

Located at 5920 Sunset Boulevard, on the southeast corner of Sunset Boulevard and Tamarind Avenue in Hollywood, the subject sign consists of a double-faced neon pole sign with a letter board sign below. It was built in 1968 by engineer B.L. Prenovich and contractor Intercity Neon featuring a design by Peskin Sign Co. for the Arby's restaurant located on the same lot.

The subject sign is of steel construction with plastic paneling. The east- and west-facing sign faces are symmetrical and feature a 30-foot tall, ten-gallon cowboy hat designed in a minimal line style that reads "ARBY'S ROAST BEEF SANDWICH DRIVE THRU" along the shaft of the hat and "IS DELICIOUS" along the brim. The slab-serif letters and outline of the hat are lined with neon tubing. Directly beneath the cowboy hat is a plain letter board sign. Overall, the sign is approximately 53-feet tall with 289-square feet of coverage.

Alterations

The subject sign has experienced minimal alterations that include the addition of a 6x8 letter board sign below the primary cowboy hat sign in 1969 as well as the replacement of the original incandescent light bulb outline with a neon outline at an unknown date.

Statement B: Significance Statement

The Arby's Sign on Sunset Boulevard meets one criterion for designation under the Cultural Heritage Ordinance: it "exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community" as an excellent example of 1960s illuminated commercial signage on Sunset Boulevard.

The Arby's Sign on Sunset Boulevard was erected following the 1968 construction of the Arby's restaurant building that originally had a covered wagon design but has been significantly altered throughout the years. Structures and signs designed to resemble giant or miniature non-architectural objects that reflect the name or general spirit of the commercial enterprise are often referred to as Programmatic/Mimetic. Signs and structures using Programmatic/Mimetic forms were common along roadsides during the 1920s and 1930s, but despite largely falling out of use by the 1950s, many national and international corporations and roadside chains adopted large signage to advertise their businesses in the 1960s and 1970s. The neon and incandescent cowboy hat sign design was installed at Arby's locations from its founding in 1964 until 1969, when the Arby's brand phased it out in favor of a smaller and simplified backlit sign for new locations and redesigns of earlier restaurants.

The Mimetic sign in the shape of a western 10-gallon hat along with the original covered wagon Mimetic restaurant were designed to be eye-catching for people driving automobiles along the major thoroughfare of Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood. The subject sign's large size and centered placement along the roadside curb make it a prominent sight for drivers traveling in both directions of the street.

Starting in the late 1800s and early 1900s, Sunset Boulevard provided access to the then Hollywood agricultural settlement before becoming a significant route servicing the entertainment industry beginning in the 1910s. From motion picture studios, to record labels, and the many venues that served them, Sunset Boulevard has been the home to numerous landmarks and a notable concentration of illuminated commercial signage in Los Angeles. The subject sign was

purposely placed along Sunset Boulevard. The location was next door to the Paramount and KTLA studios (the former Warner Bros. Studio Lot, Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument #180) which drew vehicle and foot traffic past the sign.¹ Even today, the subject sign stands a block away from Netflix headquarters. Over the years, the sign has been a prominent feature in many parades and events through Hollywood and along Sunset Boulevard, such as the 1992 and 1993 Dolores and Bob Hope Hollywood Christmas Parade which saw grandstands erected in the lot of 5920 Sunset Boulevard.

In June 2024, it was announced that the Arby's restaurant on Sunset Boulevard was set to close.² This news provoked widespread concern for the fate of the neon Arby's sign that had adorned Sunset Boulevard for over half a century. Newspaper articles, opinion pieces, and online posts quickly arose describing personal experiences at the Arby's restaurant, and more specifically about the ambiance and image of Sunset Boulevard that was provided by the subject sign.

The subject sign was identified in the 2020 Hollywood Redevelopment Project Area Historic Resources Survey conducted by Architectural Resources Group as individually eligible for local designation as an excellent example of 1960s commercial signage.³

While the accompanying Arby's restaurant lost its original Mimetic covered wagon design, the Arby's Sign on Sunset Boulevard retains its original design and location. Only three other Arby's signs dating to the 1960s remain in the City, one each in the Canoga Park, Mission Hills, and Reseda neighborhoods.⁴ These three signs were also identified within the citywide historic resources survey, SurveyLA; however, the sign in Canoga Park is currently threatened due to the closure of the Arby's restaurant and a planned redevelopment of the site.⁵ Many of the other original Arby's signs regionally and nationwide are currently threatened or have disappeared due to the closure of the accompanying restaurant or to redesigns that updated the signage to more contemporary Arby's logos.⁶ The subject sign is a rare, remaining example of an original Arby's sign in the city and the only 1960s-era commercial signage in Hollywood identified as eligible for designation in an official City historic resources survey.

Commercial and Neon Signage in Los Angeles

The prominence of commercial signage in Los Angeles grew with the consumer and car-centric culture that has defined much of the city's history. The earliest electronically illuminated signs in

¹ Judy Sibelman, "Arby's Celebrates 50 Years in Hollywood," *Inspire Stories* (blog), January 14, 2019, <https://stories.inspirebrands.com/arbys-celebrates-50-years-in-hollywood/>.

² Makenna Sievertson, "Hollywood Arby's Sign," *LAist*, June 26, 2024.

³ Architectural Resources Group, GPA Consulting, and Historic Resources Group, "Historic Resources Survey, Hollywood Redevelopment Project Area: Individual Resources," January 28, 2020, https://planning.lacity.gov/odocument/ac6c03d6-42c1-4207-baa7-aa537fb9229f/Appx_A_Individual_Resources.pdf.

⁴ "Arby's Roast Beef Sign 6850 N Reseda Blvd - Historic Places Los Angeles - Resource Report," accessed October 7, 2024, <https://historicplacesla.lacity.org/report/82437598-6d33-4351-b3dc-8d13850d7eb4>; "Arby's Roast Beef Sign 7011 N. Topanga Canyon Blvd - Historic Places Los Angeles - Resource Report," accessed October 7, 2024, <https://historicplacesla.lacity.org/report/183407b4-61fc-4c0b-acb8-62c95c4950ec>.

⁵ LADBS Records, accessed October 31, 2024, <https://www.ladbsservices2.lacity.org/OnlineServices/PermitReport/PermitResultsbyPin?pin=183B101%20%20%20325>

⁶ RoadsideArchitecture.com, "Arby's Roast Beef & Covered Wagon Restaurants | RoadsideArchitecture.com," accessed October 7, 2024, <https://www.roadarch.com/eateries/arbys3.html>.

Los Angeles arose in the early 1900s as variety theaters utilized incandescent bulbs to advertise their names along with sponsors. These signs took over the vertical facades of buildings and eventually found their place along rooftops supported by metal scaffolding. In the following decades, many of Los Angeles's commercial corridors were soon dominated by illuminated commercial signage: Downtown Los Angeles in the 1900s, Sunset Boulevard in the 1910s, and Pasadena Avenue (now Figueroa Street) in the 1920s. Over the years, Los Angeles became known for its abundance of illuminated signage including the Hollywoodland sign that featured 50-foot letters and was the largest illuminated sign in the world at the time of its construction in 1923.⁷

The first American neon displays began in Los Angeles in 1923 with a car dealer on the corner of 7th and Flower Streets with a sign that read "Packard" in 30-foot red and orange letters outlined in blue.⁸ These signs were illuminated by long clear or colored vacuum-sealed tubes with gasses such as argon and neon used to produce brighter illumination than incandescent bulbs. Throughout their use, neon lights were used in conjunction with incandescent lights on commercial signage. Throughout the 1930s, the popularity of illuminated signs continued to grow as studios, theaters, hotels, apartment buildings, and rail lines adopted neon to light their roof, blade, and marquee signs. By the 1940s, neon signage became a commonplace feature on the storefronts of eateries, grocery stores, markets, dry cleaners, liquor stores, bars, and dance halls throughout the city.

Beginning in 1942, war-time restrictions on metal used in wiring and the anticipation of enemy raids resulted in mandated nighttime blackouts for the duration of World War II. As a result, many of these signs fell into disrepair during the war due to lack of use and neglect. New signage after the war was made with cheaper and more readily available materials. As a result, translucent plastics, fluorescent tubing, and backlighting began to dominate signage and displace neon as a singular material in the late 1940s.⁹

In the 1950s and 1960s, commercial signs began to grow exponentially in size, scale, and symbolism employing a broader range of colors and shapes so as to be easier read from fast-moving automobiles. At the same time, there was a trend of corporate chains creating attractively lit and easy-to-identify signage. In 1952, Holiday Inn began using their "Great Sign" design featuring bright green and yellow electric lights with pulsating neon, a curvilinear plane, and topped with a golden star. Other roadside establishments followed such as the 76 (originally Union 76) pole sign that featured a large, rotating orange sphere with "76" in blue lettering; KFC's pole sign with a plexiglass bucket and Colonel Sanders's face on top; Pioneer Chicken's wagon on a backlit plastic box; and Arby's big cowboy hat and flashing electric bulbs. These signs were designed and best suited for placement along large vehicle thoroughfares and commercial strips. Despite the often iconic silhouettes and imagery of this era of corporate signage, in the 1970s and 1980s, many companies began phasing out and replacing their illuminated signs in favor of modernized and simplified brand images.¹⁰

⁷ Catherine Gudis, "Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement; Context: Commercial Development, 1850-1980; Theme: Commercial Signs, 1906-1980," SurveyLA: Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey (Los Angeles City Planning, Office of Historic Resources, July 2016), https://planning.lacity.gov/odocument/03d09336-aa3e-416c-96b4-4368938aa9e9/CommercialSigns_1906-1980_0.pdf.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Commercial Development and the Automobile

The architecture of Los Angeles throughout the 20th century was impacted by the automobile. New building types such as gas and service stations as well as drive-in restaurants were created to serve motorists. These new building types produced buildings that sat physically disconnected from their neighbors, instead surrounded by driveways and parking lots. Additionally, these buildings were designed in new architectural styles following three different approaches. The utilitarian approach designed buildings to meet the needs of automobiles as directly as possible. The celebratory approach emphasized the imaginative possibilities of car culture and resulted in architectural styles such as Programmatic/Mimetic, Streamline Moderne, and Googie. These styles focused on the customer's car as an integral part of the building and transformed the free-standing buildings into identifying sculptures. The final design approach, the tasteful, sought to hide the visible influence of the automobile while still serving the driver with detached and heavily landscaped parking structures.¹¹

While the three design approaches developed early along with the development of the automobile in Los Angeles, some approaches grew and fell in popularity over time. The celebratory approach dominated the 1930-1960s. However, pushback against car-centric design led to the decline in popularity of this approach in favor of the tasteful approach starting in the 1970s.¹²

Programmatic/Mimetic architecture refers to structures which resemble giant or miniature non-architectural objects. Mimetic architecture specifically reflects the name or general spirit of the commercial enterprise. Buildings in this style were common along roadsides during the 1920s and 1930s. Large-scale Mimetic architecture was designed to be viewed from passing vehicles and structures in the style were placed on large lots surrounded by parking. These structures had an advantage over more discreet signs of earlier pre-automobile commercial outlets. Despite Programmatic/Mimetic buildings largely falling out of use by the 1950s, many national and international corporations and roadside chains adopted large Programmatic/Mimetic signage to advertise their businesses in the 1960s and 1970s, typically high atop poles such as Kentucky Fried Chicken's bucket sign and Pioneer Chicken's wagon sign.

Development of Hollywood and Sunset Boulevard

The original occupants of the area that includes the present-day Hollywood neighborhood of Los Angeles were the Gabrieleño Tongva. Since time immemorial the Gabrieleño Tongva have occupied the entirety of the Los Angeles basin and the Santa Catalina, San Nicholas, San Clemente, and Santa Barbara islands, today referred to as the Channel Islands. The locations of the villages of the Gabrieleño Tongva, and other First Peoples of Los Angeles, are often dense population centers today, like Hollywood, and the roads or trading routes that were utilized by First Peoples often mirror some of Los Angeles's major thoroughfares. Additionally, the names of some of the city's neighborhoods and landmarks were taken from the names given by First Peoples. The presence of First Peoples is deeply embedded in the development of the City of Los Angeles from before its beginnings.

In the late 1800s, the first attempts by Anglo-Americans to establish the City of Hollywood in the area failed. The idea to found Hollywood began with Harvey Wilcox who owned a large tract of

¹¹ Daniel Prosser, "Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement: Context: Commercial Development, 1850-1980: Theme: Commercial Development and the Automobile 1910-1970," August 2016, https://planning.lacity.gov/odocument/3007ea6e-c4dd-42ec-bede-b109293f2873/CommercialDevelopmentandtheAutomobile_1910-1970.pdf.

¹² Ibid.

land by 1886 and saw potential in the area for citrus cultivations. Lack of water meant the area saw little agriculture. By 1889, Wilcox was forced to buy back the land he sold. However, investor E.C. Hurd purchased a large amount of the land and continued the attempts to cultivate citrus fruits, this time using imported water. By 1902, Hollywood began to take on a suburban shape as businessman H.J. Wilcox purchased and subdivided land to build houses. By 1903, Hollywood incorporated as a city with strict temperance laws and continued to build a suburban image. In early 1910, Hollywood was annexed by the City of Los Angeles.¹³

Soon after consolidation with the City of Los Angeles, Hollywood became the home of many motion-picture production companies and was the center of motion picture production throughout the early silent-film era and the emergence of talkies beginning in the late 1920s. After World War II, Hollywood developed into the production home of American network television.¹⁴

Sunset Boulevard stretches from the Pacific Coast Highway on its western end to Figueroa Street near Downtown Los Angeles on its eastern end. The street passes through and acts as a major thoroughfare connecting several iconic Los Angeles neighborhoods such as Echo Park, Silverlake, Los Feliz, Bel Air, and Hollywood in addition to the cities of West Hollywood and Beverly Hills. Originally serving as a cattle-trail from El Pueblo de Los Angeles to the Pacific coast, Sunset Boulevard –along with Hollywood Boulevard– was one of the early streets used to subdivide the plots created by Wilcox starting in 1902; it was serviced by horse-drawn vehicles and a railcar on its eastern end.¹⁵ The street has since been associated with the development of Hollywood and the entertainment industry. The first motion picture production studio in Hollywood–Nestor Motion Picture Company–opened along Sunset Boulevard in 1911 with more that followed.¹⁶ Simultaneously, Sunset Boulevard developed into a commercial artery connecting Downtown Los Angeles to the western parts of the city. In the 1920s, the one-time suburban commuter road became an attraction within itself with clubs and hotels such as Chateau Marmont (1929, HCM #151) and the Garden of Allah catering to the Hollywood elites.¹⁷

Sunset Boulevard's commercial identity continued to grow in conjunction with car culture in Los Angeles. Sunset Boulevard was home to early drive-in restaurants such as the Pig Stand (1931, no longer extant). In 1936, the Crossroads of the World (HCM #134), an outdoor shopping center featuring an early Programmatic design utilizing ship-like motifs, was constructed on Sunset Boulevard, further drawing in vehicle and pedestrian traffic.¹⁸ In 1949, the John Lautner designed Googie's drive-in restaurant opened along Sunset Boulevard, which served as a model for later Googie-architecturally styled drive-ins.¹⁹

¹³ Prosser, Daniel. "Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement: Context: Pre-Consolidation Communities of Los Angeles, 1862-1932." SurveyLA: Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey. Los Angeles City Planning, Office of Historic Resources, July 2016. <https://planning.lacity.gov/odocument/232b11bd-19fd-4781-93f8-704d17b0aebc/Pre-ConsolidationCommunitiesofLosAngeles.pdf>.

¹⁴ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Hollywood." In Britannica, October 5, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hollywood-California#ref1316356>.

¹⁵ Masters, Nathan. "How L.A. Celebrated Sunset Boulevard's Opening in 1904." PBS SoCal, November 3, 2014. <https://www.pbssocal.org/shows/lost-la/how-l-a-celebrated-sunset-boulevards-opening-in-1904>.

¹⁶ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Hollywood."

¹⁷ Jaskol, Julie. "Timeline: Explore a Changing Sunset Boulevard." Iris Blog | Getty (blog), October 13, 2020. <https://blogs.getty.edu/iris/timeline-explore-a-changing-sunset-boulevard/>.

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Ibid

Through prohibition and the Great Depression, the section of Sunset Boulevard in unincorporated Los Angeles County became known as the Sunset Strip. In the 1950-60s, the thoroughfare was associated with nightlife and the music industry as record labels increasingly established studios in Hollywood and artists enjoyed the Sunset Strip.²⁰ By the 1960s and 1970s, Sunset Boulevard was well established as a cultural and commercial corridor of Los Angeles with varying establishments to serve both industry workers and tourists.

History of Arby's

The first Arby's was founded in Boardman, Ohio in July 1964 by brothers Forrest and Leroy Raffel. The Raffel brothers—or RB, alliterated to Arby's—wanted to create a more premium alternative to 10- and 15-cent burgers popularized by McDonald's by serving slow-roasted beef sold at 69 cents a sandwich. Within a year of their first restaurant, the Raffel brothers leveraged their experience in the restaurant equipment business to spread the Arby's brand through franchising.²¹

Arby's spread throughout the United States as a family-run business franchise with over 300 restaurants opened by 1969.²² In 1976, Arby's was sold to Royal Crown Company with Leroy Raffel involved with the business until his retirement in 1979. Throughout the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, the Arby's company would be transferred between several corporate owners and see its expansion overseas to markets in the Middle East and Europe.²³ In 2008, Arby's corporate owner combined the company with Wendy's, creating the short-lived Wendy's/Arby's group.²⁴ While Wendy's soon after dropped the Arby's Restaurant Group, it still retains ownership of a minority share of the company. The Arby's Restaurant Group Inc. later purchased other restaurant chains and franchises such as Buffalo Wild Wings, Dunkin', and Baskin-Robbins and was renamed to Inspire Brands in 2018.²⁵

As of 2024, Arby's is headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, and is the second-largest fast-casual restaurant brand in the world with over 3,500 locations worldwide.²⁶

Arby's Brand and Logo Identity

Arby's has had relatively few commercial brand identity shifts since its beginning in 1964. The business has only gone through four major logo reworks. Its original "Roast Beef" or "Cowboy Hat" logo featured a minimalist outline of a brown ten-gallon cowboy hat with the words "ARBY'S ROAST BEEF SANDWICH IS DELICIOUS" in a slab-serif typeface. This hat was used from 1964 until 1969 as the brand's logo and adorned many large signs in front of or on top of its restaurants

²⁰ Architectural Resources Group, GPA Consulting, and Historic Resources Group, "Historic Resources Survey, Hollywood Redevelopment Project Area: Individual Resources," 51-53; Charlie Gillet, "Los Angeles 1960s Overview," in Britannica, n.d., <https://www.britannica.com/topic/rock-Los-Angeles-1960s-overview-1371259#ref709881>.

²¹ Arby's, "About Arby's," accessed August 19, 2024, <https://www.arbys.com/about-us/>.

²² Jane Erwin, "\$40 Million Business // Franchise Is Made From Scratch," Tulsa World, October 22, 1989, https://tulsaworld.com/archive/40-million-business-franchise-is-made-from-scratch/article_0498312f-1ce9-5060-ae57-fad22d321121.html

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Julie Jargon And Annie Gasparro, "Wendy's/Arby's Agrees to Sell Most of Arby's to Roark Capital," *Wall Street Journal*, June 13, 2011, sec. Markets, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303848104576383211960795164.html>.

²⁵ Inspire Brands, "About Us," Inspire Brands (blog), accessed August 19, 2024, <https://inspirebrands.com/about-us/>.

²⁶ Arby's, "About Arby's."

built in this era with neon and incandescently illuminated letters and outlines.²⁷ The cowboy hat, along with the Mimetic wagon-shape of their restaurants, used by Arby's during this era, were likely designed to evoke the popularity of Westerns in America in the 1960s.²⁸

In 1969, the Arby's brand saw its first, and longest serving, logo redesign. While the ten-gallon cowboy hat shape remained, the text of the logo was shortened to read only "ARBY'S" in hand-drawn lettering in red along with a red outline. This served as the company's primary logo until 2012. During this time, new Arby's locations, along with some older locations, adopted the redesigned logo for their signs. The Mimetic wagon restaurant design also began to be phased out along with the older "Roast Beef" logo.²⁹

In 2012, Arby's saw another brand redesign—albeit short-lived—at which time the text was changed to read "ARBY'S" in lowercase along with a stylized apostrophe in the shape of a meat slicer. The outline of the hat was also redesigned to be glossy and 3-dimensional. This rebrand coincided with a new slogan "Slicing Up Freshness," but it was replaced in 2013, reverting to a simpler two-dimensional design.³⁰

The current Arby's logo, adopted in 2013, was a return to the 1969-2012-era form with hand-drawn letters reading "ARBY'S" in a red two-dimensional cowboy hat outline. However, in this version, the cowboy hat was reduced in both vertical and horizontal dimensions, emphasizing the restaurant name in the center.

5920 Sunset Boulevard

Permit records reveal that the lot at 5920 Sunset Boulevard was occupied by a residence constructed in 1917, which was converted into a restaurant, hot dog stand, and gas station/car wash that shared the lot by 1944. Additionally, in 1946, a permit was issued for the relocation of an office building on the lot.

In April 1968, the gas station and other properties on the lot were demolished and an Arby's restaurant building was permitted to be built. The construction of the accompanying sign (the subject sign) likely followed the building, with permits being issued in August of 1968, along with the construction of a letter board sign in early 1969.

The Arby's located at 5920 Sunset Boulevard opened in 1969 as the 150th Arby's restaurant and one of the earliest franchises in Los Angeles.³¹ The franchise was owned and operated by Mike and Marilyn Leviton throughout its 55-year history. During this time, the restaurant saw many changes that included several redesigns and the addition of a drive-thru in 1980. The location was also used in several movies and TV shows.

The Arby's restaurant continuously operated on the lot until its closure in June 2024.

²⁷ Mosi A., "The Complete History Of The Arby's Logo," *Hatchwise* (blog), accessed August 19, 2024, <https://www.hatchwise.com/resources/the-complete-history-of-the-arbys-logo>.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Sibelman, "Arby's Celebrates 50 Years in Hollywood."

Other Arby's Signage

In addition to the Arby's Sign on Sunset Boulevard, there are at least three other extant examples of "Great Hat" Arby's signs in the city of Los Angeles: a roof sign along Topanga Canyon Boulevard in Canoga Park, a pole sign along Sepulveda Boulevard in Mission Hills, and a pole sign along Reseda Boulevard in Reseda. While the signage is intact, the Arby's restaurant in Canoga Park closed in 2022 with permit records indicating a planned redesign into a Raising Canes restaurant. The three signs were constructed in 1969 and were identified by the citywide historic resources survey, SurveyLA, as potentially eligible for local designation as excellent examples of 1960s Arby's Roast Beef signs. However, none of these signs retain the same level of association with commercial signage along a major thoroughfare as the Arby's Sign on Sunset. In addition to identified Arby's signage in the city of Los Angeles, there are at least 22 known Arby's "Great Hat" signs constructed in the 1960s extant today across the United States.³² However, many of these signs have faced alterations such as replacement of original neon tubing, metal and plastic materials, and/or removal of letters. Another notable example of a 1960s-era Arby's sign within California is the Arby's located at 7942 Edinger Avenue in Huntington Beach. In May and June of 1924, online outlets reported on the planned demolition and redesign of the original Arby's Mimetic covered wagon building at this location.³³ However, the plans for the original sign are unclear as of August 2024. Other 1960s Arby's signs in California locations such as Pomona and Ventura have lost their original neon sign designs which were replaced with more modern Arby's signage. Many of the approximately 250 original 1960s Great Hat-designed Arby's signs across the country have either been replaced with updated signage or lost due to the closure of the business.

B.L. Prenovich and Peskin Sign Co.

The Arby's Sign on Sunset Boulevard was constructed by sign engineer B.L. Prenovich along with contractor Intercity Neon utilizing a design by the Peskin Sign Co. While not much is known about B.L. Prenovich, there are numerous permit records listing them as the engineer for neon signage across Los Angeles such as for a tax service and bakery along Sunset Boulevard in 1969 and 1972 (both no longer extant), a plastics company along Venice Boulevard in 1969 (no longer extant), and the Shoppers Market Building in Highland Park in 1960 (no longer extant).³⁴

Peskin Sign Co. designed and installed the original Arby's Great Hat sign at its premier Ohio location in 1964. As of 2009, the company still handles the removal and installation of signage for Arby's locations across the United States.³⁵

³² RoadsideArchitecture.com, "Arby's Roast Beef & Covered Wagon Restaurants | RoadsideArchitecture.Com."

³³ Rolando Pujol, "Concerns Swirl over Epic 1960s Arby's; a Motor City Miracle; and More Sweet and Sour News from the American Roadside," Substack newsletter, The Retrologist by Rolando Pujol (blog), June 5, 2024, <https://rolandopujol.substack.com/p/concerns-swirl-over-epic-1960s-arbys>.

³⁴ "Historic-Cultural Monument Application: Shoppers Market Building," August 2013.

³⁵ Trax Page, "HATS OFF TO ARBY'S," Star Beacon, November 23, 2009, https://www.starbeacon.com/archives/hats-off-to-arby-s/article_2bcc88cf-5f2e-5b5a-b01a-785f39b6c144.html.

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Arby's
ROAST
BEEF
Sandwich
Drive Thru
IS DELICIOUS

St. Pizza

The
sters
Café



LOS ANGELES

IC
ESS
E

LATE

thru

Prince St. Pizza



LA TRAFFIC
SUCKS A LOT
WITH A S
NO RAIN













Edward Ruscha, Sunset Boulevard, 1973 : Roll 8 : Edgemont Headed West : Image 0182, Photo, 1973, Edward Ruscha
 Photograph of Sunset Boulevard and Hollywood Boulevard, 1965-2010, The Getty Research Institute



Edward Ruscha, Sunset Boulevard, 1973 : Roll 8 : Edgemont Headed West : Image 0183, Photo, 1973, Edward Ruscha
 Photograph of Sunset Boulevard and Hollywood Boulevard, 1965-2010, The Getty Research Institute



Edward Ruscha, Sunset Boulevard, 1973 : Roll 8 : Edgemont Headed West : Image 0184, 1973, Photo, 1973, Edward Ruscha
Photographs of Sunset Boulevard and Hollywood Boulevard, 1965-2010, The Getty Research Institute



Edward Ruscha, Sunset Boulevard, 1985 : Roll 8 : Edgemont Headed West : Image 0196, 1985, Photo, 1985, Edward Ruscha
Photographs of Sunset Boulevard and Hollywood Boulevard, 1965-2010, The Getty Research Institute



Edward Ruscha, Sunset Boulevard, 1985 : Roll 8 : Edgemont Headed West : Image 0197, 1985, Photo, Edward Ruscha
 Photographs of Sunset Boulevard and Hollywood Boulevard, 1965-2010, The Getty Research Institute



Edward Ruscha, Sunset Boulevard, 1985 : Roll 8 : Edgemont Headed West : Image 0198, 1985, Photo, Edward Ruscha
 Photographs of Sunset Boulevard and Hollywood Boulevard, 1965-2010, The Getty Research Institute



Edward Ruscha, Sunset Boulevard, 1990 : Roll 18 : Poinsettia Headed East : Image 0198, 1990, Photo, Edward Ruscha
Photographs of Sunset Boulevard and Hollywood Boulevard, 1965-2010, The Getty Research Institute



Edward Ruscha, Sunset Boulevard, 1995 : Roll 28 : Berendo St. Headed West : Image 0172, 1995, Photo, Edward Ruscha
Photographs of Sunset Boulevard and Hollywood Boulevard, 1965-2010, The Getty Research Institute



Edward Ruscha, Sunset Boulevard, 1995 : Roll 28 : Berendo St. Headed West : Image 0173, 1995, Photo, Edward Ruscha
Photographs of Sunset Boulevard and dHollywood Boulevard, 1965-2010, The Getty Research Institute



Edward Ruscha, Sunset Boulevard, 1997 : Roll 28 : Wilton Headed West : Image 0043, 1997, Photo, Edward Ruscha
Photographs of Sunset Boulevard and Hollywood Boulevard, 1965-2010, The Getty Research Institute



Edward Ruscha, Sunset Boulevard, 1998 : Roll 6 : Hobart Headed West : Image 0126, 1998, Photo, Edward Ruscha
Photographs of Sunset Boulevard and Hollywood Boulevard, 1965-2010, The Getty Research Institute



Edward Ruscha, Sunset Boulevard, 1998 : Roll 6 : Hobart Headed West : Image 0127, 1998, Photo, Edward Ruscha
Photographs of Sunset Boulevard and Hollywood Boulevard, 1965-2010, The Getty Research Institute



Edward Ruscha, Sunset Boulevard, 1998 : Roll 6 : Hobart Headed West : Image 0128, 1998, Photo, Edward Ruscha
Photographs of Sunset Boulevard and Hollywood Boulevard, 1965-2010, The Getty Research Institute



Edward Ruscha, Sunset Boulevard, 2007 : Roll 10 : Bronson Headed West : Image 0013, 2007, Photo, Edward Ruscha
Photographs of Sunset Boulevard and Hollywood Boulevard, 1965-2010, The Getty Research Institute



Edward Ruscha, *Sunset Boulevard*, 2007 : Roll 10 : Bronson Headed West : Image 0014, 2007, Photo, Edward Ruscha
 Photographs of Sunset Boulevard and Hollywood Boulevard, 1965-2010, The Getty Research Institute



A Photo of the Early Days of the Hollywood Arby's, n.d., From Judy Sibelman <https://laist.com/brief/news/la-history/heres-the-latest-on-the-push-to-preserve-the-iconic-hollywood-arbys-sign>.



u/DeliciousMoments on r/FoodLosAngeles, "RIP Hollywood Arbys," June 16, 2024, https://www.reddit.com/r/FoodLosAngeles/comments/1dho7ug/rip_hollywood_arbys/



u/HowAreYouStranger on r/LosAngeles, "I just love this sign at Arby's on Sunset," September 12, 2021, https://www.reddit.com/r/LosAngeles/comments/pmzf92/i_just_love_this_sign_at_arbys_on_sunset/

Historic Resources Survey, Hollywood Redevelopment Project Area
Individual Resources – 01/28/20

Reason:	Significant for its association with a woman-run institution that has played an important role in the social history of Hollywood. This building was constructed as a playhouse for the Assistance League of Southern California. The organization was founded in 1919 by Mrs. Ada Hancock Banning in response to the need of working mothers in the Hollywood studios for quality day care, and continues to provide a variety of social services to the community. The playhouse has remained in continuous operation at this location since its construction in 1939.
---------	--



Primary Address: 5914 W SUNSET BLVD
 Other Address: 5916 W SUNSET BLVD
 5920 W SUNSET BLVD
 5924 W SUNSET BLVD
 1472 N TAMARIND AVE
 1478 N TAMARIND AVE
 Name: Arby's Roast Beef Sign
 Year built: 1968
 Architectural style: Not Applicable

Context 1:

Context:	Commercial Development, 1850-1980
Sub context:	No Sub-context
Theme:	Commercial Signs, 1906-1980
Sub theme:	Pylons, Poles, Stantions, and Billboards, 1920-1980
Property type:	Commercial - Sign
Property sub type:	Freestanding Pole
Criteria:	A/1/1
Status code:	5S3
Reason:	Excellent example of 1960s commercial signage; exhibits distinctive design features that evince the commercial ethos of the era, including eye-catching forms and neon illumination. Evaluation pertains to the sign only; building does not appear to be eligible. Signs appear to meet local criteria only and may not meet significance thresholds for National Register or California Register eligibility.

CITY & STATE; Family behind a Hollywood Arby's decides to hang up its famous hat; Pandemic, rising food costs and changes to neighborhood lead to the decision to close.

[A'Hearn, Bryan.](#) [Los Angeles Times](#); **Los Angeles, Calif.**.. 20 June 2024:
B.3.

Los Angeles Times

Full Text


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The **Arby's** restaurant on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood, famous for its enormous, neon-clad hat sign, has shuttered its doors after 55 years. Its last day of operation was Friday.

On Monday, at the back of the lot, Gary Husch -- general manager of the **Arby's** and son-in-law of its original owner -- was carting out trash and caught a reporter staring at the bones of the drive-through menu.

"There's nothing there anymore, huh?" he said.

The menu was already a polyptych of long, fluorescent tubes. The **Arby's** marquee, sprawled with advertisements for the chain's affordable, slow-roasted beef sandwiches a few days ago, now reads: "Farewell Hollywood. TY for 55 great years."

5  "You know, they're not making those signs anymore," Husch said. "It was the 150th **Arby's** location ever opened."

Since its opening in January 1969, the Hollywood **Arby's** has had a single owner, Marilyn Leviton, who is 91 years old.

Husch said that the **Arby's** was simply no longer sustainable. He pointed to a combination of pandemic fallout in a changing neighborhood, rising food costs and the recent law that raised the minimum wage of fast-food workers in California.

"The customer count has gone down over the last few years. A lot of the offices around this area are empty now, and we're just not getting the same foot traffic we did before," Husch said. "With inflation, food costs have gone way up and the \$20-an-hour minimum wage has been the nail in the coffin."

Leviton was active in the business till the very end, he added.

"Truth is, I think it was the pandemic that did us in," she told KTLA News recently. "I really feel we would have closed during the pandemic [if it weren't] for the federal loans."

Years ago the family owned, in part, two other **Arby's**: one in Santa Monica and another on the corner of Hollywood Boulevard and Highland Avenue. Those two have since shuttered. Workers at the Hollywood **Arby's** were let go when they came to work Friday, Husch said.

The family had not yet determined any sale or the future of the derby hat sign. The building is boarded up with plywood and plastered with art posters.

The giant, neon-lined hat, which would not feel out of place on Fremont Street in Las Vegas, is now flanked by shiny high-rises and film and television studios, including Netflix.

It has had occasional brushes with celebrity.

Jerry Seinfeld and Seth Rogen visited the shop in an episode of "Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee" while musing on fame. In 2016, Patton Oswalt famously dined on its outside tables after winning an Emmy Award.

"His wife had just passed away," Husch said. "He was just sitting, and, I believe, thinking about his wife. ... There's a lot of good memories here."

Caption: PHOTO: THE SUNSET Boulevard site, opened in 1969, had a single owner, who is now 91.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Bryan A'Hearn Los Angeles Times

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LA HISTORY

Hollywood Arby's sign

The latest on the push to preserve the neon hat

By [Makenna Sievertson](#)

Published June 26, 2024 5:00 AM



The historic Arby's Roast Beef Sandwich neon cowboy hat fast food sign stands on Sunset Boulevard outside of a closed Arby's restaurant and drive-thru in Hollywood, California on June 20, 2024.

(Patrick T. Fallon / AFP)

Now that the Arby's in Hollywood has closed after 55 years of serving roast beef sandwiches on Sunset Boulevard, some people are on a mission to save the towering neon 10-gallon hat sign from being scrapped.

Corrie Siegel, executive director of the Museum of Neon Art in Glendale, told LAist the sign struck a lot of chords with people, partly because it's such an iconic marker of the area and a symbol of the changing face of Hollywood.

"I found out about the business closing around the time the rest of the public found out ... and jumped into finding ways of connecting to the family, connecting to the property owner and city council, and speaking to local preservationists to figure out what could be done," Siegel said.

How we got here

The Arby's, near the intersection of Tamarind Avenue and Sunset Boulevard, had been run by the Leviton family since 1969.

Judy Sibelman, one of the four children of Mike and Marilyn Leviton, told LAist they left everyone they knew in Illinois to move to California and build the restaurant from the ground up.

"My father liked to say the business had to have three important things — location, location, location," she said.

And with a once-clear view of the Hollywood sign and nearby studios packed full of potential customers, the Arby's certainly had its site on its side.

Jon Stewart Surprises Jimmy Kimmel's Kids on the Drive to School



But Sibelman said financial troubles started around 2019, when the restaurant was celebrating its 50th anniversary.

The landlord they'd worked with for decades died, and the family was given the right of first refusal to buy the property outright, but she said "none of us happened to have a spare \$5 million lying around."

The new landlord came with a more difficult relationship, and the family was able to renegotiate another lease, but only for five years. The landlord didn't immediately respond to LAist's request for comment.

With that lease expiring at the end of June, combined with a decline in business during the COVID pandemic and the [Hollywood strikes](#), it became increasingly clear their days of beef and cheddar were coming to a close.



Three out of four of the Leviton children, including Ruth, Bob, and Judy, from left to right. The photo on the left was taken on Arby's opening day, when the trio were between 9 and 13 years old. The photo on the right is a re-creation from the restaurant's 50th anniversary party.

(Photo courtesy of Judy Sibelman)

Sibelman said the lease was the “number one reason that we had to go out of business,” not California's [minimum-wage increase](#) for fast food workers.

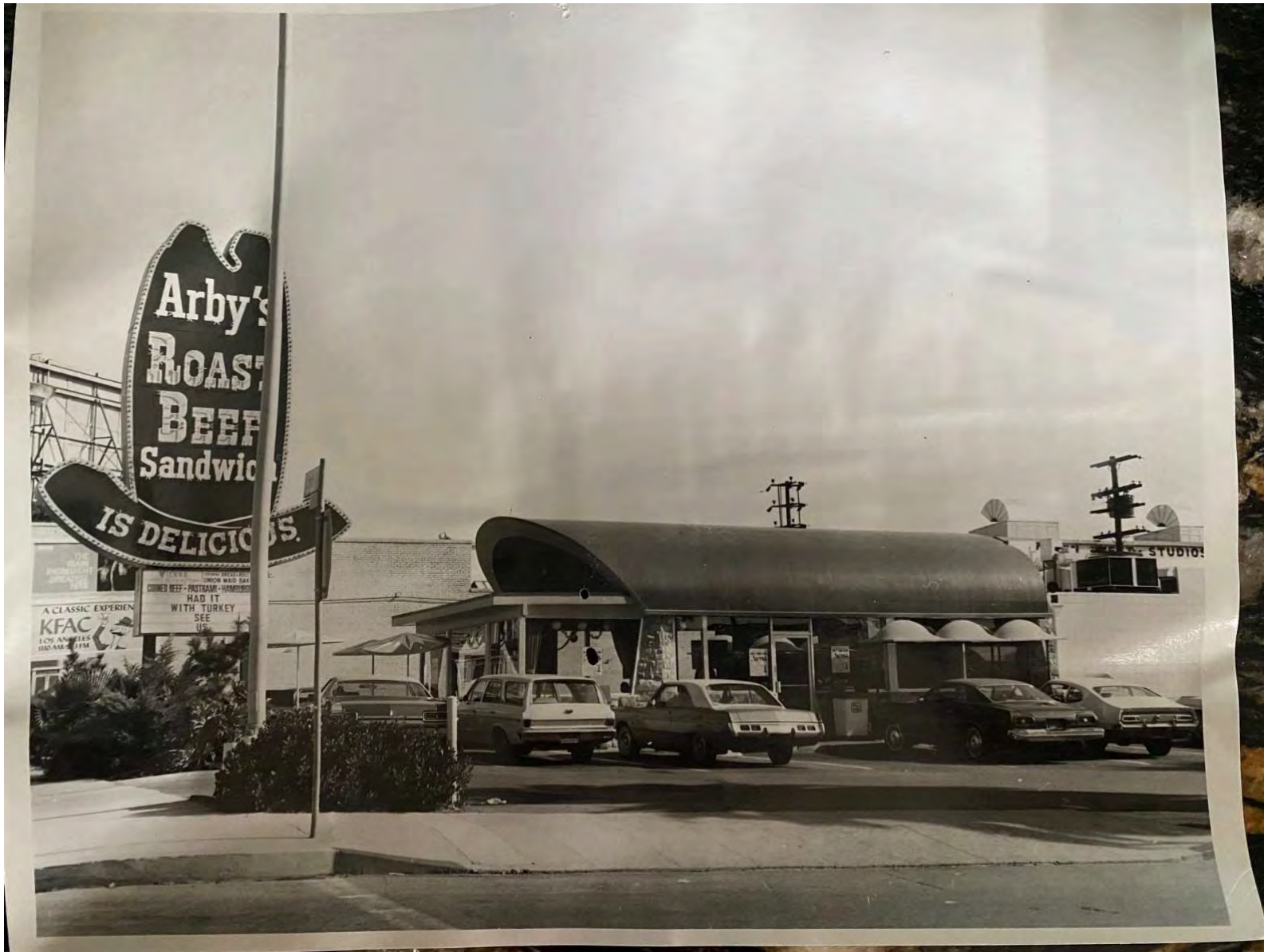
“We don't consider ourselves victims of that at all,” she said.

Sibelman started thinking about what would happen to the neon sign and reached out to several organizations, including the [Valley Relics Museum](#) in Van Nuys and the [American Sign Museum](#) in Ohio, until she connected with a “very empathetic” Siegel and the Museum of Neon Art on Brand Boulevard.

What's in store for the sign

For Siegel, the huge 10-gallon hat is more than just a sign. She said it's about community, a family, and the end of an era — because signs don't exist without people.

“Neon signs are important because of the people they're connected to,” she said. “And I think it's really important in any preservation context, or any civic context, to recognize that the meaning that's coming from these signs is directly related to the importance of the narratives — the family narratives, the stories of the people that worked in the businesses, and the stories of the communities that grew up around the sign.”



A photo from the early days of the Hollywood Arby's.

(Courtesy Judy Sibelman)

But moving the towering display would be a logistical feat in and of itself, a scenario Siegel said she's had nightmares about. And since the family didn't own the property, the push for preservation has been further complicated by a city

ordinance that considers the setup an asset to the landlord, Sibelman said.

However, Siegel noted that actually might be even better, as it's always within the museum's best interests to keep the neon signage in the context of which it was created to convey history and act as an aesthetic beacon.

Some are now lobbying for the sign to be saved as-is on Sunset Boulevard with Councilmember Hugo Soto-Martínez's office, whose 13th district includes Hollywood.

In a letter to Soto-Martínez reviewed by LAist, Sibelman urged the city to designate the sign as a landmark cultural resource in honor of the community of which it has so long been a part.

"We know the hat is a beloved feature, and our office is committed to supporting the local business owners and stakeholders so the Arby's hat can remain on Sunset Blvd," a spokesperson for Council District 13 said in a statement to LAist.

Siegel said the Arby's sign saga may bring up a lot of feelings of loss, but she's encouraging people to continue to support the businesses that they see as integral to their Los Angeles experience.

"Take a break and go in and meet the people behind the signs, because that's really what I think people miss when this happens," she said. "They miss the community that they didn't realize was quietly there all along."

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Arby's Roast Beef & Chuck Wagons (page 3)

(hit "refresh" to get the most recent version of this page; click on photos for larger images)

East Coast Custard
Parma Heights, OH



This **East Coast Custard** has occupied this former Arby's since 1985. This was the company's first location. There are now five others. For more, see [this website](#). [\[map\]](#)

Arby's
Kent, OH



This **Arby's** in Kent featured the original sign and building when these photos were taken in 2011. The front part of the building had been altered to create a dining room but the original floor was still there. The "Delicious" on the sign had been changed to "Drive-Thru". Around 2016, the sign was replaced with a small, modern plastic sign. The building looked to be the same. In 2021, this location closed and the sign was removed. The building is currently vacant. [\[map\]](#)

More Ohio Arby's Covered Wagon Buildings:

[Boardman](#) [\[map\]](#)

former Arby's
Portland, OR



former Arby's [gone]
King of Prussia, PA



This **former Arby's** has housed the Mr. Oscar Hair Stylist since at least 2007. [\[map\]](#)

This former **Arby's** in King of Prussia was adapted for Starbucks. I believe this Starbucks moved to a new location in 2013. By 2015, this building was gone.

More Pennsylvania Arby's Covered Wagon Buildings:

[Clifton Heights](#)

[Folsom](#)

[Whitehall](#)

former Arby's
San Antonio, TX



This former Arby's was built in 1966. The building has housed El Paraiso Ice Cream since 1984. It still has the original steer and brands tile floor. [\[map\]](#)

More Arby's "Brand" Tile Floors:

[Lynchburg, VA](#) [gone]

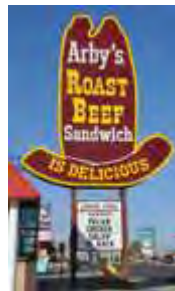
Arby's
Dayton, OH



Arby's
Bartlesville, OK



Arby's
El Paso, TX



Arby's [gone]
Arkadelphia, AR



Arby's
Laurel, MD



Arby's
Mission Hills, CA



Arby's
Denver, CO



Arby's
Phoenix, AZ



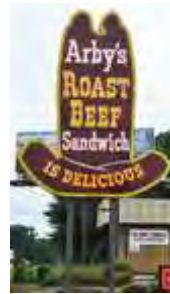
Arby's
Gainesville, FL



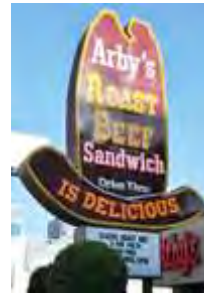
Arby's
Clearwater, FL



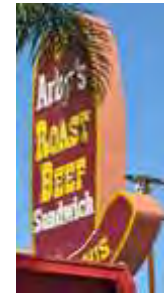
Arby's
Athens, GA



Arby's
Hollywood, CA



Arby's
Canoga Park, CA



Arby's
Conway, AR



Arby's
North Las Vegas, NV



Arby's
Orem, UT



Arby's [gone]
Ventura, CA



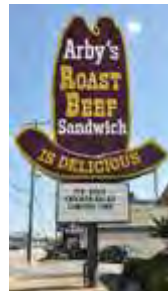
Arby's [building gone]
Wichita Falls, TX



Arby's
Miami, OK



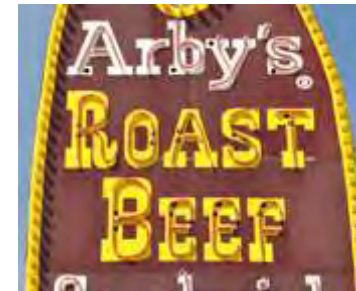
Arby's [gone]
Tulsa, OK



Arby's
Tulsa, OK



Arby's
Tulsa, OK



These are just some examples of Arby's hat signs which were first built in 1964 by the Peskin Sign Co. in Ohio. The original covered wagon buildings at these locations are long gone. The Laurel sign is from the late 1960s. It is the only one I have seen with the "Sandwich" on the

bottom part of the sign and without the "Is Delicious" wording. The original signs had the "Is Delicious". These hat signs were phased out in 1976 in favor of a more cartoonish logo and plastic signs. I believe the neon hat signs came in two sizes. The ones in **Bartlesville** and **Arkadelphia** are examples of the smaller size. **El Paso**, **Phoenix**, and **Gainesville** have the big signs. [\[Dayton map\]](#); [\[Bartlesville map\]](#); [El Paso, TX](#)

In 2022, the **Arkadelphia** sign was removed for road widening. I don't think that it will be reinstalled. [\[map\]](#)

[\[Laurel map\]](#); [\[Mission Hills map\]](#); [\[Denver map\]](#); [\[Phoenix map\]](#)

[\[Gainesville map\]](#); [\[Clearwater map\]](#); [\[Athens map\]](#)

The **Hollywood** location opened in 1968. The bulb border was replaced with neon at some point. In 2024, the location closed. The sign remains and it is unknown whether it will be removed or adapted. [\[map\]](#)

The **Canoga Park** location has closed and is fenced off. The plastic letters on the building have been painted over and the bottom of this hat sign has been tagged. [\[map\]](#)

[\[Conway map\]](#), [\[North Las Vegas map\]](#), [\[Orem map\]](#)

This Arby's in **Ventura** featured the large model neon sign. The building had been remodeled and the original tile floor was gone. In 2015, it was announced that this Arby's would be moving. In 2019, this location closed and the sign was demolished. In 2021, the building was demolished.

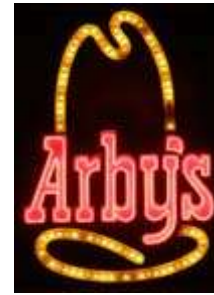
This Arby's in **Wichita Falls** was built in 1970. It featured the original sign, building and tile floor. Around 2001, the original yellow roof was painted red upon the insistence of corporate headquarters. In 2017, the building was demolished and replaced with a modern box. The neon was removed from the sign and replaced with backlit plastic letters. [\[map\]](#)

This Arby's sign in **Miami** was previously installed at a location in town. In 2022, it was replaced with a plastic sign and this one was moved to the Allen Sign Studio where it is displayed. [\[map\]](#)

The first **Tulsa** location shown above had closed by 2023 and the sign was removed. The neon on the second **Tulsa** sign shown above was removed in 2022 and replaced with LED rope. [\[map\]](#)

The neon on the third **Tulsa** sign shown above was removed and replaced with LED rope around 2024. [\[map\]](#)

former Arby's [gone]	former Arby's [gone]	former Arby's	Arby's [gone]
Kansas City, MO	Austin, TX	Norfolk, VA	Reno, NV



This **Arby's** sign in Kansas City and building were adapted by Texas Tom's. Additions were made to all sides of the covered wagon building. The location is now closed and the Arby's hat sign was removed in 2010. There was at least two other Texas Tom's with adapted Arby's hat signs but this was the last one. For more, see [this website](#). [photo thanks Glenda Campbell]

This **Arby's** sign in Austin was adapted by the Hat Creek Burger Co. This photo is from 2011. In 2014, the restaurant remodeled and the sign was removed. For more, see [this website](#).

While this **Arby's** building in Norfolk is gone, this hat sign was adapted for a loans business. This photo is from 2010. By 2014, the neon had been replaced with backlit plastic. By 2022, the property was housing a used car dealership and the sign was stripped. [\[map\]](#)

This **Arby's** building in Reno was modern. This location had what seemed to be a modern and unique chasing bulb and neon sign. I've never seen one like it anywhere else. This photo is from 2008. By 2011, the location had closed and the sign was gone.

More Arby's Hat Signs:

[Forestdale, AL](#)

[Benton, AR](#)

[Wilmington, DE](#)

[Wilmington, DE](#)

[Bradenton, FL](#)

[Lakeland, FL](#) [gone]

[Miami, FL](#)

[Countryside, IL](#)

[Galesburg, IL](#)

[Indianapolis, IN](#)

[Mishawaka, IN](#)

[Muncie, IN](#)

[Warsaw, IN](#)

[Auburn Hills, MI](#)

[Bay City, MI](#)

[Flint, MI](#)

[Flint, MI](#)
[Lansing, MI](#)
[Lapeer, MI](#)
[Port Huron, MI](#)
[Port Huron, MI](#)
[Redwood Charter Township, MI](#)
[Raleigh, NC](#) [gone]
[Winston-Salem, NC](#)
[Las Cruces, NM](#)
[North Las Vegas, NV](#)
[Niagara Falls, NY](#) [gone]
[Syracuse, NY](#)
[Cincinnati, OH](#)
[Mansfield, OH](#)
[Feasterville, PA](#)
[Meadville, PA](#)
[Williamsport, PA](#)
[Knoxville, TN](#)
[Waco, TX](#)
[Hampton, VA](#)
[Lincolnia, VA](#)
[Norfolk, VA](#)
[Richmond, VA](#)
[Richmond, VA](#)
[Richmond, VA](#) [gone]
[Spokane, WA](#)
[Tacoma, WA](#)
[Ashwaubenon, WI](#)
[Cudahy, WI](#) [gone]
[Casper, WY](#)

There are probably dozens of other examples of these signs scattered around the country. If you know of any others, I'd love to know about them.

Chuck Wagon
Wheat Ridge, CO

2004:



2012:



This **Chuck Wagon** was built in 1961 to resemble a Conestoga Wagon. It has housed numerous businesses over the years including The Grill Next Door, O'Brien's Wings & Things, and Silver's Burgers-N-Wings. The building housed Big Mama's Burritos in 2012. By 2019, it was housing El Jefe. By 2020, the covered wagon feature had been painted black. [\[map\]](#)

Taco Loco Wagon
Dallas, TX

2006:



2011:



2017:



The **Taco Loco Wagon** was supposedly built around 1945-1955. I believe it was originally part of the "Chuc Wagun" chain (see links at the bottom of this page). The building's size and design are also so similar to the Chuck Wagon in Denver described above that they were probably related.

This location was previously known as the Taco Wagon and the Fajitas Wagon. In 2011, the building was undergoing renovation. It reopened later that year. A canopy was added which bisects the building beneath the covered wagon top feature. The place looked closed by 2016 and remains vacant. For more, see [this website](#). [\[map\]](#)

former Chuckwagon Restaurant
Jamestown, ND



The **Chuckwagon Restaurant** building was operating by 1986. It has been used for storage by the adjacent Frontier Bar & Grill for many years. Does anyone know more about the Chuckwagon? [\[map\]](#)

former Arnold's Chuck Wagon Inn
Granby, CO

2012:



2023:



The **Arnold's Chuck Wagon Inn** was built by the 1950s. It had a simple "Cafe" sign on the roof originally. The covered wagon sign replaced it sometime in the 1950s. The covered wagon continues to be used as an entrance. The name was changed later to the Chuckwagon Cafe & Bar. In 2022, the building began housing Fitch Ranch Meats & Market. The covered wagon was enlarged and a [bull statue](#) was installed then. For more, see these websites: [1](#) and [2](#). [\[map\]](#)

More Covered Wagons:

[Wagon Ho!](#) (Birmingham, AL; gone)

[Chuck Wagon Cafe](#) (Grand Junction, CO; gone)

[The Chuck Wagon](#) (Wilmington, DE; gone)

[Covered Wagon Restaurant](#) (Chicago, IL) [gone]

[World's Largest Covered Wagon](#) (Milford, NE)

[Covered Wagon](#) (Elysburg, PA)

[Flying T Chuck Wagon](#) (Rapid City, SD) [vintage; gone]

[Prairie Schooner Steakhouse](#) (Ogden, UT)

[Cowboy Coffee](#) (Packwood, WA) [\[map\]](#)

[Covered Wagon Tavern](#) (Spokane, WA) [vintage; gone]

Dilly Wagons: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#) (various locations; vintage/gone)

[Arby's & Chuck Wagons](#)
([page 1](#)).

[Arby's & Chuck Wagons](#)
([page 2](#)).

[Eateries Main Page](#)

HOME PAGE



LOS ANGELES CITYWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT

Context: Commercial Development, 1850-1980

Theme: Commercial Signs, 1906-1980



Prepared for:

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



July 2016

PREFACE

The theme “Commercial Signs” is a component of Los Angeles’ citywide historic context statement and provides guidance to field surveyors in identifying and evaluating commercial signs as potential historic resources. Refer to www.HistoricPlacesLA.org for information on designated resources associated with this theme as well as those identified through SurveyLA and other surveys.

CONTRIBUTOR

Catherine Gudis, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of History and Director of the Public History Program at the University of California, Riverside. Ms. Gudis earned her doctoral degree in American Studies from Yale University and has more than twenty years’ experience in art and history museum curation as well as a consulting practice in the field of historic preservation. Ms. Gudis has edited and contributed to several written works concerning the relationship between advertising and the built environment including *Lions and Eagles and Bulls: Early American Inn & Tavern Signs* (Princeton, 2001) and *A Forest of Signs: Art in the Age of Representation* (MIT, 1989). In 2004, Ms. Gudis authored *Buyways: Billboards, Automobiles, and the American Cultural Landscape* (Routledge, 2004). During her work with SurveyLA Ms. Gudis served as a consultant to ICF International.

INTRODUCTION

The significance of signs in Los Angeles rests first and foremost on the fact that the city grew in tandem with two simultaneous developments – mass use of the automobile and mass advertising and consumption. The architectural, social, economic, and environmental impact of these developments is global. Its historical trajectory can be traced from the streets and structures of Los Angeles, especially its signs and signage. Los Angeles leads the nation in the quantity, quality, and concentration of extant incandescent and neon signs (1920s-1940s); modernist exuberance of oversized, exaggeratedly modernist forms and colors oriented to the automobile strip and utilizing the mixed media of its era (1950s-60s); and use of signs and symbols to turn mere surfaces—facades—into Hollywood-styled stage sets (1920s-1980). These historic signs still laud today all of the fantasy, spectacle, and diversity of cultural influences that has for so long characterized the Los Angeles urban consumerist experience.

This theme covers five sign types presented here a sub-themes:

- Rooftop Signs
- Marquees
- Projecting Blade Signs
- Pylons, Poles, Stantions, and Billboards
- Façade Signs

Evaluation Considerations:

- For SurveyLA, signs were generally evaluated under local Historic-Cultural Monument criteria only as they do not appear to meet significant thresholds for listing in the National and California Registers.
- This context and associated eligibility standards are used to identify and evaluate individually significant signs. However, it also provides guidance for identifying sign types that may be significant character-defining features of buildings or structures.

- Googie style signs may also be evaluated as excellent examples of the style under the Googie sub-theme within the Postwar Modernism theme of the Architecture and Engineering context.
- Programmatic/Mimetic buildings are evaluated under that sub-theme within the Commercial Development and the Automobile theme.
- Inscribed fascia, cornice, and cornerstone signs are discussed in this theme under Façade Signs and may apply to commercial and institutional buildings. These sign types would rarely be individually identified for significance since they are integral to the building.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The words, symbols, pictures, and structural components that comprise historic signs and signage convey to an inestimable extent a sense of time and place. Though they are an integral part of the built environment and cultural landscape, they are often overlooked or undervalued as architectural elements and cultural expressions worthy of preservation. The initial role of commercial signs may have been to mark a site for way-finding purposes and to identify or advertise a business. Signs also served to endow buildings and the businesses advertised with qualities beyond the mere use value of the goods or services sold within. Today, commercial signs as well as those found on public institutions (schools, government buildings, and even churches) serve all of those purposes and more. They have also become memory markers that keep multiple pasts present within the seemingly ephemeral commercial



Circus Liquor at 5600 Vineland Avenue in North Hollywood (SurveyLA)

embroidery of images, words, and objects adorning cities, streets, and highways. They can mark different passages in the life of a building, street, and community; become an important icon for a neighborhood's residents and visitors; and serve as a palimpsest, in which specters of a seemingly erased past appear through the multilayered remnants for us to read and experience today.

Sometimes, signs and signage comprise the most dominant, unifying, or symbolically expressive features of a building or arrangement of built and natural forms. Stylized design elements—from typography to projecting or stand-alone signs—can transform buildings into stage sets or tableaux that re-enact the myths, personae, and regional associations of an historical epoch, while a façade can front as a screen or scrim upon which to project an imagined place identity. Or a sign can serve as a building (and vice versa) in ways that span the entire history of modernist and vernacular design. Most of all, commercial signs are among the most populist means of

expressing the lived experiences of one of the most important eras in Los Angeles—and American—history: the age of the automobile and mass consumption. (Mass consumption here is meant to include advertising, marketing, and entertainment of all sorts aimed towards or engaged by large and diverse audiences.)

Signs and signage are markers of the architectural, social, cultural, and economic history of all cities. However, they are of particular significance in Los Angeles. The rapid development of Los Angeles in the era of the streetcar, the first decades of the automobile, and the post-World War II decades of development coincide with the largest growth of advertising, mass media (including entertainment and recreation), and consumer culture in the United States.¹ In a period of less than fifty years the field of

¹ The impact of other forms of mass media—film, radio, television—on both advertising and architecture is significant, and apparent not just in the role played by spectacular signs for movie theaters or illuminated radio towers, but in the ways architects and designers began to treat the facades of structures. On the design of commercial facades and revitalization during times of financial difficulty in particular, see for instance, Gabrielle Esperdy, *Modernizing Main Street: Architecture and Consumer Culture in the New Deal* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2008); Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); M. Jeffrey Hardwick, *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

advertising grew exponentially, professionalized, became seen as integral to business, and sought status as art. This was especially true of outdoor advertising, which had always been oriented to mobility of all sorts (literal and metaphorical) and to consumption. Mass media—from film to radio and then television—grew simultaneously with and through advertising as an important form of commerce that affected not only social consciousness and relationships but also buildings and the urban fabric. And by as early as the first decades of the twentieth century, nowhere was better known for its bombast and ballyhoo in the arena of commercial, automobile-oriented advertising and consumer culture than Los Angeles, whose stars and starlets lit up the big screen just as neon and atomic blasts of spectacular signs lit up the city's rapidly decentralizing city streets. The boosterist promotional spirit and speculative drive that developed the city at the start of the twentieth century thus became physically incarnate in architectural forms of advertising unique to or having originated in Los Angeles, from hot dog stands in the shape of a dog to the famously noir neon sign districts popularized by Raymond Chandler and genre film to the skyward reaching starbursts and stantions of exaggeratedly modernist or "Googie"-styled signage.²



Rooftop Sign on Beverly Boulevard
(CRA Survey)

In the outdoor advertising industry, signs are categorized in terms of on-premise, or those within the legal property lines of the businesses being advertised, and off-premise, referring to those signs for businesses and vendors located elsewhere (for the purposes here, the latter refers mostly to billboards and painted signs). These forms of advertising in the outdoors have frequently been subject to great public scrutiny and outcry.³ In some cases, the use of new technologies and design approaches and the employment of architects and artists to integrate signs as architectural elements became ways in which to better comply with restrictive sign ordinances. These were also ways that businesses and those promoting them sought to assert the legitimacy of outdoor advertising signs as economic and aesthetic assets to the built environment.⁴ The use of advanced promotional strategies—thanks in part to technologies ranging from neon to Plexiglas to metal

alloys—also allowed businesses to communicate more loudly, in larger numbers, and across greater distances as streetcars and automobiles enabled the spatial diffusion (and then re-densification) of commercial arenas.

² See Catherine Gudis, *Buyways: Billboards, Automobiles, and the American Landscape* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004); William Brevda, "The Double Nihilation of the Neon," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 41 (Spring 1999), 70-103; Jim Heimann and Rip Georges, *California Crazy: Roadside Vernacular Architecture* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1980); Chester Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins, 1995); Alan Hess, *Googie Redux: Ultramodern Roadside Architecture* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2004); Thomas Hine, *Populuxe* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990).

³ A survey of Los Angeles sign ordinances over various periods of time and localities would be useful for better understanding periods of significance and technical restrictions for the creation of signs and would be a valuable element to include here if further research can be undertaken.

⁴ See, for instance, the trajectory of reportage in the *Los Angeles Times* regarding both on-site signage restrictions, especially pertaining to projecting signs and the height of rooftop signs in the 1900s through 1920s. For instance: "Sign Ordinance Causes Some Debate," 5 Dec. 1899, 1; "Fence Out Daylight with Galvanized Iron: Billboard Wilshire's Successors Have a New 'Idee,'" 29 Mar. 1902, 7; "Electric Signs," 26 Sept. 1903, A4; "Electric Signs," 21 Oct. 1906, I16; "Doom of Billboards: Women Say They Must Go," 17 May 1908; "Mayor Vetoes New Sign Bill," 10 Jan. 1908, I12. Also see Gudis, *Buyways*, 163-230.

Yet opposition remained. Whether it was the clubwomen in the 1900s to 1930s or Five Man Electrical Band in the 1970s, often the refrains were shared: “Sign, sign, everywhere a sign / Blocking out the scenery, breaking my mind.” Such outcries and the rise of planning as antidote to the ad hoc commercialism of the cityscape, not to mention waves of urban renewal, drew attention to another kind of symbolic order represented by advertising outdoors: commercial blight. As zoning and sign ordinances have sought to regulate different parts of the city, alternative strategies of advertising and sign design—and a counter-battle against the detractors of ad hoc commercialism—have emerged along with policies geared towards their preservation. But the struggles for preservationists only amplify, as the economic forces of advertising revolve around speed and novelty, replacing the old with the new. This also informs deeply engrained assumptions held by many regarding the ephemeral nature of popular culture as expressed through advertising signs and signage: it is aimed towards mass appeal, it is of its moment, and it is geared towards consumption (something that is *spent* not *saved*).

Yet it is also what frequently holds a dear place in the minds, hearts, and memories of Angelinos. In a place like Los Angeles, where glitz and glamour, boosting and bombast, have been a mainstay of its heritage—or at least its historical branding of itself—and where advertising and architectural innovations have found fertile ground, especially when oriented towards automobility, the preservation of even the most omnipresent and mass reproducible objects in the landscape—signs—becomes all the more important. This is made more notable when so many of these signs have been removed, replaced, or demolished with hardly a legal step to delay their erasure from public view. (Note, too, that relatively few Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments specifically name the signs as monuments, even for buildings whose historic character includes the signs and signage.) Given that sign restrictions have often been related to the ways that signs project their messages into public space, their preservation ought also to consider the same public whose memories and experiences are affected.



Million Article Thompson sign on Vermont Avenue at 89th Street in South Los Angeles (SurveyLA)

CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as the heart of commercial Los Angeles grew up and outward from El Pueblo along commercial arteries (Spring Street, Main Street, and Broadway, for instance) signs were primarily hand-painted on glass windows and transoms, walls, wooden and varnished metal plaques, and billboards adorning the buildings and streetscapes of downtown.⁵ The sides and tops of commercial buildings in the first decades of the twentieth century seemed to serve more as pages of oversized display advertisements than mere bricks and mortar, as painted signs and printed billboards populate the landscape. Oriented to streetcars, pedestrians, and horse and carriage riders at the start and then cars in its early years, the profusion of painted and printed signs in the urban core and along access routes in and out of the city (sometimes painted or posted directly onto trees, rocks, or hillsides) garnered attention—and much of it out of concern for the fate of a city whose picturesque nature would be destroyed by commerce (or at least its signs).

⁵ Michael J. Auer, “The Preservation of Historic Signs,” Preservation Briefs – 25 (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1991); John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *Signs in America’s Auto Age: Signatures of Landscape and Place* (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 2004), 5, 20.

Engraved Fascia and Painted Signs

For some, however, the signs of commerce had stability, were heraldic, and marked a personal stake in the development of the city. These were the permanent inscriptions of owners' names and sometimes the year of a building's completion, carved into the fascia of a building and integrated into its architectural design. Inseparable from the building and lasting well beyond the lifespan of their namesake, these were an enduring combination of advertisement and cornerstone and today sometimes serve as the only record of a building's earliest history (and usually a regal one, at that). (See, for instance, Douglas Building; Los Angeles Trust and Savings Bank; Cahuenga, Vermont Square, and Felipe de Neve Branch public libraries.) These are especially resonant when seen in combination with other layered remnants of social and commercial history: the ghosts of painted signs that emerge decades after their original creation on the sides of brick and masonry walls—especially in commercial, mixed use, and industrial areas of the city undergoing renovation. Since sign painters until the 1930s often used what was known as “white lead” as a base for the colors they mixed, the wall signs that were a copious and constant reminder of commercial expansion from the early years of the century have been known to last decades (up to a hundred years, even) after their original use.⁶ While such signs advertising former on-site businesses or off-site products might not be fully visible or easy to date and may stand beside contemporary advertisements, they serve as clues to an otherwise silent and invisible past.

Los Feliz denizens today, for instance, might enjoy sidewalk bistro dining at Café Figaro with the ghost of Lena Luckwenbach, whose name is inscribed beneath the cornice of a 1922 building at 1802-06 Vermont Avenue. She is joined by a forgotten tailor whose vertically projecting neon and incandescent blade sign tells us that he also imported cloth and a whiskey vendor whose brand can't be read but whose outlined painted “ghost” sign still bedecks the north-facing brick-and-mortar wall. Alongside these a painted proclamation in block letters indicates “Apartments” within.



The former Teatro California on S. Main Street shows layers of painted signage history, 1990 (Los Angeles Public Library)

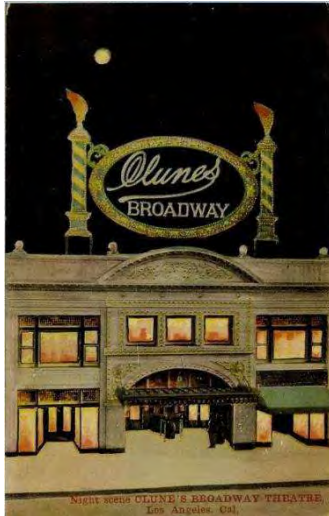
In some cases, especially residential hotels and apartments in the Hollywood and downtown areas, painted on-site signs remain intact—whether recently refreshed, as in the case of the Dover Hotel – today, residential apartments – on Beverly Boulevard, or leftover from decades prior to remind us of the “Barclay Hotel formerly the Van Nuys \$1 and up” (on the south side of 4th Street downtown) or the Hotel Baltimore (501 S. Los Angeles Street). These ghost signs may not have been included within or as

⁶ Wm. Stage, *Ghost Signs: Brick Wall Signs in America* (Cincinnati, OH: Signs of the Times Publications, 1989), 52-53, 71, 92.

independent nominations for Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument status, but they are referenced in the historic sign ordinances of other parts of the state and nation.⁷

Incandescent Signs, 1900s-1920s

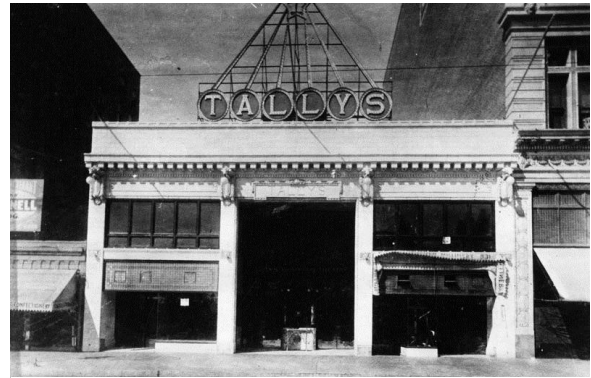
By the 1900s and 1910s, painted and printed signs came to seem like humble emissaries as both the skyline and the city's streets, avenues, and boulevards became transformed by the technology of electrical illumination. Los Angeles' "Great White Way" offered up the Broadway, Spring, and Main streets of downtown, for instance, as a commercial and entertainment center in which variety theaters outlined their offerings and sponsorship in white



Early Clune's Postcard, c. 1910s

incandescent bulbs that stretched along thin

vertically oriented signs mounted perpendicularly to the façade.⁸ These reached even wider and higher from rooftops, where they were propped up by elaborate, unenclosed metal scaffolding that silhouetted the night sky with "Clune's Broadway...the Time the Place" (today, an electronics retail shop) or "Tallys" (demolished in 1929) spelled out in circles with lines radiating to a central star at the top.⁹ (See Clune's postcard and Tallys' photograph.) "Crowds Pack for Blocks," reads the *Los Angeles Times* headline of March 3, 1907, for the opening of Bullock's elaborate two-faced, nine-foot-high, lettered sign on its 7th story garden rooftop at Broadway and 7th Street. An unnamed business at 7th and Main a year earlier employed moving lights to spell out its name, and was claimed to be the first of its kind in the nation.¹⁰ By 1914—and still standing as one of the earliest extant incandescent signs in the city, though some of the bulbs have since been replaced with neon—flashing, colored bulbs added to the



Tally's Theater at 833 S. Broadway, Undated
(Los Angeles Public Library)

⁷ Though twenty years old, an excellent synthesis of the significance of historic signs and analysis of historic sign ordinances, included appendices with the ordinances employed by Pasadena and Portland, among others, is George H. Kramer, "Preserving Historic Signs in the Commercial Landscape: The Impact of Regulation," Master's Thesis, University of Oregon, December 1989.

⁸ On early electrical signs nationally: Charles Louis Henry, *The Story of Signs: An Outline History of the Sign Arts from the Earliest Recorded Times to the Present "Atomic" Age* (Boston: A. MacGibbon, 1954); Tama Starr, *Signs and Wonders* (New York: Currency Books/Doubleday, 1998); Jakle and Sculle, *Signs in America's Auto Age*; *Signs of the Times: A Century of Excellence*. Supplement to *Signs of the Times*, Vol. 228, Centennial Edition (Cincinnati, OH, 2006). Locally: *Los Angeles Times* coverage in the 1920s and later, Nathan Marsak and Nigel Cox, *Los Angeles Neon* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer, 2002).

⁹ Although Clune's sign violated much-debated city ordinances that restricted the height of signs to twenty feet above the firewall, it was not alone in its violation. "Issues Ruling on High Sign; Theater Proprietor Must Submit to Trial," *Los Angeles Times*, 19 Feb. 1911, 116. Also see Marsak postcards for street view from the 1910s, pages 13, 17. One reason why some of the projecting, vertically oriented signs attached perpendicularly to the facades were narrow may be due to sign ordinances, which even the Municipal Art Commission agreed to revise in 1904. However, the Mayor continued to reject proposals lifting of height and width of projecting signs through the 1910s.

¹⁰ "Crowds Pack for Blocks," *Los Angeles Times*, 3 Mar. 1907; "Novel Electric Sign," *Los Angeles Times*, 31 Mar. 1906: "A unique advertising sign will make its appearance tonight over a building at seventh and main. It is nearly fifty feet long and contains a multitude of incandescents. The sign starts just like a person writing, spells out the name of a firm, makes a flourish underneath, and then puts in the punctuation. It is said to be the only one of the kind in the United States and was designed by R. W. W. Grigsby." The first mass-produced electric signs equipped with on-off flashers to create a sense of movement is said to date to 1909 (see <http://www.americansignmuseum.org/a-brief-history-of-the-sign-industry/>).

urban spectacle with signs for such establishments as the “New Million Dollar Hotel Rosslyn” boasting “Fire Proof Rooms” and “Popular Prices,” sentiments stressed by a red pulsing bulb-outlined heart enclosing the message; several years later it was doubled across the street when a second Rosslyn and another grandiose rooftop sign were erected.¹¹ By 1912, the most prominent downtown merchants, including some of the city’s earliest and renowned users of incandescent signs – Hotel Lankershim (demolished), Hamburgers Department Store, Orpheum, etc. – would band together to insist upon increasing the permitted height of what they described as electric signs as “city beautifiers” and proof of “progress and enterprise.”¹²

By the late 1910s, downtown’s emergence as the center for theatrical entertainment, residential apartment buildings and hotels, and department stores was illuminated through incandescent electrical advertising signs that reached higher and extended further than ever before. These signs became a portent—and exemplar—for what was to come as downtown decentralized first along streetcar lines then through the mass use of the automobile. For instance, as Sunset Boulevard developed in the 1910s its commercial establishments were well endowed with similar electric signs. Perhaps the biggest and best existing example, employing over 700 electrical sockets, 1300 red, green, and white bulbs, and dating from 1919 is the animated bowler who scores a strike and announces Jensen’s Recreation Center (restored in 1999).¹³ This is among the remaining restored and operating incandescent signs in the city, joining the 1924 Highland Theatre, whose 1200 green bulbs outlining its name blazed after restorations in 1999 and ca. 2005, seen along what would have then been called Pasadena Avenue (today, Figueroa). While the incandescent rooftop sign for the 1925 Superba Apartments can’t boast the same reconditioning, it’s rusting metal suitcase, channel letters, and electric sockets nevertheless reveal the once prominent use of electrified signs in Wilshire Center. Such signs also fortify the argument that Los Angeles promoted itself not just as a suburban idyll but also as an ideal locale for the urban density of mixed use, multifamily residential life.¹⁴ Electrification was a way to promote the city, in all its incarnations. As the trade journal the *Signs of the Times* boasted, in 1912, Los Angeles had 33 electric signs; by 1922, it had 7,000, including the world’s largest, for Hollywoodland, the 50-foot letters of which were encircled within 4,000 incandescent bulbs.¹⁵

¹¹ Marsak, *Los Angeles Neon*, 23; “Greatest of City Hotels: New Rosslyn Is Open with a Birthday Party,” *Los Angeles Times*, 8 Nov. 1914.

¹² “Higher Electric Signs Wanted in this City,” *Los Angeles Times*, 14 Nov. 1912, II5.

¹³ Kevin Starr, “Landscape Electric: A program that renews the city’s urban spirit by relighting Philip Marlowe’s neon L.A.,” *Los Angeles Times*, 4 July 1999, Home section, p. 1; <http://www.historicechopark.org/id97.html>, accessed 12/20/09.

¹⁴ Todd Gish, “Building Los Angeles: Urban Housing in the Suburban Metropolis, 1900-1936,” Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 2007.

¹⁵ *Signs of the Times*, 52; Marsak, *Los Angeles Neon*, 24.



An array of neon signs looking north on Vine Street from Selma Avenue, 1960
(Los Angeles Public Library)

Neon Signs, 1920s-1940s

In 1923 car dealer Earle C. Anthony flipped a switch and turned on America's first display of the uniquely patented Claude Neon. It was a show—and traffic—stopper. Located near the corner of 7th and Flower streets, thirty-foot orange-red letters spelled out "Packard," outlined in brilliant blue.¹⁶ Los Angeles was soon the epicenter of the production and consumption of neon – in fact, the city has designated a number of buildings and their neon signs as City Historic-Cultural Monuments – with local companies challenging the Claude Neon patent and monopoly to distribute neon nationwide.¹⁷ By

1928, the trade journal *Signs of the Times* claimed that California was home to the largest number and variety of neon signs.¹⁸ The colors and production methods were varied: bent, vacuum glass tubes might be clear, colored, or coated and contain a mixture of gases (for commercial signs, usually argon and neon) to produce piercing colors—from the orange-red and mercury blue most commonly found to greens and yellows—when connected through electrodes at each end to high voltage electrical power.¹⁹ By the late 1930s, fluorescent-coated tubing exposed to ultraviolet rays created a glow that enabled the addition of another range of possible colors, though it was not widely used until after the war (when it joined other forms of illumination before displacing neon, which required greater training and skill to employ).²⁰

¹⁶ Starr, "Landscape Electric," 1; Bob Pool, "Neon Lights," *Los Angeles Times*, B2; Marsak, *Los Angeles Neon*; <http://www.americansignmuseum.org/a-brief-history-of-the-sign-industry/>, accessed June 23, 2009.

¹⁷ See for instance "Sign Companies Looking Ahead," *Los Angeles Times*, 28 Jan. 1927, and various display advertisements in the *Los Angeles Times* for "genuine Claude Neon," by Neolite (31 Jan. 1927), Electrical Products Corporation (27 Sept. 1927), and Pig and Whistle (24 Jan. 1928).

¹⁸ "Fifty Years of Electric Sign," *Signs of the Times*, May 1956, 29, 25; Starr, "Landscape Electric"; Rudi Stern, *Let There Be Light* (New York: Abrams, 1979), 19, 24.

¹⁹ Auer, Preservation Briefs - 25; Al Ridenour, "Rough 'n' Radiant: Los Angeles' Museum of Neon Art," *Los Angeles Times*, 31 May 2001, F6.

²⁰ <http://www.americansignmuseum.org/a-brief-history-of-the-sign-industry/>; also see Marsak, *Los Angeles Neon*; Jakle and Sculle, *Signs in America's Auto Age*; *Signs of the Times*.

Neon was frequently used in tandem with incandescent bulbs, both of which might outline letters and images painted on the steel suitcases that had been holding signs since the turn of the century.²¹ While incandescent bulbs offered “points of light,” neon provided penetrating color and illumination (five times that of a bulb) at low operating costs.²² Soon neon was used solo, either over flat painted fascia letters (Formosa Cafe, the Bear Pit Bar-B-Q (see image at right), Sun



Bear Pit Bar-B-Q Sign, Mission Hills neighborhood (SurveyLA)

Lake Drugs), contained within metal cutout channel letters (the Desmond in downtown Los Angeles), freely mounted to create motion (Jack Stephan Plumbing), or attached to rooftop scaffolding as freestanding letters (Ravenswood, El Royale Apartments, “Jesus Saves” at the Ace Hotel) backed in reflective metal or presented billboard style (Arwyn Manor Apartments, Hotel Barbizon).

The phenomenon of neon, unto itself, was a spectacle that advertisers could capitalize on. It was a sign of modernity, too, and by the late 1920s and 1930s was employed as an architectural element, outlining the zigzags of deco, streamlines of moderne, or fascia of newly modernized store facades. Movie theaters built in previous decades added neon bedecked marquee and vertical blade signs and by the 1930s planned for it as an integral part of both design and modernization schemes (see the Tower, Palace, Los Angeles, Orpheum, and Wiltern theaters for existing examples of blade and marquee signs). At the same time, however, a depressed economy often meant that by the late 1930s broken glass tubing or bulbs weren’t replaced and the lights went dark. Then, in 1942, wartime materials restrictions on metals (including the copper used for wiring) reduced the production of neon signs while fears of enemy attack led to formal prohibitions: nighttime blackouts. In some cases, signs were extinguished for not just the duration of the war but for decades as they fell into disrepair and were not turned on again.²³

By the time of the blackouts, however, Los Angeles had become renowned for its sign districts. Broadway theaters and hotels near the entering rail lines downtown were early adopters of neon rooftop and projecting pylon and marquee signs, and in 1930 Bendix Aviation Corporation trumped all with its 150-foot tall neon letters at Maple and 13th Streets. In Hollywood—where The Broadway Hollywood department store sign could be seen for miles (see image on next page)—one could glance down Vine and find far more than today’s sole remaining original blade sign for the Taft Building²⁴ (though if traveling south from the Taft today, past Melrose Avenue one can find the Ravenswood and the El Royale blazing brightly). Driving north and south of Hollywood boulevards and venturing into the

²¹ Lisa Mahar, *American Signs: Form and Meaning on Route 66* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 2000) and Michael F. Crowe, “Neon Signs: Their Origin, Use, and Maintenance,” *APT Bulletin* (Association for Preservation Technology) 23, 2 (1991), 30-37.

²² Wagner, *The Story of Signs*, 43; Mahar, *American Signs*, 46; Crowe, “Neon Signs,” 30.

²³ Starr, “Landscape Electric”; *Signs of the Times*; Marsak, *Los Angeles Neon*.

²⁴ Marsak, *Los Angeles Neon*, 39.

Westlake-Wilshire area today still yields a bumper crop of existing rooftop neon: Ancelle Apartments, DuBarry Apartments, Fontenoy Apartments (see image below), Gaylord Apartments, Hotel Chancellor, Piccadilly Apartments, Trianon Apartments. Still, the views that frame all, as if drawn from Raymond Chandler's *Little Sister* or another of his 1930s novels, are from Wilshire Boulevard around Lafayette and MacArthur Parks, where the Asbury, Ansonia, Bryson, Park Wilshire, Wilshire Royale, and Westlake Theatre are still silhouetted against the night sky.



The Broadway Department Store and its neon sign were declared Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 664 in 1999 (Los Angeles Public Library)



The Fontenoy, designated Historic-Cultural Monument No. 882 in 2007, is located in the Hollywood community (City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)

By the time of the blackouts more than rooftop crowns blazed regally—almost every big theater in town had a marquee, projecting signs, towers, and rooftops gleaming and animating the land of “inexhaustible material dreams,” as Kevin Starr puts it. So did a full variety of other commercial establishments. Egalitarianism seemed to reign, as the 1939 WPA Guide to California suggests in this description of Hollywood: “At night thousands of names and slogans are outlined in neon, and searchlight beams often pierce the sky, perhaps announcing a motion picture premiere, perhaps the opening of a new hamburger stand.”²⁵ In 1935, the slogan that perhaps best highlighted the hopes and dreams of the promised land was “Jesus Saves,” the set of two orange-red neon signs erected by the Bible Institute of Los Angeles at 5th and Hope, moved in 1988 to Dr. Gene Scott’s Los Angeles University Church atop United Artists Theater at 933 S. Broadway (now the Ace Hotel, the sign was preserved and is located on the back side).²⁶ Perhaps its huge scale was intended as redemption for the smaller storefront neon that, by the 1940s, was a commonplace announcement for liquor stores, bars, and dance halls throughout the city (not to mention dry cleaners, markets, and eateries).

Decentralization and Advertising Signs, 1920s-1960s

As commerce directed its attention by the 1920s and 1930s to audiences in motion—streetcar riders as well as motorists—the size and quantity of projecting signs, marquees, and fascia signboards, especially along taxpayer strips, grew. The scale of advertisements paralleled the increased verticality of the historic urban core and rising commercial centers *as well as* the horizontal growth of the city along developing arterial streets and highways. The designs and quantity of off- and on-premise signs corresponded to the decentralization of the city, the rise in mass consumer durables and new sites of

²⁵ Quoted in William Brevda, “The Double Nihilation of the Neon,” 22.

²⁶ Cecilia Rasmussen, “Oilman’s Legacy Lives on in LA,” *Los Angeles Times*, 2 Mar. 2008.

mass consumption and entertainment, and the growth of the professional advertising industry. It didn't hurt that the outdoor advertising and film industries enjoyed a symbiotic relationship. Indeed, movie theaters, electrical spectaculars, billboards, and other signs grew together up and out onto the sidewalks and commercial streets.

Billboards

Los Angeles was dominated by the billboard company Foster and Kleiser (later incorporated into Clear Channel Communications), which held a virtual monopoly on the West Coast. They were closely linked to the film industry, even locating their plant in Los Angeles for proximity of studio access. Foster and Kleiser became known for their modernist designs and novel three-dimensional approaches to outdoor advertising. In the 1920s, their low-slung, horizontally spanning billboards occupied entire vacant lots and, in an effort to appease critics, were sometimes made of pilaster frames that sported neoclassical columns and other sculptural elements (urns, Grecian figures/caryatids; see Lachman Bros "sign park" in Los Angeles, ca. 1920s, with multiple neoclassical billboards).²⁷ In the 1930s, the company made extensive use of the "Streamliner," which had characteristics including white porcelain-enameled steel with stainless steel trim, rounded corners, streamlining stripes, and beveled edges; often the same look was attempted through the use of wood and metal.²⁸

Foster and Kleiser Company dominated the market and was considered by many to be at the forefront of architectural and graphic design innovation at various historic moments. However, there were numerous other companies—large and small—that leased space throughout the city and created advertising that was spectacular in its own right. They too employed the rounded curves of the Streamliner, streaming horizontal bands or latticework at the bottom of billboards, and other variations. Indeed, variations on the Streamliner continued into the post-World War II period, when the shape was modified—set askew and then punched outward and upward with three-dimensional abstract and geometric forms bursting from the borders of the frame. By the 1950s and 1960s, the scale of this outburst was enlarged, with cutout and molded plastics, moving lights, rotating tri-panel screens, and objects (clocks, three-dimensional shapes to represent what was being advertised) set askew to exaggerate a sense of implied motion, as if to compete with other media (such as television) and the speed of turbo-charged cars of the day.

Notably, in 1946 renowned industrial designer Raymond Loewy was hired by the national outdoor advertising trade organization to create a more aerodynamic billboard frame that became the new industry standard (barely changed for decades thereafter). It included a slender beveled 19-inch molding, border of pearl gray, angled gold stripe, and white enameled surface.²⁹ This design was altered in 1949-50 to be lighter stainless steel. Despite the adoption of this as an industry standard, many companies produced wood versions (or employed a combination of metal and wood) that employed rounded corners and curved molding, a look that was employed through the 1960s, when it was abandoned in favor of the squared rectangle "royal face" still used today.

²⁷ Gudis, *Buyways*, 202-204.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 144-46.

²⁹ C. D. McCormick, *Advertising and Selling* 40 (February 1947), 60; see blueprints and patent applications for the Loewy billboard frame, OAA/Duke. Gannett Outdoor Advertising Company made one of the first notable changes to the Loewy panel, introducing the "Trim Panel," which replaced the foot-wide curved frame with a mere 1-1/2-inch border. James Fraser, *The American Billboard: 100 Years* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 157.

In 1993, one neon Coca Cola sign that had glowed brightly atop the Newberry building in the 6500 block of Hollywood Boulevard since the 1930s was removed, to the chagrin of Hollywood boosters and preservationists, and it is uncertain if others remain (likely not).³⁰ Indeed, examples of the “special bulletins” or spectacular billboards from the 1920s through 1960s are hard to come by in Los Angeles and when they are found, they may have lost their luster but not their significance. Examples suggest that extant historic off-premise advertisements (billboards) are likely to have changed function, serving today as on-site signage instead.

Sign as Building, Building as Sign

Each of these dramatically stylized billboards transformed the two dimensions of the poster or painted advertisement into three-dimensional architectural space. As both billboards and store fronts increasingly relied upon the use of neon embellishments in the 1930s to spell out the brand or store name and to activate the front of their structures, their visual similarities increased. The front of the store was a “living billboard,” one journalist wrote of a Los Angeles drive-in market of the 1930s. This same concept was embodied by retail shops, supermarkets, and gasoline stations whose one-story, horizontally stretching buildings included a high-reaching facade of stucco or porcelain-enameled sheet metal on which the cutout or painted letters were arranged, poster like. A&P supermarket, for instance, had a 100-foot-long façade of light-colored stucco that sported little more than a sign.³¹ Industrial designer Walter Teague arranged all of the architectural features of one of his store fronts – from the doorway to windows to signage – as if they were visual elements of a “two-dimensional poster design,” according to Jeffrey Meikle, creating a streamlined, unified façade that would read easily in one swift glance.³² Teague’s approach, integrating all elements of architecture and advertisement within one harmonious yet dramatically simple design, was advocated by many architects, industrial designers, and sign-makers, whose work was in great demand, given that between 1924 and 1938, according to a survey by *The Architectural Record*, “three-quarters of the nation’s commercial establishments conducted face-lifting operations.”³³ They were aided at the federal level after the 1933 New Deal Modernization Credit Plan began to offer businesses financial aid for their “face lifts.”³⁴

In their quest to create stylish exteriors that would be apt containers for what was held within, many designers employed materials the public would perceive as “modern,” such as glass and metal veneers, plastic laminates, rounded edges, and bold graphics. Sometimes this impulse to mold the storefront façade as a package for the product within became literal, a programmatic packaging, as was the case on Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles when Marcus Miller “inserted an eight-foot tall camera of black Carrara, plate glass, and metal trim into the façade of the Darkroom photography shop.”³⁵

³⁰ Amy Wallace, “Removal of Coke Sign is ‘Classic’ Blunder, Preservationists Say,” *Los Angeles Times*, 31 Jan. 1993, Home ed., 1.

³¹ Richard Longstreth, *The Drive-in, the Supermarket, and the Transformation of Commercial Space in Los Angeles, 1914-1941* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: The MIT Press, 1999), 48, 62-63, 105-106; Hardwick, *Mall Maker*, 62-65; Jakle and Sculle, *The Gas Station in America*, 146.

³² Jeffrey Meikle, *Twentieth-Century Limited: Industrial Design in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1979), 119.

³³ “Main Street, U.S.A.,” *The Architectural Forum* 70 (February 1939), 85; Horace Ginsbern, “In Store-Front Displays,” *Signs of the Times* 77, no. 3 (July 1934), 11; Morris Lapidus, “Where the Sign Begins...,” *Signs of the Times* 78, no. 1 (September 1934), 11; William F. Rooney, “Electrical Displays,” *Signs of the Times* 73, no. 2 (February 1933), 10.

³⁴ See Esperdy, *Modernizing Main Street*, 55-58 and Jakle and Sculle, 27.

³⁵ Esperdy, *Modernizing Main Street*, 168-70.



*Lincoln Heights Municipal Light, Water, and Power, 1936
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Greater attention to graphic art and comprehensive design—in which a company's logo, packaging, and use of typography correspond—were apparent in modernized storefronts and reflected the growing influence of the Bauhaus, International Style, and machine-age industrial or applied design as émigré artists and designers came from Europe to make Los Angeles their home and studio. Commercial and public signage during the 1930s and 1940s, for instance, dramatically employed sans-serif and other Bauhaus influenced typography as a means to unify the building as sign, soon melding into a style that some would call "PWA" or "WPA," after the acronyms for New Deal public projects to build schools, libraries, and other municipal buildings. The best example of utilizing modern materials and a machine-age typeface integrated into the façade is the landmarked Lincoln Heights Municipal Light,

Water, and Power Building designed by S. Charles Lee in 1936; the nearby Fire Station Number 1 offers another variation of streamline moderne façade with metal letters in the Bauhaus style. Department of Water and Power buildings similarly have utilized typefaces that express their architectural derivation during the period of the New Deal. These are significant stylistic elements, since oftentimes today we discern the date of a building by its signage, and usually by its sans serif typographic cutout letters or metal type, which might perch above the entry or be attached with small metal rods to a smooth stucco expanse.

Yet there were widely disparate approaches to how a business might capture in a single moment, with a singular image or idea, the attention of passing motorists. Though many proprietors still followed the basic designs of downtown, with buildings fronting the street and signs tacked on as an afterthought, others moved their buildings back to allow auto access and parking, and embellished the structures with more flamboyant decorations, pylons, towers, and illuminated and neon signage.³⁶ The pylons and towers of Art Deco and Streamline commercial buildings, for instance, were advertisements unto themselves and usually bore an additional typographic or symbolic image. The 1924 Los Feliz Small Animal Hospital, for instance, uses a wide white pylon topped by a disc framed with an abstract image of a cat and a dog, encircled, while cutout sans-serif block letters span horizontally across the facade. With its various architectural and symbolic and typographic elements unified by a stylistic consistency, the building thus functions as sign and emblem of the period of its original construction.

In the post-World War II period, another wave of modernist comprehensive design came into use, likely an outcome of increased opposition to the blizzard of signs and signage that accompanied economic expansion of the era. Integrating signs and signage as part of the building, especially through the use of letters and logos as architectural elements, became the antidote prescribed by modernists (many of

³⁶ Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile*, 40. Liebs traces the development of roadside architecture from the nineteenth-century commercial strip to the 1980s. Also see Longstreth, "Don't Get Out: The Automobile's Impact on Five Building Types in Los Angeles, 1921-1941," 32-56 and *City Center to Regional Mall; The Drive-In, the Supermarket*.

whom also were advancing Miesian styled corporate modernism).³⁷ Structures such as Piller's, a family owned and run department store on Colorado Boulevard in Eagle Rock (now Renaissance Arts Academy charter school), and other late modern commercial office buildings and banks, sought to read clearly yet without additional symbolic or metaphoric meanings expresses: the free floating graphic elements state the name and draw necessary attention as the main architectural features.



*CBS Television City at 7800 Beverly Boulevard, Undated
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Other office and studio complexes, such as for CBS Television, also incorporated signage into the overall corporate identity, as early adopters of simple graphic logos. In the case of CBS, the corporate “eye” designed by art director William Golden peered down omnisciently from the sharp-edged west-facing wall of William Pereira’s 1952 modernist icon; the eye moved walls but persisted over the years. Yet just as corporate modern design was making inroads into even non-corporate sponsored architecture, so were metaphorical references populating the

Strip and the city in Los Angeles, tapping the reputation of the region as a stage set with little behind its false front, all surface and no depth. Artist Ed Ruscha took humorous note of this in paintings, photographs, and books *Some Los Angeles Apartments* (1965) and *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1966) in which he took the ordinary and repetitive features of the built environment, framed them, and called them art. Some photographs from *Los Angeles Apartments*, for instance, depict the antithesis of the internationally renowned California Case Study House program of the 1940s and 1950s. Instead of pristine steel-and-glass cubes, Ruscha gives us boxy beige stucco, dingbat apartments built right over their parking. Their main features are exotic names typographically scripted, carved from thin plywood, and stuck on to stucco facades, which almost mock residents’ tired dreams of mobility, leisure, and California’s Mediterranean idyll life: the Capri, Algiers, St. Tropez, Fountain Blu (sic). Even while Ruscha’s images were bereft of people, they seem to acknowledge the role of the graphic emblem in creating place-based imagery and mental maps to the city. Signage for multi-residential dingbat and courtyard apartments like the Corsair or Capri, both on Harvard in Hollywood, or the Hausr (on Hauser) are dominant means by which their buildings gain identity, and refract regional history.³⁸

³⁷ For instance, in 1961, Mildred Constantine and Egbert Jacobson published a book that accompanied an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, entitled *Sign Language for Buildings and Landscapes* (New York: Reinhold, 1961, with a preface by Henry Russell Hitchcock), proposing a clean-up of city signs and signage by integrating graphic logos into corporate modernist architecture. Also at this time, critic Peter Blake published his *God’s Own Junkyard: The Planned Deterioration of America’s Landscape* (New York: Henry Holt, 1964), an excoriating attack against outdoor advertising as commercial blight.

³⁸ On the design and significance of the dingbat graphic elements, see John Chase with John Beach, “The Stucco Box,” in *Glitter Stucco & Dumpster Diving: Reflections on Building Production in the Vernacular City* (New York and London: Verso, 2000) and Clive Piercy, *Pretty Vacant: The Los Angeles Dingbat Observed* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2003).

Programmatic Architecture

Also tapping the mythos of Los Angeles as a place of fantasy and the fanciful were the roadside giants that sold what they pictured (or at least alluded to). Amusing and attention getting, aimed to lure motorists—and their cash—to the side of the road, no piece of roadside architecture loomed larger on the landscape and in the public imagination.

Who could resist

stopping at the Jumbo Lemon, Giant Orange, or The Big Cone for a refreshment?³⁹ Or how about visiting the papier-mâché owl lettered “I-Scream” (selling ice cream), a smiling pig with orange neon teeth with tamales inside, or giant donut, hot dog, or chili bowl selling just what they promised? This was architecture as advertisement. It was part of “The Great American Roadside,” the glorious marketplace unveiled by James Agee, in an article for *Fortune* in 1934, in which he explained that “The Eye is Quicker than the Brain.”⁴⁰ Agee had it right – this was not about deep thinking or pondering the meaning of the architectural symbolism. One glance revealed all. It was advertising, straight from P.T. Barnum’s handbook. And it was perfect for the roadside strip, where land was cheap, parking was ample, and a flamboyant idea was the biggest investment required to catch the attention of passing motorists.

The heyday of these thematic and colossal works of vernacular commercial architecture was from the late 1920s through the mid-1930s, with Southern California as central locus, hosting an estimated 90 such structures.⁴¹ After the war, it was still a viable structural form—after all, they cost little to produce and could be easily moved—and giant hot dogs (such as Tail of the Pup, image above, removed from the site in Los Angeles), donuts (the most well-known being Randy’s, which is actually in the city of Inglewood, not Los Angeles), and tamales continued to punctuate the Strip. Today, these roadside attractions and statuary—such as the black fiberglass steer used to entice motorists to get a steak at the



*Tail of the Pup restaurant at 300 N. La Cienega Boulevard, Undated
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

³⁹ Heimann and Georges, *California Crazy & Beyond: Roadside Vernacular Architecture*, is devoted to this genre of architecture. In the 1930s, giant oranges were built in Florida, California, and even upstate New York (J.J.C. Andrews, *The Well-Built Elephant and Other Roadside Attractions* [New York: Congdon & Weed, 1984], 32). The Big Cone was a 25-foot high upside-down ice cream cone built in 1928 in Santa Ana, California (Andrews, *The Well-Built Elephant*, xi). One teapot in Tacoma, Washington, served something else in its teacups -- it was a speakeasy for a while (Andrews, *The Well-Built Elephant*, 63). Jakle and Sculle, *Gas Station in America*, 194, 199; Karal Ann Marling, *Colossus of Roads: Myth and Symbol Along the American Highway* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 74; Daniel Vierya, *An Architectural History of America's Gas Stations* (New York and London: Collier MacMillan Publishers, 1979), 18-19; Andrews, *Well-Built Elephant*, 2.

⁴⁰ “The Great American Roadside,” 172. On the attribution of this article to James Agee, see Judith Keller, “Evans and Agee: ‘The Great American Roadside,’” *Fortune*, 1934; *History of Photography* 16 (Summer 1992), 170-71.

⁴¹ David Gebhard “Introduction” in Heimann and Georges, *California Crazy*, 5, 15.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Commercial Development/Commercial Signs

Pacific Dining Car on Sixth Street (image below) or My Brothers Bar-B-Q in Woodland Hills (until 2015, see image below) or the colossal Carpeteria genie (see image below) advertising a chain of rug stores—are hard to find in Los Angeles. Though the Brown Derby’s “Eat in the Hat” advertisements still resonate for many, there is only a remnant of the original hat remaining on Wilshire Boulevard, shorn from its original site and now in the corner of a strip mall in Koreatown.



A long-time restaurant in Westlake, the Pacific Dining Car has been in continuous operation since 1921; originally constructed at 7th Street and Westlake, the building was moved to its current site in 1923 (SurveyLA)



The Carpeteria sign in North Hollywood (SurveyLA)



My Brother's Bar-B-Q sign; the establishment closed in 2016 (SurveyLA)

Remaining examples include the luxuriously clad black glass exterior complete with lens cap of the Darkroom on Wilshire, which originally sold cameras; Kindles Donuts, the oversized glazed drive through on Normandie and Century where motorists have placed orders since 1953; The Bucket, where burgers are flipped in Eagle Rock now; the chili bowl where you can buy Mr. Cecil's Ribs;⁴² and the tower where, in 1946 and today, a café operated (now named Cafecito Organico instead of Tower Café).



*Chili Bowl King, now Mr. Cecil's California Ribs
(SurveyLA)*

Acrylic Plastic, Fluorescent Lighting, and Pylons, 1940s-1980



Ship's in Westwood, 1978 (Los Angeles Public Library)

By the late 1940s, new translucent, colored plastics, Plexiglas acrylic, fluorescent tubing, and backlighting began to dominate signs and signage and to displace neon as a singular material. By the 1950s and 1960s (the design era dubbed "Populuxe" by Thomas Hine), signs using these new materials (or newly advanced materials, in the case of fluorescent, which had been around) began to grow exponentially in size, scale, symbolism, and exuberance. They

employed a broader range of colors, with shapes bursting outside of the frame of the marquee, blade, or rooftop structure—the better to read from faster moving cars and arterial highways or bustling boulevards. Businesses that had begun to dot the commercial landscape in the 1920s and 1930s with aerodynamic shapes and extruding signage—roadside restaurants, drive-ins, gas stations, hotels and motels, franchises, supermarkets—now grew in number and the amount of real estate they occupied,

⁴² Steve Harvey, "The Chili's All Gone But a Few Bowls Remain," *Los Angeles Times*, 2 Aug. 2009, A32. Between 1931 and 1941, Art Whizin constructed 22 Chili Bowls in Southern California; four survive today but only one of them is located in Los Angeles.

with both integrated and freestanding pylon and pedestal signs and a rainbow of color and imagery serving as architectural accouterments to what in some cases were otherwise indistinct single-story stucco or traditional buildings.⁴³

Modernist commercial architecture that was stylistically exaggerated enough that the buildings themselves seemed to take flight, as was the case with what has now become known as “Googie” architecture—inspired by late 1950s coffee shop architecture of Googie’s downtown (demolished), Ship’s in Westwood (demolished; see image on previous page), and Wich Stand on Slauson (altered), among others—fed a fascination for the technologies of the atomic age, the speed of space



Pann’s Coffee Shop and Sign (SurveyLA)

travel, and a lust for Cold War culture’s conspicuous consumption. Boomerangs, diagonals, cantilevers, biomorphic abstractions, zig-zags, parabolas, industrial “Swiss cheese” I-beams, and tapering pylons are among the glossary of “Googie” architectural style⁴⁴ that can still be seen (in varying condition) in extant signs and signage across Los Angeles, from the gloriously tilted typography of Pann’s Coffee Shop on La Tijera Boulevard to Johnie’s (formerly Romeo’s) scripted illumination (with electric bulbs and neon) on Wilshire Boulevard to Norm’s trademark diamond-shaped pennants in orange and white neon and Plexi stacked atop an I-beam on La Cienega, Sherman Way, and Pico Boulevards. “Googie gurus” Armet and Davis designed all three of these coffee shops, integrating pylons and signage into the architecture for visual, structural, and promotional purposes.⁴⁵

⁴³ Signs serving as the decoration for what architects Steven Izenour, Robert Venturi, and Denise Scott Brown famously called the “decorated shed” of the commercial vernacular roadside environment was explored in their *Learning from Las Vegas* studio and publication of the late 1960s (*Learning from Las Vegas* [Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 1972]). They mark the contrast between the “duck,” which for Los Angeles would be the donut or the hot dog stand in the shape of what they sell and the “decorated shed” as a way to address the role of symbolism expressed in different ways along the roadside. Both are legitimated in their discussion and in subsequent scholarly attention to it. So is the ad hoc commercialism of billboards, corporate signs and signage, and the advertisements produced for small businesses highlighted as worthy of attention and architectural emulation as expressions of living commercial history. See Aron Vinegar and Michael J. Goec, eds., *Relearning from Las Vegas* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009) and Aron Vinegar, *I Am a Monument: On Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008).

⁴⁴ Hess, *Googie Redux*.

⁴⁵ John Eng and Adriene Biondo, *Southern California Eats* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer, 2009), 46-47, 54-57.



Corbin Bowl in Tarzana (SurveyLA)

The excesses of architectural and consumerist expressions were articulated through signs soaring, often with constellations of starbursts or atomic particles in multi-colored hues spun from or wrapped round poles or posts to shout out or literally—through repeated diagonals and arrows—point the way to the businesses just beyond street's edge (see, for instance, the Liquor Deli sign for Beverly Mart Liquors on Beverly Boulevard, Hollywood Downtowner Motel, Corbin Bowl, image at left, on Ventura Boulevard). As automobility increased decentralization patterns—and cars moved faster than ever before—larger expanses of land were devoted to roadside shops and restaurants, and parking areas were connected visually by monumental ground signs or freestanding pole signs with easy-to-erect modular components and metal alloy that allowed scaling greater heights at low cost. While through the 1940s, many roadside signs adhered to tradition: thin vertical signs attached to the façade or an armature at the roof, by the late 1940s and 1950s they

were divorced from the buildings, set off on their own, often with horizontally oriented signs favored over the vertical,⁴⁶ or with some combination thereof, as can be seen in the neon topped pole signs in front of the Apple Pan (see image below) in Westwood and the motel and coffee shop signs on the stretch of Route 66 along Colorado Boulevard in Eagle Rock.

The late 1940s and 1950s roadside sign was also more expressionistic, both in their forms and other graphic typographic elements. Angles, curves, slanted or handwritten script typography, unusual novelty, and asymmetry were among the graphic elements employed to suggest energetic composition, and incandescent gained favor again as a way to create animated displays of chasing lights to accentuate feelings of speed and dynamism.⁴⁷ In some cases, thematic tableaux were created through this combination of moving lights, shapes, and other imagery, as in the House of Spirits postwar update to a 1924 building. It is a folksy scene in which a picket-fence-enclosed cottage puffs smoke from its chimney in a Technicolor blaze and a blue neon cocktail stands as tall as a tree. While not necessarily the hand of a master designer, this is a work of art that has found a place in the hearts of many Angelenos, certainly those who frequent this neighborhood. Its values are tangible insofar as the sign is architecturally innovative. However, its significance also rests on the larger associative values of commercial culture expressed in populist terms.



The Apple Pan sign (SurveyLA)

⁴⁶ Mahar, *American Signs*, 96, 33, 66, 67.

⁴⁷ Mahar, *American Signs*, 96, 121, 126.

Corporate Signs and Signage, 1950s-1980

More questions arise regarding significance when the signs fall within the period under consideration but have been mass-produced by corporate chains. For instance, in 1952 Holiday Inn laid the corporate groundwork for sign-bearing stantions as primary architectural elements unto themselves with their “Great Sign” of green and yellow electric lights and neon pulsating across broad curvilinear planes with a pole stuck through, topped with a golden star.⁴⁸ Now extinct (produced from roughly 1952-82), the “Great Sign” was mimicked by other roadside establishments that sought distinction through homogeneity: one glance at the sign was all that was needed to let motorists know that a standardized product was available on the grounds. Though once seemingly ubiquitous, the Great Sign has been sorely missed by those who wax nostalgic for the heyday of commercial roadside culture, its references to standardization and its dismissal of the original or the unique notwithstanding.⁴⁹ The Great Sign serves as an object lesson, as we see other corporate signs fade (or nearly fade) from view if not for public outcry by those for whom the image of the city relies upon corporate as well as vernacular commercial expression.⁵⁰

The dominance of national and international corporations and corporate chains by the 1960s and 1970s dramatically altered the scale and appearance of Los Angeles’ built environment. Street scenes of Wilshire Boulevard from 1970, for instance, are dotted with corporate signs atop the high-rise office towers, the backlit Plexiglas letters sharply punctuating the boulevard with their block forms spelling “Tishman,” “IBM,” “Texaco.” In the case of roadside establishments, the molded letters and shapes perch high atop poles, with those no longer in production, such as the orange ball with “76” written in blue (which once rotated) or KFC’s Plexiglas bucket with the Colonel smiling down upon passersby, winning a place in the hearts of consumers. Indeed, when the orange balls, designed in 1962, were replaced by red and blue monument signs in 2005, Conoco Phillips heard about it. The outcry was international, and the company ultimately responded by installing red and blue balls instead, some of which can be seen in Los Angeles instead of their original forebears.⁵¹ National chains like Arby’s, with its big cowboy hat and flashing electric bulbs, references a commercial frontier long gone—as are most of these ca. 1960s “Great Hat” signs, replaced over the last few years by more lightweight plastic and fluorescent signs and a revised logo that is more oven mitt than hat.⁵² Prototypes of signs for these and regional chains—such as Pioneer Chicken’s



An iconic Arby's sign, erected in 1969, in the Mission Hills neighborhood (SurveyLA)

⁴⁸ <http://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=2765>

⁴⁹ http://www.salon.com/entertainment/masterpiece/2002/04/29/holiday_inn

⁵⁰ The best known example of this is Boston’s Citgo sign. See Wm. Stage, “Saving Signs of Past Times,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 14 Feb. 1989, 12.

⁵¹ See <http://www.savethe76ball.com/>

⁵² Peskin Sign Co. in Ohio designed the original hat logo for Arby’s, which was founded in 1964 and expanded greatly in the 1970s; Peskin continues to make and install Arby’s signs today. See <http://starbeacon.com/local/x546366498/HATS-OFF-TO-ARBY-S>

cartoonish wagon pictured on backlit plastic box—have a place on the commercial strip and not just in a museum. More research needs to be done to date originals and to preserve a selection of these and the spate of multi-lingual plastic and hand-painted signs (such as the backlit plastic façade sign for GW Market in Chinatown), which also narrate the commercial, urban, and social developments of the city.

The year that concludes the period considered by SurveyLA – 1980 – makes sense in the context of signs and signage. Many in the outdoor advertising industry use that as a benchmark for the end of an era, when signs that used to be hand-designed gave way to computer generated and mass reproducible vinyl, plastic, and metal cutouts.⁵³ Yet it was also at this moment that Los Angeles became home to the highest concentration of artists and designers dedicated to revitalizing a lost art that had been refined for the purposes of commercial communication: neon.

⁵³ See, for instance, <http://business.highbeam.com/industry-reports/food/signs-advertising-specialties>

Conclusion



*Chinatown Gate West, Historic-Cultural Monument No. 825
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)*

In the 1980s, the Cultural Affairs Department of the City of Los Angeles, under Adolfo Nodal, began to support the refurbishing and relighting of neon signs in the MacArthur Park area. The project continued as LUMENS (Living Urban Museum of Electronic and Neon Signs), overseen by the Museum of Neon Art since 2000, and has refurbished electrical signs in different parts of the city. These include the relighting of the Los Angeles and Palace movie marquees (600 S. Broadway block) and gates to Chinatown (see image at left) along with the Bendix Tower, Plaza Hotel, Broadway Hollywood, KRKD tower, and Californian Hotel signs.⁵⁴

Outright preservation such as LUMENS is not the only way in which historic signage may be saved. Recognizing that the symbolic and nostalgic value of historic signs also translates into financial profit, many commercial establishments keep old signs even when they don't light up, are not in pristine condition, or reflect businesses long gone and unrelated to the current enterprise. For instance, the sign for Sarno's (see image at right) —though its bulbs and tubing are missing—still serves as a personal landmark for many in Los Feliz, while the diminutive La Perlita Bakery plastic box sign on Sunset Boulevard marks an earlier commercial era than that of the business now located at the site. These signs serve as memory markers, or what French critic Pierre Nora has called “realms of memory,” physical reminders of collective histories that we would otherwise lose track of or forget entirely.⁵⁵



*Sarno's at 1712 North Vermont Avenue, 1987
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

⁵⁴ *A Guide to Neon Lights Along the Wilshire Corridor* (Los Angeles: Cultural Affairs Department and California Institute of the Arts, ca. 1999), available at http://www.publicartinla.com/neon_signs/neon_guide.html, accessed June 20, 2009; Starr, “Landscape Electric”; Pool, “Neon Lights.”

⁵⁵ Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Memoire*,” *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989), 7-25.

SUB-THEME: Pylons, Poles, Stantions, and Billboards, 1920-1980

Summary Statement of Significance: Pylons, Poles, Stantions, and Billboards represent one structural type of sign significant to the commercial, cultural, and urban development of Los Angeles in which advertising, mass consumption, entertainment, and automobility came to define, collectively, both the unique international identity and visual appearance of the city.

Period of Significance: 1920-1980

Period of Significance Justification: 1920, beginning of prominent use of modernist and art deco pylons oriented to motorists; 1980 marks the concluding year for SurveyLA

Geographic Location:

- Areas known for 1920s-1940s modernist and streamline moderne and 1940s-1970 exaggeratedly modernist or “Googie” style buildings
- Throughout the city along commercial and mixed-use streets and commercial arteries
- All streets serving as portions of Route 66 from its founding in 1926 to its decommissioning in 1985

Area(s) of Significance: Commerce, Social History

Criteria: NR A CR 1 Local 1

Associated Property Type: Commercial—Integrated Pylons (1920s-1970)

Property Sub-type Description: Any sign that is vertically oriented, integral to the architectural fabric of the building, and extends beyond the cornice, parapet, or roofline to project into space as a tower-like structure.

Property Sub-type Significance: Originally intended to serve as towering, architecturally synthesized advertising signs, integrated pylons, poles, and stantions are significant for their association with the commercial growth and prosperity of Los Angeles, the development of the city in association with transportation (automobiles), and the development of significant architectural styles and promotional techniques oriented to mobile audiences.

Eligibility Standards:

- Originally constructed as an integral, vertical architectural element of the building to bear advertisements to be read from a distance by moving audiences

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May serve as a prototype for mass-produced corporate or chain-store logos• Evokes iconic cultural associations with period- or regionally specific commercial establishments, personae, or multiple-family residential properties, and/or is an excellent example of an architectural style or promotional technique from its period• Remains in situ
Character-Defining/Associative Features:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Originally constructed as an integral, vertical architectural element of the building to bear advertisements to be read from a distance by moving audiences• Retains the essential character-defining features of its type• May serve as a prototype for mass-produced corporate or chain-store logos• Evokes iconic cultural associations with period- or regionally specific commercial establishments, personae, or multiple-family residential properties, and/or is an excellent example of an architectural style or promotional technique from its period• Retains the required aspects of integrity• Remains in situ
Integrity Considerations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tubing may be broken or missing• Painted letters or images may be faded or removed• Some letters or other elements of the sign may have been removed or illegible, if the general meaning or associations remain• The lifespan of neon is not everlasting, so replacements are acceptable if they follow the contours and basic materials of the sign (evident by sockets, wiring, remnants of tubing or gases, or painted images)• Replacement of transformers, switches, timers or other mechanisms for the control of voltage, dimmers, and flashing mechanisms is acceptable to meet contemporary safety and maintenance standards• Remains an integral part of the fabric of the building
Associated Property Type:	Commercial—Freestanding Pylons, Poles, Towers, and Stantions, 1920s-1980 [Includes early and post-WWII Rte 66, Googies, late 1960s and 70s roadside restaurants (Arby's, etc.), gasoline stations, hotels/motels, corporate chains]
Property Sub-type Description:	Any freestanding pylon, pole, tower, or stantion bearing or

serving as an advertising sign that is located within the property lines of the commercial establishment though unattached to the building.

Property Sub-type Significance:

Freestanding pylons, poles, towers, or stantions are significant for their association with the commercial growth and prosperity of Los Angeles, the development of the city in association with transportation (automobiles), and the development of significant architectural styles and promotional techniques oriented to mobile audiences.

Eligibility Standards:

- Originally constructed as freestanding support for advertisements to be read from a distance by moving audiences
- May serve as a prototype for mass-produced corporate or chain-store logos
- Evokes iconic cultural associations with period- or regionally specific commercial establishments, personae, or multiple-family residential properties, and/or is an excellent example of an architectural style or promotional technique from its period

Character-Defining/Associative Features:

- Retains most of the essential character-defining features of its type
- Usually freestanding steel poles, rectilinear stucco-faced pylons, towers, or stantions that extend vertically, separate from and usually (especially in post-World War II years) rising to a height above that of the building it advertises
- Often serves to advertise and visually link the building and parking lot to street frontage
- Pylons, poles, stantions, or towers support metal or plastic boxes (in varying dimensions and shapes), cutouts, spheres, statuary, or other three-dimensional forms
- May support a combination of backlit plastic, incandescent bulbs, neon tubing, and/or fluorescent tubing
- Often bear signs on both sides and may include other intersecting shapes and forms that jut from the primary structure at different angles
- May exemplify design features of Art Deco, Streamline Moderne, or exaggeratedly modernist or “Googie” architectural styles
- May exemplify design features of sans-serif modernism; scripted and slanted typefaces of post-World War II period; askew, exaggeratedly modernist or “Googie” styled forms and features; thematic or exotic imagery; or bubble-type, psychedelic, or hand-designed computer-esque

	<p>forms, typefaces, and colors of 1960s and 1970s stylization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evokes commercial ethos of its period through forms, typography, material, and/or imagery
Integrity Considerations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tubing and bulbs may be broken or missing, with only electrical sockets for electrodes remaining• Painted letters or images may be faded; plastic elements might be faded and/or segments missing• Sheet metal box or other cutout or three-dimensional shapes may be rusted, nicked, or repainted, or porcelain coatings damaged if some elements of original remain• Sign may have been moved within the property lines of the building; for local preservation, sign may have been moved off site to avoid demolition, for parallel (i.e., consistent) use elsewhere, or for artistic display• Some letters or other elements of the sign may have been removed or illegible, if the general meaning or associations remain• Bulbs may have been replaced by neon if such alteration was within the period of significance• The lifespan of electrical bulbs and neon is not everlasting, so replacements are acceptable if they follow the contours and basic materials of the sign (evident by sockets, wiring, remnants of tubing or gases, or painted images) and remain within the period of significance• Replacement of transformers, switches, timers or other mechanisms for the control of voltage, dimmers, and flashing mechanisms is acceptable to meet contemporary safety and maintenance standards• Retains the relationship between the building and the street, even if surroundings have altered the visibility of the sign
Associated Property Type:	Commercial—Freestanding Billboard (1920s-1960s)
Property Sub-type Description:	Any freestanding metal or wood scaffolding or poles supporting a metal or wood billboard frame located within the property lines of a commercial establishment though unattached to the building.
Property Sub-type Significance:	Freestanding billboards are significant for their association with the commercial growth and prosperity of Los Angeles, the development of the city in association with transportation (automobiles), and the development of significant architectural styles and promotional techniques oriented to mobile audiences.



LOS ANGELES CITYWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT

Context: COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, 1850-1980

Theme: Commercial Development and the Automobile, 1910-1970



Prepared for:

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



August 2016

PREFACE

This theme is a component of Los Angeles' citywide historic context statement and provides guidance to field surveyors in identifying and evaluating potential historic resources relating to commercial development and the automobile. Refer to www.HistoricPlacesLA.org for information on designated resources associated with this theme as well as those identified through SurveyLA and other surveys.

CONTRIBUTORS

Daniel Prosser is a historian and preservation architect. He holds an M.Arch. from Ohio State University and a Ph.D. in history from Northwestern University. Before retiring, he was the Historic Sites Architect for the Kansas State Historical Society. Daniel Herrick holds a master's degree in Heritage Conservation from the University of Southern California and contributed to the "Motels" sub-theme.

INTRODUCTION

Los Angeles has long been known as a city dominated by the automobile. The "Commercial Development and the Automobile" theme examines building types which reflect the city's predilection for the passenger car and whose forms were directly shaped by the needs of the car. This shaping occurred in two ways. First, the design of these buildings took on features which identified them as catering to, and often celebrating, the automobile. Second, site layouts accommodated the auto's need to maneuver. These design and spatial adaptations led to clear differentiations between the older pedestrian-oriented commercial buildings and the newer auto-based forms. Significant examples of these building types are indicative of Los Angeles' flourishing car culture, particularly during the 1940s to 1960s.

This theme covers four sub-themes and their associated property types:

- The Car and Car Services, which includes gas/service stations, car showrooms, car repair facilities, parking structures, and car washes
- The Motel
- Commercial Drive In/Drive Thru, which includes drive-in restaurants and drive-thru facilities of varying commercial building types
- Programmatic/Mimetic, which includes various commercial building types, but particularly food service-related

Evaluation Considerations

The theme “Commercial Development and the Automobile” may have some overlap with other SurveyLA themes as follows:

- Properties significant for their architectural quality may also be eligible under themes within the “Architecture and Engineering” context such as Spanish Colonial Revival, Art Deco, Streamline Moderne, Mid-Century Modern, Googie and other styles discussed in the narrative below.
- Signs may be identified as character-defining features of property types in this theme. They may also be identified individually as significant under the “Commercial Signs” theme.
- Properties evaluated under this theme may also be significant under the “Commercial Identity” theme for their association with well-known and long-term businesses.
- For a historic context on properties associated with Route 66, see the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: *U.S. Highway 66 in California*.
<http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/pages/1054/files/us%20route%2066%20mpdf.pdf>
A Route 66 theme was not developed as part of the citywide historic context statement.
- Resources relating to automobile parts and production are covered under the “Automobile Production” theme of the “Industrial Development” context.
- Related topics, including Drive-in Markets, are discussed in the “Neighborhood Commercial Development” theme of the “Commercial Development” context.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The Automobile and Los Angeles

Reyner Banham noted in *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* that, “like earlier generations of English intellectuals who taught themselves Italian in order to read Dante in the original, I learned to drive in order to read Los Angeles in the original.”¹ It is impossible to understand Angeleno architecture of the twentieth century without considering the impact of the automobile. This impact can best be seen in those buildings created to provide for the needs of the car. Beginning in the early 1900s, there emerged new building types – from gas stations to drive-in restaurants – which served the motorist.

These new building types led to new relationships with the street and surrounding building. Earlier urban buildings had been part of a greater whole. Set adjacent or close to each other, they formed a visually solid street wall. Only the occasional monumental building, such as a library or a church, broke with the street wall and stood apart. But the automobile produced buildings that all stood alone, each surrounded by its own driveway and parking lot. The idea of a wall of unified background buildings, broken in places by a foreground building sitting in isolated splendor, no longer fit the increasingly auto-oriented city. In its place came a line of separate buildings, each putting itself forward as a monument.

Given this new relationship, designers of auto-related architecture took one of three approaches. Each approach drew from the designer’s attitude toward the passenger car and the street it created. The first approach was the utilitarian. To utilitarian designers the automobile and the roadside landscape it produced were neither good nor bad. They simply were. These designers accepted the car as a given and tried to devise building forms that directly served its needs. They had little concern for architectural flourish or the larger urban setting. At its best, the utilitarian approach resulted in well-proportioned and crisply detailed industrial-style structures. At its (more common) worst, utilitarian designers produced box-like sheds whose signs were the most memorable elements.

The second architectural approach was the celebratory. To celebratory designers the automobile was unquestionably good and the roadside it produced an opportunity for the imagination. The celebratory first appeared in the 1920s with Programmatic/Mimetic buildings, those structures shaped like non-architectural objects from derby hats to chili bowls. It continued into the 1930s with the Streamline Moderne, best exemplified by the circular drive-in restaurants of the day, surrounded by cars like spokes on a wheel and awash at night in neon and indirect lighting. Its high point was the Googie style of the 1950s, with structures such as car washes with their expansive roofs and slender pylons extending into the sky like so many tail fins. Regardless of its form, the celebratory approach accepted the idea of the free-standing structure and transformed it into a type of identifying sculpture, with the customer’s car as an integral part.

¹ Reyner Banham, *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 23.

The third architectural approach was the tasteful. To the tasteful designers the automobile was at best a necessary evil and the roadside landscape it produced a disgrace. These designers sought to tame the influence of the car and to bring to the roadside the harmony of the earlier pedestrian city. In essence they tried to separate the building from the car, physically and psychologically. Purveyors of tasteful design initially used revivalist domestic and commercial forms to clothe structures serving the automobile, and tried to maintain the spatial arrangement of the earlier city by hiding parked cars at the rear of their buildings or in separate garages. Later designers accepted the visible parking lot as inevitable, but tried through landscaping to distance the building from the car, covering their structures in so-called natural materials so as to combat the mechanistic ambience of the highway.



Gas Station, circa 1920 (Los Angeles Public Library)

These three approaches have done battle from the beginning of the car's widespread use. The utilitarian was the first to emerge in structures such as early service stations, and its influence has been more or less steady ever since. By the mid-1920s the tasteful approach gained favor as it tried to fit the ever-increasing number of cars into the existing architectural and spatial arrangements of the pre-automobile city. From the early 1930s through the middle of the 1960s the celebratory approach became dominant, as auto-oriented sprawl and individualistic architecture to match became the acceptable norm for both professional designers and the public at

large. But by the late 1960s the auto-based roadside came into question on environmental grounds, and the celebratory architecture it encouraged was denounced as unacceptably ugly. A new era of the tasteful had begun.

The Passenger Car, 1900-1930

The sprawling nature of greater Los Angeles was actually the product of an earlier system of transportation, the interurban railroad. The development of the interurban, beginning in the late 1800s and reaching its peak with the Pacific Electric network in the early 1900s, allowed the residents of the city and its surrounding suburbs to spread out over the flatlands. Yet this was still a settlement pattern of clusters around interurban stops. Large expanses of vacant land sat between these settlements. It was the automobile that allowed Angelenos to fill in the expanses.²

² Ibid., 80-83.

The widespread use of the automobile came in the years just before the United States entered the First World War in 1917. Up until that time the passenger car was a luxury item. In 1906, Woodrow Wilson, then president of Princeton University, maintained that “possession of a motor car was such an ostentatious display of wealth that it would stimulate socialism by inciting envy of the rich.”³ The Automobile Club of Southern California, organized in 1900, at first represented this well-off class of motorists, and by 1910 had a membership of 2,500.⁴

Ten years later, in 1920, Automobile Club membership had risen to 30,320, a twelve-fold increase that reflected the changing nature of auto ownership during that decade. Overall, auto registration in Los Angeles County, less than 20,000 in 1910, exceeded 100,000 by 1920. The increase in popular ownership came about through the development of an affordable car, specifically the Ford Model T. There were other manufacturers of cars intended for the masses but none could come close to challenging Henry Ford. Built using assembly-line techniques, the Model T – commonly known as the Tin Lizzie – was durable, easy to operate, economical to maintain and simple to repair.⁵

The Model T was first introduced in 1908. A year later Ford stopped manufacturing all other models and concentrated on it alone, and by 1911 Ford had become the largest single automobile manufacturer in the country. In the process of increasing volume he continually lowered the price. In 1908 the touring car cost \$850 and less than six thousand were made. By 1912 the price had fallen to \$600 and over seventy-eight thousand were produced. By 1916 a new touring car could be had for \$360 and well over half a million were built. By the end of the First World War, in 1918, Ford had half the market for automobiles in the United States, and by 1920 every other motor car in the world was a Model T.⁶

In great part because of the Model T, the 1920s were the years during which the motor car became the dominant mode of transportation in Southern California. Registration of passenger cars in Los Angeles County went from a bit more than 100,000 in 1920 to almost 800,000 by 1930. This growth was aided by the fact that prices for new cars continued to fall during that decade. The average price of all passenger cars in 1919 was \$1,157. By 1929 it was \$818. A new Model T could be bought in 1926 for \$290, seventy dollars less than what it cost ten years earlier. Also there had developed by the early 1920s a used-car market, which provided the less well off with an even cheaper car. Finally, adding to the affordability of autos was the emergence of buying on credit. By 1925 three-quarters of all sales, new and used, were made with some form of a time-payment plan.⁷

³ Quoted in John B. Rae, *The American Automobile: A Brief History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 29.

⁴ Scott L. Bottles, *Los Angeles and the Automobile: The Making of the Modern City* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 54; Howard J. Nelson, *The Los Angeles Metropolis* (Dubuque IA: Kendell-Hunt Publishing Company, 1983), 276.

⁵ Robert M. Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967 [1993]), 92; Nelson, *The Los Angeles Metropolis*, 276; Rae, *American Automobile*, 59.

⁶ Rae, *American Automobile*, 38, 59-62, 66-67.

⁷ Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis*, 92; Rae, *American Automobile*, 79-80, 87-88, 200.

By the mid-1920s the dominance of the Model-T began to fade. The growing popularity of the self-starter, and the shift in preference from open to closed cars, made the cloth-topped Ford, with its crank-dependent engine, increasingly unattractive. General Motors introduced the Chevrolet as a slightly more costly but much more stylish alternative, and devised the annual model change as a means to stimulate the market. Henry Ford's concept of a durable car built for long use became unfashionable. Ford responded in the late 1920s with the Model A as an updated substitute for the Model T. By the end of the decade the Tin Lizzie may have vanished as a new product, but it had accomplished its purpose of making the car an affordable element of everyday life.⁸

The City Street, 1900-1930

The increasing presence of the car after the First World War caused Los Angeles to rethink the nature of its street system. There were some major early thoroughfares laid out by both the city and the county, particularly after the Board of Supervisors issued \$3.5 million in bonds for road construction in 1909. But typically streets had been created by subdividers, with the higher-priced developments having some kind of hard surface provided. Otherwise, property owners created improvement districts of their own to finance the grading and surfacing of their streets.⁹

Yet in spite of this generally haphazard system, between 1904 and 1914 Los Angeles was able to improve nearly 500 miles of streets. These included hundreds of residential lanes and such north-south and east-west arteries as Central Avenue, Vermont Avenue, Adams Boulevard and Pico Boulevard. These routes were generally thirty to fifty feet wide and topped by a firm surface. By 1915 all of the main thoroughfares had paving of some sort.¹⁰

But these improvements were soon overwhelmed by the increase in car ownership during the early 1920s. This increase prompted community leaders to press for studies as to how the street system could further be improved. Both the Automobile Club of Southern California in 1921 and the City's Traffic Commission in 1922 prepared plans for upgrading street layouts. The Board of Supervisors created a Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission, also in 1922. But these were all less than comprehensive in coverage and findings.¹¹

In 1924 community leaders hired the firm of landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted to prepare a survey of existing conditions and make recommendations for the improvement of the city's streets. This study, entitled *A Major Traffic Street Plan for Los Angeles*, covered what was then the extent of

⁸ Rae, *American Automobile*, 74, 79-80, 106.

⁹ Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis*, 94-95; Nelson, *The Los Angeles Metropolis*, 278.

¹⁰ Bottles, *Los Angeles and the Automobile*, 58; Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis*, 92-94.

¹¹ Bottles, *Los Angeles and the Automobile*, 97; Todd Gish, "Challenging the Myth of an Unplanned Los Angeles," in *Planning Los Angeles*, edited by David C. Sloane (Chicago & Washington DC: American Planning Association, 2012), 25; Frederick Law Olmsted, Harlan Bartholomew and Charles Henry Cheney, *A Major Traffic Street Plan for Los Angeles, Prepared for the Committee on Los Angeles Plan on Major Highways of the Traffic Commission of the City and County of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: Traffic Commission of the City and County of Los Angeles, 1924), 5.

settlement. It reached to the south as far as Hyde Park and 110th Street, to the west as far as Beverly Hills, and to the southwest as far as Culver City.¹²

Some of its recommendations followed older City Beautiful models. It suggested that Crenshaw Boulevard south of Wilshire Boulevard and Wilshire west of Crenshaw be developed as traditional parkways such as those constructed a generation earlier in Boston and Chicago. At the same time, the plan was foresighted enough to recommend parkways along the Arroyo Seco to Pasadena and through the Cahuenga Pass to the San Fernando Valley, which would serve both as pleasure drives and traffic arteries. Both the Arroyo Seco and the Cahuenga Pass Parkway proposals would find their way into later plans for the city's freeway system.¹³

But of more immediate importance was the plan's differentiation between local and arterial streets. Local streets were those that served neighborhood residents and businesses, while arterial streets were those which the report called major distribution streets. These were the streets that allowed traffic to move from one neighborhood or district to another. The plan stated that the primary need was the designation and improvement of these arterial streets for through traffic. These major distribution streets were to be widened and, where necessary, relocated to eliminate intersections at which they did not directly align. The plan realistically identified these distribution streets to be those that were already being used for through traffic, and thereby made implementation of its recommendations more likely.¹⁴

During the next six years Los Angeles worked to carry out the widening and straightening recommended by the Olmsted Plan. Within a year of the plan's publication the city's voters had approved a five million dollar bond issue and later accepted a special property tax for street improvements. The result was that, by the first years of the Great Depression of the 1930s, most of the arterial routes south of the Santa Monica Mountains had been identified and reconfigured as major distribution streets.¹⁵

These improved arterials were also designated as locations for commerce. For this, Los Angeles relied on its zoning power. The first comprehensive zoning ordinance was drafted in 1925. Business was relegated both to its traditional downtown district and to the major distribution streets identified in the plan. Thoroughfares such as Santa Monica Boulevard and Vermont Avenue extended for block after block as "C-Zone – Commercial-Business Uses." While these streets were often already sites for scattered businesses based on earlier streetcar lines, their designation in the zoning code discouraged other uses and led to their becoming predominantly commercial.¹⁶

¹² Olmsted, *A Major Traffic Street Plan for Los Angeles*, *passim*.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Bottles, *Los Angeles and the Automobile*, 114-115, 169; Gish, "Challenging the Myth of an Unplanned Los Angeles," 25; Nelson, *The Los Angeles Metropolis*, 277-278.

¹⁶ Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis*, 254-256.



Pig Stand Drive-In, circa 1930 (Los Angeles Public Library)

This blanket designation made available more commercially-zoned land than was justified by demand. The result, by the time construction came to a halt in the early 1930s, was spotty development. Isolated commercial structures stood interspersed among vacant lots. One historian has described this as the creation of business “shoestrings” with development “in an uneconomical, disorderly, and unattractive fashion.”¹⁷ At the same time, the relatively large amount and low cost of this commercial space along arterial streets allowed an automobile-centered architecture to emerge.

Taming the Automobile, 1920-1930

The growing number of cars, and the apparently disorganized streetscape that resulted, led professional designers to search for some kind of order. The first reaction was to make the car fit into the familiar land arrangements that predated it. One response was to turn to the older Garden City model. In 1926 the Los Angeles City Club reported that decentralization was inevitable and that Los Angeles should become a “harmoniously developed community of local centers and garden cities.”¹⁸

Perhaps the best known of these local centers within the city limits was Westwood, laid out between 1926 and 1929. It was designed as a self-contained commercial district to serve the planned campus for the southern branch of the University of California (today’s UCLA) and the surrounding upper-middle class residential neighborhood. Westwood was deliberately set back a block from Wilshire Boulevard, and commercial development was originally banned along that thoroughfare as it passed by the community. The new district consisted of a series of commercial streets much like a pre-industrial village, all equal in importance and none serving as a path for through auto traffic.¹⁹

As appealing as it was architecturally, Westwood failed to serve as a model for commercial development in the automobile age. Its lack of an arterial path through the center made auto circulation difficult and its shortage of parking quickly became a problem. An alternative approach to Westwood’s concentrated layout was to accept the shoestring commercial strip as a given and to find some way to make it more attractive. The concept that emerged was that of placing commercial structures directly on the street, in the pre-automobile pattern, and then locating parking in the rear. In this manner the traditional

¹⁷ Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis*, 257.

¹⁸ 1926 report quoted in Bottles, *Los Angeles and the Automobile*, 159.

¹⁹ Richard Longstreth, *City Center to Regional Mall: Architecture, the Automobile, and Retailing in Los Angeles, 1920-1950* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 163-165.

street wall of solid attached buildings along a boulevard could be maintained and the parked car hidden away.²⁰

This concept of rear parking appeared first in Hollywood in 1923, when I. Magnin constructed a luxury women's store with parking in back and valet service. But the best-known and most influential example was Bullock's Wilshire, completed in 1929; today the site is Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) #56 and listed in the National Register. It was directly adjacent to the street, allowing for the maintenance of a continuous wall of buildings. At the same time, it had an expansive and easily accessible parking area to the rear that occupied two-thirds of its site, and an entrance from that area into the store which was as imposing as that fronting on the street.²¹

Bullock's Wilshire was significant for roadside commercial architecture in a second way. While maintaining the street wall with its façade, it featured a tower that extended above the street wall and became a free-standing three-dimensional object easily seen by passing motorists. This led to other commercial structures along Wilshire, such as the Wilshire Tower of 1929 (HCM #332) and the Pellissier Building of 1930-1931 (HCM #118 and listed in the National Register), which combined the older boulevard ideal of the solid street wall with the newer highway-based concept of building as sign through the use of a tower.²²



Historic-Cultural Monument Nos. 332 (The Wilshire Tower), 386 (Chapman Park Market), and 566 (May Co. Department Store)

The arrangement of front building and rear parking remained influential, particularly in elite neighborhoods, for the next decade. It was used for the Chapman Park Market of 1928-1929 (HCM #386), one block off Wilshire on Sixth Street, and for the May Company Department Store of 1938-1939 on the northeast corner of Wilshire and Fairfax (HCM #566). As late as 1941, the Los Angeles County Regional Planning District still called for future commercial construction to be concentrated in business centers at major intersections in which the buildings were set hard against the street and parking placed in the rear.²³

²⁰ Longstreth, *City Center to Regional Mall*, 174.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 97, 114-115.

²² *Ibid.*, 106, 114.

²³ Longstreth, *City Center to Regional Mall*, 139, 197, 290-291; Richard Longstreth, *The Drive-In, the Supermarket, and the Transformation of Commercial Space in Los Angeles, 1914-1941* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 140-142; *A Comprehensive Report on the Master Plan of Highways for the Los Angeles County Regional Planning District – Volume I, The Plan and its Preparation* (Los Angeles: Regional Planning Commission, 1941), 54-55.

The Architecture of the Auto, 1910-1930

So what were these roadside buildings that so appalled the traditionalists? The most numerous were gas stations. Individual purveyors of fuel, in buildings of their own and separated from their neighbors by expanses of paving, began appearing in the years before the First World War. By the late 1920s they had become one of the most common buildings types in the city and, for better or worse, established the formula of an auto-oriented architecture that was free-standing and acting as an advertisement for itself.

The service station of the 1920s came in all sizes and styles. It could be a simple shed with a single pump, or a large enterprise with a phalanx of pumps in front and a collection of service buildings to the rear. It could be housed in the simplest of utilitarian designs, or clothed in one of the many historical forms typical of the era. But regardless of its size or architectural elaboration, it broke the rules of traditional urbanism.

Along with the service station came other building types housing services for the automobile. They included the auto repair shop and the car wash. Originally, these had been part of the service station, housed in structures located to the rear of the pumps. But by the late 1920s they had emerged as separate building types of their own.

A second category of buildings came to join the gas station and its offspring as typifying the auto strips of the 1920s. These were the restaurants. There were two forms. One was the drive-in. This was a descendent of the roadside food stand. By the mid-1920s the food stand had migrated to the center of the lot and was surrounded by parking. The car hop provided service to the customers in their parked cars.

The other restaurant form that came to characterize the strip used the architecture of fantasy. Specifically this was the practice of employing non-architectural forms, from giant hats to miniature mountains, to house commercial enterprises. Historians have called this giant-object architecture Programmatic/Mimetic, with the architecture reflecting the name of the restaurant, the type of food served, or both. To be sure, other kinds of businesses used the Programmatic/Mimetic, but the vast majority consisted of restaurants.

Finally, there was the emergence of the motel as a distinct auto-oriented form. It first made its appearance as a cluster of cabins within the auto camps found at the outskirts of the city. By the late 1920s, the motel was a separate building type, consisting of collection of simple cabins, arranged along the lines of the earlier bungalow courts, with parking adjacent to each unit.

What characterized these 1920s types – the motel, the gas station, the drive-in, and the giant object restaurant – was a variety of style that verged on anarchy. Motorists driving along one of the arterials became accustomed to seeing a gas station, housed in a simple industrial structure, next to a hot dog

stand in the shape of a giant frankfurter in a bun, followed by a cluster of tourist cabins in rustic bungalow style, and then by a second gas station outfitted in elaborate Spanish Colonial Revival dress. Each sat in isolation on its individual lot, displaying its uniqueness in three dimensions.

To be sure, not all automobile-related architecture of the 1920s was that of the open road. Some forms remained rooted in the older central business districts. In doing so, they adopted the historicist styles and the relationship to the street of the commercial structures that surrounded them. These forms were the automobile dealership and the parking garage. The dealership chose to remain where it could share in the prestige of a downtown location, as well as be accessible to potential customers who did not yet own cars. The parking structure by its very nature was a product of the compact downtown core and would remain so even when the auto dealership later fled for the strip to join the other car-related building types.

In addition to new transportation infrastructure, proliferation of the automobile in the 1910s and 1920s also spawned a commercial enclave to the south and west of the central business district that was oriented around the sale, repair, and maintenance of cars. Capitalizing on the enhanced role that auto travel played, particularly in Southern California, several automobile manufacturers erected large, new showrooms and repair facilities along Figueroa and Flower Streets in what is now known as the South Park neighborhood. By the 1910s, the term “auto row” appeared in local newspapers and was used to describe the cluster of showrooms and associated businesses in the area.²⁴ Throughout Downtown, multi-story “auto parks” were weaved into the central business district as early as the 1920s, providing patrons of department stores and other businesses with a convenient place to park their car while shopping. To entice motorists, many of these garages offered on-site services in addition to parking stalls. Some touted a rather robust menu of amenities including “a repair department manned by experts, a lubrication department, and a washing and polishing department ... a complete accessory and tire department with direct factory representation ... [and] a finely appointed ladies’ lounge.”²⁵

²⁴ The terms “auto row” and “automobile row” first appear in *Los Angeles Times* articles from the early 1910s.

²⁵ “New Garage Has Features for Car Service,” *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 13, 1925.



Herbert's Drive-In Restaurant, circa 1940 (Los Angeles Public Library)

The Streamline Moderne of the 1930s

The Depression of the 1930s was devastating for commercial construction. Land remained vacant and its value dropped. The excess of commercially-zoned lots was still an issue as late as 1941. A study commissioned by the Los Angeles County Regional Planning District that same year maintained that the problems of “the overabundance of so-called business lots on major highways – the miles of vacant business properties – are well known,” and blamed them in large part on the liberal use of commercial zoning.²⁶

At the same time the Depression apparently had little effect on the widespread ownership of cars. The proportion of Angelenos owning autos remained generally the same from the mid-1920s through the early 1940s. There had been 8.2 residents per automobile in 1915, 3.6 in 1920, and 1.8 in 1925. At this point the ratio stabilized, with 1.5 residents per automobile in 1930, 1.6 in 1935 and 1.4 in 1940. Automobile registration actually increased by some 300,000 in Los Angeles County between 1930 and 1940 as migrants to the southland brought their cars with them.²⁷

This combination of abundant cheap land and continued car use led architects and planners to embrace the roadside architectural model of the isolated building surrounded by parking. The little commercial construction that did take place was almost exclusively on those abundant, low-cost commercially-zoned plots where businesses could stretch out and make sure that their auto-born customers had plenty of space. The result, according to critic Douglas Haskell writing in 1937 in the *Architectural Record*, was a city that “appears to the casual view as a series of parking lots interspersed with buildings.”²⁸

A few planners had begun, before the onset of hard times, to accept the roadside arrangement of a commercial building with parking in front rather than hidden in the rear. In 1927 the Board of City Planning Commissioners for the City of Los Angeles presented a “Suggested Treatment for Local Business Centers at the Intersection of Main Thoroughfares.” It was published in the journal *American*

²⁶ *A Comprehensive Report on the Master Plan*, 67-68.

²⁷ Bottles, *Los Angeles and the Automobile*, 93; Longstreth, *City Center to Regional Mall: Architecture*, 99.

²⁸ Quoted in Chester H. Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985 [1995]), 15.

City in February of 1928. The suggested treatment showed an intersection on which all four corners contain rows of stores set back from the street and fronted by parking. No landscaping or other amenities were recommended, simply the building and the parked cars. It was in essence the modern strip mall.²⁹

The first major commercial building that accepted the idea of the freestanding building adjacent to visible parking was the Sears Roebuck Store and Mail Order House of 1926-1927 (HCM #788). Its location at Olympic Boulevard and Soto Street, a commercial area surrounded by industrial uses near railroad connections, allowed it to ignore having to fit into an existing architectural setting. It was a huge multi-story edifice of 450,000 square feet, topped by a tower containing the water tank for its fire-suppression sprinkler system. It was clothed in what would become known as Public Works Administration (PWA) Modern garb, consisting of simplified classical forms such as those used by Bertram Goodhue in the Los Angeles Public Library of 1922-1926. Its setting, with large parking lots on either side, allowed it to stand as a roadside advertisement for itself, and fit a pattern followed by other Sears stores of the period.³⁰

The auto-oriented architecture of the Depression years followed from the Sears store, in both its acceptance of the parking lot as a visual entity and in its treatment of the building as a free-standing form to be viewed in three dimensions from the passing car. Sears was also influential in its rejection of overtly historicist garb. But rather than use its stripped classicism, roadside architecture adopted a less monumental and more playful style commonly known as Streamline Moderne.

Streamline Moderne was actually a collection of decorative devices that first made its appearance in the late 1920s. Its direct ancestor was the Art Deco ornament that was used with great success on Bullock's Wilshire. Streamlining differed from the angular Art Deco approach in its smoother, more rounded, generally more horizontal lines. Streamline also differed from Art Deco in that it was more willing to break with traditional architectural principles such as symmetry and balancing of masses, and experiment with asymmetric arrangements appropriate to a free-standing building being viewed from a moving automobile.³¹

Streamline Moderne was, in essence, a variety of Programmatic/Mimetic architecture. In place of more specific images of non-architectural objects, Streamline Moderne buildings provided an abstract image of movement. This image was seen as particularly appropriate for an auto-related architecture. The association with movement was due to Streamline Moderne's use in the industrial design of modes of transportation. The rounded forms appropriate for aircraft were used for locomotives and for automobiles such as the Chrysler Air-Flow of the mid-1930s. It was, as well, relatively inexpensive to build compared to historicist and Art Deco forms, particularly given the wood-frame-and-stucco

²⁹ Illustrated in Longstreth, *The Drive-In, the Supermarket, and the Transformation of Commercial Space*, 155.

³⁰ Longstreth, *City Center to Regional Mall*, 119-121.

³¹ Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile*, 53-57.

construction of Los Angeles. Streamline Moderne also adapted itself well to innovations in exterior lighting, particularly neon and indirect.³²

Along with the popular Streamline Moderne style were occasional examples of the International Style. This style was identified with experimental European designs of the 1920s, particularly that of the Bauhaus movement in Germany. Bauhaus was generally more respectable in the eyes of academically-trained architects, having been legitimized by an exhibit at New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1932. It was characterized by flat roofs, asymmetry, clean right angles, expanses of undivided glass, and an absence of ornament. Only lettering in modernist fonts was allowed as a means of giving some relief to the spare forms. The International Style was particularly well suited to the steel framing and porcelain panel systems characteristic of prefabrication at that time.³³

The Streamline Moderne provided architectural unity to auto-oriented building types. The 1920s had been characterized by a cacophony of styles. The near-universal adoption of the Streamline Moderne for the few structures that were built during the 1930s went far to lessen it. All building types to one degree or another used it. The service stations of the era were the first, with the oil companies standardizing their designs around an International Style box adorned with Streamline detailing. The few auto dealerships built during the era migrated to the Strip and followed the lead of service stations. Even motels experimented with grafting Streamline Moderne architecture onto their more urban locations.

Perhaps the most vivid use of the Streamline Moderne came in the drive-in restaurant. By the mid-1930s a circular form had become common, with the cars parked around the restaurant like spokes extending from the hub a wheel. The drive-in made use of the latest in abstraction, with a delicate cantilevered canopy extending like a disc out over the cars and a slender pylon reaching upward. The drive-in looked best at night, when the use of neon and indirect lighting converted it into something from the science fiction films of the era. The 1930s drive-in was in its abstract way as much an element of fantasy as the earlier more literal Programmatic/Mimetic creations.

³² Paul Gleye, *The Architecture of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: Rosebud Books, 1981), 130.

³³ Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile*, 58.

Coming of the Freeways, 1933-1965

During the 1930s there was a general halt to new subdivisions and street construction. Only toward the end of the decade did the infusion of federal funds for defense generate a resumption of growth. Much of this occurred within the Los Angeles city limits in the southwest areas around Westchester and the airfield that became Los Angeles International Airport. Arterials such as Sepulveda Boulevard were improved and acquired new structures to serve the needs of the local defense workers.³⁴



*Hollywood Freeway at the Cahuenga Pass, 1940
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

More significant during the 1930s was the work done in planning for what would later become known as freeways. The first step was the scheme for a network of parkways that had been put forth as early as the Olmsted Report of 1924. In 1937 the Automobile Club of Southern California proposed what it called Motorways, divided highways without grade crossings at intersections. Unlike similar schemes at the time for other cities, this plan recognized that auto travel around Los Angeles was random and not focused solely on entering and leaving the central business district. The Auto Club proposal included north-south and east-west routes that followed the lines of major arterial streets, as well as radial routes linking downtown to outlying areas.³⁵

The 1937 Auto Club report became the basis for the official freeway plan. In 1939 the mayor appointed a Los Angeles Transportation Engineering Board which issued its own plan calling for Express Highways that generally followed the routes of the Auto Club's Motorways. Both the County Regional Planning Commission and the City Planning Department adopted the plan in 1941 with only minor changes and thus made it official.³⁶

Construction of parts of the proposed system actually preceded the acceptance of the plan. Between 1933 and 1935 the City built a four-mile stretch of what was then called Ramona Boulevard, northeast of the city center. It consisted of an initially undivided stretch of multi-lane road with nine overpasses in place of intersections. (It eventually was improved to become the western-most section of the San Bernardino Freeway.) Closer to the modern form of the freeway were two other early projects, both

³⁴ Greg Hise, *Magnetic Los Angeles: Planning the Twentieth Century Metropolis* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins Press, 1997), 143.

³⁵ Bottles, *Los Angeles and the Automobile*, 206, 216-217.

³⁶ *City Planning in Los Angeles: A History* (Los Angeles: Department of City Planning, 1964), 43; Bottles, *Los Angeles and the Automobile*, 219-220, 223; Nelson, *The Los Angeles Metropolis*, 281.

begun under the supervision of the State Highway Department; these were the Pasadena Freeway and the initial portion of the Hollywood Freeway.³⁷

The Pasadena Freeway began as the Arroyo Seco Parkway, long under consideration as a part of the 1924 Olmsted Plan. It linked the central business district with what was considered the premier suburb of the city. Planners envisioned it as a parkway in the traditional sense, closed to commercial vehicles and treated as a landscaped thoroughfare to be enjoyed rather than a commuter run to be endured. The state surveyed the route in 1934, began construction in 1936, and completed the first six miles by 1940. The finished Parkway opened in 1942.³⁸

The Hollywood Freeway began as the Cahuenga Pass Parkway. This also was proposed by the 1924 Olmsted Plan and was long sought as a means of opening the San Fernando Valley to increasing settlement. By December of 1940 the first section through the pass, two lanes of divided highway with no intersections, was completed. A second section, extending two more miles, opened in 1942.³⁹

The years following the end of the Second World War in 1945 saw the implementation of the 1941 freeway plan, which was updated in a Master Plan in 1947. Auto registration in Los Angeles rose from 1.2 million in 1946 to 2.6 million by 1956. The plan and the funding it required were justified to the public as the best way to accommodate this increasing number of cars. State funding was secured during the 1940s and by 1956 the Interstate Highway Act allowed for the use of federal funds.⁴⁰

With these funding sources in place, Los Angeles proceeded to complete its freeway system. Work on the four-level interchange in downtown, connecting the Pasadena, Harbor, Hollywood, and Santa Ana-San Bernardino Freeways, was completed in 1948. The Hollywood Freeway reached north from Cahuenga Pass to Barham Boulevard in 1949, and by 1953 extended south to connect to the interchange. Construction on the Hollywood proceeded during the 1950s, including the addition of a third lane in each direction, and the exchange with the Golden State Freeway was finished in 1968.⁴¹

³⁷ Bottles, *Los Angeles and the Automobile*, 219-220; Nathan Masters, "L.A.'s First Freeways," at www.kcet.org/updaily/social_focus/history/la-as-subject/las-first-freeways.

³⁸ David Gebhard and Harriette Von Breton, *Los Angeles in the Thirties, 1931-1941*, Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged (Santa Monica CA: Hennessey + Ingalls, 1989), 280-281.

³⁹ Gebhard and Von Breton, *Los Angeles in the Thirties*, 23; Nelson, *The Los Angeles Metropolis*, 281.

⁴⁰ Bottles, *Los Angeles and the Automobile*, 232-233; *City Planning in Los Angeles*, 42-43; Nelson, *The Los Angeles Metropolis*, 281-282.

⁴¹ Charles A. Bearchall and Larry D. Fried, *The San Fernando Valley Then and Now: An Illustrated History* (Northridge: Windsor Publications, 1988), 47-48; Kevin Roderick, *The San Fernando Valley: America's Suburb* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Times Books, 2001), 119, 122.

By 1955 most of the Santa Ana and San Bernardino Freeways were done. By 1960 the Ventura Freeway had been extended westward from the Hollywood Freeway, the Long Beach Freeway was complete and the Harbor well under way. The Ventura was completed by 1962. The San Diego Freeway was extended over the Sepulveda Pass that same year. Both the San Diego and the Golden State Freeways were finished in 1963. By the mid-1960s the freeway system of Los Angeles, first envisioned a quarter century earlier, was well on its way to completion.⁴²



Ventura Boulevard, circa 1927 (Los Angeles Public Library)

The Opening of the San Fernando Valley, 1920-1965

For the development of roadside architecture the most important result of the freeway system was the opening of the San Fernando Valley. Its arterial streets, zoned “C-Zone – Commercial-Business Uses,” were now accessible, and these arterials became the setting for a new generation of auto-oriented design. The widespread ownership of the passenger car and the relative scarcity of existing commercial building stock made the San Fernando Valley the center for roadside architecture in postwar Los Angeles.

Before 1940 the Valley was overwhelmingly agricultural. The Los Angeles Aqueduct arrived in 1913 and the Valley was annexed to the city in 1915. But it was not commonly considered part of the metropolis. The Valley was reached by a winding road and the Pacific Electric line through the Cahuenga Pass. Only the eastern end, around Burbank and San Fernando Road, had major settlement. In 1920 the population of the entire valley was perhaps 20,000.⁴³

Although sparsely settled at this time, the Valley was laced with north-south and east-west roads. While perhaps only dirt or gravel, they established the arterial routes that would be the setting for later roadside structures. As early as 1917 the Automobile Club of Southern California called out auto-accessible roads that included the state highway of Ventura Boulevard, and the less improved Sherman

⁴² Banham, *Los Angeles*, 88; Bearchall and Fried, *The San Fernando Valley Then and Now*, 48-49; Nelson, *The Los Angeles Metropolis*, 281.

⁴³ Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 176; Richard L. Preston, “The Changing Landscape of the San Fernando Valley Between 1930 and 1964,” in *The California Geographer*, Volume VI (1965), 61.

Way, San Fernando Road, Lankershim Boulevard, Reseda Avenue, Canoga Avenue, and Santa Susanna Pass Road (now Devonshire Street).⁴⁴

Ventura Boulevard, as the state highway, was the premier site for roadside commerce during the 1920s. A portion of Sherman Way that ran north and south, today's Van Nuys Boulevard as it passes through Van Nuys, also became a commercial center because of its Pacific Electric stop. But both Ventura Boulevard and the Van Nuys business districts were exceptions; the rest of the valley remained overwhelmingly rural. By 1930 the Valley's population had grown to something over 50,000, concentrated primarily along its southern rim of Ventura Boulevard and its eastern quarter from the edge of Burbank to Van Nuys and North Hollywood.⁴⁵

Fortunately several of the Valley's thoroughfares were designated U.S. or State Highways, thus enabling their improvement with government funds. Ventura Boulevard, already a state highway, became U.S. 101; San Fernando Road became U.S. 6 and State Route 99; Sepulveda Boulevard became State Route 7; Devonshire Street became State Route 118, and Lankershim Boulevard became State Route 159. By the mid-1930s an improved arterial road was constructed through the Sepulveda Pass, providing a much-needed point of entry to the western end of the Valley.⁴⁶

The Valley's population had reached around 112,000 by 1940. Settlement was primarily in the eastern section, drawn by the growth of the defense plants such as Lockheed in Burbank, as well as in the small communities of Canoga Park, Chatsworth, Reseda, and Tarzana. The *Comprehensive Report on the Master Plan of Highways* of 1941 specifically identified arterial routes in the Valley. They included Ventura, Devonshire, Parthenia, and Vanowen as east-to-west routes, as well as Victory and Burbank east of Sepulveda. North-to-south routes included Topanga Canyon-Canoga, Reseda, Sepulveda, Van Nuys, Laurel Canyon, and Lankershim. When the freeway system made the more distant parts of the Valley accessible to settlement in the 1950s and 1960s, a grid of arterial roadways, waiting to be lined with roadside commerce, was already in place.⁴⁷

The opening of the early Hollywood Freeway through the Cahuenga Pass, together with the expansion of the defense related industries, caused the Valley to reach a population of between 150,000 and 175,000 by the end of the war in 1945. In the late 1940s General Motors opened an assembly plant between Van Nuys and the new planned community of Panorama City, and other companies followed in

⁴⁴ Roderick, *The San Fernando Valley*, 60.

⁴⁵ Gebhard and Von Breton, *Los Angeles in the Thirties*, 22; Roderick, *The San Fernando Valley*, 58; "Van Nuys Boulevard" (Order Number 00024963), Photo from the Security Pacific National Bank Collection, Los Angeles Public Library. Gebhard and Von Breton, *Los Angeles in the Thirties*, 22, places the population at 54,217 in 1930 while Roderick, *The San Fernando Valley*, 103, places it at 51,000. Roderick, *The San Fernando Valley*, passim, otherwise gives higher numbers for all the decades, but my assumption is that he is including all cities in the valley. I have used the smaller numbers.

⁴⁶ Roderick, *The San Fernando Valley*, 104-106, 108.

⁴⁷ *Comprehensive Report on the Master Plan*, 31; Gebhard and Von Breton, *Los Angeles in the Thirties*, 22; Preston, "The Changing Landscape of the San Fernando Valley," *The California Geographer*, 61, 63; Roderick, *The San Fernando Valley*, 108.

establishing facilities in various sections of the Valley. By 1950 the population increased to well over 400,000. During the fifties, tracts of housing filled the still-vacant land west of Van Nuys and Pacoima and north of Ventura Boulevard. The population approached three-quarter of a million in 1960. With the completion of the Ventura, San Diego, and Golden State Freeways in the sixties, the valley reached maturity as the premier middle-class residential district of Los Angeles.⁴⁸

At first roadside development was limited. In 1949 Ventura Boulevard, the most important thoroughfare, had a strip that included two Herbert's Drive-Ins, one at Laurel Canyon and one at Sepulveda.⁴⁹ Geographer Richard Preston noted that, aside from "commuter-oriented buildings" along Ventura Boulevard, commercial development in the early 1950s "was confined mainly to concentrations at the major intersections of each valley community." Only in the older, denser southeastern section were "ribbon-like forms" of commercial development typical.⁵⁰

But by 1965 what Preston called commercial "string development" became common along the arterial routes. "It appears that a constantly improving highway system, an abundance of open and relatively cheap land, a fairly small population, and the prolific development of dispersed communities greatly assisted the rapid spread of an automobile-oriented suburban landscape."⁵¹

Preston saw a danger in this pattern. He maintained that, by the early 1960s, the older commercial development was facing competition from both shopping centers and newer strips. The result was "a serious vacancy problem in the strip-shopping districts, especially the older ones." He attributed it to an over-supply of commercially-zoned land, "approximately four times as much commercial zoning in the valley as the population can reasonably be expected to support."⁵² Yet it was precisely this abundance of roadside land that allowed the auto-oriented architecture of the era to flourish.

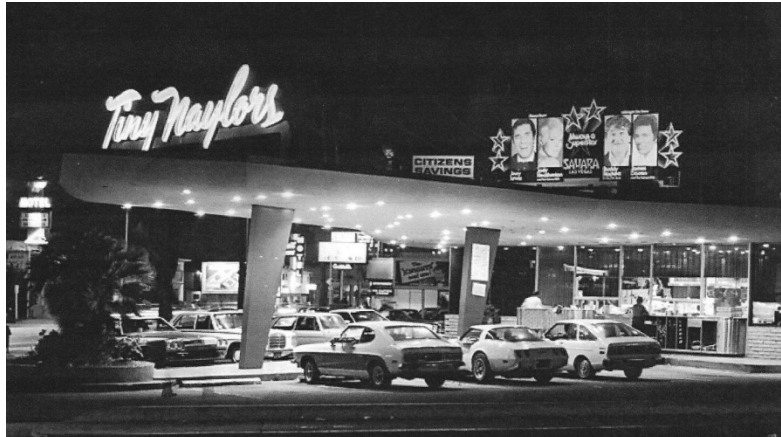
⁴⁸ *City Planning in Los Angeles*, 33, 51; Preston, "The Changing Landscape," 67; Roderick, *The San Fernando Valley*, 113, 122.

⁴⁹ Alan Hess, *Googie Redux: Ultramodern Roadside Architecture* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2004), 42.

⁵⁰ Preston, "The Changing Landscape," 67.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 72.



Tiny Naylor's Drive-In, 1980 (Los Angeles Public Library)

Googie, 1945-1965⁵³

All private commercial construction ceased during the Second World War from 1941 to 1945. In the immediate postwar period, the Streamline Moderne style of the 1930s continued to be used for roadside architecture. But by the late 1940s a freer, more extravagant style took hold. It was characterized by structural exhibitionism,

dominant signage, and vast amounts of glass which made the buildings seem transparent at night.⁵⁴

This was auto-oriented architecture at its most raffish. As historian Thomas Hines noted in *Populuxe*, “The strip was conceived just at the edge of respectability. Only very rarely did it offer beauty. Far more often there was humor. But always there was vitality.”⁵⁵

This style has been called Googie, based on its use with the coffee shops of that name. It draws primarily from the late work of Frank Lloyd Wright and his son Lloyd Wright. It shows as well the influence of 1950s-era structures ranging from Eero Saarinen’s TWA Terminal at New York’s Kennedy Airport to the Miami Beach hotels of Morris Lapidus. Auto-oriented Googie architecture took characteristics from all these sources.

Most obvious was dramatic expression of structural elements. This included elongation and distortion of roofs, extension of beams and columns as protruding spear-like objects, and meandering of walls beyond the boundaries of the building. It also included the mixing of materials and colors. Wood, stone, brick, metal, and stucco were all placed adjacent to each other; interiors featured the newly evolved plastics, laminates, and vinyls in the brightest of hues. All this was composed in rigorously asymmetric fashion.⁵⁶

Particularly notable was the expansive use of glass. The concept of transparency was important in appealing to the passing motorist. One historian has called this the “visual front.”⁵⁷ The use of glass had long been a staple of auto-oriented architecture, dating back to the early showrooms and pre-fabricated service stations. But through the achievement of wide spans available with new construction techniques and devices such as cantilevering, architects were able to create an apparently unbroken

⁵³ This style is examined fully in the Postwar Modernism theme within the Architectural and Engineering context.

⁵⁴ Thomas Hine, *Populuxe* (New York: MJF Books, 1986 [1999]), 10-11; Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile*, 60-63.

⁵⁵ Hine, *Populuxe*, 153.

⁵⁶ Alan Hess, *Googie: Fifties Coffee Shop Architecture* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1985), 47, 61-62; Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile*, 62-63; Hine, *Populuxe*, 156.

⁵⁷ Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile*, 61.

expanse of window that extended the width of the building. The passerby was presented with a low wall of stone or brick, a continuous sheet of glass above it, and an apparently weightless roof of fanciful form hovering on top. This ensemble was most effective when lit at night.⁵⁸

Finally there was fantasy applied to signage. Generally, the sign was an integral part of the building. Asymmetric composition allowed for a wall or a set of columns to be extended upward to form the face of the sign. As with glass, this integration of the sign into the building mass was used earlier, particularly with the drive-in restaurants and supermarkets of the 1930s. But the freedom permissible with Googie architecture allowed for a much greater variety in shape and material. Added to this were playful lettering and the occasional use of space-age related images such as rockets and satellites, spread on angular and amoeboid-shaped backgrounds.⁵⁹

Many of these forms can be first found in the work of the Russian Constructivists of the 1920s, particularly in their use of dramatic structural elements and mammoth signs. Closer to home, Lloyd Wright's 1928 Yucca-Vine Market in Hollywood featured plate-glass walls, a prominent roof, and a pylon-like sign. But the first postwar structures to feature the style are generally considered to be the coffee shops of Douglas Honnold and John Lautner. Their Googie's Restaurant of 1949, on Sunset Boulevard at Crescent Heights, was the pioneer. Also influential, particularly for drive-ins, was the work of architects Louis Armet and Eldon Davis. Armet and Davis established their firm in 1947 and were responsible for Denny's, Norm's, and later Bob's Big Boy outlets.⁶⁰

The drive-in restaurant, in fact, was one of the auto-oriented building types that made the best use of the Googie style. As with the Streamline Moderne drive-ins of the 1930s, Googie drive-ins of the postwar period created an environment of fantasy and excitement. The postwar drive-ins were also, as with their pre-war antecedents, most creative in tying the car to the building. Extended free-form canopies sheltering the cars were the dominant architectural element, to the point that without cars parked in front the buildings looked incomplete.

But there was a second building type that perhaps surpassed the drive-in in its use of Googie. This was the car wash. By the mid-1950s there emerged the standard form of a linear open pavilion topped by a flat plane of a roof. Protruding from this roof was a structural fantasy that could take many forms. It might be a series of spear-like pylons like so many lined-up tail fins. It might be a series of A-frames that gave the car wash a resemblance to a modernist church of the era. Or it might be a series of lopsided inverted U's that provided an asymmetric image typical of Googie design.

The other auto-oriented building types – the gas station, the showroom, the auto-parts outlet, and the motel – were more limited in their use of Googie. In most cases, it was a matter of grafting Googie forms onto an existing structural type that had proven economically successful. For the service station,

⁵⁸ Hine, *Populuxe*, 153.

⁵⁹ Hess, *Googie*, 35-36; Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile*, 62-64.

⁶⁰ Hess, *Googie*, 21-22, 61-72. 81.

this meant an extravagant canopy added to the standard 1930s-era box. For the motel this required the use of Googie detailing added to the façade of a functional if undecorated structure that extended toward the rear. For the showroom and the auto-parts outlet, Googie consisted primarily of the use of large expanses of glass and the construction of a mammoth, often detached, sign.

But regardless of the extent of its use, Googie became the characteristic architecture of the postwar auto strip. But by its very openness to originality and its relatively large scale, it brought to the strip the variety – some would say the anarchy – of the roadside architecture of the 1920s. The result was an inevitable reaction.

The Conservative Reaction, 1965-1980

Beginning in the mid-1960s, good taste tamed the roadside. Architectural forms became quieter and featured natural materials, actual or apparent. Neon gave way to backlit plastic. Encouraging this conservative move was the rise of the franchise and the fading of the independent merchant trying to make a statement. Emblematic was the shift of McDonald's in 1968 from its pair of oversized parabolic arches to its mansard roof.

There had always been distaste for roadside architecture. Some critics, beginning in the 1920s, preferred the more sedate look of the pre-automobile city and the traditional residential suburb. Others, firmly committed to the modernism of the International Style, found roadside architecture to be unacceptably vulgar. In all of this criticism was a distain for popular culture in general, and for that produced by the automobile in particular.

Added to this by the early 1960s was a growing environmentalist movement. Traditional concern for preserving wilderness areas was broadened to include land newly conquered by the highway. In the mind of many, the cluttering of the roadside landscape with uncontrolled and unsightly construction was an environmental crime. In 1964 Peter Blake published *God's Own Junkyard*, in which he charged that a once pristine landscape had been "crisscrossed by highways lined with billboards, jazzed-up diners, used-car lots, drive-in movies, beflagged gas stations, and garish motels."⁶¹

Soon there emerged the push for Beautification. A 1965 White House Conference on Natural Beauty made this movement official. Lady Bird Johnson, the wife of then President Lyndon Baines Johnson and a leader of the movement, called for "pleasing vistas and attractive roadside scenes" to replace "endless corridors walled in by neon, junk and ruined landscape."⁶² Even Ray Kroc, the head of McDonald's, at least publicly echoed the sentiment and linked the problem directly to Googie. "How can we go into these towns and propose to put up these slant-roofed buildings, which are absolute eyesores?"⁶³

⁶¹ Quoted in Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile*, 65.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., 66.

At the same time, the strip itself declined. Auto-oriented Googie of the 1950s was an architecture of the boulevard. It confronted motorists without reticence as an object to be admired during a casual cruise. As the freeway became dominant the architecture became mute. Buildings retreated from the passing car and were mere abstract shapes in the middle of massive parking lots. Only the signs, made familiar through incessant advertising, identified the contents.

Just about all auto-related building types succumbed to this conservative wave. As a result, the celebration of the car through its incorporation into the architecture of the building disappeared. The drive-in restaurant gave way to the fast-food franchise outlet with only the drive-up window retaining the link to the car. The dealership retreated to the rear of its site and the passing motorist was left with a view of row upon row of new parked cars and a mammoth corporate sign. The motel, with its direct link between the car and room, was replaced by the multi-storied double-loaded corridor building that was simply a hotel surrounded by parking. Even the car wash, the high point of auto-oriented Googie, was displaced by less exuberant linear forms that eventually gave way to the stationary automated box.

Conclusion

Automobile-related commercial architecture had its high point in the decades between the mid-1930s and the mid-1960s. It was during this time that the celebratory attitude toward the automobile was most prevalent. The result was an acceptance of the car as part of the architecture. Today intact examples of auto-related resources from this period are scattered citywide but are becoming increasingly rare.

Sub-Theme: Programmatic/Mimetic, 1918-1950

Buildings included in this sub-theme are those which resemble giant or miniature non-architectural objects. They fall into one of two categories:

- *Programmatic* refers to structures which take the form directly related to the product sold
- *Mimetic* refers to structures that take on the appearance of a non-architectural object that may reflect the name or in a general way the spirit of the commercial enterprise

Programmatic/Mimetic buildings are a specific commercial architectural type common along the roadside during the 1920s and 1930s. Programmatic/Mimetic buildings are, above all, objects that need to be viewed in three dimensions and the sprawl allowed by the passenger car. Larger lots surrounded by parking made this possible. At the same time, the speed of passing vehicles gave the large-scale



4824 Vineland Avenue is Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 977, built 1941 (@2015 Google StreetView)

advertising innate in the Programmatic/Mimetic form an advantage over the more discreet signs of the earlier pre-automobile commercial outlets.

In essence, Programmatic/Mimetic buildings look like giant or miniature non-architectural objects. Programmatic refers to a structure which takes its form directly from the product sold, such as a giant frankfurter in a bun for a hot dog stand. Mimetic refers to a structure that mimics a form which is not directly related to the

product provided, but may reflect the name of the business. A prime example of this is the now vanished Brown Derby Restaurant. Its form as a giant hat had no relationship to its function, but did in a memorable way relate to what it was called. The form of the object may also reflect in a general way the spirit of the activity housed within. Such is the case with the bar Idle Hour, located at 4824 Vineland Avenue, which is housed in a giant beer barrel (and Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument #977).

These Programmatic/Mimetic roadside buildings could be found throughout the country but were particularly well-suited to Southern California. The mild climate and the resulting local tradition of inexpensive stucco-on-wood-frame construction made them easy and cheap to build. The stucco-on-wood-frame construction also allowed for a greater freedom of form than could be achieved with the masonry or clapboard exteriors typical elsewhere.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Jim Heimann, *California Crazy & Beyond: Roadside Vernacular Architecture* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2001), 6.

There were two other ways in which the particular nature of Los Angeles made Programmatic/Mimetic architecture popular. One was status of Southern California as a vacation destination. Programmatic / Mimetic structures had long been common in holiday resorts, from Lucy the Margate Elephant of the 1880s along the New Jersey shore to the Cabrillo restaurant-in-a-ship at Abbot Kinneys' Venice-of-America. The other was the presence of the motion picture studios. One historian maintains that film set designs greatly influenced both the Programmatic/Mimetic images presented and the construction techniques used to carry them out.¹⁵⁷

It is difficult for us to image today how popular these bizarre forms were during the early years of widespread car ownership. Gawking at them was part of the ritual of the Sunday afternoon family drive for many getting their first car. During the late 1920s and early 1930s the demand for Programmatic / Mimetic forms became so strong that a number of patents were issued to designers for particular types of structures. Many patents went to residents of Los Angeles, including a refreshment stand in the shape of a pig, an octagon-shaped tea room topped by a giant teapot, and an ice cream stand in the form of an igloo that combined the traditional ice dwelling with a glacier.¹⁵⁸



*Chili Bowl Restaurant 801 N. La Brea, circa 1937
(Los Angeles Public Library)*



*A Chili Bowl restaurant today at 12244 W. Pico Boulevard, 1931
(SurveyLA)*

Typical of Programmatic/Mimetic architecture is the Chili Bowl Restaurant chain. This was a network of restaurants in 1930s that used the form of the bowl for its small structures. The chain was founded by a 25-year old ex-boxer in 1931 who raised twelve-hundred dollars by selling his possessions, said to

¹⁵⁷ Heimann, *California Crazy*, 9, 13, 28-29; Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile*, 49.

¹⁵⁸ Heimann, *California Crazy*, 10-11.

include his wife's wedding ring and his own car, to build the first Chili Bowl on Crenshaw Boulevard near Jefferson Boulevard. The prototype and its offspring had no tables, simply a 26-stool circular counter.¹⁵⁹

The Chili Bowl is an excellent example of the Programmatic/Mimetic in that it fulfills the requirements of both forms. The architecture makes visual reference to both the name of the restaurant and to the product served within. Of interest is the slogan "Built Thru Merit" painted on the side, perhaps reflecting a Depression-era sentiment. There is a Chili Bowl restaurant structure still standing at 12244 West Pico Boulevard in Palms. It dates from 1931 and, while altered, retains much of its original form.



*Hollywood Flower Pot, circa 1920
(Los Angeles Public Library)*



*The Freezer ice cream parlor, undated
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Unfortunately, the Pico Boulevard Chili Bowl is a rare remnant. Most of the city's Programmatic/Mimetic structures have vanished. Historic photos provide a hint of their abundance and variety. We have views from as early as 1920 of a florist's shop, the Hollywood Flower Pot at 1124 North Vine, in the form of a giant version of its name complete with a blooming plant protruding from its top, and of the Jail Cafe at 4242 Sunset Boulevard, housed in a fake stone penitentiary-looking building in which customers could dine in cells labeled "Speeding" and "Non-Support." From later in the decade are photos of two ice cream parlors. The Igloo, at 4302 West Pico, was a wedding of an igloo and a glacier that may well have been one of the patented designs noted above. The Freezer, also on Pico Boulevard, took the form of the bucket-shaped hand-operated ice-cream maker, complete with crank handle, which was found in many of the households of the time.¹⁶⁰

The popularity of Programmatic/Mimetic architecture continued into the early 1930s. Views from that decade show the Pup, a hot dog stand in the form of a giant Dalmatian in Venice at 12728 Washington Boulevard and the Zep Diner, at 515 West Florence, in the shape of a zeppelin or

¹⁵⁹ "The Chili's Gone But The Restaurant-Sized Bowls Remain," *Los Angeles Times*, August 2, 2009.

¹⁶⁰ "Hollywood Flower Pot" (Order Number 00042105), "Jail Cafe, Exterior" (Order Number 00042115), "Jail Cafe Customers" (Order Number 00042114), "The Igloo Ice Cream Parlor" (Order Number 00068650) and "Freezer Ice Cream Parlor" (Order Number 00008006), Photos from the Security Pacific National Bank Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.

blimp.¹⁶¹ Perhaps the best known of all was the original Brown Derby restaurant. It was actually one of four restaurants that shared the name but was the one that most looked like a hat. It was built in 1926 in the form of a giant bowler measuring twenty-eight feet in diameter and over seventeen feet high. Originally it was located at 3427 Wilshire Boulevard and in 1937 was moved one block to 3327 Wilshire and enlarged with non-Programmatic/Mimetic additions. The Brown Derby was torn down in 1980 and replaced by a strip mall.¹⁶²



*The Brown Derby on Wilshire, circa 1957
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

The high point of Programmatic/Mimetic architecture in Los Angeles was probably between 1928 and 1934. By the mid-1930s, Streamline Moderne, itself a sort of Programmatic/Mimetic form, became the popular garb for roadside commerce of all types. Nonetheless, notable Programmatic/Mimetic structures continued to be constructed up to the early 1940s.¹⁶³ The years before the Second World War also saw the increasing use of Programmatic/Mimetic architecture for non-automobile-related uses. A well-known example is the Dark Room, an urban storefront on Wilshire Boulevard. It is Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument #451. It features a show window shaped like a single-lens-reflex camera. It was built in 1938 and designed by Marcus P. Miller, who was responsible for numerous Streamline Moderne retail outlets.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ "Pup, A Hot Dog Stand" (Order Number 00068626) and "Zep Diner" (Order Number 00068629), Photos from the Security Pacific National Bank Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.

¹⁶² "Wilshire Brown Derby Exterior" (Order Number 00068917), WPA Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.

¹⁶³ Heimann, *California Crazy*, 15.

¹⁶⁴ Gebhard and Von Breton, *Los Angeles in the Thirties*, 33; Gebhard and Winter, *An Architectural Guidebook to Los Angeles*, 211; Heimann, *California Crazy*, 13.



Historic-Cultural Monument No. 451, the façade of the Dark Room, 1937 (Los Angeles Public Library)

Another well-known storefront-like example of the Programmatic/Mimetic is the Crossroads of the World. It, too, is a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument, #134, designed by architect Robert V. Derrah and located on Sunset Boulevard. Built in 1937, its tower with a lighted globe functions much like a roadside piece of exotic architecture. But the Crossroads is essentially a pedestrian mall of small shops entered from a break in the streetwall of commercial storefronts. Its use of ship-like motives, together with historicist forms for the shops, can only be appreciated once the customer is out of the car and into the pedestrian precinct.¹⁶⁵



The Fleetwood Center is shaped like a Cadillac grille though the property never supported any Cadillac-related businesses, 1987 (SurveyLA)

¹⁶⁵ Gebhard and Winter, *An Architectural Guidebook to Los Angeles*, 183.



*Historic-Cultural Monument No. 138, the Coca Cola Building, 1939
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Two Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments from the years before the Second World War illustrate the use of Programmatic/Mimetic architecture for non-commercial structures. One is the Coca-Cola Bottling Company, Historic-Cultural Monument #138, from 1939 and also designed by Derrah. It is located in an industrial section on South Central Avenue and consists of a multi-story block fitted out as an ocean liner, complete with portholes and pipe railings.

The other is the Haven of Rest, Historic-Cultural Monument #897, on Hyperion Avenue in Silver Lake. Built in 1941, the building served as the headquarters for a gospel quartet known as “The Crew of the Good Ship Grace.” Its architecture combines stark International Style forms with nautical details such as curved corners and port holes.¹⁶⁶



*Historic-Cultural Monument No. 897, Haven of Rest, 1941
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)*

¹⁶⁶ Gebhard and Winter, *An Architectural Guidebook to Los Angeles*, 268; Date of construction for the Haven of Rest is from the Los Angeles County Assessor Map.

PROPERTY TYPE: Programmatic/Mimetic, 1918-1950

Summary Statement of Significance: Programmatic/Mimetic architecture developed in Los Angeles in response to the increasing influence of the automobile and the rise of roadside attractions. This architecture evolved between 1918 and 1950 as a device to call attention of passing motorists to a commercial building by having the building itself take the form of non-architectural objects at an altered scale – reduced or enlarged. A resource evaluated under this sub-theme is significant in the areas of Commerce and Architecture. Extant examples illustrate the evolution of Programmatic/Mimetic commercial structures as a significant building type related to the automobile. Although many of the best examples of this architecture were built in Los Angeles, few remain today.

Period of Significance: 1918-1950

Period of Significance Justification: By 1918 automobile ownership and commercial land availability in Los Angeles were great enough to generate programmatic/mimetic commercial buildings. By 1950 the commercial demand for programmatic/mimetic structures had ended.

Geographic Location: Citywide, primarily along arterial roads and highways.

Area(s) of Significance: Commerce; Architecture

Criteria: **NR** A/C **CR** 1/3 **Local** 1/3

Associated Property Type: Commercial/Auto-Related – Programmatic/Mimetic

Property Sub-type Description: Programmatic/Mimetic architecture is typically applied to low-scale commercial buildings, particularly those along well-traveled automobile corridors. This architecture was primarily applied to restaurants, food stands, and retail stores. Buildings take the form of non-architectural objects, enlarged and/or reduced in scale, related to the product sold (Programmatic) and/or reflective of their name or spirit of activity (Mimetic). The term does not apply to buildings that adopt a fantasy architectural style.

Property Sub-type Significance: Extant structures illustrate the evolution of Programmatic/Mimetic commercial structures as a significant building type related to the automobile. They show how a building type's architecture is shaped by accommodation to

the needs of a particular mode of transportation, as well as the stylistic and economic trends of the day.

Eligibility Standards:

- Is a good example of Programmatic/Mimetic architecture
- Contains site layout features that reflect the influence of the automobile (e.g. placed on the lot so as to allow for three-dimensional viewing as an object by passing motorists)
- Was constructed during the period of significance

Character-Defining/Associative Features:

- Retains most of the essential-character defining features of the type
- Of the Programmatic/Mimetic form as described in the Narrative Statement of Significance
- Typically a low-scale commercial building
- Conveys an advertising message through adaptation in the building form itself
- Primarily applied historically to restaurants, food stands, and retail stores
- Of the layouts typical of adapting to the needs of the automobile (e.g. free-standing on a roadside setting to allow for viewing from the automobile)
- May be linked to particular companies and/or designers (e.g. Chili Bowl)

Integrity Considerations:

- Should retain integrity of Design, Feeling, Materials, and Association
- Extant examples of Programmatic/Mimetic architecture are rare, therefore, a greater degree of alterations or fewer character defining features may be acceptable.
- Original applied signage may be altered
- Should retain as much Programmatic/Mimetic architectural integrity as possible, including overall massing, significant features, and identifying details such as trim and signage
- Should retain as much of original relationship to the street and to adjacent buildings as possible, so as to allow for viewing of the Programmatic/Mimetic form from the passing automobile
- If use has changed, adaptation to new use should allow for maintenance of as much of the original design and site layout as possible
- May have been moved for preservation purposes

Bot. Bronson + Tamam.

B&S B-5-R12.67

S

APPLICATION FOR INSPECTION OF SIGNS

FS-1

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPT. OF BUILDING AND SAFETY

INSTRUCTIONS: 1. Applicant to Complete Numbered Items Only.
2. Plot Plan Required on Back of Original.

CENSUS TRACT
1909

1. LEGAL DESCR.	LOT 96	BLK.	TRACT Under Hamilton's Hollywood Tract
2. TYPE OF SIGN OR NEW WORK Pole Sign			
3. JOB ADDRESS 5920 Sunset Blvd Hollywood			
4. OWNER'S NAME Arby's Restaurant		PHONE	
5. OWNER'S ADDRESS Same		P O BOX	ZIP
6. ARCHITECT OR ENGINEER B.L. Prenovich		STATE LICENSE NO. 7375 H02 3624 PHONE	
7. CONTRACTOR Intercity Neon		STATE LICENSE NO. 252968 PHONE 785 5171	
8. LENDER		BRANCH OFFICE PHONE	
9. SIZE OF SIGN 289 SF	HEIGHT 33		TOTAL COPY AREA 598
10. ILLUMINATION TO BE USED: SINGLE FACE <input type="checkbox"/> DOUBLE FACE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
NONE <input type="checkbox"/> DIRECT <input type="checkbox"/> INDIRECT <input type="checkbox"/> FLASHING <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER			
11. MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION	SUPPORTING FRAME Steel	FRAME OF SURFACE Steel	SURFACE OF SIGN Plastic

DIST. MAP 4716
ZONE C-4-3
FIRE DIST. I
LOT (TYPE) Cor
LOT SIZE 81 X 130
REAR ALLEY
SIDE ALLEY
BLDG LINE
AFFIDAVITS See map

S

12. JOB ADDRESS 5920 Sunset Blvd Hollywood				DISTRICT OFFICE L14
13. VALUATION TO INCLUDE ALL FIXED EQUIPMENT REQUIRED TO OPERATE AND USE PROPOSED SIGN. \$ 3000				GRADING
14. SIZE OF EXISTING BUILDING	TYPE	STORIES	EXT WALLS	ROOF CONST
TYPE OF SIGN OR NEW WORK 289 SF DE ILL POLE SIGN FLASHING				
FREEWAY CLEARANCE NOT REQUIRED <input type="checkbox"/> REQUIRED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		FREEWAY CHECKED		FILED BY
FREEWAY CLEARANCE FLASHING LIGHTS Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVING PARTS Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ANIMATIONS Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER		VALUATION APPROVED		FILED WITH
SIGN TRAFFIC APPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> BOARD APPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/>		PLANS CHECKED		FREEWAY CLEARED
REQUIRES: BOARD APPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/>		PLANS APPROVED		DATE 8-15-68
P.C. No. 00-5373		CONT. INSP.		APPLICATION APPROVED
INSPECTOR I		TYPIST		

Plan check expires six months after fee is paid. Permit expires one year after fee is paid or six months after fee is paid if construction is not commenced.

AUG 26-68	44301 E	•72965	X - 6 CK	14.30
AUG 26-68	44302 E	•72965	X - 1 CK	22.00

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

I certify that in doing the work authorized hereby, I will not employ any person in violation of the Labor Code of the State of California relating to workmen's compensation insurance.

"This permit is an application for inspection, the issuance of which is not an approval or an authorization of the work specified herein. This permit does not authorize or permit, nor shall it be construed as authorizing or permitting the violation or failure to comply with any applicable law. Neither the City of Los Angeles, nor any board, department, officer or employee thereof make any warranty or shall be responsible for the performance or results of any work described herein, or the condition of the property or soil upon which such work is performed." (See Sec. 91.0202 L.A.M.C.)

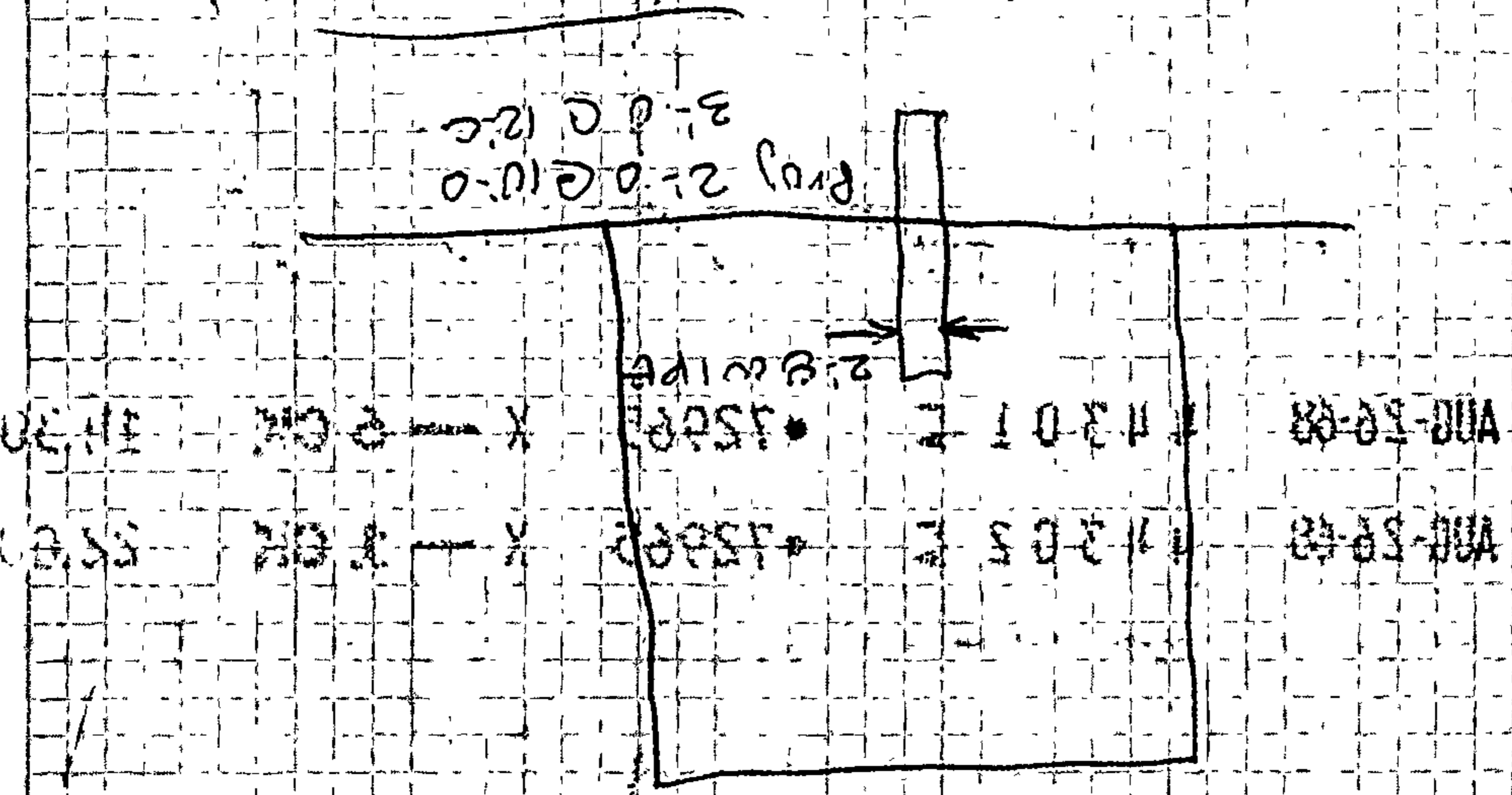
Signed (Owner or Agent)

Bureau of Engineering	ADDRESS APPROVED	Name Warren	Date 8/14
	HIGHWAY DEDICATION REQUIRED		
	COMPLETED		
Municipal Arts Commissioners	APPROVED FOR ISSUE		
Board of Building Safety Commissioners	APPROVED FOR ISSUE FILE #		
Traffic	APPROVED FOR ISSUE		
Planning	APPROVED UNDER CASE #		
Conservation	APPROVED FOR ISSUE FILE #		

AUG 26 68 72965

LA

ON LOT PLAN SHOW ALL BUILDINGS ON LOT AND USE OF EACH



3 typed LA 89318/69

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND SAFETY
REQUEST FOR CHANGE OF ADDRESS

to Correct LEGAL description

DATE
6-4-69

I HEREBY REQUEST THE CHANGE OF ADDRESS ON:

BUILDING PERMIT NO. LA 87912/69

FROM 5920 Sunset Blvd.
ADDRESS

REASON: PLEASE CHECK

- () CHANGE BECAUSE OF LOCATION OF PHYSICAL ACCESS.
() CHANGE FROM ONE STREET TO ANOTHER STREET FOR CORNER LOT.

CORRECT ADDRESS:
5920 Sunset Blvd.

ISSUED ON MAY-13-69

TO 5920 Sunset Blvd.
ADDRESS

- (X) CHANGE BECAUSE OF ERROR ON PART OF APPLICANT.
() CHANGE BECAUSE OF ERROR ON PART OF SOME CITY DEPARTMENT.

OWNER, CONTRACTOR OR AUTHORIZED AGENT

ADDRESS

CITY USE ONLY

LOT 95,96 & 2	BLOCK	TRACT Grider & Hamilton Hollywood TR	DISTRICT MAP NO. 4716
BUREAU OF ENGINEERING APPROVAL R.J.A. DATE 6-4-69		APPLICATION CHECKED BY: k.gilmore DATE 6-4-69	APPROVED <i>E. Buasa</i> DATE 6-10-69

Bet. Bronson & Tamarind		BAS B-5-R12.67	
APPLICATION FOR INSPECTION OF SIGNS		CITY OF LOS ANGELES DEPT. OF BUILDING AND SAFETY	
INSTRUCTIONS: 1. Applicant to Complete Numbered Items Only. 2. Plot Plan Required on Back of Original.		CENSUS TRACT 1909 DIST. MAP 4715 ZONE C-4 FIRE DIST. 60 ONE/100 LOT (TYPE) CORNER LOT SIZE 81.46 X 130 REAR ALLEY SIDE ALLEY BLDG. LINE AFFIDAVITS 12591 35638	
1. LEGAL DESCR.	LOT 26	BLK.	TRACT Gridler & Hamiltons Hollywood Tr.
2. TYPE OF SIGN OR NEW WORK (12)	Pole Sign		
3. JOB ADDRESS	5920 Sunset Blvd Hollywood		
4. OWNER'S NAME	Arby's Beef		
5. OWNER'S ADDRESS	ame		
6. ARCHITECT OR ENGINEER	B.L. Prenovich		STATE LICENSE NO. 7375 H02 3624 PHONE
7. CONTRACTOR	Pacific Coast Neon		STATE LICENSE NO. 135073 Ma3 5852 PHONE
8. LENDER	None		BRANCH OFFICE
9. SIZE OF SIGN	6x8		HEIGHT ABOVE GRADE 22 FT. ROOF FT. TOTAL COPY AREA 96
10. ILLUMINATION TO BE USED: SINGLE FACE <input type="checkbox"/> DOUBLE FACE <input type="checkbox"/>			
NONE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DIRECT <input type="checkbox"/> INDIRECT <input type="checkbox"/> FLASHING <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER			
11. MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION	SUPPORTING FRAME Steel	FRAME OF SURFACE Steel	SURFACE OF SIGN Sh Metal
12. JOB ADDRESS	5920 Sunset Blvd		DISTRICT OFFICE LA
13. VALUATION TO INCLUDE ALL FIXED EQUIPMENT REQUIRED TO OPERATE AND USE PROPOSED SIGN.	\$ 400		GRADING YES
14. SIZE OF EXISTING BUILDING	TYPE	STORIES	EXT. WALLS
TYPE OF SIGN OR NEW WORK	6x8 DF Non Ill Pole Sign		CONC.
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FLASHING LIGHTS	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	VALUATION APPROVED Kobler	FILED WITH NEPAL
MOVING PARTS	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PLANS CHECKED Kobler	FREEWAY CLEARED Kobler
ANIMATIONS	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PLANS APPROVED Kobler	DATE 5/12/67
OTHER		APPLICATION APPROVED Kobler	INSPECTOR I
SIGN REQUIRES: TRAFFIC APPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> BOARD APPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/>			
P.C. No. PP-2436	CONT. INSP.		
P.C. 219	S.P.C.	G.P.I.	B.P. 330
I.F.	O.S.	C/O	TYPIST

Plan check expires six months after fee is paid. Permit expires one year after fee is paid or six months after fee is paid if construction is not commenced.

CASHIER'S USE ONLY

2.14
3.30
3.30

24350 E -87912 X-ACK

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

I certify that in doing the work authorized hereby, I will not employ any person in violation of the Labor Code of the State of California relating to workmen's compensation insurance.

"This permit is an application for inspection, the issuance of which is not an approval or an authorization of the work specified herein. This permit does not authorize or permit, nor shall it be construed as authorizing or permitting the violation or failure to comply with any applicable law. Neither the City of Los Angeles, nor any board, department, officer or employee thereof make any warranty or shall be responsible for the performance or results of any work described herein, or the condition of the property or soil upon which such work is performed." (See Sec. 91.0202 L.A.M.C.)

Signed _____
(Owner or Agent)

Name	Date
Bureau of Engineering	5/1/67
Municipal Arts Commissioners	
Board of Building Safety Commissioners	
Traffic	
Planning	
Conservation	

I can
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freeway visibility.

the sign
that may be
or removed

Signed

Owner or Authorized Agent

21
8143
21

NO FLASHING LIGHTS
NO MOVING PARTS
NO ANIMATION

31432

31432

31432

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND SAFETY
REQUEST FOR CHANGE OF ADDRESS

DATE **8-6-69**

I HEREBY REQUEST THE CHANGE OF ADDRESS ON:

BUILDING PERMIT NO. **LA 87912/69**
89318/69

FROM **5920 Sunset Blvd.**
ADDRESS

REASON: PLEASE CHECK

- () CHANGE BECAUSE OF LOCATION OF PHYSICAL ACCESS.
() CHANGE FROM ONE STREET TO ANOTHER STREET FOR CORNER LOT.

5900 Sunset Blvd.

CORRECT ADDRESS:

ISSUED ON **MAY-13-69**
JUN-4-69

TO **5900 Sunset Blvd.**
ADDRESS

- () CHANGE BECAUSE OF ERROR ON PART OF APPLICANT.
(XX) CHANGE BECAUSE OF ERROR ON PART OF SOME CITY DEPARTMENT.

OWNER, CONTRACTOR OR AUTHORIZED AGENT

ADDRESS

CITY USE ONLY

LOT 95.96 & 2	BLOCK —	TRACT Grider & Hamilton HWD TR	DISTRICT MAP NO. 4716
BUREAU OF ENGINEERING APPROVAL <i>[Signature]</i> DATE 9-11-69		APPLICATION CHECKED BY: K. Gilmore 9/11/69 DATE	APPROVED <i>[Signature]</i> DATE 9-11-69

5-1

APPLICATION FOR INSPECTION OF SIGNS

INSTRUCTIONS:
1. Applicant to Complete Numbered Items Only.
2. Plot Plan Required on Back of Original.

LEGAL DESCR.

LOT

BLK.

TRACT

GRIDER & HAMILTONS HOLLYWOOD TR.

TYPE OF SIGN OR NEW WORK (19)

POLE SIGN

JOB ADDRESS

SUNSET BLVD HOLLYWOOD

OWNER'S NAME

Arby's Beef

PHONE

OWNER'S ADDRESS

ame

P.O. BOX

ZIP

ARCHITECT OR ENGINEER

B.L. Prenovich

STATE LICENSE NO.

7375 H02

PHONE

3624

CONTRACTOR

Pacific Coast Neon

STATE LICENSE NO.

135073

PHONE

Ma3 5852

LENDER

None

BRANCH OFFICE

SIZE OF SIGN

6x8

HEIGHT ABOVE GRADE

22

FT.

ROOF

FT.

TOTAL COPY AREA

96

ILLUMINATION TO BE USED: SINGLE FACE

DOUBLE FACE

NONE

DIRECT

INDIRECT

FLASHING

OTHER

MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION

STEEL

SUPPORTING FRAME

STEEL

FRAME OF SURFACE

SH METAL

SURFACE OF SIGN

JOB ADDRESS

SUNSET BLVD

VALUATION TO INCLUDE ALL FIXED EQUIPMENT REQUIRED TO OPERATE AND USE PROPOSED SIGN

400

SIZE OF EXISTING BUILDING

TYPE

STORIES

EXT WALLS

ROOF CONST

TYPE OF SIGN OR NEW WORK

6x8 DF Mon Ill Pole Sign

FREEWAY CLEARANCE

NOT REQUIRED

REQUIRED

FREEWAY CHECKED

VALUATION APPROVED

PLANS CHECKED

PLANS APPROVED

APPLICATION APPROVED

FLASHING LIGHTS

MOVING PARTS

ANIMATIONS

OTHER

TRAFFIC APPROVAL

BOARD APPROVAL

DATE

5/12/69

P.C. No.

2436

CONT. INSP

P.C.

214

S.P.C.

G.P.I.

B.P.

330

I.F.

O.S.

C/O

INSPECTOR

I

Plan check expires six months after fee is paid. Permit expires one year after fee is paid or six months after fee is paid if construction is not commenced.

CASHIER'S USE ONLY

24350 E 07912 X-4CK

2.14

3.50

3.30

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

I certify that in doing the work authorized hereby, I will not employ any person in violation of the Labor Code of the State of California relating to workmen's compensation insurance.
"This permit is an application for inspection, the issuance of which is not an approval or an authorization of the work specified herein. This permit does not authorize or permit, nor shall it be construed as authorizing or permitting the violation or failure to comply with any applicable law. Neither the City of Los Angeles, nor any board, department, officer or employee thereof make any warranty or shall be responsible for the performance or results of any work described herein, or the condition of the property or soil upon which such work is performed." (See Sec. 91.0202 L.A.M.C.)

Signed

(Owner or Agent)

Bureau of Engineering

ADDRESS APPROVED

HIGHWAY DEDICATION REQUIRED

COMPLETED

Municipal Arts Commissioners

APPROVED FOR ISSUE

Board of Building Safety Commissioners

APPROVED FOR ISSUE

FILE #

Traffic

APPROVED FOR ISSUE

Planning

APPROVED UNDER CASE #

Conservation

APPROVED FOR ISSUE

FILE #

Name

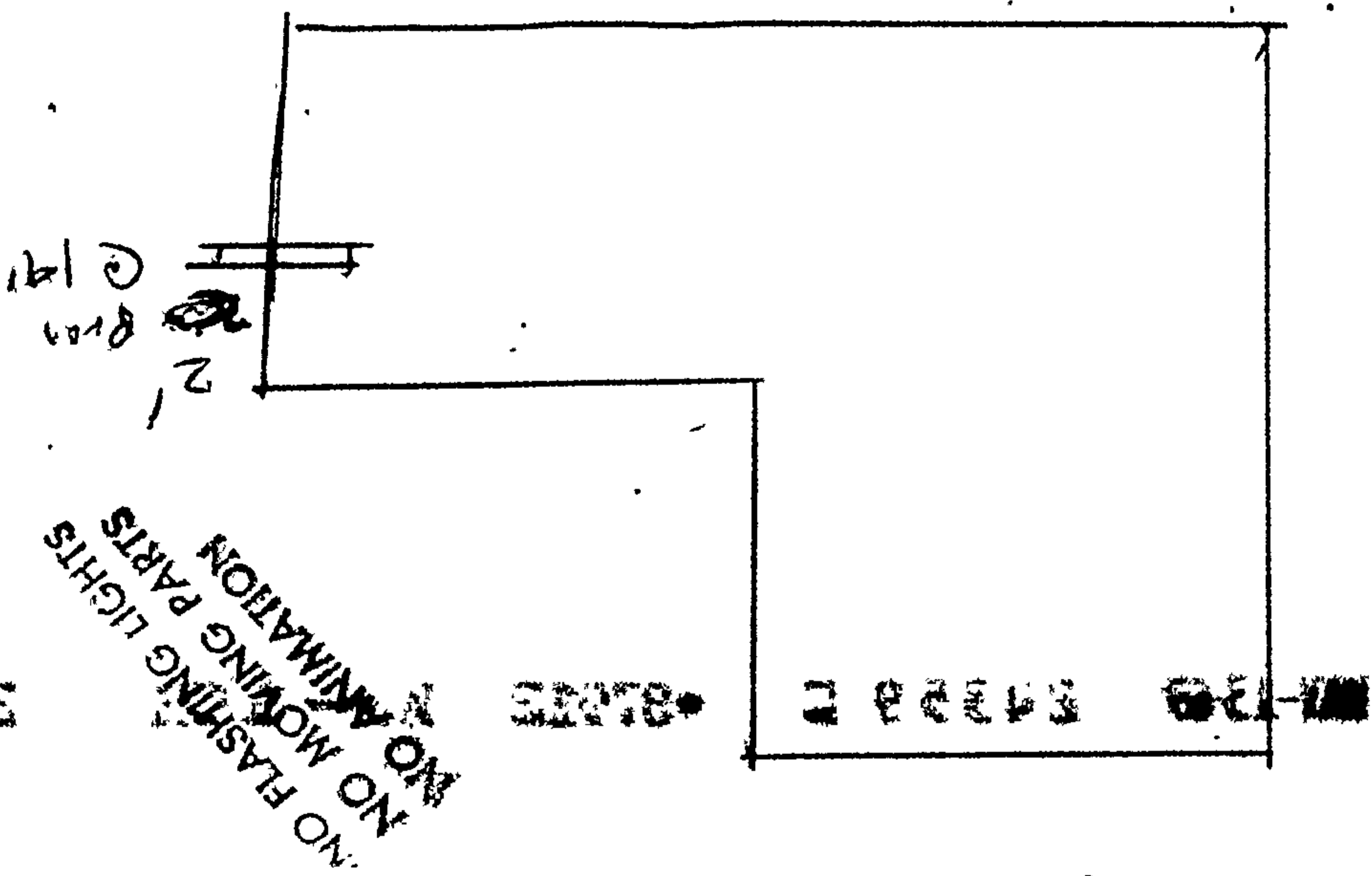
Date

5/1/69

I can
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 should field in ... visibility.

Signed

Owner or Authorized Agent



CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND SAFETY
REQUEST FOR CHANGE OF ADDRESS

DATE 8-6-69

I HEREBY REQUEST THE CHANGE OF ADDRESS ON:

BUILDING PERMIT NO. LA 87912/69
89318/69

FROM 5920 Sunset Blvd.

ADDRESS

REASON: PLEASE CHECK

- ☐ CHANGE BECAUSE OF LOCATION OF PHYSICAL ACCESS.
☐ CHANGE FROM ONE STREET TO ANOTHER STREET FOR CORNER LOT.

CORRECT ADDRESS:
5900 Sunset Blvd.

ISSUED ON MAY-13-69
JUN-4-69

TO 5900 Sunset Blvd.

ADDRESS

- ☐ CHANGE BECAUSE OF ERROR ON PART OF APPLICANT.
☒ CHANGE BECAUSE OF ERROR ON PART OF SOME CITY DEPARTMENT.

OWNER, CONTRACTOR OR AUTHORIZED AGENT

ADDRESS

CITY USE ONLY

LOT <u>1</u> 95, 96 & 2	BLOCK <u>—</u>	TRACT Grider & Mamilton HWD TR	DISTRICT MAP NO. 4716
BUREAU OF ENGINEERING APPROVAL <i>[Signature]</i> DATE <u>8-8-69</u>		APPLICATION CHECKED BY: k.gilmore 9/11/69 DATE	APPROVED <i>[Signature]</i> DATE <u>9-11-69</u>

CITY OF LOS ANGELES		APPLICATION FOR INSPECTION OF SIGNS S-1				B&S B-5—Rev. 10-63	
		DEPT. OF BUILDING AND SAFETY					
INSTRUCTIONS: 1. Applicant to Complete Numbered Items Only. 2. Plot Plan Required on Back of Original.							
1. LEGAL DESCR.	LOT	BLK.	TRACT	Grider & Hamlin		GRIDER & HAMLIN TRACT	
	1		hwd. tr.			1909	
2. TYPE OF SIGN OR NEW WORK	pole sign-- change of address & legal					DIST. MAP 4716	
3. JOB ADDRESS	Sunset Blvd. (Sunset Blvd.) (Sunset Blvd.)					ZONE C-4-3	
4. BETWEEN CROSS STREETS	Bronson		AND	Tamarind		FIRE DIST. I 60.100	
5. OWNER'S NAME	Arbys Beef			PHONE		LOT (TYPE) cor	
6. OWNER'S ADDRESS	same			P.O. BOX		LOT SIZE 81.46x	
7. ARCHITECT OR ENGINEER	B.L. Prenovich			STATE LICENSE NO. 7375		PHONE HO2-3624 130	
8. CONTRACTOR	Pacific Coast Neon			STATE LICENSE NO. 133073		PHONE MA3-5852	
9. LENDER	BRANCH			ADDRESS		BLDG. LINE	
10. SIZE OF SIGN	HEIGHT ABOVE		TOTAL COPY AREA		AFFIDAVITS		
6 x 8	GRADE 22 FT. ROOF FT.		96		12591		
11. ILLUMINATION TO BE USED: SINGLE FACE <input type="checkbox"/> DOUBLE FACE <input type="checkbox"/>					35638		
NONE <input type="checkbox"/> DIRECT <input type="checkbox"/> INDIRECT <input type="checkbox"/> FLASHING <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER.....							
12. MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION	SUPPORTING FRAME		FRAME OF SURFACE		SURFACE OF SIGN		
13. JOB ADDRESS	Sunset Blvd. (Sunset Blvd.) (Sunset Blvd.)					DISTRICT OFFICE LA	
14. VALUATION TO INCLUDE ALL FIXED EQUIPMENT REQUIRED TO OPERATE AND USE PROPOSED SIGN.	S 101 / 5900					GRADING	
15. SIZE OF EXISTING BUILDING	TYPE		STORIES		EXT. WALLS		ROOF CONST.
							HIGHWAY DED. yes
16. TYPE OF SIGN OR NEW WORK					CONS.		
change of address and legal							
FREEWAY CLEARANCE		NOT REQUIRED <input type="checkbox"/>		INSPECTION ACTIVITY		ZONED BY	
		REQUIRED <input type="checkbox"/>		COMB. GEN. MAJ S. CONS.		MAJ S.	
FREEWAY CLEARANCE				FREEWAY CHECKED		FILED WITH	
FLASHING LIGHTS Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				PLANS CHECKED		LA 87912/69	
MOVING PARTS Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				PLANS APPROVED		FREEWAY CLEARED	
ANIMATIONS Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						By Ralston Before	
OTHER						DATE 6/4/69	
SIGN REQUIRES:		TRAFFIC APPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/>		APPLICATION APPROVED		INSPECTOR I	
		BOARD APPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/>					
P.C. No.	CONT. INSP.						
P.C.	S.P.C.	G.P.I.	B.P. 2 20	I.F.	O.S.	C/O	TYPIST yp

PLAN CHECK EXPIRES SIX MONTHS AFTER FEE IS PAID. PERMIT EXPIRES ONE YEAR AFTER FEE IS PAID OR SIX MONTHS AFTER FEE IS PAID IF CONSTRUCTION IS NOT COMMENCED.

CASHIER'S USE ONLY

JUN-4-69 286715 •89318 Z-1CS 2.20

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

I certify that in doing the work authorized hereby, I will not employ any person in violation of the Labor Code of the State of California relating to workmen's compensation insurance.

"This permit is an application for inspection, the issuance of which is not an approval or an authorization of the work specified herein. This permit does not authorize or permit, nor shall it be construed as authorizing or permitting the violation or failure to comply with any applicable law. Neither the City of Los Angeles, nor any board, department, officer or employee thereof make any warranty or shall be responsible for the performance or results of any work described herein, or the condition of the property or soil upon which such work is performed." (See Sec. 91.0202 L.A.M.C.)

Signed: Charles S. S. S.
(Owner or Agent)

Bureau of Engineering	ADDRESS APPROVED	Name	Date
	HIGHWAY DEDICATION REQUIRED	RJA - Dalton	6-4-69
	COMPLETED		
Municipal Arts Commissioners	APPROVED FOR ISSUE		
Board of Building Safety Commissioners	APPROVED FOR ISSUE		
Traffic	APPROVED FOR ISSUE		
Planning	APPROVED UNDER CASE #		
Conservation	APPROVED FOR ISSUE		
	FILE #		

NO FLASHING LIGHTS
NO MOVING PARTS
NO ANIMATION

Handwritten notes and signatures including "No", "change", and "OK".

17-43 59318 8-18-69

JUN 4 69 89318
LA



City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning

7/18/2024 PARCEL PROFILE REPORT

PROPERTY ADDRESSES

5914 W SUNSET BLVD
5920 W SUNSET BLVD
5916 W SUNSET BLVD
5924 W SUNSET BLVD
1478 N TAMARIND AVE

ZIP CODES

90028

RECENT ACTIVITY

None

CASE NUMBERS

CPC-9708
CPC-2018-6005-CA
CPC-2016-1450-CPU
CPC-2014-669-CPU
CPC-2013-3169
CPC-2005-6082
CPC-2003-2115-CRA
CPC-2002-1128-CA
CPC-1999-324-ICO
CPC-1999-2293-ICO
CPC-1997-43-CPU
CPC-1986-835-GPC
ORD-175038
ORD-173562
ORD-165652-SA355
ORD-129944
ZA-1986-988-E
ZA-11782
ENV-2019-4121-ND
ENV-2018-6006-CE
ENV-2016-1451-EIR
ENV-2014-670-SE
ENV-2013-3170-CE
ENV-2002-1131-ND
ENV-2002-1130-ND
AFF-5638
AF-91-360095-LT
AF-91-360094-MB

Address/Legal Information

PIN Number	147A191 83
Lot/Parcel Area (Calculated)	10,476.7 (sq ft)
Thomas Brothers Grid	PAGE 593 - GRID G4 PAGE 593 - GRID G5
Assessor Parcel No. (APN)	5545015049
Tract	GRIDER AND HAMILTON HOLLYWOOD TRACT
Map Reference	M B 9-12
Block	None
Lot	FR 96
Arb (Lot Cut Reference)	None
Map Sheet	147A191

Jurisdictional Information

Community Plan Area	Hollywood
Area Planning Commission	Central
Neighborhood Council	Hollywood Studio District
Council District	CD 13 - Hugo Soto-Martinez
Census Tract #	1909.02
LADBS District Office	Los Angeles Metro

Permitting and Zoning Compliance Information

Administrative Review	None
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Planning and Zoning Information

Special Notes	None
Zoning	[Q]C4-1
Zoning Information (ZI)	ZI-2427 Freeway Adjacent Advisory Notice for Sensitive Uses ZI-2492 Hollywood Redevelopment Project Area Individual Historic Resources ZI-2517 Al Fresco Ordinance within Planning Overlay and/or the Coastal Zone (Ordinance 188073) ZI-2374 State Enterprise Zone: Los Angeles ZI-2498 Local Emergency Temporary Regulations - Time Limits and Parking Relief - LAMC 16.02.1 ZI-2488 Redevelopment Project Area: Hollywood ZI-2452 Transit Priority Area in the City of Los Angeles
General Plan Land Use	Limited Manufacturing
General Plan Note(s)	Yes
Hillside Area (Zoning Code)	No
Specific Plan Area	ADAPTIVE REUSE INCENTIVE AREAS
Subarea	None
Special Land Use / Zoning	None
Historic Preservation Review	No
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone	None
Other Historic Designations	None
Mills Act Contract	None
CDO: Community Design Overlay	None
CPIO: Community Plan Imp. Overlay	None
Subarea	None
CUGU: Clean Up-Green Up	None

HCR: Hillside Construction Regulation	No
NSO: Neighborhood Stabilization Overlay	No
POD: Pedestrian Oriented Districts	None
RBP: Restaurant Beverage Program Eligible Area	General (RBPA)
RFA: Residential Floor Area District	None
RIO: River Implementation Overlay	No
SN: Sign District	No
AB 2334: Very Low VMT	Yes
AB 2097: Reduced Parking Areas	Yes
Streetscape	No
Adaptive Reuse Incentive Area	Adaptive Reuse Incentive Area
Affordable Housing Linkage Fee	
Residential Market Area	Medium-High
Non-Residential Market Area	High
Transit Oriented Communities (TOC)	Tier 3
ED 1 Eligibility	Review Eligibility
RPA: Redevelopment Project Area	Hollywood
Central City Parking	No
Downtown Parking	No
Building Line	None
500 Ft School Zone	No
500 Ft Park Zone	No
Assessor Information	
Assessor Parcel No. (APN)	5545015049
Ownership (Assessor)	
Owner1	SUNSET PACIFIC I LLC C/O C/O BLAKE MEGDAL
Address	252 S BEVERLY DR STE C BEVERLY HILLS CA 90212
Ownership (Bureau of Engineering, Land Records)	
Owner	SHUSETT, HONEY (TR) HOWARD M.SHUSETT RESIDUAL TRUST (ET AL)
Address	101 GIANT OAK AVE THOUSAND OAKS CA 91320
Owner	SHUSETT, HOWARD M. (TR) HOWARD & HONEY SHUSETT LIVING TRUST UDT 10-28-86
Address	4735 HEAVEN AVE. WOODLAND HILLS CA 91364
Owner	SHUSETT,HONEY (TR) HOWARD M. SHUSETT RESIDEUA TRUST (ET AL)
Address	101 GIANT OAK AVE THOUSAND OAKS CA 91320
APN Area (Co. Public Works)*	0.313 (ac)
Use Code	2100 - Commercial - Restaurant, Cocktail Lounge - Restaurant, Cocktail Lounge, Tavern - One Story
Assessed Land Val.	\$8,219,160
Assessed Improvement Val.	\$102,929
Last Owner Change	02/03/2020
Last Sale Amount	\$9
Tax Rate Area	200
Deed Ref No. (City Clerk)	65134
	3040
	1833762
	1416913
	1416910-13
	1416910,12
Building 1	

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 (*) - APN Area is provided "as is" from the Los Angeles County's Public Works, Flood Control, Benefit Assessment.

Year Built	1968
Building Class	CX
Number of Units	0
Number of Bedrooms	0
Number of Bathrooms	0
Building Square Footage	1,242.0 (sq ft)
Building 2	No data for building 2
Building 3	No data for building 3
Building 4	No data for building 4
Building 5	No data for building 5
Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO)	No [APN: 5545015049]

Additional Information

Airport Hazard	None
Coastal Zone	None
Farmland	Area Not Mapped
Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone	YES
Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone	No
Fire District No. 1	Yes
Flood Zone	Outside Flood Zone
Watercourse	No
Hazardous Waste / Border Zone Properties	No
Methane Hazard Site	None
High Wind Velocity Areas	No
Special Grading Area (BOE Basic Grid Map A-13372)	No
Wells	None

Environmental

Santa Monica Mountains Zone	No
Biological Resource Potential	None
Mountain Lion Potential	None

Seismic Hazards

Active Fault Near-Source Zone	
Nearest Fault (Distance in km)	1.30612896
Nearest Fault (Name)	Hollywood Fault
Region	Transverse Ranges and Los Angeles Basin
Fault Type	B
Slip Rate (mm/year)	1.00000000
Slip Geometry	Left Lateral - Reverse - Oblique
Slip Type	Poorly Constrained
Down Dip Width (km)	14.00000000
Rupture Top	0.00000000
Rupture Bottom	13.00000000
Dip Angle (degrees)	70.00000000
Maximum Magnitude	6.40000000
Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone	No
Landslide	No
Liquefaction	No
Preliminary Fault Rupture Study Area	No
Tsunami Hazard Area	No

Economic Development Areas

Business Improvement District	HOLLYWOOD ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT
Hubzone	Qualified
Jobs and Economic Development Incentive Zone (JEDI)	None
Opportunity Zone	Yes

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Promise Zone	Los Angeles
State Enterprise Zone	LOS ANGELES STATE ENTERPRISE ZONE

Housing

Direct all Inquiries to	Los Angeles Housing Department
Telephone	(866) 557-7368
Website	https://housing.lacity.org
Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO)	No [APN: 5545015049]
Ellis Act Property	No
AB 1482: Tenant Protection Act	No
Housing Crisis Act Replacement Review	Yes
Housing Element Sites	
HE Replacement Required	N/A
SB 166 Units	N/A
Housing Use within Prior 5 Years	No

Public Safety

Police Information	
Bureau	West
Division / Station	Hollywood
Reporting District	667
Fire Information	
Bureau	West
Battalion	5
District / Fire Station	82
Red Flag Restricted Parking	No

CASE SUMMARIES

Note: Information for case summaries is retrieved from the Planning Department's Plan Case Tracking System (PCTS) database.

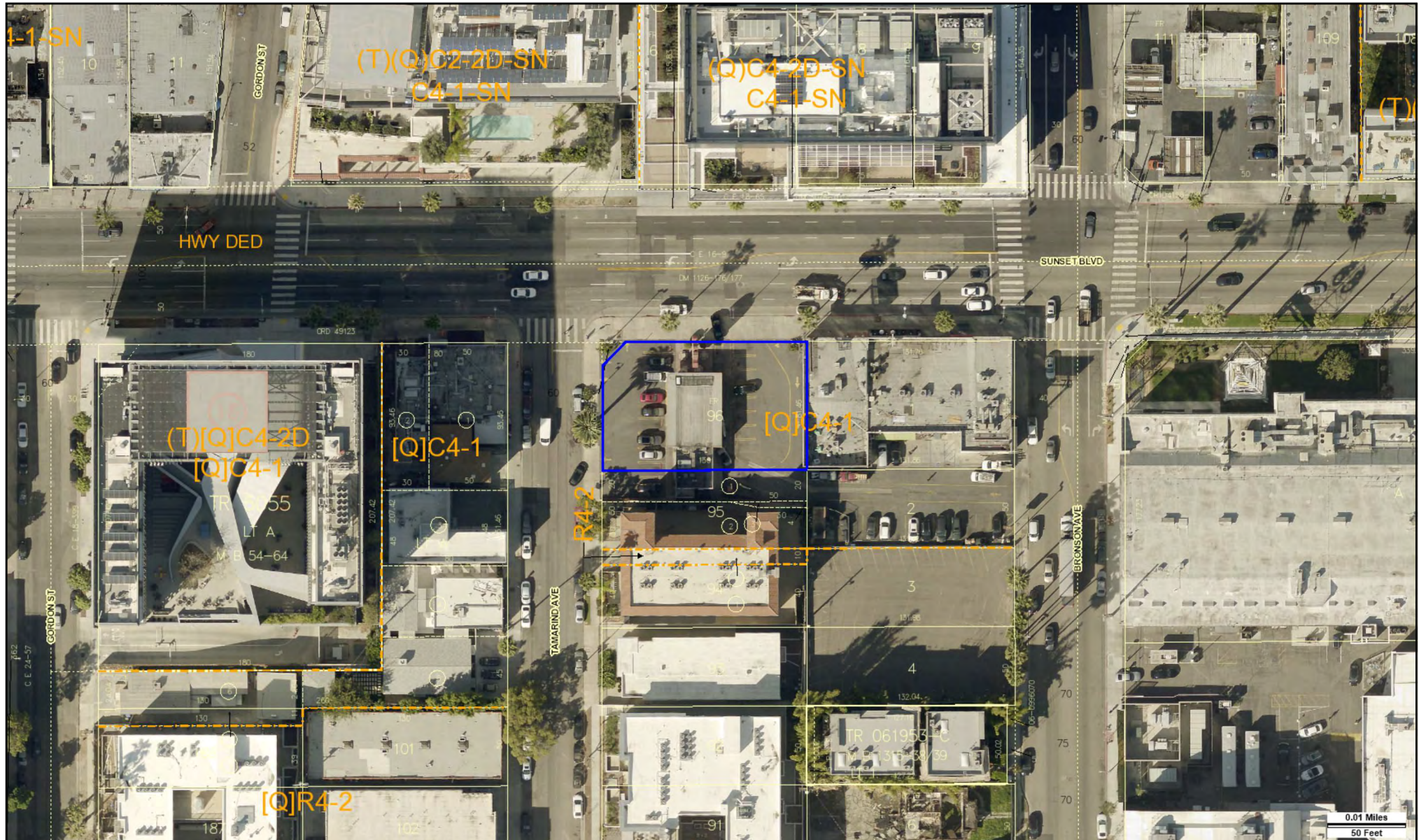
Case Number:	CPC-2018-6005-CA
Required Action(s):	CA-CODE AMENDMENT
Project Descriptions(s):	RESOLUTION TO TRANSFER THE LAND USE AUTHORITY FROM THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES, DESIGNATED LOCAL AUTHORITY (CRA/LA-DLA) TO THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES AND CODE AMENDMENT TO ESTABLISH PROCEDURES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNEXPIRED REDEVELOPMENT PLANS AND UPDATE OTHER RELEVANT CODE PROVISIONS IN THE LOS ANGELES MUNICIPAL CODE TO FACILITATE THE TRANSFER OF LAND USE AUTHORITY FROM THE CRA/LA-DLA TO THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES.
Case Number:	CPC-2016-1450-CPU
Required Action(s):	CPU-COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE
Project Descriptions(s):	UPDATE TO THE HOLLYWOOD COMMUNITY PLAN
Case Number:	CPC-2014-669-CPU
Required Action(s):	CPU-COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE
Project Descriptions(s):	COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE/GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT
Case Number:	CPC-2013-3169
Required Action(s):	Data Not Available
Project Descriptions(s):	THE PROPOSED PROJECT CONSISTS OF: (1) A TECHNICAL MODIFICATION TO SECTIONS 12.03, 12.04, 12.21, 12.22, 12.24, 13.11, 14.5, 16.05 AND 16.11 OF THE LOS ANGELES MUNICIPAL CODE (LAMC) TO REMOVE OR AMEND REFERENCES TO THE FORMER COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CRA); (2) TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS TO CLARIFY EXISTING REGULATIONS IN THE LAMC THAT ARE IMPACTED BY THE TRANSFER OF LAND USE AUTHORITY; AND (3) A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT ALL LAND USE RELATED PLANS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE CRA/LA BE TRANSFERRED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING
Case Number:	CPC-2005-6082
Required Action(s):	Data Not Available
Project Descriptions(s):	HOLLYWOOD COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE
Case Number:	CPC-2003-2115-CRA
Required Action(s):	CRA-COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
Project Descriptions(s):	First Amendment to the Hollywood Redevelopment Plan
Case Number:	CPC-2002-1128-CA
Required Action(s):	CA-CODE AMENDMENT
Project Descriptions(s):	
Case Number:	CPC-1999-324-ICO
Required Action(s):	ICO-INTERIM CONTROL ORDINANCE
Project Descriptions(s):	
Case Number:	CPC-1999-2293-ICO
Required Action(s):	ICO-INTERIM CONTROL ORDINANCE
Project Descriptions(s):	INTERIM CONTROL ORDINANCE.
Case Number:	CPC-1997-43-CPU
Required Action(s):	CPU-COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE
Project Descriptions(s):	COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE FOR HOLLYWOOD WHICH IDENTIFIES AND REDEFINES OUTDATED LAND USE ISSUES AND INCONSISTENT ZONING, REVIEWS POLICIES AND PROGRAMS, AS WELL AS REVISING AND UPDATING THE PLAN MAP AND TEXT
Case Number:	CPC-1986-835-GPC
Required Action(s):	GPC-GENERAL PLAN/ZONING CONSISTENCY (AB283)
Project Descriptions(s):	PLAN AMENDMENTS AND ZONE CHANGES FOR THE HOLLYWOOD COMMUNITY PLAN REVISION/ZONING CONSISTENCY PROGRAM
Case Number:	ZA-1986-988-E
Required Action(s):	E-PRIVATE STREET MODIFICATIONS (5TH REQUEST) E-- ALL OTHER CONDITIONAL USE CASES, INCLUDING RELATED VARIANCES
Project Descriptions(s):	EXCEPTION FOR THE SALE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES MAXIMUM OCCUPANCY LOAD 50 PATRONS
Case Number:	ENV-2019-4121-ND
Required Action(s):	ND-NEGATIVE DECLARATION
Project Descriptions(s):	RESOLUTION TO TRANSFER THE LAND USE AUTHORITY FROM THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES, DESIGNATED LOCAL AUTHORITY (CRA/LA-DLA) TO THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES AND CODE AMENDMENT TO ESTABLISH PROCEDURES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNEXPIRED REDEVELOPMENT PLANS AND UPDATE OTHER RELEVANT CODE PROVISIONS IN THE LOS ANGELES MUNICIPAL CODE TO FACILITATE THE TRANSFER OF LAND USE AUTHORITY FROM THE CRA/LA-DLA TO THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES.
Case Number:	ENV-2018-6006-CE

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Required Action(s):	CE-CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION
Project Descriptions(s):	RESOLUTION TO TRANSFER THE LAND USE AUTHORITY FROM THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES, DESIGNATED LOCAL AUTHORITY (CRA/LA-DLA) TO THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES AND CODE AMENDMENT TO ESTABLISH PROCEDURES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNEXPIRED REDEVELOPMENT PLANS AND UPDATE OTHER RELEVANT CODE PROVISIONS IN THE LOS ANGELES MUNICIPAL CODE TO FACILITATE THE TRANSFER OF LAND USE AUTHORITY FROM THE CRA/LA-DLA TO THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES.
Case Number:	ENV-2016-1451-EIR
Required Action(s):	EIR-ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
Project Descriptions(s):	UPDATE TO THE HOLLYWOOD COMMUNITY PLAN
Case Number:	ENV-2014-670-SE
Required Action(s):	SE-STATUTORY EXEMPTIONS
Project Descriptions(s):	COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE/GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT
Case Number:	ENV-2013-3170-CE
Required Action(s):	CE-CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION
Project Descriptions(s):	THE PROPOSED PROJECT CONSISTS OF: (1) A TECHNICAL MODIFICATION TO SECTIONS 12.03, 12.04, 12.21, 12.22, 12.24, 13.11, 14.5, 16.05 AND 16.11 OF THE LOS ANGELES MUNICIPAL CODE (LAMC) TO REMOVE OR AMEND REFERENCES TO THE FORMER COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CRA); (2) TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS TO CLARIFY EXISTING REGULATIONS IN THE LAMC THAT ARE IMPACTED BY THE TRANSFER OF LAND USE AUTHORITY; AND (3) A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT ALL LAND USE RELATED PLANS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE CRA/LA BE TRANSFERRED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING
Case Number:	ENV-2002-1131-ND
Required Action(s):	ND-NEGATIVE DECLARATION
Project Descriptions(s):	
Case Number:	ENV-2002-1130-ND
Required Action(s):	ND-NEGATIVE DECLARATION
Project Descriptions(s):	

DATA NOT AVAILABLE

CPC-9708
 ORD-175038
 ORD-173562
 ORD-165652-SA355
 ORD-129944
 ZA-11782
 AFF-5638
 AF-91-360095-LT
 AF-91-360094-MB



Address: 5914 W SUNSET BLVD

Tract: GRIDER AND HAMILTON
HOLLYWOOD TRACT

Zoning: [Q]C4-1

APN: 5545015049

Block: None

General Plan: Limited Manufacturing

PIN #: 147A191 83

Lot: FR 96

Arb: None

