La Brea Loops and Lenses
A JOURNEY THROUGH MULTIPLE EPOCHS

The La Brea Tar Pits and Museum are an enduring source of wonder for our exploration and understanding of the world. Few other parks in the world combine art, discovery, and raw curiosity into such tantalizingly close reach. Few other museums in the world juxtapose real-time excavation with imaginative display.

The Loops and Lenses redefines Hancock Park and the Tar Pits Museum as one unified experience. The continuous Loops collective design that disperses existing structures, adding amenities for community and research. The park areas connected by the loops capture three distinguishing themes: research, education, and community and culture, and aspect and urban fabric. Each area is designed to be environmentally sensitive and to maximize space for the community, creating opportunities for the public to engage with the site’s unique history. The different identities of the intertwining loops embody journeys that encourage discovery, with programming that appeals to diverse audiences—from paleontology to bird watching, from artwork and performances to kids playgrounds.

The Lenses, as framed views throughout the park and museum, bring into focus the research and museum collection that contains over 3.5 million specimens. The proposed design of the Pits Museum expansion is rooted in a close analysis of the existing building, preserving and magnifying its unique strengths. The below grade slope and terraces of the museum is doubled in size and made accessible in the expansion to provide more opportunities for education. The museum terraces will be revealed to visitors, bringing the museum to the park, and the park into the public imagination.
Enhance Hancock Park's Environmental Identity

SITE PLAN The La Brea Loops, a triple mobius path, links all existing elements of the park and provides a connected identity.

ARRIVAL EXPERIENCE The entry canopy is the gateway between city and park, providing orientation, legibility, and shade.

MICROGARDEN Intimate paleobotanical gardens are situated throughout the park to provide a place for contemplation.

SCIENCE WALK Along the loops, the pits reveal scientific discovery, and involve and engage the community.

PLAY AREA Pit stops for play populate the loop.

CONNECT HISTORIES: L.A. AND THE LA BREA TAR PITS

The long geological and paleontological history of the Tar Pits and the relatively short history of Los Angeles have been interconnected in continuous and paradoxical ways. Here, science is neither imposed nor described, but is literally extracted from this ever-changing site. The tactile reality of the La Brea Tar Pits has preserved the flora and fauna from the Pleistocene past in a city committed to inventing real and imaginary futures.

How can these histories connect in new revealing ways?
Connect the Museum and Park to the Cultural Landscape

PROJECT 91 The active excavation sites unique to La Brea place park visitors at the center of scientific discoveries.

AMPLIFY THE PARK IDENTITIES

The creation of Hancock park was a gift to the community over 100 years ago. Over time the park and museum have evolved idiosyncratically. The existing collection of pathways wander through the park yet fail to create legible connections. However, a collection of latent identities does exist on the site today. “Excavation and discovery” characterize the north west precinct, “community gathering and the Page Museum” give focus to the center, and “the lake pits and park-amenities” are visible from Wilshire.

How can we connect and clarify the latent identities of each park precinct so that science and recreation support each other across the whole of the park?
Magnify the Museum’s Visibility

Building Section: A new Pleistocene garden in the existing Page Museum and new exhibitions, galleries, labs, and visible storage in the expansion renew the identity of the museum.

Main Level Plan: A central lobby connects the rejuvenated Page Museum and new expansion.

Plateau Level Plan: The expanded plateau creates a setting for public programming and a café.

Central Lawn: The museum’s lobby and café are visible from the enlarged central green.

Labs and Exhibition: Panoramic labs flank the exhibition pit, encouraging dialogue between the past and present.

Café and Garden: The café, with views into the central lawn and the Pleistocene Garden, is available to the public.

Northeast Drop-off: With parking situated underground, the northeast corner becomes a drop-off for buses and cars.

Reimagine the Park & Museum

The Loops: Create a connecting framework. The 5-kilometer continuous loop wanders through the park and connects the community to both real science and speculative histories.

The Lenses: Expand the museum to reveal the collection. Science and exhibition are brought together to be legible from afar and informative up-close.

The Landscape: A place that grows and changes over time. 400 new trees and a Pleistocene-inspired plant palette offer shade and shelter throughout the park.
Reveal the Museum Collection

A MAGNIFYING LENS FOR LOS ANGELES’ NATURAL HISTORY

THE COLLECTION

An ascending central hall reveals the Page Museum collection, making its wonders visible from afar and powerfully compelling up close.