

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Historic Resources Technical Report**





# Historic Resources Technical Report, La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan, Los Angeles, California

JANUARY 2023

PREPARED FOR

**Los Angeles County Museum of  
Natural History Foundation**

LEAD AGENCY

**County of Los Angeles**

PREPARED BY

**SWCA Environmental Consultants**





# **HISTORIC RESOURCES TECHNICAL REPORT, LA BREA TAR PITS MASTER PLAN, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA**

Prepared for

**Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History Foundation**

On behalf of County of Los Angeles Museum of Natural History

900 Exposition Boulevard

Los Angeles, California 90007

Attn: Dawn McDivitt, Chief Deputy Director

Lead Agency: County of Los Angeles

Prepared by

Debi Howell-Ardila, MHP

Senior Team Lead, Architectural History

Dan Herrick, MHC

Historic Preservation Specialist

Susan Zamudio-Gurrola, MHP

Architectural Historian

Leslie Heumann

Senior Strategic Advisor

**SWCA Environmental Consultants**

320 N. Halstead Street, Suite 120

Pasadena, California 91107

(626) 240-0587

[www.swca.com](http://www.swca.com)

SWCA Project No. 63953

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Purpose and Scope:**

The 13-acre La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan project site is located within the eastern and northeastern portions of the 23-acre Hancock Park (Assessor's Parcel Number 550-801-6902). The La Brea Tar Pits, the George C. Page Museum (Page Museum), and associated facilities, are owned by the County of Los Angeles but are managed by the non-profit Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History Foundation (Foundation). The Foundation's role is to carry out all County services including public access and programming, administration, and operation of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, including the La Brea Tar Pits and Page Museum. The County of Los Angeles (County) is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); the Museum of Natural History is a County departmental unit. The Foundation retained SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) to prepare a Historic Resources Technical Report in support of the La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan (proposed project) in the City of Los Angeles, California.

The Foundation proposes a reimagined site design, expansion, and upgrades for the La Brea Tar Pits complex, including renovations to the Page Museum and changes to portions of the surrounding Hancock Park. The project site is located at 5801 W. Wilshire Boulevard in the Mid-Wilshire corridor of Los Angeles, California. The project site is adjacent to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA).

This report provides the substantial evidence required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) 1) to determine the historic resource status of the properties within and directly adjacent to the project site, and 2) to assess the possibility for direct and/or indirect significant adverse impacts to historical resources that would result from project implementation. (Archaeological and tribal cultural resources are addressed in a separate accompanying study.) For purposes of this report, the CEQA Area of Potential Effects (APE) encompasses the project site and directly adjacent parcels one parcel over.

### **Dates of Investigation:**

In support of this study, field surveys took place on February 25 and July 29, 2022. All properties within the CEQA APE were inspected and photographed. In addition, to accurately characterize the proposed project, SWCA met with the Foundation and the design team in order to review project drawings, architectural plans and conceptual sketches, and site design concepts.

To characterize all properties within the CEQA APE, SWCA conducted primary- and secondary-source research in a wide variety of collections. Research focused on a variety of materials relating to the history and development of the project site and its role in the history of institutional/cultural development in Los Angeles. Materials consulted included historical maps, photographs, and newspapers; aerial and ground photographs; publications and journal articles; among other materials.

Following fieldwork, subject properties were documented, evaluated, and assigned the appropriate California Historical Resources (CHR) status code. The principal elements of the proposed project were studied for potential direct and indirect impacts to historical resources pursuant to CEQA.

Research, evaluations, analysis, and report preparation took place between February and August 2022.

### **Summary of Findings:**

As a result of this study, SWCA identified three historic resources within the project footprint: the La Brea Tar Pits Historic District (eligible at the state and local levels), the Page Museum (eligible at the federal, state, and local levels), and the Hancock Park Observation Pit (eligible at the federal, state, and local levels). Another eight resources were identified adjacent to the project footprint: Pavilion for Japanese Art, Park La Brea Garden Apartment Historic District, Prudential Square (5757 W. Wilshire Boulevard), Craft and Folk Art Museum (5814 W. Wilshire Boulevard), Hancock Park Building (5820 W. Wilshire Boulevard), CMAA Gallery (formerly Arthur Murray Dance Studio, 5828 W. Wilshire Boulevard), Office Building (5850 W. Wilshire Boulevard), and the Mutual Benefit Life Plaza (5900 Wilshire Boulevard).

Based on available project information, the potential exists for **significant and unavoidable direct adverse impacts to both** the La Brea Tar Pits Historic District and the Page Museum. Although the project would retain the Page Museum, it is anticipated that project implementation would render the resource no longer eligible at the federal, state, and local levels, resulting in material impairment.

Although the project would retain many contributing features of the La Brea Tar Pits Historic District, it is anticipated that project implementation would render the historic district no longer eligible at the state and local levels, resulting in material impairment.

No significant, indirect adverse impacts would be likely to result from project implementation.

### **Conclusion:**

Due to the potential for direct, significant adverse impacts to historic resources, the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must include a range of feasible alternatives and mitigation measures/project design features capable of reducing, avoiding, and/or eliminating significant adverse impacts.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Project Purpose and Scope

The 13-acre La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan project site is located within the eastern and northeastern portions of the 23-acre Hancock Park (Assessor's Parcel Number 550-801-6902). The La Brea Tar Pits, the George C. Page Museum (Page Museum), and associated facilities, are owned by the County of Los Angeles but are managed by the non-profit Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History Foundation (Foundation). The Foundation's role is to carry out all County services including public access and programming, administration, and operation of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, including the La Brea Tar Pits and Page Museum. The Foundation retained SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) to prepare a Historic Resources Technical Report in support of the proposed La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan (proposed project) in the City of Los Angeles, California.

The County of Los Angeles (County) is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); the Museum of Natural History is a County departmental unit.<sup>1</sup>

The Foundation proposes a redevelopment, or "reimagining," of the La Brea Tar Pits site, including the Page Museum and portions of the surrounding Hancock Park. The Foundation proposes a reimagined site design, expansion, and upgrades for the La Brea Tar Pits complex, including renovations to the Page Museum. The project site is located at 5801 W. Wilshire Boulevard in the Mid-Wilshire corridor of Los Angeles, California. Hancock Park was established on the site in the early twentieth century. The project site is adjacent to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA).

The project site encompasses the La Brea Tar Pits, whose facilities include the 1977 Page Museum; 1952 Observation Pit; various tar pit excavation sites and features, primarily with temporary construction serving as support facilities; a concession and public restroom building; a multipurpose lawn and recreational areas; hardscaping/landscaping features throughout the park; and a surface parking lot.

This study was conducted to address potentially significant adverse direct and indirect impacts to historical resources to facilitate compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as codified in Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5024.1, Title 14 California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines, and PRC Sections 21083.2 and 21084.1.

This study pertains only to historical resources. Archaeological and tribal cultural resources are addressed in a separate, accompanying study.

## Key Personnel

The lead author and investigator for this study was Senior Team Lead for Architectural History, Debi Howell-Ardila, MHP. Dan Herrick, Historic Preservation Specialist, served as co-author and researcher of the report. Susan Zamudio-Gurrola, MHP, contributed to researching and writing the report. SWCA Senior Strategic Advisor, Leslie Heumann, provided oversight and quality assurance/quality

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<sup>1</sup> In accordance with Chapter 2.94 of the Los Angeles County Code and various other operating agreements, the County Museum of Natural History is a department of the County and has administrative charge and control over all County matters relating to history and science, and shall also include the administration of Hancock Park (except that area of said park devoted to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art [LACMA]), and the care, safeguarding, and maintenance of all exhibits, equipment, and structural improvements directly relating to exhibits, the administration and maintenance of LACMA, and other property hereafter acquired for or devoted to history and science.

control (QA/QC). John Dietler, Ph.D., RPA, served as the Principal-in-charge of the project, and Bobbette Biddulph was the Project Manager.

Copies of the report are on file with the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History Foundation, SWCA's Pasadena office, and the South Central Coastal Information Center at California State University, Fullerton.

## **2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **Project Location**

The La Brea Tar Pits is located at 5801 W. Wilshire Boulevard within the 23-acre Hancock Park (APN 5508-016-902). The project site spans 13 acres of the eastern and northwestern portions of Hancock Park. The project site is directly adjacent to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), which is presently under construction. LACMA is not included within the project site.

Located in the Wilshire Community Plan Area, the project site is located approximately 5.5 miles west of downtown Los Angeles. It is bounded by West 6th Street to the north, South Curson Avenue to the east, Wilshire Boulevard to the south, and LACMA to the west, in the "Miracle Mile" neighborhood of Los Angeles (Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3).

### **Proposed Project**

The proposed project is a reimagining of the La Brea Tar Pits complex, including the Page Museum and surrounding Hancock Park. Maintaining the current uses of these spaces—as an international destination for research and as a local destination for recreation—is a core objective of the project.

In addition, retaining the Page Museum's iconic Pleistocene frieze, visible laboratory, and Ice Age gardens and landscapes are also included as part of the proposed project. As a primary objective, the project would update and expand the use of these spaces, modernize the interpretations and exhibits, make more of the collection visible to the public, increase research and presentation space, and make the site more environmentally sustainable through the capture of stormwater.

Overall, the Master Plan consists of nine principal project components, as shown in Figure 4. These are: 1) Page Museum Renovations, 2) Wilshire Gateway Entry Plaza and Lake Pit, 3) Enhanced Central Green, 4) Revamped Pit 91, 5) New Museum Building, 6) New Public Promenade, 7) New Pedestrian Path, 8) 6th Street Entry Gateway, and 9) Support Building. Figure 4 shows the proposed site plan with each of these nine project components labeled and numbered.

The EIR for the La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan provides the full description of the proposed project. The following summarizes project elements most pertinent for historical resources.

Figure 1. Project vicinity map





Figure 2. Project site shown on U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute quadrangle

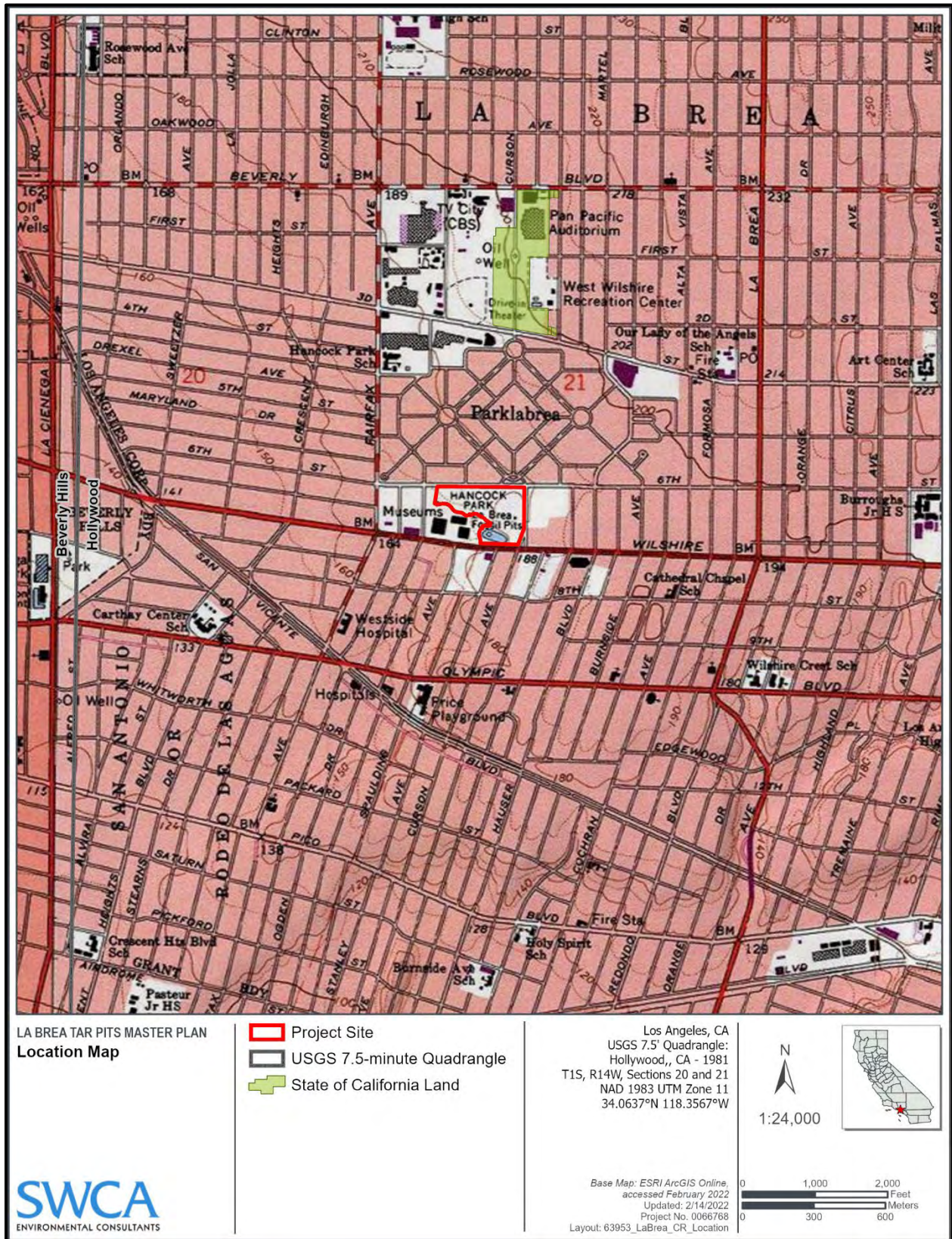
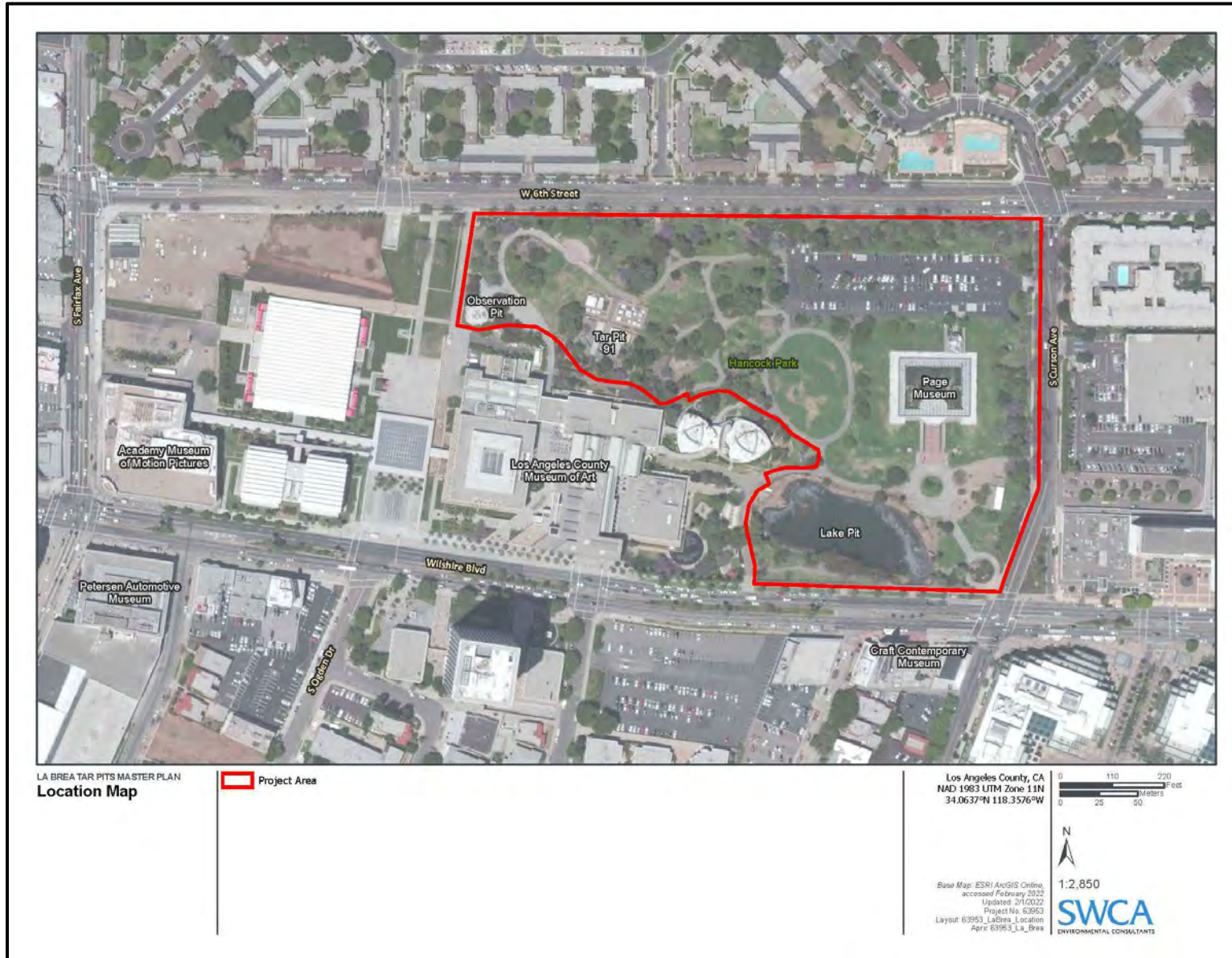




Figure 3. Project site shown on 2020 aerial photograph



## **Page Museum Renovations**

The project would renovate the existing Page Museum to allow for enlarged exhibition space, additional storage, a ground floor café, and retail space (Figure 5 and Figure 6). The vegetation in the existing central atrium of the Page Museum would be removed to allow for the display of additional exhibitions and provide additional classroom and laboratory space (Figure 7). The enlarged collections storage could accommodate approximately 45,000 to 62,000 cubic feet of storage using a mixture of 7-foot-tall and 10-foot-tall compactors and open shelving. The final selection of storage systems and the layout would be developed through future phases of design. In addition, space for visiting researchers would be added.

The second floor of the Page Museum would contain two classrooms and a multipurpose space. An outdoor café and bar would be located next to these spaces on the center terrace on the west side of the Page Museum.

A sloped green roof would be installed to the north of the Page Museum and would curve to the west. The project would add extensive sustainability features to the Page Museum. In addition, the project would demolish the existing maintenance building and service facilities along the northern boundary, directly west of the parking lot. A new 2,000-gross-square-foot (gsf) satellite maintenance and support building would be constructed for additional storage, administration, and research space directly west of the parking lot.

## **New Museum Building**

A new two-story museum building would be located northwest of the Page Museum. The building would be approximately 40,000 gsf and would increase the total museum square footage to 104,000 gsf. The new museum building would be a maximum height of 30 feet. The new museum building would include an extended central lobby, exhibit spaces, two theaters, a mechanical equipment room, research and collections rooms, administration spaces, and a loading dock.

The Page Museum and new museum building would be continuously connected on the first floor (see Figure 5 and Figure 6). The first-floor central lobby would face southwest toward the Central Green and branch off into the Page Museum to the east and the new museum building to the west. An updated retail and café would be located off the lobby and look out over the Central Green. The buildings would be disconnected on the second floor, which would rise above the earthen berm. The separated facilities would be accessible through sloped outdoor walkways from the Central Green or interior staircases in the museum. There would be pedestrian entrances leading into the central lobby from the Central Green and from the parking lot. The existing Page Museum entrance would be converted to an educational group and tour entrance, which would be connected to a new school drop-off area on South Curson Avenue.

Figure 4. Proposed site plan, La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan





Figure 5. Proposed ground floor building program

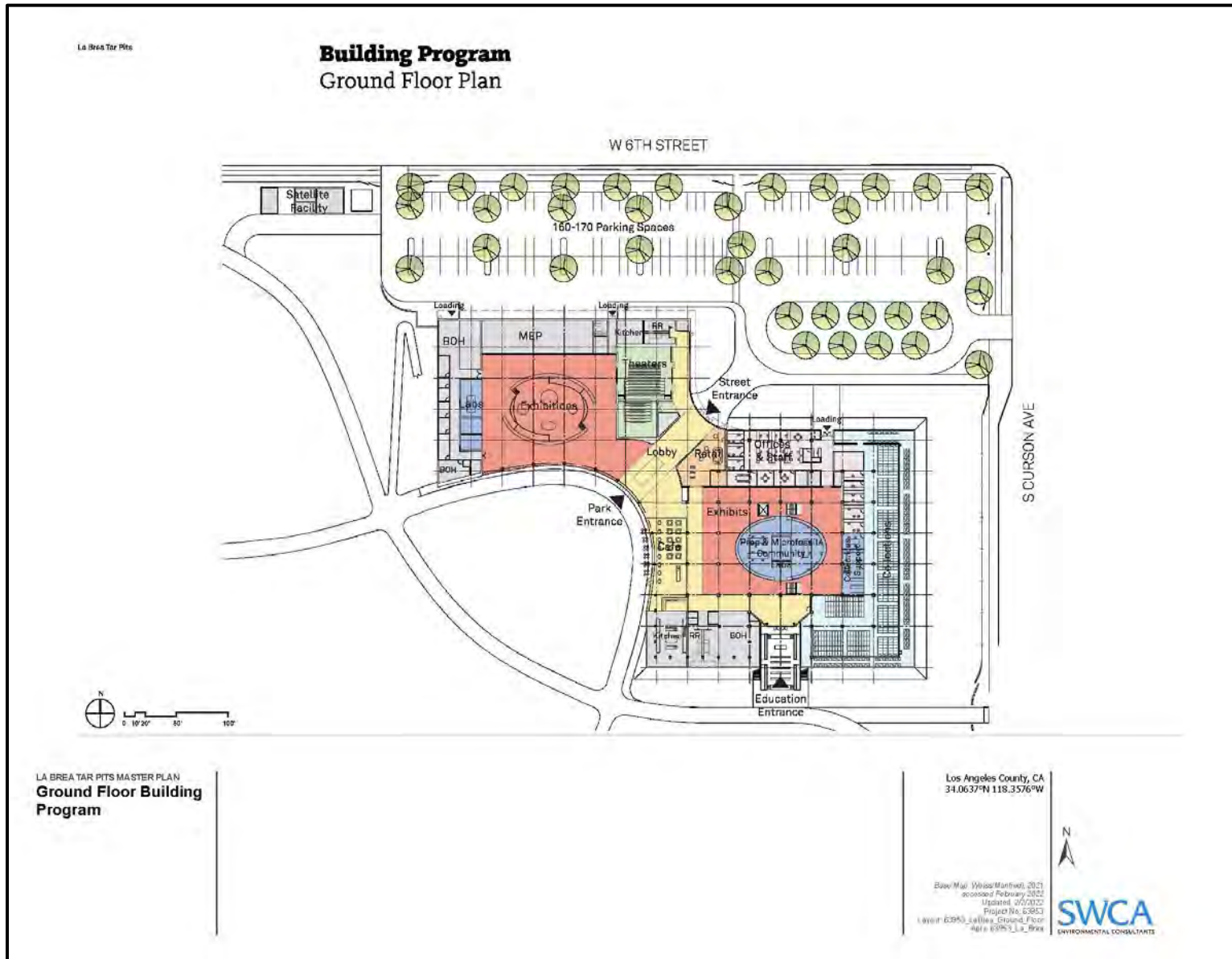




Figure 6. Proposed building program, promenade level plan

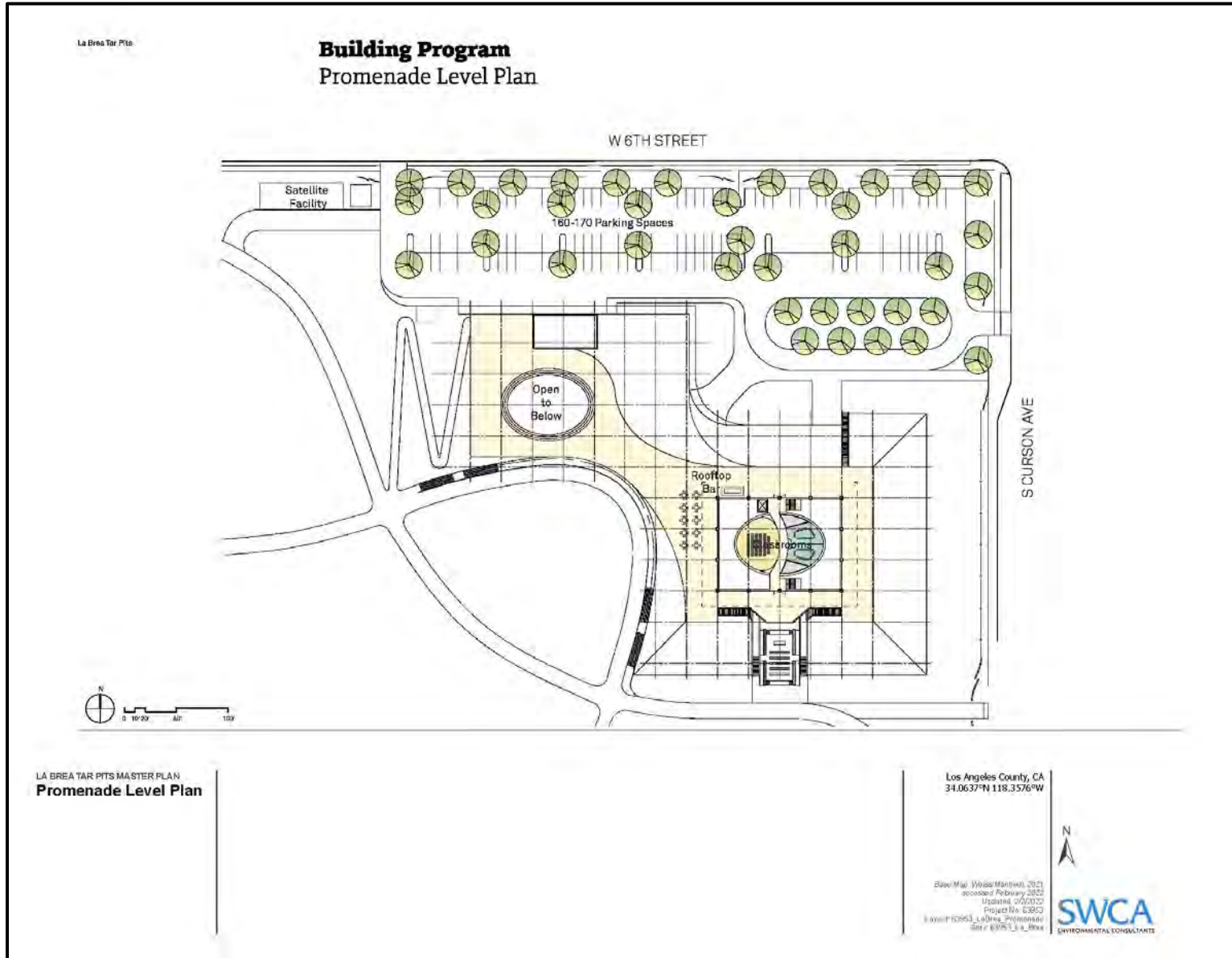
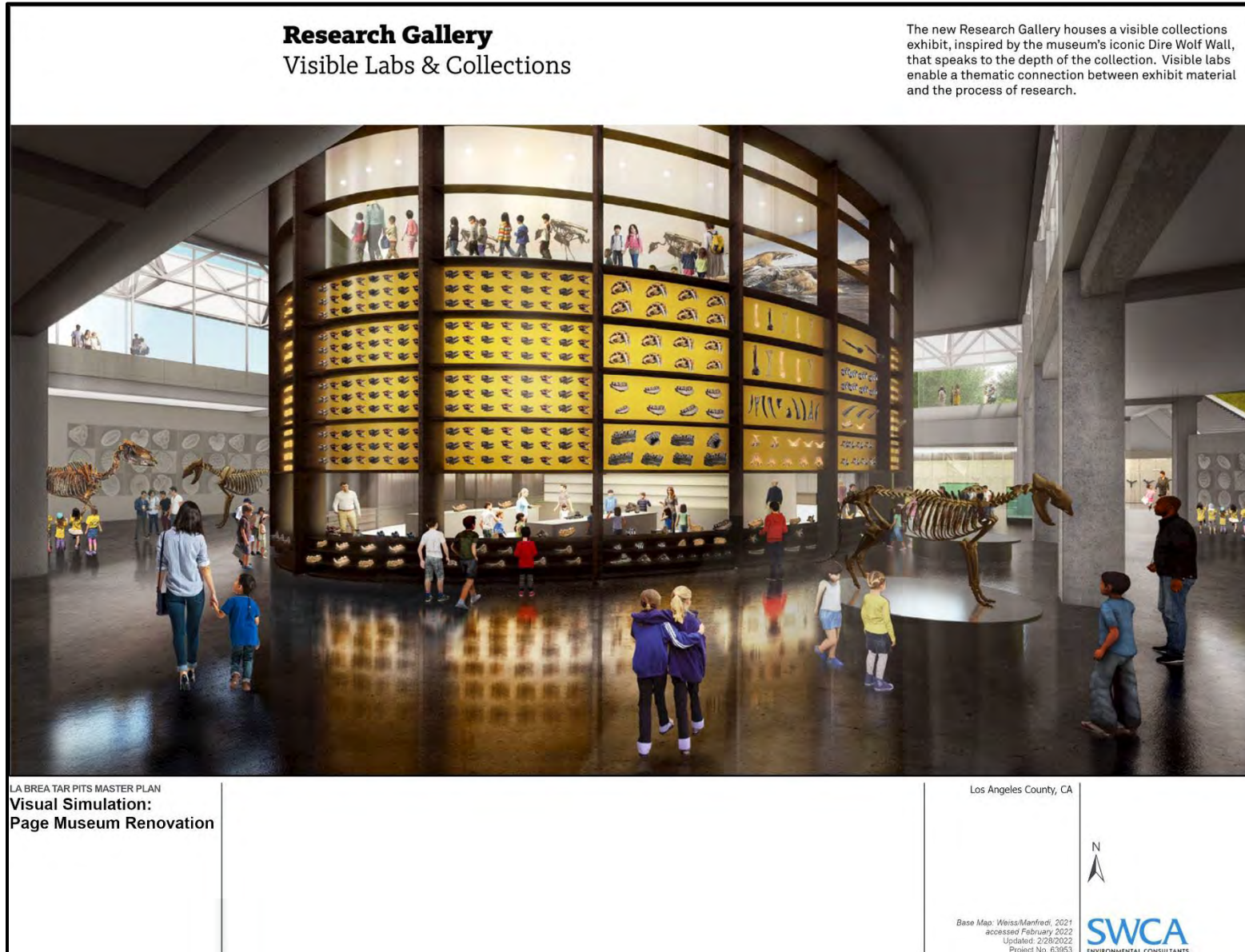


Figure 7. Visual simulation, Page Museum renovation



## **ADDED MUSEUM PROGRAMMING**

All three existing theaters in the Page Museum would be renovated to serve as offices and collections storage. Two new theaters would be built in the new museum building. The project would replace the existing 3D Theater in the Page Museum, which is 1,120 square feet and contains 57 seats, and create a new Small Theater in the new museum building. The existing 2D Theater (1,630 square feet) and Ice Age Theater (1,540 square feet) in the Page Museum would be replaced by the Large Flexible Theater in the new museum building. The Large Flexible Theater would be 2,700 square feet and contain 170 to 190 removable seats.

### ***Wilshire Gateway and Lake Pit***

The project would renovate the existing entrance to the La Brea Tar Pits located at Wilshire Boulevard and South Curson Avenue. A large, shaded canopy would stretch down Wilshire Boulevard and curve around to South Curson Avenue to create a new welcome pavilion and shaded entry plaza; this would provide orientation, spaces for gathering and queuing, and restrooms (Figure 8). A picnic area would also be located under the shaded canopy.

A pedestrian bridge and walking path would be constructed over the large tar lake, referred to in this study as the “Lake Pit,” with interpretive signage. Directly to the east of the Lake Pit, a new garden bioswale would be installed to manage stormwater and would include vegetation related to the Pleistocene era. The mammoths and mastodon sculptures would be relocated here.

### ***6th Street Gateway***

The project would renovate the existing entrance at the northwest corner of West 6th Street and the entrance to the LACMA service drive. Similar to the Wilshire Gateway, a shaded canopy and welcome pavilion would provide orientation, legibility, and amenities. As a visible point of arrival from the residential communities to the north, this new entry would welcome visitors to a shaded park where recreational needs are balanced with the research activities of La Brea. Amenities would include play areas, picnic areas, seating and interpretation zones at the protected tar seeps, the gentle topography and bioswales along Lake Pit, and the revitalized destinations of the Dorothy Brown Amphitheater, Observation Pit, and Pit 91. Along the south edge of the loop path, connections would allow access to other Hancock Park programs and transportation connections.

### ***Tar Pits***

The project would renovate the existing facilities at all the tar pits in the northeastern portion of the project site (Figure 9). The extended chain fencing around Pit 9, Pit 13, and Pits 3, 4, 61, and 67 would be removed. The project would construct clearly defined viewing areas around each of the tar pits, with improved pit protection zones and fencing, seating, and interpretive signage. The project would relocate the wooden fossil boxes, research facilities, and ongoing excavation associated with Project 23 to space within and adjacent to the new museum building. The temporary storage and research buildings adjacent to Project 23 would be demolished or repurposed within the project site.

Pit 91 would continue to be a key research and interpretation destination in the park (Figure 10 and Figure 11). The project would demolish the current viewing station overlooking Pit 91 and construct a shaded outdoor classroom with canopy. While excavation at Pit 91 could be completed in a few years, the site would be maintained and enhanced to support future excavation and education opportunities. In addition, the new support facilities at Pit 91 would continue to support temporary excavation sites at adjacent Pit 10 or other future field sites.



Figure 8. Proposed Wilshire Gateway



Figure 9. Visual simulation, tar pits





Figure 10. Visual simulation, Pit 10 and Pit 91, outdoor classroom

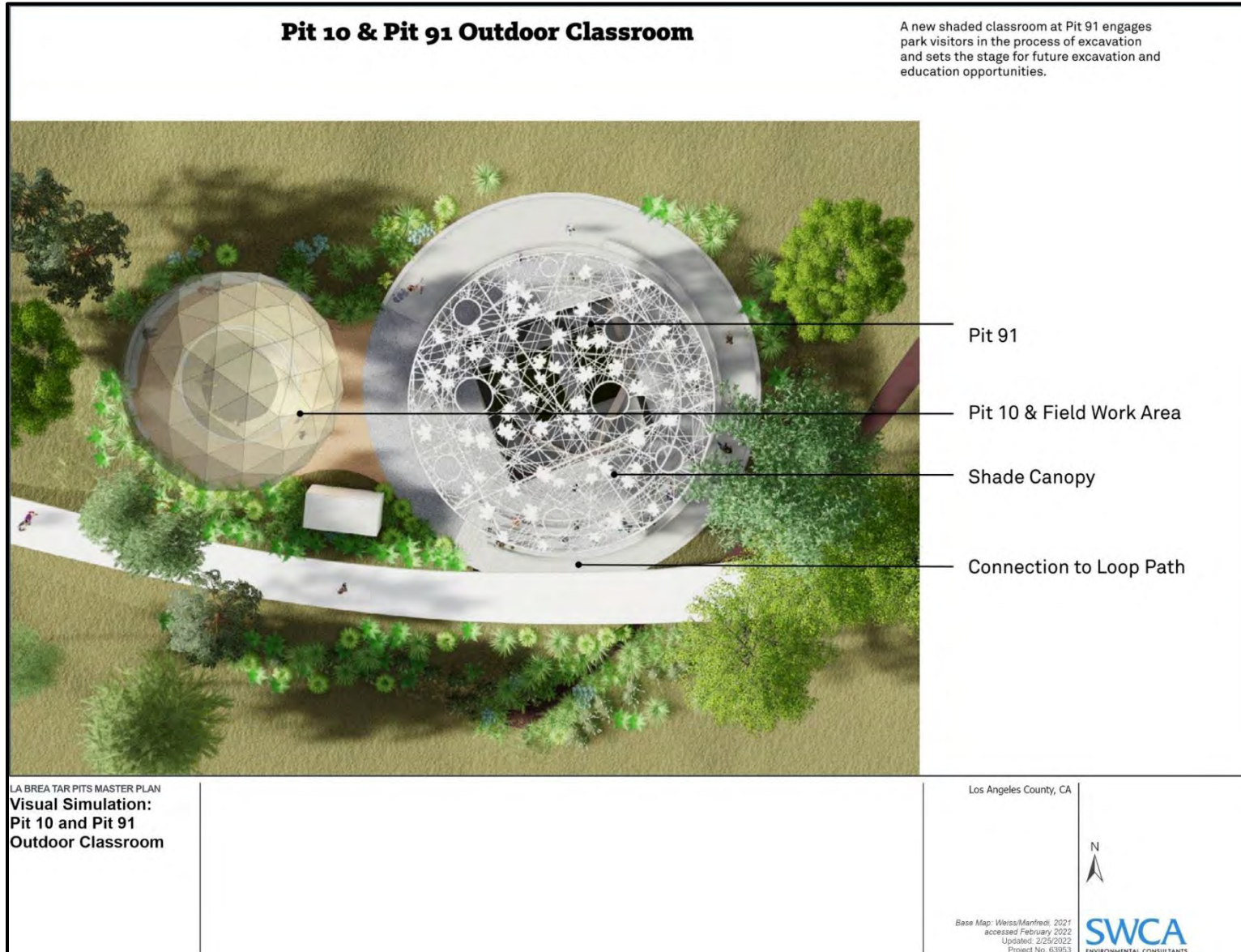


Figure 11. Visual simulation, Pit 91 interior





## **Pedestrian Path and Recreation**

The project would reconfigure the existing pedestrian pathways on-site into a continuous 1-kilometer paved pedestrian path linking the disparate existing elements of the site: the Lake Pit and Wilshire Gateway in the southeast, Central Green, museum, tar seeps, and 6th Street Gateway in the northwest. The path would feature three distinct loops, each one reflecting distinct themes (Figure 12).

The Central Green would be at the center of the project site, directly to the southwest of the Page Museum and new museum building. This large common grass lawn provides a setting for community activities, recreation, events, and public gathering. The project would improve the infrastructure to create a drivable path for food trucks to access the Central Green. To the west of the 6th Street Gateway, the project would add a children's play area, picnic areas, and a small dog park. Vegetated berms around recreation areas would create seating areas and elevated vantage points.

## **Landscaping**

As shown in Figure 13, the planting and landscaping concept for Hancock Park is divided into three distinct zones encircled by the looping path system. Each loop of the pedestrian path has its own usage and distinguishing theme representing different geologic epochs—Pleistocene in the southeastern loop, Holocene in the northwestern loop, and Anthropocene in the central loop. As noted above, the Pleistocene Garden would be approximately 10,000-11,000 square feet in size, located directly east of the Lake Pit, and incorporate a biofiltration area to help manage stormwater. It would be planted with herbaceous and woody species. The western loop would consist of a Holocene landscape with climate-appropriate native plantings to ease water consumption, ensure appropriate maintenance, and promote sustainable growth. A forested woodland consisting of Torrey Pine and Coast Live Oak would be planted with the intention of providing a focal area and shade. The western loop also contains Oil Creek, which will be developed into a biofiltration zone for stormwater management and would be planted with Sequoia and Monterey Pine trees in wetter pockets. The Central Lawn would be a common lawn.

The woodland forest zone of the western loop would be extended along the park's peripheral edges (northern, southern, eastern, and western) to provide shade to the picnic areas and the parking lot to the north. Tree species are expected to include Torrey Pine, Coast Live Oak, Western Sycamore, and Valley Oak and would support the development of a unified canopy across the site.

As stated above, there are 197 trees currently on the project site. The planting strategy includes the introduction or relocation of approximately 84 trees on-site. The relocated trees would be from existing locations within the project site. New plantings would be consistent with the planting and landscape concept and plant palette included in the Master Plan. New plantings would be selected for resilience to disease and with consideration for their ability to create shaded areas at the park. Trees that would be removed include non-native trees and/or trees that have been diseased or are not in good health. Species such as the Western Sycamore, California Buckeye, and Redwood would be preserved, unless they are diseased or in locations where new built features are planned, specifically the museum expansion and shifted parking lot on the northern side of the site. If healthy, these trees could be moved to the west of the parking lot, adjacent to the maintenance and support building.

At this juncture of the planning process, a tree assessment and landscaping plan have not been developed. More detailed plans for tree removal and planting would not be developed until after the EIR is completed.



Figure 12. Visual simulation, pedestrian pathway



LA BREA TAR PITS MASTER PLAN  
**Visual Simulation:  
Pedestrian Pathway**

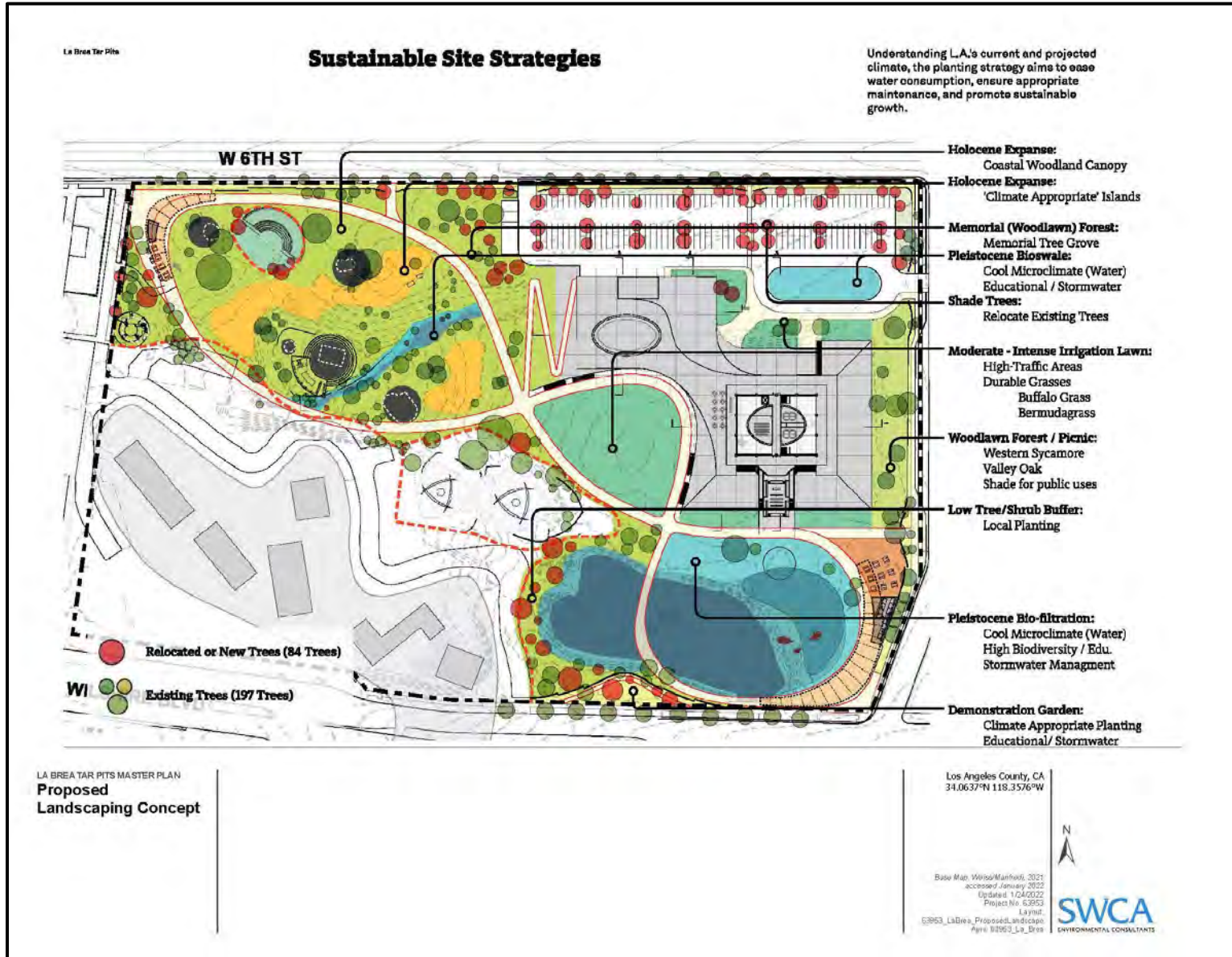
Los Angeles County, CA  
34.0637°N 118.3576°W

Base Map: Weiss/Mantredi, 2021  
accessed January 2022  
Updated: 1/24/2022  
Project No. 63953  
Layout:  
63953\_LaBrea\_VisualSimulation  
Apr/6/2022\_La\_Brea



**SWCA**  
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

Figure 13. Proposed landscaping concept



## **Circulation and Vehicle Parking**

The existing parking lot would be expanded from 63,000 square feet to 65,000 square feet and shifted to the northeast corner of Hancock Park. The parking lot would hold approximately 160 to 170 vehicle parking spaces, an increase of approximately 5 to 15 spaces. The project would add new landscaping and vehicle access lanes to the parking lot. A vehicular drop-off loop would facilitate vehicle circulation and visitor entry through a pedestrian entrance to the museum leading from the parking lot.

Three loading and service entrances would accommodate deliveries for labs, exhibition material, food service, events, and staff offices. Two of the entrances would be from the parking lot into the new museum building on the north side, the third entrance would be from the parking lot into the Page Museum, also on the north side.

The proposed project includes a new school drop-off area from South Curson Avenue, adjacent to Wilshire Gateway picnic area. This inset loading area would accommodate school buses. School buses would also be able to access the parking lot from South Curson Avenue and drop-off in the loading area in the parking lot.

## **3. REGULATORY SETTING**

This regulatory framework section identifies the federal, state, and local laws, statutes, guidelines, and regulations that govern the identification and treatment of cultural resources as well as the analysis of potential impacts to cultural resources. The lead agency must consider the provisions and requirements of this regulatory framework when rendering decisions on projects that have the potential to affect cultural resources.

### **Federal Regulations**

#### ***National Historic Preservation Act of 1966***

Enacted in 1966 and amended in 2000, the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) instituted a multifaceted program, administered by the Secretary of the Interior, to encourage sound preservation policies of the nation's cultural resources at the federal, state, and local levels. The NHPA authorized the expansion and maintenance of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), established the position of State Historic Preservation Officer and provided for the designation of State Review Boards, set up a mechanism to certify local governments to carry out the goals of the NHPA, assisted Native American tribes to preserve their cultural heritage, and created the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

#### ***National Register of Historic Places***

The NRHP was established by the NHPA of 1966 as “an authoritative guide to be used by Federal, State, and local governments, private groups and citizens to identify the Nation’s cultural resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment” (36 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 60.2). The NRHP recognizes properties that are significant at the national, state, and local levels. To be eligible for listing in the NRHP, a resource must be significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. Districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of potential significance must also possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials,

workmanship, feeling, and association. A property is eligible for the NRHP if it is significant under one or more of the following criteria:

- Criterion A: It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- Criterion B: It is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in our past;
- Criterion C: It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; and/or
- Criterion D: It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, or graves of historic figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, and properties that are primarily commemorative in nature, are not considered eligible for the NRHP, unless they satisfy certain conditions. In general, a resource must be 50 years of age to be considered for the NRHP, unless it satisfies a standard of exceptional importance.

In addition to meeting these criteria, a property must retain historic integrity, which is defined in National Register Bulletin 15 as the “ability of a property to convey its significance.”<sup>2</sup> In order to assess integrity, the National Park Service recognizes seven aspects or qualities that, considered together, define historic integrity.

To retain integrity, a property must possess several, if not all, of these seven qualities, which are defined in the following manner in National Register Bulletin 15:

1. Location – the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred;
2. Design – the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property;
3. Setting – the physical environment of a historic property;
4. Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.
5. Workmanship – the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory;
6. Feeling – a property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time;
7. Association – the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

For the purposes of this study’s indirect impact analysis, the aspects of setting and feeling are of particular relevant for this discussion; areas of particular relevance are highlighted below. The National Park Service defines the quality of setting in the following way:

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. Whereas location refers to the specific place where a property was built or an event occurred, setting refers to the character

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<sup>2</sup> National Park Service (NPS). 1990. *National Register Bulletin 15, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, p. 44. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service.

of the place in which the property played its historical role. It involves how, not just where, the property is situated and its relationship to surrounding features and open space.

Setting often reflects the basic physical conditions under which a property was built and the functions it was intended to serve. In addition, the way in which a property is positioned in its environment can reflect the designer's concept of nature and aesthetic preferences.

The physical features that constitute the setting of a historic property can be either natural or manmade, including such elements as: Topographic features (a gorge or the crest of a hill); vegetation; simple manmade features (paths or fences); and relationships between buildings and other features or open space.

These features and their relationships should be examined not only within the exact boundaries of the property, but also between the property and its surroundings. This is particularly important for districts.<sup>3</sup>

The National Park Service defines the quality of feeling in the following way:

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character.<sup>4</sup>

## ***National Natural Landmarks Program***

Authorized by the Historic Sites, Buildings and Antiquities Act, the National Natural Landmarks program is administered by the National Park Service for resources located on federal, state, or local lands. As codified in 36 CFR 62, the National Natural Landmarks program seeks to encourage the identification, study, designation, recognition, and preservation of nationally significant ecological and geological resources that reflect the nation's natural heritage (including paleontological/fossil-based resources).

## **State Regulations**

The policies of the NHPA are implemented at the state level by the California Office of Historic Preservation, a division of the California Department of Parks and Recreation. The Office of Historic Preservation is also tasked with carrying out the duties described in the PRC and maintaining the California Historic Resources Inventory and California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). The state-level regulatory framework also includes CEQA, which requires the identification and mitigation of substantial adverse impacts that may affect the significance of eligible historical resources.

## ***California Register of Historical Resources***

Created in 1992 and implemented in 1998, the CRHR is, according to PRC Sections 21083.2 and 21084.1, "an authoritative guide in California to be used by state and local agencies, private groups, and citizens to identify the state's historical resources and to indicate what properties are to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse change." Certain properties, including those listed in or formally determined eligible for listing in the NRHP and California Historical Landmarks numbered 770 and higher, are automatically included in the CRHR. Other properties recognized under the California Points of

<sup>3</sup> NPS, 1990, p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> NPS, 1990, p. 45.

Historical Interest program, identified as significant in historical resources surveys or designated by local landmarks programs, may be nominated for inclusion in the CRHR.

According to PRC Section 5024.1(c), a resource, either an individual property or a contributor to a historic district, may be listed in the CRHR if the State Historical Resources Commission determines that it meets one or more of the following criteria, which are modeled on NRHP criteria:

- Criterion 1: It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
- Criterion 2: It is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
- Criterion 3: It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values;
- Criterion 4: It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

Resources nominated to the CRHR must retain enough of their historic character or appearance to convey the reasons for their significance. Resources whose historic integrity does not meet NRHP criteria may still be eligible for listing in the CRHR.

## ***California Environmental Quality Act***

CEQA requires a lead agency to analyze whether historical resources may be adversely impacted by a proposed project. Under CEQA, a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. Answering this question is a two-part process: first, the determination must be made as to whether the proposed project involves historical resources. Second, if historical resources are present, the proposed project must be analyzed for a potential substantial adverse change in the significance of the resource.

According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, for the purposes of CEQA, historical resources are:

1. A resource listed in, or formally determined eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources (PRC 5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4850 et seq);
2. A resource included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in Section 5020.1(k) of the PRC or identified as significant in a historical resources survey meeting the requirements of Section 5024.1(g) of the PRC;
3. Any building, structure, object, site, or district that the lead agency determines eligible for national, state, or local landmark listing; generally, a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be historically significant (and therefore a historical resource under CEQA) if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the California Register (as defined in PRC Section 5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4852).

According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 and PRC Section 5024.1, the fact that a resource is not listed or determined eligible for listing in the California Register or is not included in a local register or survey shall not preclude the lead agency from determining that the resource may be an historical resource. According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b), a project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource may have a significant effect on the environment.



## **SUBSTANTIAL ADVERSE CHANGE TO HISTORICAL RESOURCES**

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 specifies that “substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource means physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of an historical resource would be materially impaired.” Material impairment occurs when a project alters in an adverse manner or demolishes “those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion” or eligibility for inclusion in the NRHP, CRHR, or local register. In addition, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2, the “direct and indirect significant effects of the project on the environment shall be clearly identified and described, giving due consideration to both the short-term and long-term effects.”

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(d) further defines direct and indirect impacts in the following manner:

1. A direct physical change in the environment is a physical change in the environment which is caused by and immediately related to the project.
2. An indirect physical change in the environment is a physical change in the environment, which is not immediately related to the project, but which is caused indirectly by the project. If a direct physical change in the environment in turn causes another change in the environment, then the other change is an indirect physical change in the environment.
3. An indirect physical change is to be considered only if that change is a reasonably foreseeable impact which may be caused by the project.

## **SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR’S STANDARDS FOR THE TREATMENT OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines and 14 CCR Section 15126.4(b)(1), a project that has been determined to conform with the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (*Secretary’s Standards*) is generally considered a project that will not cause a significant adverse impact to historical resources. The *Secretary’s Standards* and associated Guidelines are not “prescriptive but are intended to promote responsible preservation practices.”<sup>5</sup> The standards offer recommendations for maintaining, repairing, and replacing historic features, as well as for designing additions.

As developed by the National Park Service, the *Secretary’s Standards* consist of four related treatment approaches: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. It is anticipated that rehabilitation would be the appropriate approach for the proposed project. Rehabilitation, which is the most flexible treatment approach of the four, is defined as the process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features that convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

The 10 *Secretary’s Standards for Rehabilitation* are:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.

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<sup>5</sup> Weeks, K.D., and A.E. Grimmer. 2001. *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior. Available at: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/rehabilitation-guidelines.pdf>. Accessed July 11, 2022.

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

*Secretary's Standards* compliance begins with the identification and documentation of the “character-defining,” or historically significant, features of the historical resource. According to *Preservation Brief 17, Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character*, identifying character-defining features consists of a three-step process.<sup>6</sup> Step 1 involves assessing the physical aspects of the building exterior as a whole, including its setting, shape and massing, orientation, roof and roof features, projections, and openings. Step 2 looks at the building more closely—at materials, trim, secondary features, and craftsmanship. Step 3 encompasses the interior, including individual spaces, sequences of spaces, finishes and materials.

In 2017, the National Park Service issued an update to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*.<sup>7</sup> The updated document includes additional, project-specific detail on how to comply with and implement the *Secretary's Standards*. Table 1 summarizes the recommendations

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<sup>6</sup> Nelson, L.H., FAIA. 1982. *Preservation Briefs #17: Architectural Character—Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving their Character*. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Available at: <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/17-architectural-character.htm>. Accessed July 11, 2022.

<sup>7</sup> Grimmer, A.E. 2017. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services.



for historic building sites that are of particular relevance to the proposed project. Table 2 summarizes the recommendations for significant settings of historic districts and neighborhoods.

**Table 1. Standards for Rehabilitation, Recommended Treatments for Historic Building Sites<sup>8</sup>**

Recommended	Not Recommended
<p>Identifying, retaining, and preserving features of the building site that are important in defining its overall historic character.                      Site features may include 1) walls, fences, or steps; circulation systems, such as walks, paths or roads; 2) vegetation, such as trees, shrubs, grass, orchards, hedges, windbreaks, or gardens; 3) landforms, such as hills, terracing, or berms; 4) furnishings and fixtures, such as light posts or benches; 5) decorative elements, such as sculpture, statuary, or monuments; 6) water features, including fountains, streams, pools, lakes, or irrigation ditches; and 7) subsurface archaeological resources, other cultural or religious features, or burial grounds which are also important to the site.</p>	<p>Removing or substantially changing buildings and their features or site features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the property so that, as a result, the character is diminished.</p>
<p>Retaining the historic relationship between buildings and the landscape</p>	<p>Removing or relocating buildings or landscape features, thereby destroying the historic relationship between buildings and the landscape.                      Removing or relocating buildings on a site or in a complex of related historic structures (such as a mill complex or farm), thereby diminishing the historic character of the site or complex.                      Moving buildings onto the site, thereby creating an inaccurate historic appearance.                      Changing the grade level of the site if it diminishes its historic character. For example, lowering the grade adjacent to a building to maximize use of a basement, which would change the historic appearance of the building and its relation to the site.</p>
<p>Protecting and maintaining buildings and site features by providing proper drainage to ensure that water does not erode foundation walls, drain toward the building, or damage or erode the landscape</p>	<p>Failing to ensure that site drainage is adequate so that buildings and site features are damaged or destroyed; or, alternatively, changing the site grading so that water does not drain properly</p>
<p>Minimizing disturbance of the terrain around buildings or elsewhere on the site, thereby reducing the possibility of destroying or damaging important landscape features, archaeological resources, other cultural or religious features, or burial grounds</p>	<p>Using heavy machinery or equipment in areas where it may disturb or damage important landscape features, archaeological resources, other cultural or religious features, or burial grounds</p>
<p>Protecting buildings and landscape features when working on the site</p>	<p>Failing to protect building and landscape features during work on the site or failing to repair damaged or deteriorated site features</p>
<p>Designing new onsite features...when required by a new use, so that they are as unobtrusive as possible, retain the historic relationship between the building or buildings and the landscape, and are compatible with the historic character of the property                      Designing new exterior additions to historic buildings or adjacent new construction that are compatible with the historic character of the site and preserves the historic relationship between the building or buildings and the landscape.</p>	<p>Introducing new construction on the building site which is visually incompatible in terms of size, scale, design, material, or color, which destroys historic relationships on the site</p>

<sup>8</sup> Grimmer, 2017, pp. 137–142.

**Table 2. Standards for Rehabilitation, Recommended Treatments for Setting (Districts)<sup>9</sup>**

<b>Recommended</b>	<b>Not Recommended</b>
Identifying, retaining, and preserving building and landscape features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the setting. Such features can include 1) circulation systems, such as roads and streets; 2) furnishing and fixtures, such as light posts or benches; 3) vegetation, gardens and yards; 4) adjacent open space, such as fields, parks, commons, or woodlands; and 5) important views or visual relationships.	Removing or substantially changing those building and landscape features in the setting which are important in defining the historic character so that, as a result, the character is diminished.
Retaining the historic relationship between buildings and landscape features in the setting. For example, preserving the relationship between a town common or urban plaza and the adjacent houses, municipal buildings, roads, and landscape and streetscape features.	Altering the relationship between the buildings and landscape features in the setting by widening existing streets, changing landscape materials, or locating new streets or parking areas where they may negatively impact the historic character of the setting. Removing or relocating buildings or landscape features, thereby destroying the historic relationship between buildings and the landscape in the setting.
Protecting buildings and landscape features when undertaking work in the setting	Failure to protect buildings and landscape features during work in the setting
Evaluating the overall condition of materials and features to determine whether more than protection and maintenance, such as repairs to materials and features in the setting, will be necessary	Failing to undertake adequate measures to ensure the protection of materials and features in the setting.
Repairing features in the setting by reinforcing the historic materials. Repairs may include the replacement in kind or with a compatible substitute material of those extensively deteriorated or missing parts of setting features when there are surviving prototypes, such as fencing, paving materials, trees, and hedgerows. Repairs should be physically and visually compatible.	Failing to repair and reinforce damaged or deteriorated historic materials and features in the setting. Removing material that could be repaired or using improper repair techniques. Replacing an entire feature of the building or landscape in the setting when repair of materials and limited replacement of deteriorated or missing components are feasible
Designing new exterior additions to historic buildings or adjacent new construction that are compatible with the historic character of the setting that preserve the historic relationship between the buildings and the landscape.	Introducing new construction into historic districts which is visually incompatible or that destroys historic relationships within the setting, or which damages or destroys important landscape features
Removing non-significant buildings, additions, or landscape features which detract from the historic character of the setting	Removing a historic building, a building feature, or landscape feature which is important in defining the historic character of the setting.

## Local Regulations

### County of Los Angeles

#### HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

In September 2015, the County of Los Angeles (County) Board of Supervisors adopted a Historic Preservation Ordinance (HPO) and Mills Act Program for all unincorporated territories of the County. As stated by the County Department of Regional Planning, the HPO:

- Specifies criteria and procedures for the designation of landmarks and historic districts;
- Specifies criteria and procedures for reviewing proposed work on designated landmarks or on property within historic districts;
- Establishes penalties for unauthorized work, including demolition, on landmarks or historic district contributors;

<sup>9</sup> Grimmer, 2017, pp. 143–146.

- Requires maintenance of landmarks and historic district contributors to prevent deterioration;
- Prohibits work, including demolition, on property nominated but not yet designated as a landmark or historic district;
- Encourages adaptive reuse of landmarks and historic district contributors by providing relief from parking requirements;
- Provides for the enhancement of historic districts by the establishment of development guidelines and standards, and by allowing streetscape improvements that are compatible with the areas historic character.<sup>10</sup>

As codified in Chapter 22.124, the HPO established the County Register of Landmarks and Historic Districts, along with the following designation criteria in unincorporated communities of the County:

- A. A structure, site, object, tree, landscape, or natural land feature may be designated as a landmark if it is 50 years of age or older and satisfies one or more of the following criteria:
  1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the nation, State, County, or community in which it is located;
  2. It is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in the history of the nation, State, County, or community in which it is located;
  3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, architectural style, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose work is of significance to the nation, State, County, or community in which it is located; or possesses artistic values of significance to the nation, State, County, or community in which it is located;
  4. It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, significant and important information regarding the prehistory or history of the nation, State, County, or community in which it is located;
  5. It is listed, or has been formally determined eligible by the United States National Park Service for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places, or is listed, or has been formally determined eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission for listing, on the California Register of Historical Resources;
  6. If it is a tree, it is one of the largest or oldest trees of the species located in the County; or
  7. If it is a tree, landscape, or other natural land feature, it has historical significance due to an association with an historic event, person, site, street, or structure, or because it is a defining or significant outstanding feature of a neighborhood.
- B. Property less than 50 years of age may be designated as a landmark if it meets one or more of the criteria set forth in subsection A of this Section, and exhibits exceptional importance.
- C. The interior space of a property, or other space held open to the general public, including but not limited to a lobby, may be designated as a landmark or included in the landmark designation of a property if the space qualifies for designation as a landmark under subsections A or B of this Section.

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<sup>10</sup> Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning. 2015. Historic Preservation Ordinance. Available at: <https://planning.lacounty.gov/preservation/ordinance>. Accessed July 11, 2022.

- D. Historic districts. A geographic area, including a noncontiguous grouping of related properties, may be designated as an historic district if all of the following requirements are met:
1. More than 50 percent of owners in the proposed district consent to the designation;
  2. The proposed district satisfies one or more of the criteria set forth in subsections A.1 through A.5, inclusive, of this Section; and
  3. The proposed district exhibits either a concentration of historic, scenic, or sites containing common character-defining features, which contribute to each other and are unified aesthetically by plan, physical development, or architectural quality; or significant geographical patterns, associated with different eras of settlement and growth, particular transportation modes, or distinctive examples of parks or community planning.

According to HPO Section 22.124.080, landmarks and historic districts may be nominated for designation through resolution by the Board of Supervisors or the Landmarks Commission. For purposes of this study, County criteria are applied to CEQA APE properties owned by the County of Los Angeles.

### ***City of Los Angeles***

Although the project site is located within the city of Los Angeles, it is owned by the County of Los Angeles and is proposed for uses that benefit the public. Accordingly, the proposed project is subject to the regulatory controls of the County of Los Angeles and not the City of Los Angeles. Areas adjacent to the project site are under the jurisdiction of the City. Consideration of the city-level regulatory framework in this study fulfills the intended purpose of CEQA as disclosing all relevant information associated with the proposed project.

### **LOS ANGELES HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENTS**

Local landmarks in the city are known as Historic-Cultural Monuments and are managed under the aegis of the City of Los Angeles Planning Department, Office of Historic Resources. Originally adopted in 1962, and most recently amended in 2018, the City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Ordinance establishes the criteria and process for designation of Historic-Cultural Monuments.

In accordance with Section 22.171.7, a Historic-Cultural Monument “is any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon), building, or structure of particular historical or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles” that 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.

In Los Angeles, the Cultural Heritage Commission may recommend approval or disapproval of applications for designation; this recommendation is made to the City Council, which may adopt a designation by majority vote.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION OVERLAY ZONES

Local historic districts in the city of Los Angeles are known as Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZ). As described by the City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources, the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) Ordinance was adopted in 1979, and amended in 2004:

To identify and protect neighborhoods with distinct architectural and cultural resources, the City ... developed an expansive program of Historic Preservation Overlay Zones ... HPOZs, commonly known as historic districts, provide for review of proposed exterior alterations and additions to historic properties within designated districts.

The project site does not fall within any HPOZ.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

The following section presents an overview of the methodology used in this report. To consider potential direct and indirect impacts to historical resources, the CEQA Area of Potential Effects (CEQA APE) consists of parcels within and directly adjacent to the proposed project footprint (Figure 14).

### Research and Literature Review

To characterize all properties within the CEQA APE, SWCA conducted primary- and secondary-source research in a wide variety of collections. A phase of literature review of previous studies was completed, and data gaps were identified to guide research efforts. Research focused on a variety of materials relating to the history and development of the project site and its role in the history of institutional/cultural development in Los Angeles. Materials consulted included historical maps, photographs, and newspapers; aerial and ground-based photographs; publications and journal articles; among other materials. Sources included the following publicly accessible collections:

- City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources (Historic-Cultural Monuments, SurveyLA)
- David Rumsey Historical Map Collection
- Environmental Data Resources, Inc.
- Huntington Library Digital Archives
- Library of Congress
- Combined collections of Los Angeles Public Library and University of Southern California libraries
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps
- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) historical topographic maps
- University of California, Santa Barbara Digital Library

For the purposes of this investigation, the results of Los Angeles's citywide historical resources survey undertaking, SurveyLA, for the Wilshire Community Plan Area were used for all properties falling within the CEQA APE, unless a preponderance of evidence suggested that alternative conclusions were more appropriate.

### Field Survey and Project Team Coordination

To accurately assess the proposed project, SWCA met with the Foundation and the design team to review project drawings, architectural plans, and site design concepts. Field surveys took place in February 2022 and July 2022. Properties within the CEQA APE were inspected and photographed. Digital photography and field notes allowed for a thorough depiction of the subject properties and their existing conditions. Figure 15 shows the target properties included in the field survey.

Subject properties were assigned the appropriate California Historical Resources (CHR) status code (full results are presented in Section 6, Historical Resources Survey and Results). The principal elements of the proposed project were studied for potential direct and indirect impacts to historical resources pursuant to CEQA. Those results are presented in Section 7 (Impacts Analysis).

Figure 14. CEQA APE, with project footprint enclosed in red, and broader APE in yellow





Figure 15. Target properties, addresses, and dates of construction, historical resources survey area





## 5. HISTORIC SETTING AND CONTEXT

National Register Bulletin 24, *Guidelines for Local Surveys*, states that the historic context developed in support of historical resource surveys should analyze and describe the “broad pattern of historical development in a community or its region that may be represented by historic resources.”<sup>11</sup> Developing a historic context for survey areas is further described by the National Register as vital for providing a basis for any assessment, helping researchers successfully identify all significant resources and helping eliminate unintended biases. Through a review of the history of the state and region under consideration, the historic context should define important patterns of development that may be reflected in the area’s historical resources.

The National Register defines context as “a body of information about our history according to the stages of development occurring at various times and places.”<sup>12</sup> Theme, place, and time are the basic elements that define historic context. The context statement incorporates stages of physical development, including the evolution of building forms and architectural style, as well as highlighting facets of industries or events.

Historic context is also linked to the built environment through the concept of property type. A property type is “a grouping of individual properties based on a set of shared physical or associative characteristics. Physical characteristics may relate to structural forms, architectural styles, building materials, or site type. Associative characteristics may relate to the nature of associated events or activities, to associations with a specific individual or group of individuals.”<sup>13</sup> Historic contexts, therefore, become a useful tool for gauging the relative importance and integrity of properties.

The following context draws on available sources and archival research to offer an overview of the regional and site-specific historic context. Material specific to the project site and surrounding areas, including the Wilshire Boulevard “Miracle Mile,” Hancock Park, and the larger Wilshire Community Plan Area is drawn from the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning study, *Historic Resources Survey Report: Wilshire Community Plan Area*, prepared in 2015 by Architectural Resources Group, Inc., for the Office of Historic Resources.

### City of Los Angeles: From Pueblo to City

On September 4, 1781, 44 settlers from Sonora, Mexico, accompanied by the governor, soldiers, mission priests, and several Native Americans, arrived at a site alongside the *Rio de Porciúncula* (later renamed the LA River).<sup>14</sup> They founded a pueblo called *La Reyna de los Angeles*, or the town of the Queen of the Angels.<sup>15</sup> By 1786, the area’s abundant resources and the availability of little-compensated Native American labor allowed the pueblo to attain self-sufficiency, and funding by the Spanish government ceased.

Less than 1 month after the pueblo’s founding, Los Angeles residents began constructing an extensive water management system. They diverted water from the river (near the present North Broadway bridge) into a ditch named the *Zanja Madre* (mother ditch), which in turn fed numerous smaller *zanjas*. The city’s

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<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. 1985 [1977]. *National Register Bulletin 24, Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning*. Washington, D.C. Available at: <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb24/chapter1.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> NPS, 1990, p. 7.

<sup>13</sup> National Park Service (NPS). 1997. *National Register Bulletin 16B: How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form*, p. 14. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service.

<sup>14</sup> Ríos-Bustamante, A. 1992. *Mexican Los Angeles: A Narrative and Pictorial History*. Mountain View, California: Floricanto Press.

<sup>15</sup> Treutlein, T.E. 2004. Los Angeles, California: The Question of the City’s Original Spanish Name. In *The Founding Documents of Los Angeles: A Bilingual Edition*, edited by Doyce B. Nunis Jr. Los Angeles, California: Historical Society of Southern California.

residents used this water for ranching and agriculture, as well as domestic purposes such as drinking, bathing, and clothes washing.<sup>16</sup> The Los Angeles zanja system was expanded and improved in subsequent decades and remained in use until the early 1900s, as many zanja segments were converted into masonry-lined canals, iron or cement pipes, or brick-lined, subsurface conduits.<sup>17</sup>

Following Mexican independence from Spain, the pueblo slowly grew in size, as the removal of economic restrictions attracted settlers to Los Angeles. The population continued to expand throughout the Mexican period, and, on April 4, 1850, only 2 years after the Mexican–American War and 5 months prior to California’s earning statehood, the City of Los Angeles was formally incorporated. Los Angeles maintained its role as a regional business center in the early American period and the transition of many former rancho lands to agriculture, as well as the development of citriculture in the late 1800s, further strengthened this status.<sup>18</sup> These factors, combined with the expansion of port facilities and railroads throughout the region, contributed to the real estate boom of the 1880s in Los Angeles.<sup>19, 20</sup>

Part of this rapid expansion of Los Angeles was achieved through the marketing of Southern California and its Mediterranean climate, which enticed people of all economic means to relocate to the region. This included some of America’s wealthiest individuals, who constructed residences as winter homes allowing them to escape the colder climates of the financial and industrial centers of the East Coast and Midwest. The development of new industries was also paramount to this growth during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, specifically the production of oil, real estate development, citriculture, and the entertainment and film industry.

Los Angeles continued to grow outward from the city core in the twentieth century, in part due to oil production and to its strategic location as a wartime port. The military presence led to the aviation and eventually aerospace industries having a large presence in the city and region. Hollywood became the entertainment capital of the world through the presence of the film and television industries, and continues to maintain that position. These industries established a Los Angeles-centered elite that would be formative in the development of the region’s first cultural institutions during the twentieth century, raising its prominence on the world stage. Through the continued promotion of the region through the motion picture and entertainment industry, growing tourism, and from hosting large-scale events, such as the Summer Olympic Games in 1932, Los Angeles had quickly become one of the world’s great cities.

Today, with nearly 4 million residents, Los Angeles is the second largest city in the United States (by population), and it remains a city with worldwide influence, while continuing to struggle with its population’s growth and needs. The early development of cultural and civic institutions in the city laid the groundwork for Los Angeles’ current status as one of the leading cities for museums.

## ***Development of Cultural Institutions in Los Angeles***

Through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Los Angeles continued to expand both in terms of population growth and new construction; the development of cultural institutions to serve the growing population took root gradually. An early catalyst was the influx of new wealth, which spurred a variety of new museums, botanical gardens, and other cultural institutions. The trend of wealthy individuals as collectors, benefactors, and patrons would continue to be the predominant catalyst for the development of

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<sup>16</sup> Newmark, H. 1977 [1915]. *Reminiscences of the Fifties. Los Angeles: Biography of a City*, edited by J. Caughey and L. Caughey, pp. 132–140. Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>17</sup> Costello, J.G., and L. Wilcoxon. 1978. *An Archaeological Assessment of Cultural Resources in Urban Los Angeles*. Prepared for the City of Los Angeles in connection with construction project La Placita de Dolores, LAN-887. On file at the South Central Coastal Information Center, California State University, Fullerton.

<sup>18</sup> Caughey, J., and L. Caughey (eds.) 1977. *Reminiscences of the Fifties. Los Angeles: Biography of a City*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>19</sup> Caughey and Caughey, 1977.

<sup>20</sup> Dumke, G.S. 1944. *The Boom of the Eighties in Southern California*. San Marino, California: Huntington Library Publications.

cultural institutions and museums throughout the history of Los Angeles, although some public partnerships would also contribute to this expansion.<sup>21</sup>

## EARLY MUSEUMS AND INSTITUTIONS (1885–1941)

The first museum founded in Los Angeles was the Southwest Museum of the American Indian, which was established in 1907 by Charles F. Lummis. Lummis had famously trekked overland from Cincinnati to Los Angeles in 1884, where he became a reporter and eventual editor for the *Los Angeles Times*. A polymathic and somewhat larger-than-life character, Loomis was a self-described journalist, writer, artist, architect, photographer, and aspiring social scientist who was heavily influenced by his experiences in the Southwest and Southern California.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to being an early advocate for the preservation of the Spanish Missions, Lummis was outspoken about the treatment of the Native Americans and the eradication and erosion of indigenous cultures. Although not particularly wealthy, Lummis started to collect a variety of artifacts through his travels in the southwest, which included intricate woven baskets and other items to be displayed as part of the museum's collection. What he lacked in finances, Lummis made up for in his connections by networking with a variety of museums, organizations, and institutions throughout the United States with the aim of bolstering Los Angeles as a cultural center.

The fruit of these early efforts by Lummis was the Southwest Museum of the American Indian, constructed in 1912. The museum opened to the public in 1913 (Figure 16).<sup>23</sup>

**Figure 16. Southwest Museum of the American Indian, ca. 1914**



Source: Los Angeles Public Library

During this same period, the Los Angeles County Museum of History, Science, and Art was established. Constructed in Exposition Park and officially opened in 1913, the county museum was set within a grand Beaux Arts inspired building that housed a variety of collections, each within wings dedicated to history, science, and the fine arts. While some collections were slow to be amassed, namely the fine arts, others were quick to expand and outgrow the facilities (Figure 17).<sup>24</sup> This is particularly true of the science

<sup>21</sup> GPA Consulting. 2017. *Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California – Historical Resources Technical Report*, p. 45.

<sup>22</sup> Burton, D. 2017. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form – Southwest Museum (Amendment), pp. 8.5–8.7. National Park Service.

<sup>23</sup> Burton, 2017.

<sup>24</sup> GPA Consulting, 2017, p. 46.

wing, which would largely house the wealth of prehistoric fossils removed from the tar pits at Rancho La Brea.

Over the following decades, the County Museum constructed new wings to house the expanded collections. Owned by the County of Los Angeles and operated by a separate board, the Los Angeles County Museum of History, Science, and Art was unique compared to other museums of the day in that it was a fundamentally a public institution, as opposed to other museums that would be reliant on private collections and endowments. Still, the county museum was sponsored by a network of organizations and donors who built the collection and supplemented the support provided by the County.<sup>25</sup>

**Figure 17. Original 1913 building of the Los Angeles County Museum of History, Science, and Art in Exposition Park, ca. 1930 (left); Los Angeles County Museum of History, Science, and Art, with expansion under construction, ca. 1925 (right)**



Source: Los Angeles Public Library

As Los Angeles continued to grow, wealth, and cultural prominence during the 1910s and 1920s, new museums were established. One of the premier institutes established during this period included the Huntington Library, Museum, and Gardens (the Huntington). Founded in 1919, the Huntington was located in San Marino on the grand estate of Henry E. Huntington, one of Los Angeles' most wealthy entrepreneurs. Huntington had amassed an impressive collection of art, decorative arts, books, and manuscripts, in addition to developing an elaborate series of gardens with an impressive horticultural collection.<sup>26</sup> In 1920, the Huntington opened the library component on the estate after completing a new building known as the Main Exhibit Hall. In 1928, a year after Huntington's death, the residence at the estate was converted into the Huntington Art Gallery. This coincided with opening the gardens to visitors, who could wander the grounds and thematic enclaves representing different gardening traditions and the collection of rare and exotic plants. Since its founding, the Huntington has continued to develop its collections and serve as one of the primary cultural institutions in the Los Angeles area.<sup>27</sup>

The Pasadena Institute of Art, now known as the Norton Simon Museum, was founded in 1924 as a wealthy social club that promoted nineteenth century European and American art. Originally located in the grand Reed Mansion in a wealthy enclave of Pasadena, the Pasadena Institute of Art would sporadically grow its collection as various wealthy benefactors bequeathed their collections to the

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<sup>25</sup> Reiner, B. 1974. *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form – Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County*, p. 5. National Park Service. April.

<sup>26</sup> GPA Consulting, 2017, p. 52.

<sup>27</sup> GPA Consulting, 2017, pp. 52–53.

museum. It relocated in 1940 to a new space and was eventually rebranded as the Pasadena Art Museum.<sup>28</sup>

A departure from the promotion of fine arts during the first half of the twentieth century in Los Angeles was the creation of the Griffith Observatory. Fascinated with astronomy, Griffith J. Griffith created a fund to establish an observatory, planetarium, and museum as a public institution within the donated lands of Griffith Park. The fund was granted to the City of Los Angeles in 1919 after his death. While construction would take over a decade to occur, the City of Los Angeles partnered with the Works Progress Administration (WPA) to construct the iconic Art Deco style building set prominently on Mount Hollywood in Griffith Park. The facility was completed in 1935 and has continued to promote the study of astronomy ever since.<sup>29</sup>

## **POSTWAR EXPANSION OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS AND MUSEUMS (1945- PRESENT)**

The post-World War II period in Los Angeles was defined by monumental growth in terms of population and wealth. The expansion of the aerospace, entertainment, real estate development, tourism, and a variety of other industries led to a vast expansion of cultural institutions throughout the region. One of the first was the California Museum of Science and Industry, which was founded in 1951 in the former State Exhibition Building in Exposition Park. Through extensive donations by Howard F. Ahmanson, a wealthy philanthropist involved multiple museums, the California Museum of Science and Industry would serve as the primary science center for Los Angeles, ultimately evolving into the California Aerospace Museum in 1984 and the California Science Center starting in 1996.<sup>30</sup>

One of the largest museum expansions of the postwar period was the construction of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). By the 1950s, the Los Angeles County Museum of History, Science, and Art was actively pursuing expanded art gallery facilities for its growing collection. The county museum initially hoped to expand its existing presence in Exposition Park, but shifted its focus to the County-owned Hancock Park, directly west adjacent to the La Brea Tar Pits. While the proposal was controversial, the plans moved forward with the support of extensive donations made by wealthy patrons.

Instantly one of the premier institutions in Los Angeles and the western United States, LACMA has continued to grow and expand with the support of an extensive network of donors and benefactors, in addition to continued support from the County of Los Angeles.<sup>31</sup> This coincided with the expansion of other cultural institutions, most notably the Los Angeles Music Center in downtown Los Angeles, which includes the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Ahmanson Theater, and Mark Taper Forum, all of which were completed between 1964 and 1967.<sup>32</sup> Similar to LACMA, these civic institutions came to fruition through the support of a network of wealthy donors interested in establishing a premier performing arts center for the City. Indeed, the development of LACMA and the Los Angeles Music Center would solidify Los Angeles' reputation as a cultural center of national significance.<sup>33</sup>

Other institutions expanded and founded in the postwar period include the Pasadena Museum of Art, which was greatly expanded between 1974 to 1975 with a new facility to accommodate the fine art

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<sup>28</sup> GPA Consulting, 2017, p. 51.

<sup>29</sup> Harnisch, 2013.

<sup>30</sup> Allgov.com. n.d.. California Science Center. Available at: [http://www.allgov.com/usa/ca/departments/business-consumer-services-and-housing-agency/california\\_science\\_center?agencyid=175#historycont](http://www.allgov.com/usa/ca/departments/business-consumer-services-and-housing-agency/california_science_center?agencyid=175#historycont). Accessed July 28, 2022.

<sup>31</sup> GPA Consulting, 2017, pp. 46–47.

<sup>32</sup> GPA Consulting, 2017, p. 49.

<sup>33</sup> GPA Consulting, 2017.

collection of benefactor Norton Simon; the museum was renamed in his honor and continues to operate as the Norton Simon Museum.<sup>34</sup>

One highly influential art collector and patron of the arts in Los Angeles was J. Paul Getty, a businessman who made his fortune in the oil industry. Beginning in 1948, Getty gifted a number of pieces from his collection to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. In the 1950s, Getty took “greater and greater steps to make art available for the public’s education and enjoyment,” first by establishing the J. Paul Getty Museum Trust in 1953, then by opening the J. Paul Getty Museum in 1954, in his ranch house in present-day Pacific Palisades.<sup>35</sup> Expanding on this foundation, in 1974 Getty’s established the Getty Villa, a reconstruction of a Roman villa that showcased Getty’s collection of antiquities and fine arts. The Getty Foundation would eventually outgrow this facility, constructing the now-iconic Getty Center complex overlooking Sepulveda Pass between 1984 and 1997.<sup>36</sup>

In 1975, Los Angeles-based businessman and philanthropist George C. Page donated millions to the County of Los Angeles for the construction of a museum at the La Brea Tar Pits. While plans for a museum at the property had been in various stages of planning since the 1920s, plans failed to materialize until Page became involved in the process. Although administered by the Museum of Natural History of Los Angeles, Page secured an influential role in the project through his donation, selecting the design team and working throughout the entirety of the planning and construction process. The resulting George C. Page Museum, sited east of the tar pits in Hancock Park, opened in 1977 with the focus on the prehistoric finds of the La Brea Tar Pits.<sup>37</sup>

Other museums founded during the second-half of the twentieth century covered a wide range of subject matter and collections, although almost all were developed through the donations of wealthy patrons. The museums of Los Angeles were located throughout the expanse of the city and surrounding region, but were typically clustered in particular areas, such as downtown, the Miracle Mile neighborhood along Wilshire Boulevard (referred to as “Museum Row” for its growing collection of museums), and the Westside and Sepulveda area. Through the second half of the twentieth century, prominent additions to Museum Row on Wilshire Boulevard have included the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures, in the former May Company building at 6065 Wilshire Boulevard, and the Peterson Automotive Museum, at 6060 Wilshire Boulevard.

Opened in 2021, the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures was originally designed by A.C. Martin and Associates as a department store for the May Company; the distinctive Streamline Moderne-style building was constructed in 1939. In the early 1990s, the department store closed, and the building was sold to LACMA in 1994, reopening as LACMA West in 1999. In 2014, the building was leased to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for use as the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures. The former May Company building was rehabilitated and expanded, with a distinctive, spherical addition and connector designed by Renzo Piano.

The Peterson Automotive Museum was originally designed by Welton Becket and Associates as Seibu of Los Angeles, “the U.S.’s first big Japanese-owned department store,” which operated at the location from 1962 through 1965 when the store closed.<sup>38</sup> After a stint as the site of Orbachs department store until 1986, the building was remodeled in 1994 by the Russell Group (Marc Whipple, AIA) for use as the Petersen Automotive Museum. In 2014, Kohn, Pedersen and Fox (KPF Architects) remodeled the

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<sup>34</sup> GPA Consulting, 2017, pp. 51–52.

<sup>35</sup> The Getty. n.d. Getty History, About the Getty. Available at: <https://www.getty.edu/about/whoweare/history.html>. Accessed August 5, 2022.

<sup>36</sup> The Getty, n.d., p. 53.

<sup>37</sup> Biederman, P.W. 1990. “Founder Used Marketing Skill to Package Tar, Bones, Ancient History”. *Los Angeles Times*, 29 July 1990. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>38</sup> “Retailing: A Touch of Tokyo.” March 23, 1962. *Time Magazine*. Available at: <https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,829151,00.html>. Accessed December 21, 2022.

museum building to its current appearance. Along with LACMA and the La Brea Tar Pits, these institutions form the core of present-day Museum Row.

Los Angeles also features a wide variety of smaller museums, institutions, cultural centers, and historic sites that cover a wide range of historic, artistic, and socio-cultural themes, ranging from specific community and ethnic histories to more popular culture, ephemera, and avant-garde collections. A majority of these smaller institutions, of which there are dozens throughout the region, are predominantly operated by non-profit organizations, but can include a variety of public and private partnerships as part of their operations.

## **Development of Public Parks in Los Angeles**

### **EARLY PLAZAS, PARKS, AND PLEASURE GROUNDS (1781-1903)**

Public park spaces have been an integral component of Los Angeles since its initial founding as a Spanish settlement. In accordance with Spanish Colonial town planning traditions and guidelines – outlined in *Ordenanzas de Descubrimiento, Nueva Población y Pacificación de las Indias*, commonly referred to as the “Law of the Indies” – newly established townsites were to be organized around central plazas. While the Los Angeles Plaza changed location, size, and configuration in response to flooding events, the concept of a central plaza was consistent throughout the City’s Spanish and Mexican eras.

By 1815, the Los Angeles Plaza was established in its current location and was primarily defined by an expanse of open space with a square configuration formed by the adjacent gridded street network, Plaza Church, and a series of low-profile adobe buildings. It remained in this condition following the 1840s annexation of California by the United States until 1859, when the plaza was redeveloped as a semi-public park space with a central water storage building (Figure 18). The plaza was made fully public again in 1870 and re-landscaped in the simple iteration of the nineteenth century Anglo-American tradition with a central fountain, circular walking paths, and decorative wrought-iron fence.<sup>39</sup> A similar early park was the Lower Plaza, now known as Pershing Square. Founded on undeveloped lands from the original Pueblo settlement, the Los Angeles Plaza was declared a municipal park in 1866. It remained largely undeveloped for several years, but a series of plantings and other improvements happened organically until an official landscape plan was developed in the 1880s.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Prosser, D. 2017. *SurveyLA: Los Angeles Historic Resource Survey – Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, Public and Private Institutional Development/ Government Infrastructure and Services/ Municipal Parks, Recreation, and Leisure, 1886-1978*, p. 5-7. Prepared for the City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources.

<sup>40</sup> Los Angeles Conservancy. 2020. Pershing Square. Available at <https://www.laconservancy.org/locations/pershing-square>. Accessed August 16, 2022.

Figure 18. Los Angeles La Plaza, ca.1857



Source: Los Angeles Public Library

By the late nineteenth century, the concepts of the “pleasure ground” and “wilderness parks” became the model for the development of public parks in Los Angeles. Characterized by their romantic and idyllic picturesque qualities, the pleasure ground and wilderness parks were born out of the American Transcendentalist movement of the late nineteenth century, which promoted natural and open spaces as a regenerative experience in contrast to the conditions within industrialized urban centers of the period.<sup>41</sup> Although intended to be natural settings, pleasure-ground parks were carefully designed and maintained to create the illusion of a natural, organic setting, whereas the wilderness park model would retain large areas of land as is, with some landscaped elements along the periphery and at select locations.

In Los Angeles, these park types also had a practical role in redeveloping land that had no profitable use or was perceived as undevelopable, either through uneven terrain, poor drainage, or other site conditions that impeded construction. The land for these early pleasure grounds and wilderness parks was often either donated to Los Angeles for development and public use, or was developed as a promotional tool for selling adjacent real estate and eventually transferred to the City.<sup>42</sup>

The first park developed during the late nineteenth century in Los Angeles, beyond the two plaza parks, was Elysian Park. Included within the original pueblo lands and located northwest of the city’s core, Elysian Park was founded in the wilderness park model with over 500 hundred acres of land with steep hills forming the parklands. Elysian Park was officially established in 1886.<sup>43</sup> The second park was Westlake Park, now known as MacArthur Park. Centered within the residential neighborhood and early streetcar suburb of Westlake, located west of the central business core, the land of Westlake Park was characterized by swamp-like conditions. Seen as a detriment to both residents and real-estate interests, the land of Westlake Park was redeveloped as a pleasure-ground park through a public-private partnership between the City and a group of citizens. As with many pleasure grounds, Westlake Park’s wetlands were redeveloped into a lake as a central water feature, whereas the surrounding spaces were redeveloped with rolling hills and various plantings for garden strolls and picnicking. A boat house, consistent with the Victorian tradition, was also constructed along the lake.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Prosser, 2017, pp. 7-8.

<sup>42</sup> Prosser, 2017, pp. 7-8.

<sup>43</sup> Prosser, 2017, p. 8.

<sup>44</sup> Prosser, 2017, pp. 7-9.



In 1889, Eastlake Park was created in the now-known neighborhood of Lincoln Heights on land donated to the City by the Southern Pacific Railroad. Similar to Westlake Park, Eastlake Park was centered around a water feature of two lakes. Associated in part with the original zanjas water conveyance system of Spanish and Mexican-era Los Angeles, the two lakes served as storage reservoirs in addition to providing scenic and recreational value within the park. The park became one of the most popular destinations in Los Angeles, known for its idyllic scenery and notable attractions, which would eventually include rides and other carnival like amenities.<sup>45</sup>

In 1889, the City of Los Angeles created the Department of Parks to design and manage the growing numbers of parks. Administered by the Parks Commission, the Department of Parks would come to internally design, relandscape, and manage twelve parks by 1903. In addition to the original plazas and the two pleasure ground parks of Westlake and Eastlake, the Department of Parks acquired, designed, and developed Echo Park (established 1891), Hollenbeck Park (established 1892), and Sunset Park (established 1895, now known as Lafayette Park), as well as smaller park spaces such as Prospect Park, St. James Place, South Park.<sup>46</sup> By far the largest park in Los Angeles was that of Griffith Park. Named after Griffith J. Griffith – a wealthy mining magnate, industrialist, and an infamous character in Los Angeles during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century – the park was founded on several thousand acres of the former Rancho Los Feliz that Griffith ultimately donated to the City of Los Angeles for use as a public park in 1896.<sup>47</sup> Due to its vast size and mountainous topography, Griffith Park was retained in the wilderness park tradition by retaining much of the existing landscape with limited improvements through new circulation patterns and development along the more accessible peripheries.<sup>48</sup>

The most notable outlier from City of Los Angeles-owned parks during this period was Exposition Park. Located south of the central core of Los Angeles and established in 1872, Exposition Park, known at the time as Agricultural Park, was used as an agricultural fairground, complete with a horse racing track. Having earned a reputation for vice and being seen as a nuisance, the 160-acre parcel containing Agricultural Park was purchased by the State of California in 1880 to reuse the land as an agricultural exhibition space and use as a pleasure ground.<sup>49</sup>

## **DEVELOPMENT OF MUNICIPAL PARKS (1904-1941)**

During the early twentieth century, the public park evolved from the pleasure ground and wilderness park models to a more modern iteration of the municipal park. In addition to planned and manicured open spaces – expressed in a mixture of picturesque and formal compositions – municipal parks began featuring a series of amenities and facilities that catered to a variety of recreational uses, marking a shift from a “passive enjoyment of the landscape,” to more developed activities and amenities.<sup>50</sup> Consistent with the Progressive-era reforms of the early twentieth century, the municipal park model would often feature various educational and cultural programs, as well as the promotion of the outdoors and sport, all through purpose-built buildings, structures, playing fields, and other facilities.<sup>51</sup>

Early examples of the municipal park model came through the re-imagining and partial redevelopment of the existing pleasure ground parks through the introduction of new amenities and facilities. This was evident with the creation of the Griffith Park Zoo and the greenhouses of the Eastlake Park Conservatory,

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<sup>45</sup> Prosser, 2017, p. 9.

<sup>46</sup> Prosser, 2017, pp. 9-11.

<sup>47</sup> Harnisch, L. 2013. “A Cosmic Gift to L.A.” *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 2013. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>48</sup> Prosser, 2017, p. 10.

<sup>49</sup> Prosser, 2017, p. 11.

<sup>50</sup> Prosser, 2017, p. 11.

<sup>51</sup> Prosser, 2017, p. 11.

both in their namesake parks as well as a series of golf courses, horseshoe pits, and similar recreational elements.<sup>52</sup>

The first of the pleasure ground parks to be remodeled in the municipal park tradition was Eastlake Park. During the early twentieth century, Eastlake Park evolved from its original picturesque composition with the removal of insular roads for pleasure drives, ornamental bridges, and the expansion of picnic grounds and other open spaces for activities. While Eastlake Park did have a small zoo for a period of time, this too was removed and the area was redeveloped for park activities, transitioning the animals to a new zoo space at Griffith Park, which was designed and constructed in the Rustic tradition.<sup>53</sup>

Elysian Park was also transitioned from pure wilderness park to include more municipal park elements. Although the park was still in part celebrated for its wild and outwardly appearing natural qualities, new hiking trails, roadways, picnic areas, and camping facilities were developed to promote outdoor recreation in proximity to the growing communities in the Los Angeles area.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, Griffith Park saw the slow introduction of new elements and amenities, particularly along the more gentle slopes on the eastern side of the parklands. In addition to the Griffith Park Zoo that was constructed between 1912 to 1913, Griffith Park saw the construction of a municipal golf courses in 1914, 1923, and the 1930s; development of tennis courts, hiking trails, new picnic grounds, children's camps, and playgrounds; and construction of the Greek Theatre performing arts venue and the Griffith Observatory, both of which opened to the public in the 1930s.<sup>55</sup> While Griffith Park would come to boast many of the early recreational amenities and publicly facing cultural institutions, it retained much of its mountainous and undeveloped lands, which promoted outdoor recreation.

The state-owned Exposition Park was also redeveloped during this period to include cultural institutions, such as the Los Angeles County Museum of History, Science, and Art. The park was also re-landscaped in the City Beautiful tradition, which included more formal garden spaces with axial pathways throughout a series of sunken gardens, rose gardens, and prominent water fountains and other features. Many other smaller parks were also re-landscaped in accordance with the City Beautiful tradition, including the original plaza space of 6<sup>th</sup> Street Park, which was renamed Central Park following its remodel in 1910.<sup>56</sup>

As other communities throughout Los Angeles County grew alongside the namesake city, they too established a series of municipal parks. In 1902, the City of Pasadena constructed two new parks, the Central and Memorial parks, both of which were developed in the City Beautiful tradition. While Pasadena had garden spaces open to the public, such as the Busch Gardens, these were primarily private estates. The momentum for public parks increased during the early twentieth century and quickly expanded to include several parks during the 1910s and 1920s, including Brookside Park, which utilized extensive acreage in the Arroyo Seco for a variety of recreational purposes with a community center, golf course, swimming pool, walking trails, the Rose Bowl stadium, and other facilities that marked the shift towards increased recreation as a primary function of public parks.<sup>57</sup>

In addition to the re-imagining of the existing park spaces, there was an increased emphasis on the creation of smaller neighborhood parks and recreation centers during this period. The City of Los Angeles' Department of Playgrounds and Recreation was created in the 1920s, which reflected the increased mission of expanding both adult and children's recreational opportunities throughout Los Angeles. This resulted in a variety of new playgrounds; recreational club houses, bath houses, and public

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<sup>52</sup> Prosser, 2017, p. 11.

<sup>53</sup> Prosser, 2017, pp. 12-13.

<sup>54</sup> Prosser, 2017, pp. 13-14.

<sup>55</sup> Prosser, 2017, pp. 15-17.

<sup>56</sup> Prosser, 2017, p. 6.

<sup>57</sup> Sapphos Environmental, Inc. 2012. *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form – Historic Designed Gardens in Pasadena, 1873-1975*, pp. E.39–E41. National Park Service.

swimming pools; and the promotion of public beaches throughout the region.<sup>58</sup> While some of these elements were introduced into existing parks, such as the recreational clubhouse at Echo Park, many were developed in new park spaces throughout the city. The collection of these recreational amenities within small municipal parks gave rise to the recreation center model, which included facilities that catered to variety of recreational pursuits.<sup>59</sup>

The development of these recreational facilities and other park improvements continued during the 1930s, despite the challenging economic conditions of the Great Depression. This was due largely to the Roosevelt Administration's New Deal policies and the creation of the WPA and similar programs that were tasked with employing citizens to construct new public amenities, including park landscapes and facilities. While the WPA was involved with countless park improvement projects throughout the Los Angeles region, one of the most notable developments was the construction of the Rancho Cienega Playground, now the Rancho Cienega Sports Park, as one of the largest municipal recreational facilities. Amenities included a running track, athletic fields and courts, public sports stadium, and a variety of other buildings, structures, and site improvements that catered to the emphasis on recreation and sport as essential public services.<sup>60</sup> The WPA was involved in other Los Angeles County communities as well, resulting in numerous recreational facilities, such as the Santa Anita Regional Recreational Center in Arcadia, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park in Florence, Charles Farnsworth Park in Altadena, Belvedere Community Regional Park in East Los Angeles, and extensive upgrades to Brookside Park in Pasadena, among others.<sup>61</sup> The emphasis on sport was reflected in other parks as well, both on a smaller and significantly larger scale. This is particularly evident at the state-owned Exposition Park, where the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum and Olympic Swim Stadium were constructed for the 1934 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.<sup>62</sup>

## **POSTWAR PARKS IN LOS ANGELES (1945–PRESENT)**

The postwar period in Los Angeles saw exponential population growth and the proliferation of suburban residential neighborhoods. With the decentralization of sprawling new neighborhoods that extended throughout the region, new community parks and recreational centers were seen as fundamental components of these developments. In just the City of Los Angeles, plans for thirty new neighborhood recreation centers and thirteen regional sports centers were developed by the late 1940s. The neighborhood recreation centers were typically three to seven acres, would feature a recreation center or clubhouse, and would be surrounded by park land with picnic spaces, playgrounds, open space, and occasionally a playing field. The larger regional recreation centers would cover 10 to 20 acres and feature expanded recreational facilities, including public swimming pools, athletic fields, gymnasiums, and other recreation buildings that could serve multiple purposes.<sup>63</sup> All facilities would also include parking lots, consistent with the suburban environment and the inherent dependence on cars as the primary mode of transportation. The recreation center would be the standard model for park development during the 1950s and 1960s in communities throughout Los Angeles County, California, and the broader United States.

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<sup>58</sup> Prosser, 2017, p. 22.

<sup>59</sup> Prosser, 2017, pp. 22-25.

<sup>60</sup> Prosser, 2017, pp. 28-29.

<sup>61</sup> Architectural Resources Group, Inc. 2016. *City of Arcadia Citywide Historic Context Statement*, p. 4. Prepared for the City of Arcadia Development Services, Planning Division; The Living New Deal, 2014. "Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park." Available at: <https://livingnewdeal.org/projects/franklin-delano-roosevelt-park-los-angeles-ca/>, accessed August 17, 2022; The Living New Deal, 2014. "Charles S. Farnsworth Park." Available at <https://livingnewdeal.org/projects/charles-s-farnsworth-park-altadena-ca/>. Accessed August 17, 2022; The Living New Deal, 2014. "Belvedere Community Regional Park." Available at: <https://livingnewdeal.org/projects/belvedere-community-regional-park-los-angeles-ca/>. Accessed August 17, 2022; The Living New Deal, 2016. "Brookside Park Improvements." Available at: <https://livingnewdeal.org/projects/brookside-park-improvements-pasadena-ca/>. Accessed August 17, 2022.

<sup>62</sup> State of California, Exposition Park. n.d. Park History. Available at: <http://expositionpark.ca.gov/about-us/park-history/>. Accessed August 18, 2022.

<sup>63</sup> Prosser, 2017, pp. 29-30.

While postwar parks utilized the modernist architectural vocabulary and focused on a variety of recreational amenities and sports facilities, later postwar parks in Los Angeles would revert to a more picturesque and natural aesthetic. This was reflected in new regional parks, which retained a combination of recreational facilities and amenities, as well as more naturally apparent landscapes as part of the promotion of outdoor education and a more tranquil experience, marking a return to a more wilderness park and pleasure ground-based ethos within the context of the emerging environmental conservation concerns.<sup>64</sup> This was evident at larger park developments in communities within the San Fernando Valley and other suburban areas where more rugged land was still accessible, such as Chatsworth Park and a series of interconnected parks set within the canyons of the Porter Ranch development.<sup>65</sup> The County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation was also instrumental in promoting the new emphasis on natural landscapes and conservation by overseeing a variety of regional natural areas, wildlife sanctuaries, historical and cultural sites, in addition to the various arboreta, botanical gardens, lakes, and other parks under their purview.<sup>66</sup>

During the 1970s and 1980s, some parks in Los Angeles, particularly those in core urban areas, entered into a state of perceived decline. Driven in part by increased suburbanization and the middle-class's focus on the private residential backyard, many public parks became underutilized and associated with increased vandalism, violence, and criminal activity. Increased maintenance and security costs coupled with budget cuts perpetuated this decline of parks in Los Angeles during this period. However, despite these challenges, as well as new challenges such as increased homelessness, various parks and recreation agencies throughout Los Angeles County have continued to develop, rehabilitate, and market park properties for the public's use and accommodate shifting trends in recreation.<sup>67</sup>

## History and Context of the Project Site

### ***Rancho La Brea, Early Settlement***

The project site and the surrounding area was initially inhabited by Native Americans who the Spanish called Gabrielino, and who today call themselves Gabrieleño, Tongva, and Kizh. They maintained a network of villages throughout the Los Angeles River basin, including a village near the tar pits. The tar pits were an uncommon and valuable resource, providing the bituminous coating that could be used for creating impermeable barriers for canoes and water carrying vessels.<sup>68</sup> The first Europeans to document the La Brea tar pits were part of the Spanish expedition under Gaspar de Portolà, who came across them in 1769 while enroute from San Diego to San Francisco. With the founding of Spanish settlements in the region, particularly the Pueblo de Los Angeles, the tar pits continued to be an important resource for the growing community as a construction material, particularly as a roof sealant. Roadways were established along the former Native American trails, connecting the tar pits with the pueblo. The most prominent of these was El Camino Viejo, which was frequented by ox-driven wagons carrying the bituminous material, referred to as *brea*, from the tar pits to the pueblo for building applications.<sup>69</sup>

Following Mexican Independence, the area around the tar pits was provisionally granted in 1828 as Rancho La Brea to Antonio Jose Rocha, a Portuguese immigrant who was a blacksmith and prominent settler in Pueblo de Los Angeles. The land grant, which covered portions of present-day Mid-Wilshire,

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<sup>64</sup> Prosser, 2017, p. 38.

<sup>65</sup> Prosser, 2017, pp. 38-39.

<sup>66</sup> County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation. 2022. Park History. Available at: <https://parks.lacounty.gov/about-us/>. Accessed August 17, 2022.

<sup>67</sup> Prosser, 2017, pp. 43-44.

<sup>68</sup> Architectural Resources Group, Inc. 2015. *SurveyLA: Historic Resources Survey Report, Wilshire Community Plan Area*, p. 10. Prepared for City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources.

<sup>69</sup> McCawley, William, 1996. *The First Angelinos: The Gabrielino Indians of Los Angeles*. Mali-Ballena Press, Banning, California.

Hollywood, and West Hollywood, was specifically given with the condition that the public could continue to travel to the tar pits to extract the brea material as needed. While Rocha and his family established an adobe ranch house on the rancho, portions of the 4,400-acre property were sold off over the following years.<sup>70</sup>

In 1849, Major Henry Hancock came to California as part of the California Gold Rush, initially settling in San Francisco before relocating south to Los Angeles. Through his work as a surveyor, Major Hancock was responsible for surveying the former land grants, often on the behalf of the original grantees as part of the lengthy legal battles regarding ownership following the annexation of California by the United States. Hancock worked on behalf of the Rocha family in their claim to the Rancho La Brea lands, and ultimately purchased the property when the Rochas were unable to pay the extensive legal expenses incurred during the drawn-out process.<sup>71</sup> Major Hancock and his wife Ida primarily used the ranch for raising livestock, but also excavated asphaltum and shipped the materials from the tar pits throughout California. The excavations on the property ultimately filled with water to create the large asphaltum lakes that famously characterized the property over the following decades.

Rancho La Brea was one of several properties owned by Major and Ida Hancock throughout California (Figure 19). With multiple political and commercial pursuits throughout the state, the Hancocks were prominent in San Francisco, Sacramento, as well as Los Angeles.

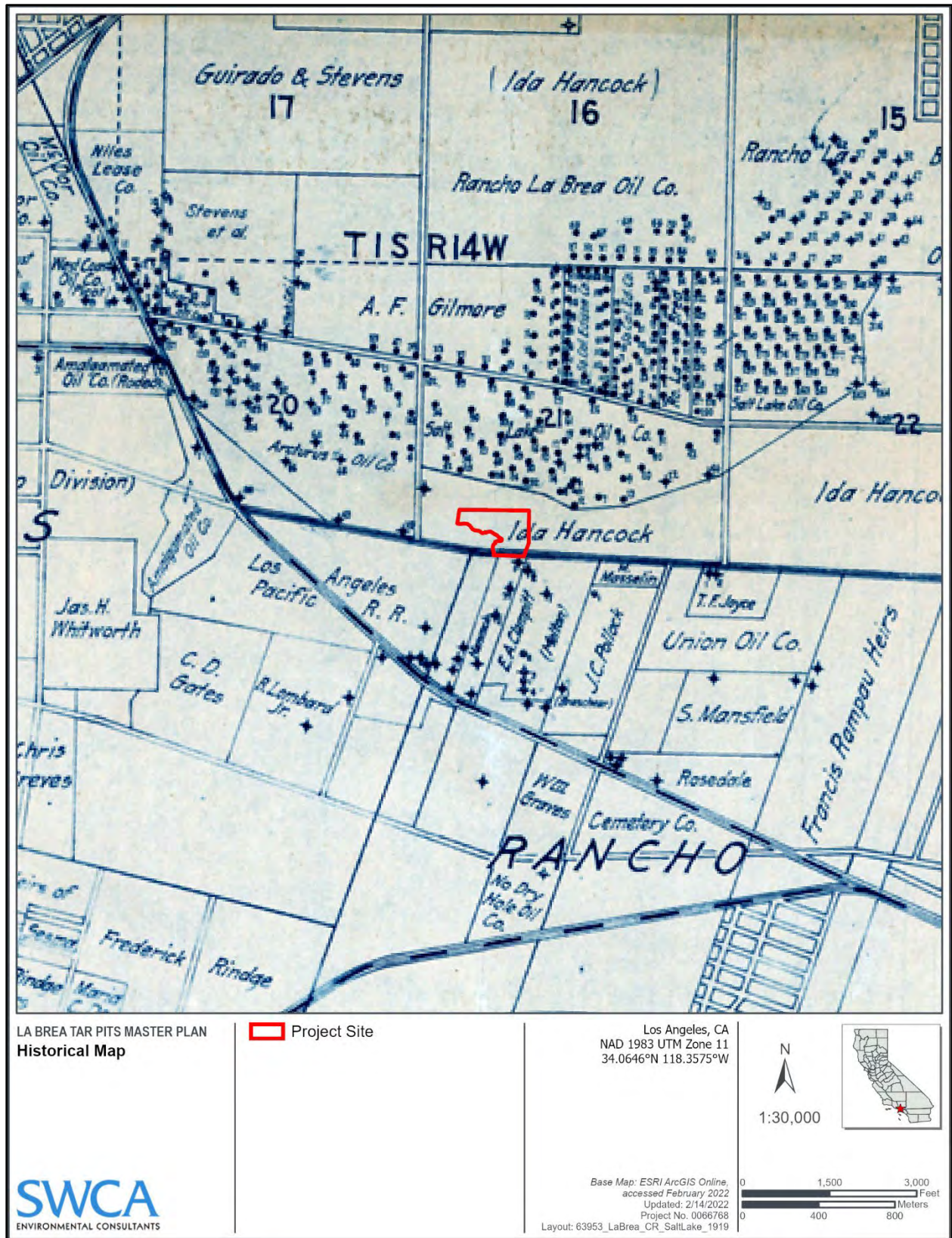
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<sup>70</sup> Seaman, F.J. 1914. A brief history of Rancho La Brea. In *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California* 9(3):253–254.

<sup>71</sup> Architectural Resources Group, 2015, p. 10.



Figure 19. The large-scale holdings of Ida Hancock in the vicinity of the project site, 1919, with dots indicating location of oil wells





Following Major Hancock's death in 1883, his wife, Ida Hancock relocated with their three children to the rancho, where they continued with livestock ranching.<sup>72</sup> From their ranch home on the banks of one of the oil lakes, the Hancocks led a relatively modest life during this period. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, oil exploration was becoming commonplace in the Los Angeles basin, and exploration of the Rancho La Brea lands was of particular interest to early oil prospectors.

In the early 1900s, Ida Hancock leased a portion of Rancho La Brea to the Salt Lake Oil Company, which quickly struck oil and spurred a significant boom in well development and oil production. Ida Hancock, along with her son George Allen Hancock, founded the Rancho La Brea Oil Company, which began developing wells and producing oil on the unleased portions of their property.<sup>73</sup>

In a short period, the Rancho La Brea lands surrounding the ranch house and tar pits would become a vast oil field, characterized by a landscape of derricks (Figure 20), and the Hancocks would be considered one of the wealthiest families in California.<sup>74</sup>

**Figure 20. Colorized photograph of Rancho La Brea with the Hancock ranch complex at center and oil field in the background, ca. 1910**



Source: California State Library, California Revealed Digital Preservation Initiative

<sup>72</sup> Seaman, 1914, p. 254.

<sup>73</sup> Seaman, 1914, pp. 254-255.

<sup>74</sup> Seaman, 1914, p. 255.

## FOSSIL EXCAVATIONS AT RANCHO LA BREA

While fossil excavations would not begin until the early 1900s, the existence of fossils in the La Brea Tar Pits had been observed as early as 1875, by Dr. William Denton in a paper presented to the Boston Society of Natural History.<sup>75</sup> Early twentieth-century oil exploration, however, brought to light the extent and significance of the site's paleontological resources. In light of the importance of the site and following its 1923 donation to the County of Los Angeles the long-term use and character of the large parcel now encompassing Hancock Park diverged significantly from the surrounding, densely developed neighborhood. In the early twentieth century, Rancho La Brea had already been recognized as home to one of the most important collections of late Pleistocene asphaltic fossils in the world.

During the era of oil exploration, between 1901 and 1902, geologist W.W. Orcutt visited Rancho La Brea to conduct studies on the feasibility of oil production for the Union Oil Company. As part of these investigations, Orcutt discovered fossils of prehistoric animals, including teeth from saber-toothed cats.<sup>76</sup>

Based on this discovery, in 1906, paleontologist Dr. John C. Merriam from University of California, Berkeley, was granted access to conduct a dig on the property, forming the first official and scientific paleontological excavation of the property. Along with a group of students, Dr. Merriam and his team began to dig out and recover fossils, procuring them for exhibition at the university.

News of the dig spurred interest from other institutions, including Occidental College, University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles Museum (now the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County), the Southern California Academy of Sciences, and even Los Angeles High School, all of which conducted digs and secured enough material to reconstruct their own skeletons (Figure 21).<sup>77</sup>

**Figure 21. Excavations of fossils at Rancho La Brea with oil derricks in the background, 1911 (left); workers cleaning extracted fossils, ca. 1915 (right)**



Source: Los Angeles Public Library

<sup>75</sup> Kegley, H. 1940. "Something Bigger Than Barnum: A Monument to Monsters." *Los Angeles Times*, 10 March 1940. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. Available at: <https://www.proquest.com/latimes/index>.

<sup>76</sup> Seaman, 1914, p. 255.

<sup>77</sup> Bartlett, D.W., 1927. "Progress Made in Developing Tomb of Giants: Creation of New Park at La Brea Pits Gives City Unique Monument." *Los Angeles Times*, 27 March 1927. ProQuest Historical Newspapers; Kegley, H. 1940. "Something Bigger Than Barnum: A Monument to Monsters," *Los Angeles Times*, 10 March 1940, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. Available at: <https://www.proquest.com/latimes/index>.

As word spread of the concentration of fossils at Rancho La Brea and requests for concessions to excavate continued to pour in, the Hancock family reevaluated their approach and drastically reduced the number of institutions that would be allowed to dig on the property. Priority was granted (exclusively) to local institutions, primarily the Los Angeles County Museum of History, Science, and Art (the predecessor to the Natural History Museum) which was given a 2-year concession to excavate and uncover as many fossils as feasible. The concession featured a strict time limit, so the County provided the necessary grants to recover the maximum amount of material within the allotted period.

Led by museum directors Frank S. Daggett and William Alanson Bryan, alongside a team of ornithologists and paleontologists, a crew of a dozen worked steadily for the entire 2-year concession; the team's painstaking process, along with a preview of treasures unearthed, was described in a feature-length article in the 27 March 1927 issue of the *Los Angeles Times*.<sup>78</sup>

As described in the article, in terms of process, the team would locate a deposit of fossils, then start digging a long trench to cover the lateral extent of the deposit, before digging outwards in 3-foot transects. Bone locations were then removed for processing, cataloguing, and transfer to the museum's facility at Exposition Park. During the dig, the team excavated over 100 pits, of which 30 included noteworthy deposits. From these deposits, the team extracted hundreds of thousands of fossilized prehistoric animal bones, which were catalogued and transported to the museum. At the time, this find was considered the largest collection of Pleistocene fossils in the world, representing thousands of animals, including wolves, saber-toothed cats, giant sloths, short-nosed bears, birds, camels, bison, and the iconic mammoths and mastodons, among others.

While the fossils uncovered by the Los Angeles County Museum of History, Science, and Art dig were too plentiful for a single exhibition, the museum constructed a special exhibition space called "La Brea Hall," where some of the most iconic and complete skeletons were displayed. In addition to the exhibits in La Brea Hall, Hancock Park and the La Brea Tar Pits became an extremely popular tourist destination; by 1940, the park attracted an estimated 500 visitors each weekday, and 1,000 each Sunday.<sup>79</sup>

Newspaper coverage in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1940 presented an overview of the offerings of La Brea Hall; as shown in Figure 22 below; captions read "Dr. John A. Comstock, left, and Dr. William Bryan examine a reconstructed bear of the glacial period; the bones were found in the tar pits" (left image) and "This skeletal exhibit at the museum represents 25 years of work—digging, scraping, classifying and assembling" (right image).

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<sup>78</sup> Bartlett, 1927.

<sup>79</sup> Kegley, 1940.

Figure 22. Exhibits at La Brea Hall, 1940



Source: Los Angeles Times, 10 March 1940

## Hancock Park

The project site falls within the larger 23-acre Hancock Park, which has remained intact as a relatively undeveloped open space, public park, and cultural institution in the Mid-Wilshire neighborhood for nearly a century.<sup>80</sup> The complex is characterized by a mixture of recreational space, walkways, hardscaping, mature trees and landscaping, the La Brea Lake Pit, seeps, and excavation pits, and museums/exhibition spaces both on-site and in the surrounding vicinity. Established in the early 1920s, Hancock Park owes its tenure and significance to the naturally occurring tar pits and paleontological fossil deposits throughout and beneath its surface (described in the previous section).

## FOUNDING YEARS

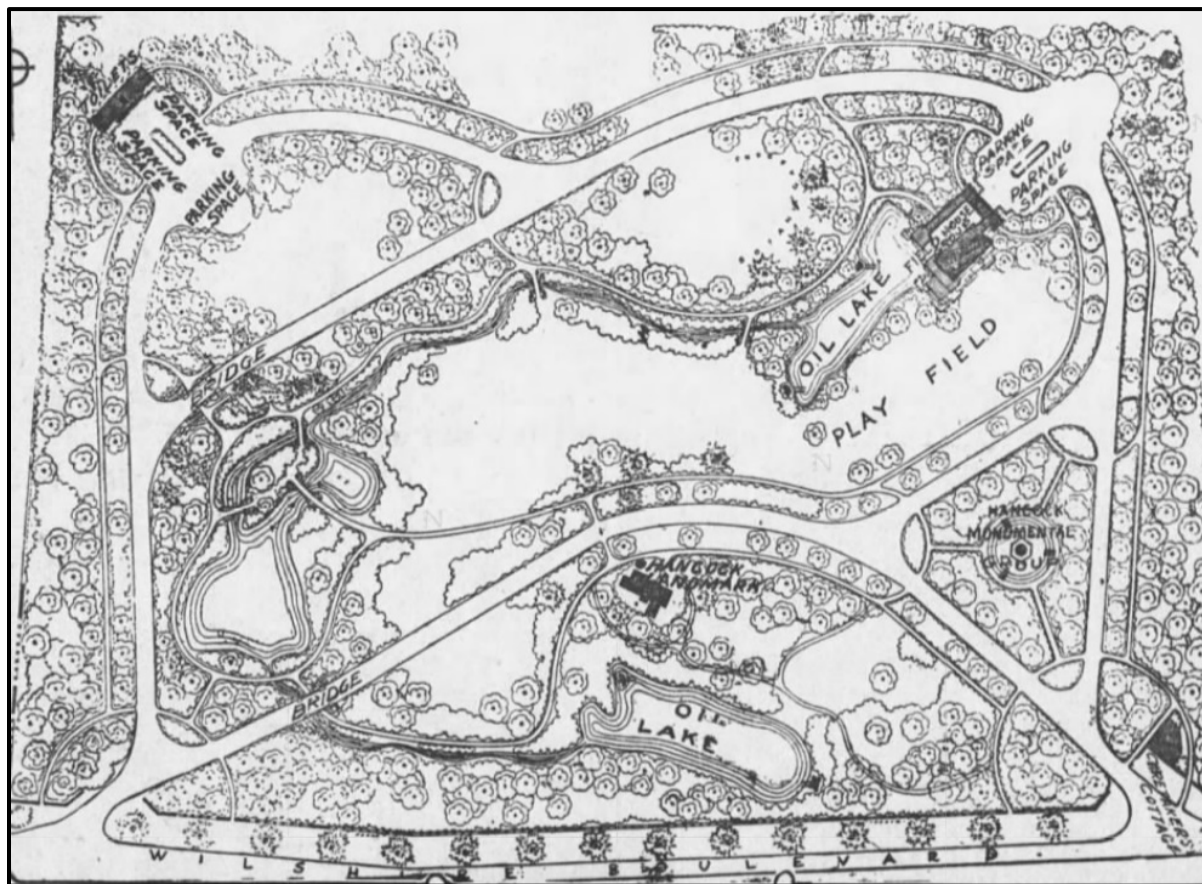
In 1915, in light of the site's scientific importance, G. Allan Hancock (son and heir of Henry and Ida Hancock) and the County of Los Angeles began discussing a potential donation of the tar pits and 32 acres of the adjacent property for a park and museum, which would preserve the space in perpetuity for scientific investigations and public enjoyment and education. Stipulations of the donation, as outlined by Hancock, included construction of a small museum for exhibiting fossils and sculpted recreations of the prehistoric mammals; landscape development with trees, ornamental shrubs, and fencing; parking and

<sup>80</sup> Not to be confused with the Los Angeles residential neighborhood of Hancock Park, which is located east of the project site.

circulation catering to automobiles; and the general condition prohibiting oil development on the property.<sup>81</sup> To solidify these stipulations and provide a robust vision for the park's development, Hancock commissioned landscape architect Paul G. Thiene to prepare a plan in 1916; Thiene worked in conjunction with his associate at the time, renowned architect Lloyd Wright.<sup>82</sup> Thiene, a German-born landscape architect and horticulturalist, worked for a number of prominent horticulturalists and landscape designers in the early twentieth century. By 1910, Thiene was working with renowned landscape architects, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and John Charles Olmsted. He assisted the Olmsted brothers with the San Diego Panama-California Exposition. Although the Olmsted brothers left the Balboa Park commission, Thiene continued to work on the project with Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue. Thiene's contributions to Balboa Park attracted multiple high-profile commissions for private gardens throughout the southland.<sup>83</sup> This included G. Allen Hancock, who commissioned Thiene to prepare a preliminary plan for Hancock Park as part of the proposed donation.

An article in *The Los Angeles Times* outlined details of the plan developed by Thiene in partnership with Lloyd Wright, including a rendering of the site plan, which reflected a picturesque, and Olmstedian design (Figure 23). The Thiene and Wright plan was never realized, but the plans represent the first attempt to apply a unified master plan and design to the park and its cultural resources.

Figure 23. Site plan for Hancock Park, 1916, Paul G. Thiene and Frank Lloyd Wright, Jr.



Source: *Los Angeles Times*, 12 December 1916

<sup>81</sup> "Unique Among World Parks," *The Los Angeles Times*, May 2, 1916.

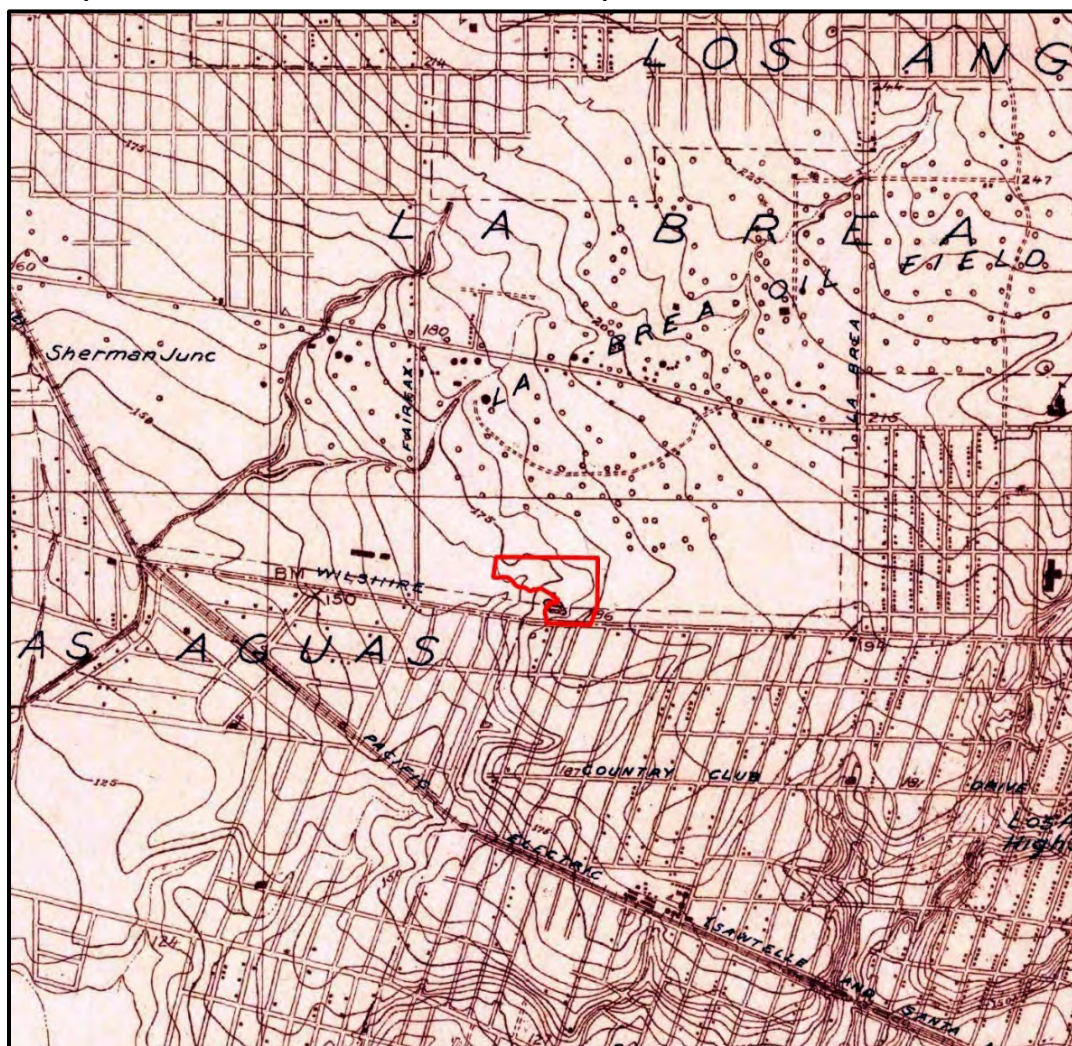
<sup>82</sup> "Deed to Hancock Park is Given to County," *The Los Angeles Times*, December 12, 1916.

<sup>83</sup> Carter, N.C. 2022. Place Studies - Paul Thiene in Southern California. Library of American Landscape History. Available at: <https://lalh.org/place-studies/paul-thiene-in-southern-california-2019/>. Accessed April 27, 2022.



In subsequent years, Hancock and the County continued discussions on the terms for the donation of the property for use as a public park. By 1923, ongoing negotiations around the Hancock land gift were showing promise. The land gift was reduced to approximately 25 acres and included revised stipulations by Hancock, which required that the entirety of the land be used for public park purposes, the tar pits remain unchanged and open for visitors to observe, that work on the park must begin immediately, and that no fence more than 5 feet high would be erected closer than 30 feet from the street.<sup>84</sup> The terms were finalized in December 1923, and the land was officially transferred to the County in 1924 (Figure 24).<sup>85</sup> Reporting from the time suggests that no formal plans were submitted as part of the transfer, but Hancock's stated wish was that the property be developed as one of the City's finest urban parks. With no accompanying financial gift with the property, however, the County was responsible for funding improvements. In light of this, the County adopted a phased approach, beginning on limited projects while a unified, overall plan was developed.

Figure 24. Project site as of 1924, as surrounding areas were in the process of rapid subdivision and development; as of 2022, Hancock Park's oversized parcel remains one of the few in the area



Source: 1924 USGS Hollywood topographic map

<sup>84</sup> "Land Gift for County Park," *The Los Angeles Times*, November 27, 1923.

<sup>85</sup> "Hancock Park to County," *The Los Angeles Times*, December 12, 1923; "La Brea Tar Pits History," La Brea Tar Pits & Museum. Available at: <https://tarpits.org>. Accessed April 27, 2022.

## PRE-WORLD WAR II EXPANSION (1926–1944)

As the donation of Hancock Park was finalized, during the Roaring 1920s, the park's surrounding vicinity was in the midst of a significant transformation. During Los Angeles's 1920s boom, this area (along with many others throughout Los Angeles and Southern California) shifted from expansive ranch lands and oil fields to a rapidly developing metropolis. During Hancock Park's first decade, the City experienced rapid urban development and exponential growth. Due to Hancock's gift, however, the large open space and cultural resources on the site of Hancock Park weathered the development pressure that was steadily transforming all surrounding areas of the neighborhood.

During this time, the original El Camino Viejo roadway, which connected the tar pits with the Pueblo de Los Angeles in the City's original downtown, was developed as Wilshire Boulevard. Wilshire continued along the original alignment along the southern boundary of the former Rancho La Brea land grant, extending west towards Santa Monica and the Pacific Ocean. With the growth and expansion of Los Angeles in the early 1920s, and the original downtown increasingly clogged with traffic congestion, the developer A. W. Ross sought to capitalize on this momentum; he saw Wilshire Boulevard as the perfect location for a new commercial district.<sup>86</sup>

With the completion of the Ambassador Hotel in 1921 (Wilshire Boulevard and Normandie Avenue) in 1921, along with the construction of high-end communities like Hancock Park and Beverly Hills, Ross realized that the City's westward expansion along Wilshire was inevitable. He sought to create a new, vibrant commercial corridor. Focusing on the segment between Highland and Fairfax avenues, Ross began to speculatively purchase the vacant lots that were subdivided from agricultural and oil field properties that defined the area. To many, the idea of the commercial district seemed fantastical, especially in an area defined by the tar pits, crowded oil fields, and open farmland.<sup>87</sup> Nevertheless, Ross continued to strategically purchase property for development along and adjacent to Wilshire Boulevard.

By the mid-1920s, limited development had occurred, and the moniker "Miracle Mile" had been created. By the 1930s, Wilshire Boulevard had become an established, highly sought-after commercial corridor with grand Art Deco and Moderne office buildings, department stores, theaters (and well-advertised parking lots, which provided a welcomed relief and draw for shoppers and visitors). The increasing urbanization of the area continued to encroach around Hancock Park throughout this period.

In 1926, during the initial phase of Ross's plans for the Miracle Mile, renewed plans for Hancock Park were announced by the County. New designs for "Pleistocene Park," as the Hancock Park property was referred to, featured notable similarities to the 1916 plans, with extensive plantings around the park perimeter, a central open lawn and recreational field, the preservation of the open tar pools and oil lakes, and the restoration of the original creek that extended diagonally through the site (Figure 25). However, the updated plan included some variations, including the omission of on-site parking and automobile circulation through the park, formal landscaping and collections of monuments, and plans for a pedestrian bridge extending from Wilshire Boulevard across the Lake Pit, leading directly into a new museum.<sup>88</sup> These changes reflected an updated vision of providing a space that looked and felt like a Pleistocene (rather than Beaux Arts classical) environment, by creating a semi-immersive parkland focusing on the paleontological significance of the site.

In addition to removing automobile circulation from the park, the key elements of this reimagining of the "dawn-era landscape" included restoring water features, a robust planting plan along the perimeter of the property, preserving open pits for interpretive and scenic purposes, and the adding statues of prehistoric

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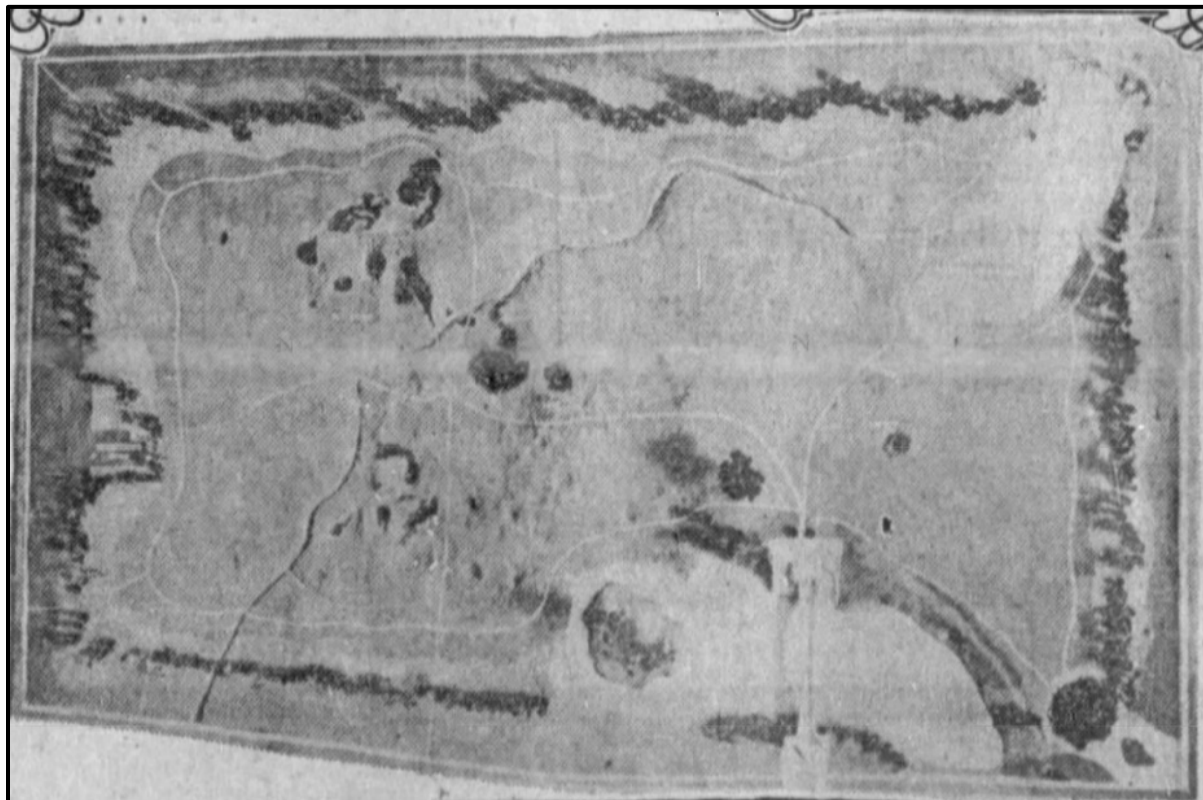
<sup>86</sup> GPA Consulting, 2017, p. 9.

<sup>87</sup> GPA Consulting, 2017, p. 9–10.

<sup>88</sup> Crane, C. "La Brea to Be Made Park," *Los Angeles Times*, November 7, 1926.

creatures throughout the meandering pathways.<sup>89</sup> The plans also called for separating the park from the surrounding, increasingly urban environment by a perimeter of trees, which would create a version of the Pleistocene environment and an immersive experience for visitors.

**Figure 25. 1926 plan for Hancock Park (originally “Pleistocene Park”); note large Lake Pit in southeastern corner, with pedestrian bridge leading to museum, and open tar pits throughout**



Source: *Los Angeles Times*, November 7, 1926

The County Board of Supervisors approved the plan in 1927. This initial scope of work involved clearing and grading a border around the perimeter of the park with some access paths that extended from the surrounding streets, primarily at the corners of the property.<sup>90</sup> This 75-foot-wide setback from the street remained one of the only developed aspects of the property for several years. An aerial photograph from 1928 exhibits these conditions (Figure 26), though there appears evidence of grading occurring towards the center of the property. This likely corresponds with utility upgrades to the property, which included the placement of water mains and conveyance infrastructure as part of the stream restoration.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Bartlett, 1927.

<sup>90</sup> Bartlett, 1927.

<sup>91</sup> “Beauty Reigns in Pit of Doom,” *Los Angeles Times*. September 8, 1928. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. Available at: <https://www.proquest.com/latimes/index>

**Figure 26. 1928 aerial photograph of Hancock Park, illustrating the limited redevelopment of the original 32-acre property donated to the County**



*Source: Environmental Data Resources, 2022*

With the onset of the Great Depression in 1930, progress in implementing the 1926 plans for Hancock Park largely stalled. Improvements completed in the 1930s include construction of meandering pathways and a complex with a groundskeeper residence and maintenance building at the western edge of the property along Ogden Drive. One notable addition to the park during the 1930s was the installation of stone walls around many of the excavation pits in the northwest corner of the property (remnants of these stone walls appear extant as of 2022).

A bird's eye aerial photograph of the property, ca. 1935, shows these conditions (Figure 27). The stone masonry walls surrounding the excavation pits were constructed in a rustic style with rough stonework. The walls extended around the circumference of the most prominent excavation pits and were occasionally integrated into other site features, including a stone masonry bridge that was integrated into the stone walls and allowed for visitors to cross and directly observe the excavation pit (Figure 28).



**Figure 27. Aerial photograph of Hancock Park, northwest perspective, ca. 1935**



Source: Los Angeles Public Library

**Figure 28. Visitors observing tar pits from stone masonry bridge (left) and overview of Hancock Park, with stone walls and site features around the excavation pits (right), 1936; as of 2022, some of the stone walls appear extant in the northwestern quadrant of the park**



Source: UCLA Digital Collections

During the Great Depression, while development of Hancock Park had shown signs of progress through the 1930s, with some landscape improvements and addition of hardscape and site features, the



implementation of larger plans remained stalled (Figure 29). By the late 1930s, the County had developed plans for new pathways and the expansion of existing circulation paths. New Spanish Colonial Revival-style comfort stations were to be constructed as well, along with new drainage and water conveyance systems, repairs to/expansion of stone masonry walls, enclosures around statues depicting the prehistoric animals, as well as the replacement and upgrades to the stone masonry dam pedestrian bridge.<sup>92</sup>

**Figure 29. Aerial photograph of Hancock Park, 1938**



Source: *Environmental Data Resources, 2022*

In 1940, plans were commissioned by the County Board of Supervisors with grant support from the Works Progress Administration to reimagine and reorganize Hancock Park as a “paleontological park and museum.”<sup>93</sup> The proposed plan for the park featured an Olmstedian layout, similar to the Thieme and Wright plan prepared in 1916, complete with meandering pathways through the site, spurring off from the primary entrances and a primary circular pathway (Figure 30). Proposed improvements included a new picnic area and shelter in the northeast corner; expansion of comfort station facilities; reconfiguration of the pit areas; a new meadow and open space at the eastern portion of the property; a historical garden and various didactic installations; shifting the primary entrance to Hancock Park at the southeast corner at Wilshire Boulevard and Curson Avenue; and a robust planting program that would extend throughout the site and frame designated areas where statues depicting prehistoric animals would be reorganized for viewing. Elements planned for retention at the time included the groundskeeper residence, maintenance building, and service yard at the western portion of the property, as well as the original Hancock ranch house (Figure 31).

<sup>92</sup> County of Los Angeles, Mechanical Department. 1938. Drawing Set, “Improvements to Hancock Park” (November 30, 1938), Sheets A-1 through A-4.

<sup>93</sup> “Museum Urged at La Brea Pits,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 24, 1940.

Figure 30. Development plan for Hancock Park, 1940



Source: Los Angeles Natural History Museum

The 1940 Development Plan for Hancock Park, developed by County engineers and landscape architects, was officially adopted by the County Board of Supervisors in May of that year. Initial publications announcing the plans state that the modest museum building would be constructed first. Funded in part by the WPA, the museum and other initial improvements were slated to occur that year with the remaining landscaping and realization of the plan happening the year after.<sup>94</sup>

However, soon after the construction timeline was publicized, the WPA delayed the project due to concerns of cost overruns and issues surrounding the museum and the potential for gases from the excavation pits causing increased risk of fire.<sup>95</sup> The resulting delay extended into 1941, and with the advent of Pearl Harbor and the US entry into World War II, any additional development of the park was halted. The park would primarily remain in its existing condition until the post-World War II era.

<sup>94</sup> "Tar Pits Park Plan Speeded," *Los Angeles Times*, May 16, 1940.

<sup>95</sup> "Plan for County Building over Tar Pits to be Discussed," *Los Angeles Times*, October 14, 1940.

**Figure 31. Visitors overlooking the primary Lake Pit in 1941, note the perimeter fencing and the original Hancock Ranch complex in the back-right**



Source: Los Angeles Public Library

## POST-WORLD WAR II PERIOD (1945–1955)

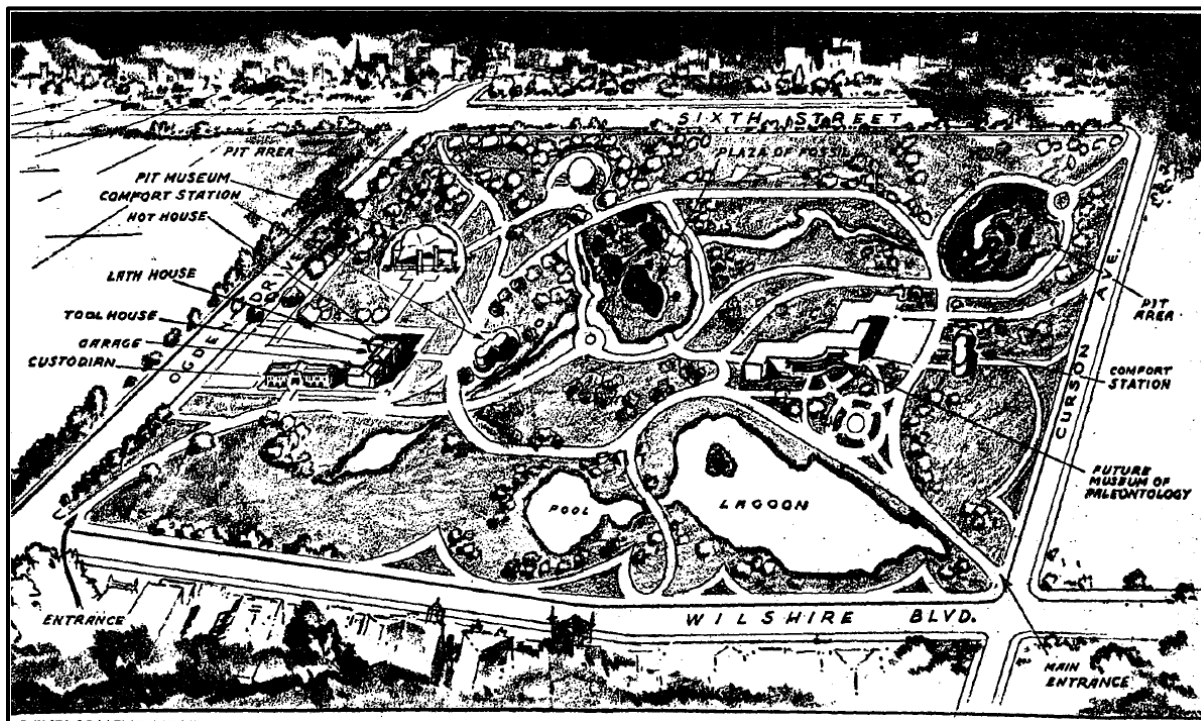
Following the end of World War II, attention returned to the conditions of Hancock Park. In 1946, the Los Angeles County Museum of History, Science, and Art (the predecessor to the Natural History Museum) began geotechnical investigations with dozens of test wells drilled throughout the site in anticipation of future development. These test bores ultimately led to the discovery of new fossil deposits, which in turn led to renewed excavation.<sup>96</sup> At this time, the County commissioned architect and landscape planner Harry Sims Bent to develop a new master plan for the property. Unlike previous attempts to redevelop Hancock Park, the 1948 plan would outline a four-phased approach that would gradually redevelop the park over an 8-year period (Figure 32).

The grand vision of the 1948 plan bore some similarities to previous designs, with meandering paved pathways extending throughout the property to create a picturesque environment. Other improvements included the restoration of the waterways, stream, and Lake Pit; construction of new comfort stations; a new observation pit museum over one of the excavation pits; a new museum of paleontology; and a complete redevelopment of the existing excavation pit enclosures with a new plaza around the main concentration towards the northwest corner of the park. Other initiatives included the installation of interpretive displays and educational materials. The overall landscape was intended to be redeveloped to evoke the sense of a Pleistocene environment, reflecting previous visions for the park.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>96</sup> “Animal Bones 50,000 Years Old Found in Tar,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 17, 1946.

<sup>97</sup> “Hancock Park Tar Pits Project to Start Soon at \$738,400,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 19, 1948.

Figure 32. Conceptual, birds-eye illustration of the 1948 plan



Source: Los Angeles Times, 19 September 1948

Construction of the first phase of the 1948 plan was initiated the following year (Figure 33). Work included general site and utility upgrades, as well as the construction of comfort stations and an initial observation platform overlooking one of the excavation pits.<sup>98</sup> Subsequent work took place over the next 3 years, including the completion of the Observation Pit museum, a Mid-Century Modern style pavilion that enclosed Excavation Pit 101 and allowed visitors to descend to a viewing platform. Other projects included reorganization of the circulation paths; restoration of the streambed with new small footbridges; renewed irrigation; and landscape lighting throughout the property.<sup>99</sup> New plantings were also added; all plantings were picked based upon the notion that they may have existed at the site during the Pleistocene period.

Construction on the site presented numerous challenges, primarily related to the tar seepage and water drainage issues throughout the site. While regrading attempted to address many of these issues, some tar pits were filled in, occasionally requiring reopening after seepage problems persisted. However, in 1952, the first phase of the 1948 master plan prepared by Bent was largely complete and the updated Hancock Park was officially opened to the public.<sup>100</sup>

Development of subsequent phases of the 1948 plan largely stalled after Hancock Park was opened in 1952. Continuous plans were prepared for the museum throughout the course of 1950s, reflecting a mixture of Revival and Modern architectural styles. However, these too would not come to fruition, leaving the park with its 1952 configuration (Figure 34).

<sup>98</sup> Conover, A. 1949. "Roaming Around with Austin Conover – Hancock Park Said 16 Per Cent Finished," *Hollywood Citizen News*, October 10, 1949.

<sup>99</sup> "Hancock Park Opened After Landscaping Job," *Los Angeles Times*, April 24, 1952.

<sup>100</sup> "Hancock Park Opened After Landscaping Job," *Los Angeles Times*, April 24, 1952.



**Figure 33. 1948 aerial photograph of Hancock Park. The landscape at this time is consistent with conditions exhibited in 1938, albeit with mature plantings and increased urban development in the surrounding neighborhood**



*Source: Environmental Data Resources, 2022*

**Figure 34. 1952 aerial photograph illustrating the phased execution of the 1948 plan, including the reconfigured circulation paths, the construction of the Observation Pit museum, and ongoing grading and other site improvements**



*Source: Environmental Data Resources, 2022*

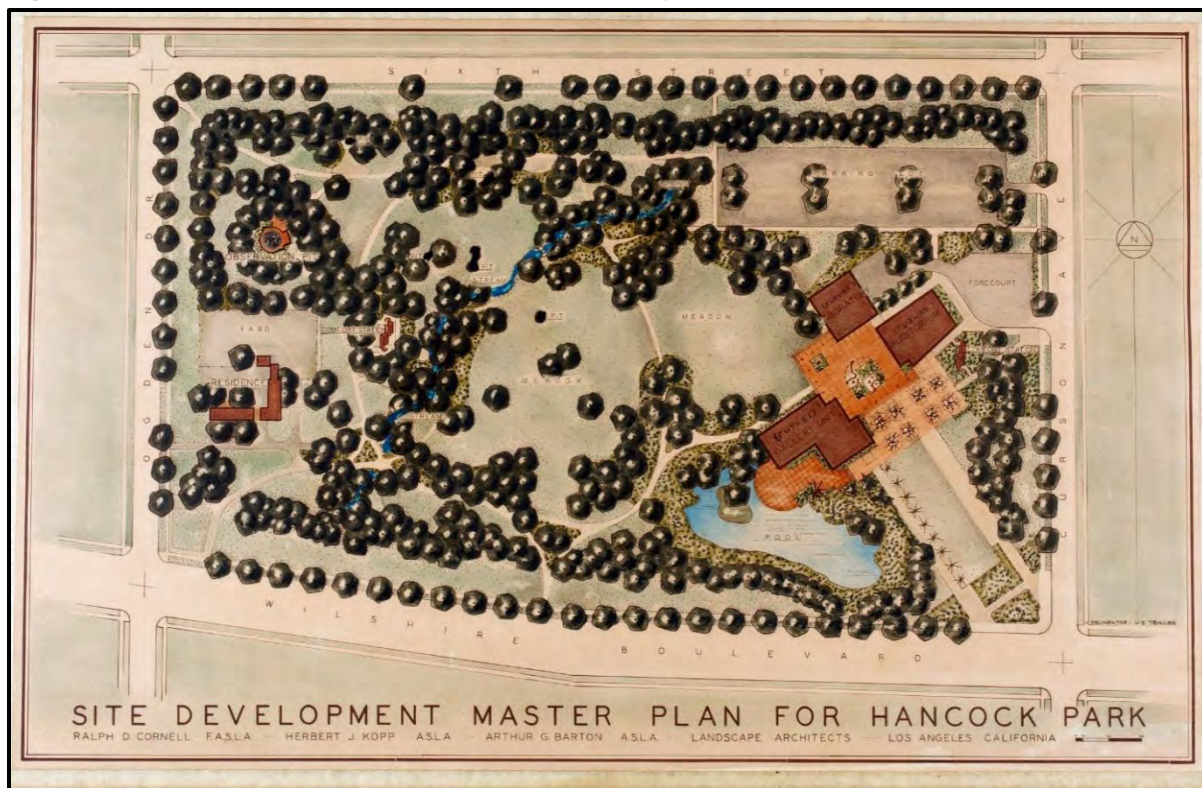


## REDEVELOPMENT ERA AND FOUNDING OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART (1956–1974)

In 1956, the County celebrated the 50-year anniversary of the initial excavations of the La Brea Tar Pits with a ceremony at Hancock Park. To mark half a century of scientific exploration, which by 1956 had yielded more than 500,000 fossil bones of prehistoric animals, the celebration included Supervisor John Anson Ford, Dr. Hildegard Howard, chief curator of science at the Los Angeles County Museum, and Dr. Jean Delacour, Los Angeles County Museum of History, Science, and Art director. Festivities included a performance by the Los Angeles County Band and a guided tour of Hancock Park and the La Brea Tar Pits.<sup>101</sup>

At the same time, though the La Brea Tar Pits and park remained scientifically relevant and remarkably popular with the public, plans for a permanent museum still had not come to fruition. In 1958, the County returned to the question of Hancock Park and its next phases of development. The County commissioned landscape architect Ralph D. Cornell to prepare a plan that would build on the completed work of the 1948 plan, leaving the western portion of the park intact, while revisiting the eastern portion (Figure 35). The 1958 Cornell plan included more Modern and formal interventions, included an axial promenade entrance into the park from the southeast corner, a rambling museum complex layout with a central courtyard and cantilevered terrace extending out over the Lake Pit, and a surface parking lot located at the northeast corner.

Figure 35. 1958 Master Plan for Hancock Park, prepared by Ralph D. Cornell and Associates



Source: Los Angeles Natural History Museum

<sup>101</sup> “La Brea Tar Pits Marks 50 Years of Digging,” 12 March 1956, *Los Angeles Times*, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

## Los Angeles County Museum of Art

During the Great Depression, in the mid-1930s, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors had explored the possibility of adding a fine arts center and museum to Hancock Park. Lamenting a lack of significant fine arts facilities for both music, displaying fine arts, and arts education, the County announced its plans and started to seek donations for new facilities that would rival those in major East Coast cities. The County saw Hancock Park as an ideal location, albeit with the supplemental addition of an adjacent 20 acres to accommodate concert halls and fine arts galleries.<sup>102</sup>

Because the addition of such facilities did not comply with the initial stipulations of the Hancock Park land gift, the County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution to establish a fine arts complex at the park and deeded the property back to G. Allen Hancock, which could then be re-gifted to the County with stipulations about use as a park removed, allowing for the estimated \$15-million facility to move forward.<sup>103</sup> These early visions called for a collection of auditoriums, fine arts-focused schools, art galleries, concert halls, and an institution for motion pictures, radio, and television. These would supplement the ongoing plans to establish a museum on the Hancock Park property dedicated to the exhibition of the tar pit fossils.<sup>104</sup> However, the plans were ultimately stalled until the late-1950s when the County began to reexplore adding a fine arts complex to the property.

The 1959 feasibility study for adding a new fine arts museum to Hancock Park was prepared. Building upon the Cornell plan developed that same year, the feasibility study examined adding the new art museum to the southwest corner of Hancock Park, directly south of the Observation Pit. Initial site plans developed as part of the feasibility study show a re-envisioning of the southwest corner with a Modern style facility and expansive surface parking lot that would front Wilshire Boulevard and extend towards the center of Hancock Park. The plans also showed the reconfiguration of the 1952 pathway network and new security fencing around the remaining open excavation pits and Lake Pit. The combination of the 1958 Cornell plan and the 1959 art museum feasibility study was largely conceptual, but provided sufficient information for the County to move forward with the plan of constructing a new Los Angeles County Museum of Art at the southwest corner of Hancock Park.<sup>105</sup>

In 1960, the County commissioned renowned Modernist architect William L. Pereira to develop a master plan for Hancock Park, the scope of which would include the development of the new fine arts museum complex, a new paleontological museum, and associated landscape plans and improvements throughout the property.<sup>106</sup> The resulting 1961 Pereira plan for Hancock park envisioned the park as a purely Modern landscape, complete with the art museum complex and a new concept for the paleontological museum, which included a prominent cyclorama integrated into a complex (Figure 36).

The pathways throughout the park were reimagined as irregular and curvilinear approaches that varied in width and enclosed amoebic shaped spaces of lawn. The components maintained from the prior Cornell plan were limited but included the vehicle parking at the northwest corner of the property and the use of an observation terrace cantilevering out from the new museum complex over Lake Pit.

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<sup>102</sup> "Art Center Plan Urged – Park Proposed as Site," *Los Angeles Times*, March 24, 1936.

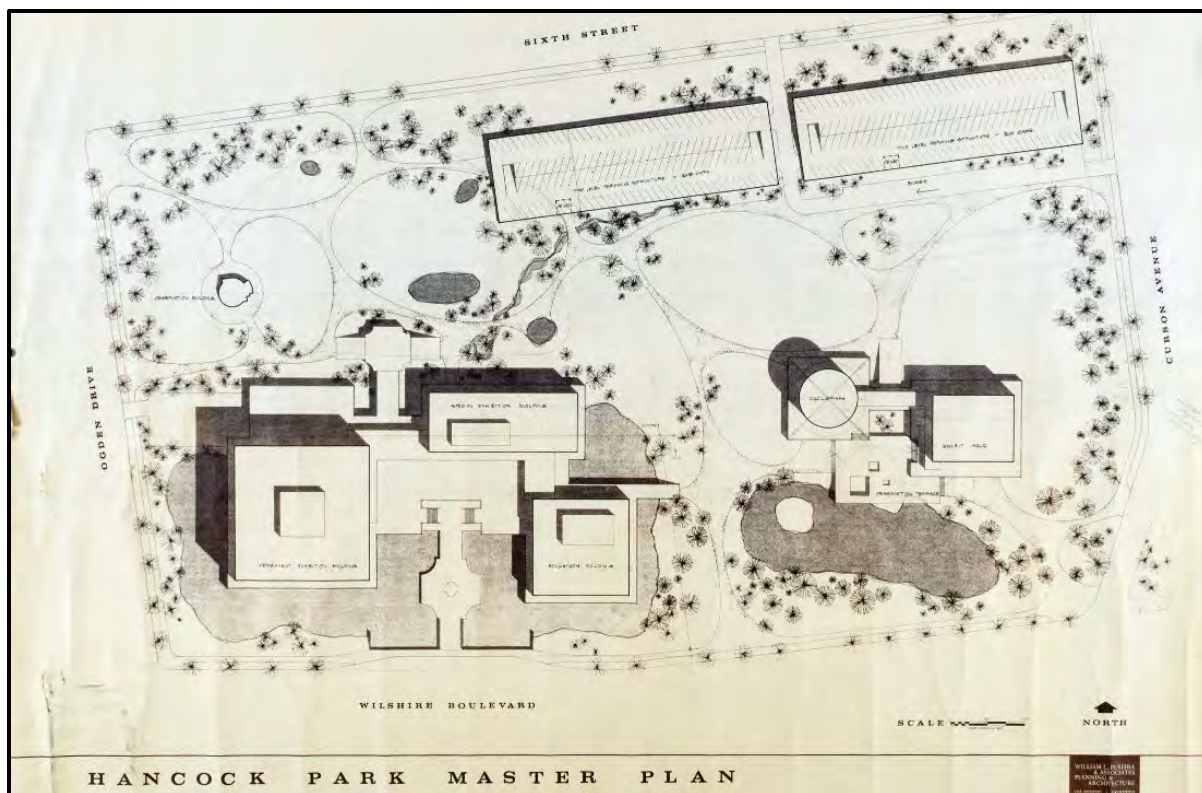
<sup>103</sup> "Park Plan Advanced – County Acts to Push Project," *Los Angeles Times*, April 2, 1936.

<sup>104</sup> "Park Plan Advanced – County Acts to Push Project," *Los Angeles Times*, April 2, 1936.

<sup>105</sup> "Art Museum Assured on Hancock Park Site," *Los Angeles Times*, July 1, 1960.

<sup>106</sup> "Art Museum Assured on Hancock Park Site," *Los Angeles Times*, July 1, 1960; "Master Plan for Hancock Park in Board Approval," *Hollywood Citizen News*, April 12, 1961.

Figure 36. 1961 Hancock Park Master Plan, showing LACMA and proposed paleontology museum, William L. Pereira & Associates



Source: Los Angeles Natural History Museum

While the 1961 Pereira plan was approved by the County, the execution was primarily focused on the construction of the new LACMA facilities, which had received millions of dollars in private donations in addition to county support. The proposed paleontological museum, however, had no funding allocated for its construction.<sup>107</sup> Over the following years, LACMA would be under construction as planned while alterations and improvements to Hancock Park would be greatly reduced.

Aerial photographs of Hancock Park in 1962 illustrate some of the changes that occurred during this period (Figure 37). Most notably, the construction of the surface parking lot in the parcel's northeast corner had been completed, and some of the landscape had been redeveloped, resulting in the removal of the 1948 Bent plan, with its Olmstedian circulation pattern, with a more streamlined network of pathways.

The conditions exhibited in Figure 37 illustrate a simplified, more direct network of pathways, particularly leading from the parking lot to the renewed pathways around Lake Pit. A new comfort station also appears to be present in this photograph (though, to date, source material on the origins and details of this building has not been identified). The photographs also depict the installation of chain-link perimeter fence around the Lake Pit. An aerial photograph from 1964 (Figure 38, upper photograph) depicts these conditions and the ongoing construction of LACMA in the southwest corner. Additionally, the photograph shown in appears to show the landscape around the Observation Pit, constructed in 1952.

<sup>107</sup> "Museum of Tar Pit Fossils Proposed," *Hollywood Citizen News*, January 11, 1961; "Fossil Museum for Tar Pits Gains Backing," *Hollywood Citizen News*, May 10, 1961.



**Figure 37. 1962 aerial photograph of Hancock Park, east perspective (top) and northwest quadrant, east perspective (bottom)**



Source: Los Angeles Public Library

**Figure 38. LACMA under construction in 1964, view facing west across Lake Pit (top) and 1964 aerial showing LACMA in western portion of Hancock Park**



Source: Los Angeles Public Library



By the late 1960s, following the completion and fanfare of LACMA, the plans for a paleontological museum at Hancock Park again went dormant. However, the Museum of Natural History began exploring other options for activating areas of the park adjacent to the new LACMA campus and increasing the interpretive component.

In 1967, a new development plan was prepared, which included revisiting the concept of the Pleistocene Garden with meandering pathways, lush plantings, and groupings of new fiberglass statues of prehistoric creatures throughout the park, including along the shores of the Lake Pit, as well as creating multiple new entrances to the park from the adjoining streets. As before, the plans were largely scaled down, but the County moved ahead with commissioning 52 new statues for the park, which included the mammoth sculptures within the Lake Pit, which have become iconic features of the La Brea Tar Pits.<sup>108</sup>

By 1969, rumors were circulating that LACMA was looking to expand further into Hancock Park. Reaction to any such potential expansion, however, was strong, particularly from County Supervisor Kenneth Hahn, who argued against potential infringement of the tar pits and any possible disagreement with Hancock's original agreement with the County.<sup>109</sup> The topic was also controversial enough that the *Los Angeles Times* published a number of articles on the possible threat to the tar pits and park site.

While LACMA officially denied the rumors, the response was strong enough that the Board of Supervisors ultimately passed a resolution in 1969 guaranteeing that Hancock Park and the tar pits would be preserved.<sup>110</sup> In this period, renewed interest in the tar pits during the mid-1960s led to its designation as a National Natural Landmark and to the expansion of scientific excavations on the property.<sup>111</sup>

Starting in 1969, these new excavations brought multiple new pits immediately to the rear of LACMA at the center of Hancock Park. The excavations included varied infrastructure, such as shaft structures to stabilize the pit walls, shelter structures, and observation platforms. While originally intended to be temporary in nature, these collections of structures associated with the La Brea project digs would remain on the property over the following decades (Figure 39).<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> "18-foot High Mammoth – First of 52 'Beasts' Put in La Brea Pits," *Los Angeles Times*, May 30, 1968.

<sup>109</sup> "Hancock Park – Tar Pits Must Be Preserved," *Hollywood Citizen News*, March 31, 1969.

<sup>110</sup> "Art Museum Won't Take Tar Pit Area," *Los Angeles Times*, May 11, 1969.

<sup>111</sup> Holliday, K. 1972. "Bay Tar Preserved – The Bones of Contention," *Los Angeles Times*, July 30, 1972.

<sup>112</sup> Hunter, P. 1977. "Sizing Up Tar Pits Museum: Sticky Business," *Los Angeles Times*, April 18, 1977.

**Figure 39. Working excavation at Hancock Park, with observation platform, 1976**



*Source: Los Angeles Public Library*

## **RECENT MASTER PLAN CHANGES AND NEW CONSTRUCTION (1975–PRESENT)**

Following the completion of LACMA in the mid-1960s, attention began to shift again to the construction of an on-site museum in Hancock Park dedicated to the exhibition of the fossils found in the tar pits. Throughout the postwar period, multiple concepts for the museum were developed, ranging from Renaissance Revival style structures to more Modern creations, including the cyclorama complex concept designed by William L. Pereira & Associates. However, lack of funding continued to stymie any plans for a tar pits museum. A simplified concept was developed in the late 1960s, though these plans did not progress beyond preliminary conceptual compositions. As with LACMA a decade prior, the long-drawn-out plans for a tar pits museum in Hancock Park needed private funding.

In the early 1970s, George C. Page, a successful industrialist and benefactor of the Museum of Natural History, donated several millions of dollars to the County in support of a paleontological museum. Having visited Hancock Park when he was younger, Page was fascinated by the tar pits and its fossils. As part of the donation, Page would provide much of the required funding, while the County would provide the land, develop the utilities and landscaping, and provide staffing for the facility. Page would also be heavily involved in the design process for the museum, which was completed and open to the public in the spring of 1977 (Figure 40). (The Page Museum is described in more detail below.)

Along with the construction of the Page Museum and its distinctive pyramid-like site, the landscape around the tar pits was reconfigured. New pathways and circulation pathways were constructed around the square plan of the building, hugging the west and south berms. The entrance to the museum, which descends to the north, was serviced by a new axial promenade that extended from the southeast corner of

Hancock Park and met a paved plaza adjoining the museum entrance progression and the walkways around the Lake Pit. A new concrete observation deck structure was constructed along the northeast corner of Lake Pit, providing visitors an elevated vantage point to view throughout the park.

Following the completion of the Page Museum and the realization of the long-awaited goal of having a paleontological specific facility, changes to Hancock Park and the tar pits were slowed over the following decade. Notable plans were developed, including for underground parking structures, but these were not constructed. As illustrated in an aerial photograph from 1989 (Figure 40, lower photograph), the most significant changes to Hancock Park came from the expansion of LACMA, which saw the construction of new additions to the complex. A rear addition to LACMA resulted in the reconfiguration of the pathways related to the Observation Pit, and the Bruce Goff designed Japanese Arts Pavilion was constructed immediately northeast of LACMA and west of Lake Pit. Completed in 1989, the Japanese Arts Pavilion was one of the largest interventions in Hancock Park in the 1980s.

Through the 1980s, the La Brea Tar Pits and Page Museum were one of the principal attractions along Miracle Mile, in the emerging district known as Museum Row. While the destination remained popular with tourists, school groups, and locals alike, Hancock Park was viewed as outdated, and the County began exploring new plans for the park to create a more attractive space for contemporary audiences.<sup>113</sup>

In 1993, a bond to renovate Hancock Park was issued.<sup>114</sup> The following year, the landscape architecture firm Hanna/Olin prepared a master plan for Hancock Park to address these concerns and provide new direction. The 1994 master plan identified immediate issues and provided long-term direction for the park's future evolution. In addition to addressing the plantings, irrigation, and lighting program, the 1994 master plan addressed site circulation. Specifically, it recommended replacing the mixture of axial pathways at the eastern portion of the park around the Page Museum and utilizing curvilinear pathways, reminiscent of the various Olmstedian plans that were developed decades earlier.<sup>115</sup>

These paths could be integrated into the western portion of the site, which partially retained its original 1952 configuration and was noted as needing replacement, due in part to accessibility issues. The plan also noted that the 1962 chain-link security fencing around tar pits and Lake Pit were aesthetically unpleasing and needing replacement with more attractive fencing materials, in addition to various other site feature improvements, such as new benches, interpretive materials, and a new food pavilion.<sup>116</sup> Unlike previous plans for Hancock Park, major components of this plan would be realized.

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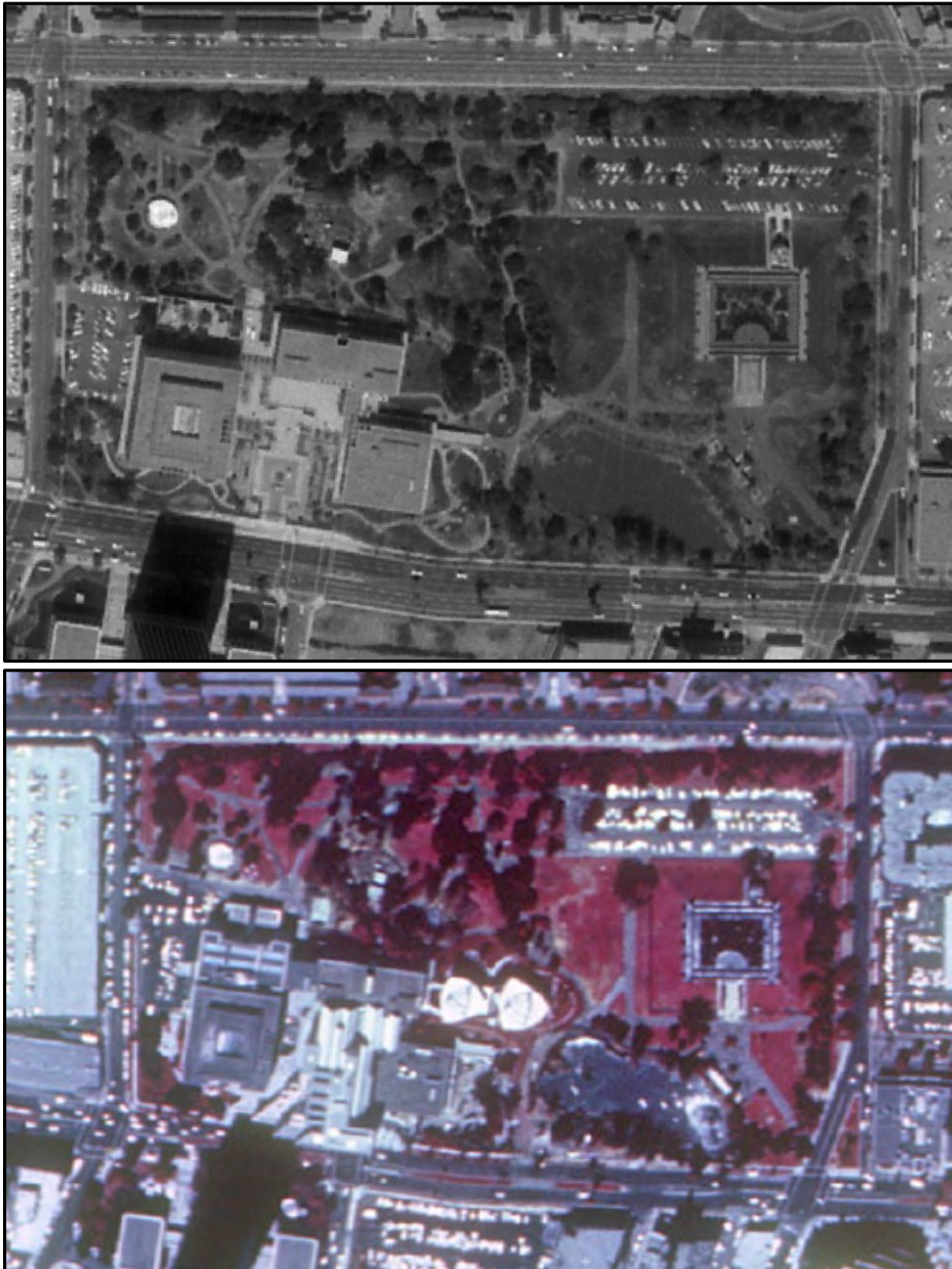
<sup>113</sup> Hanna/Olin, Ltd. 1994. *Hancock Park Master Plan*. Prepared for Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

<sup>114</sup> Muchnic, S. 1917. "Museums Rediscover Beauty, Right in Their Own Backyard," *Los Angeles Times*, July 7, 1917.

<sup>115</sup> Hanna/Olin, Ltd., 1994, pp. 33–39.

<sup>116</sup> Hanna/Olin, Ltd., 1994, 49–52.

Figure 40. Aerial photographs from 1977 (top) and 1989 (bottom) of Hancock Park, up is north



Source: Environmental Data Resources, 2022



By 1998, redevelopment of Hancock Park per the 1994 master plan was underway. This effort resulted in a reconfiguration of the pathways throughout the park, with new serpentine and curvilinear orientations, construction of new comfort stations, addition of an amphitheater and seat wall installations at the northwest corner. Other project components included a new picnic area, reconfiguration of existing statues and monuments, stream restoration, irrigation improvements, over 60,000 new plantings, and installation of a new steel picket security fence.

The plaza south of the Page Museum was also redeveloped, and the Lake Pit observation deck was removed. New foot bridges along Lake Pit and Oil Creek, along with new wayfinding and interpretive signage, helped enhance the visitor experience to the park. Finally, with a redeveloped southeast entrance to Hancock Park, with a circular entrance plaza, the rebranding of Hancock Park in general and the La Brea Tar Pits in particular was complete.<sup>117</sup> The goal was to create a parklike atmosphere that could cater to both nearby residences, as well as visitors to LACMA and the La Brea Tar Pits.

The renovated landscaped provided multiple amenities that could cater to both the arts and sciences, reflective of the major institutions within the park's vicinity, as well as general recreation and enjoyment. This was partially achieved through substantial grading throughout the site, in order to create 340,000 square feet of gently rolling landscape and contours. The renovation was completed in 1999 (Figure 41).

**Figure 41. 2002 aerial photograph of Hancock Park, exhibiting conditions associated with the 1999 renovation of the landscape; north is up**



Source: *Environmental Data Resources, 2022*

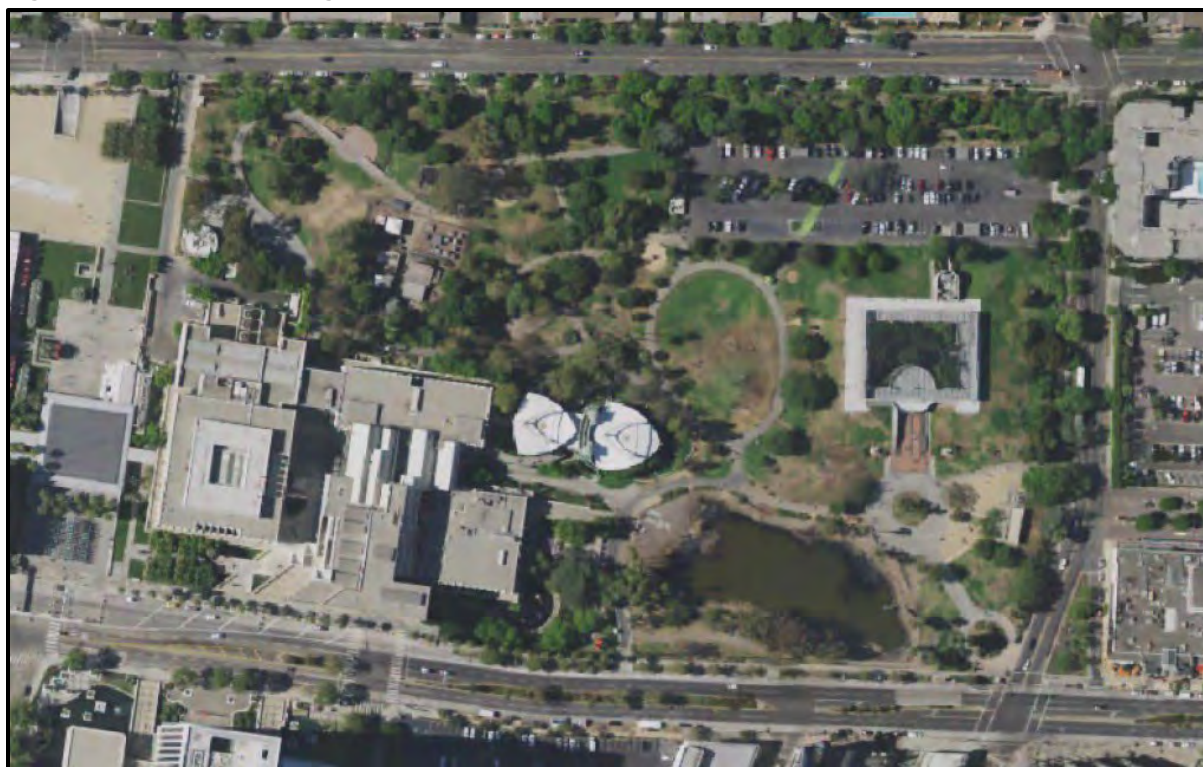
<sup>117</sup> Muchnic, 1917.



In 2014, the firm Suisman Urban Design completed additional improvements to Hancock Park. The majority of the work involved included cosmetic refurbishment, including refurbishing the Observation Pit, installing new lighting, renovating the existing comfort station, replacement of interpretive signage, expanding, reconfiguring, and adding temporary structures to various excavation areas.<sup>118</sup>

In its current form, Hancock Park reflects master planning initiatives and campaigns from various periods in the park's history. While much of the landscape reflects more recent campaigns (as noted above), the park's character and use as an urban open space protected and reserved for scientific exploration, curation, education, and public use, have remained intact for more than a century. The sparsely developed, 23-acre parcel, still framed with mature trees and landscaping, remains intact, reflecting the original agreement between the Hancock family and the County. This agreement protected this large parcel from subdivision and development even as the surrounding neighborhood and the Mid-Wilshire corridor became densely built-up. The park retains numerous natural features and resources, including the Lake Pit and excavation pits, buildings, structures, circulation corridors, hardscaping, natural features, cultural and paleontological resources, and site plan features reflecting Hancock Park's history as "Pleistocene Park." Although the landscaping, facilities, and topography have been altered through the years, Hancock Park reflects a development history that is unique in Los Angeles: from the early years of oil exploration and fossil discovery, to the gradual establishment of cultural and curatorial/educational institutions to tell its story from the Pleistocene era, through post-World War II expansion, and recent upgrades and master planning efforts (Figure 42).

**Figure 42. 2016 aerial photograph of Hancock Park; north is up**



Source: *Environmental Data Resources, 2022*

<sup>118</sup> Suisman Urban Design. 2022. Reimagining the La Brea Tar Pits. Available at: <https://suisman.com/portfolio/reimagining-the-la-brea-tar-pits/>.

## La Brea Tar Pits Museum and Grounds

The La Brea Tar Pits Museum and surrounding grounds are located within Hancock Park. As noted above, since the discovery of fossils and subsequent donation of the 23-acre parcel to the County, Hancock Park has been reserved and preserved for use as an open space and for ongoing excavations, curation, education, and open space for nearly a century.

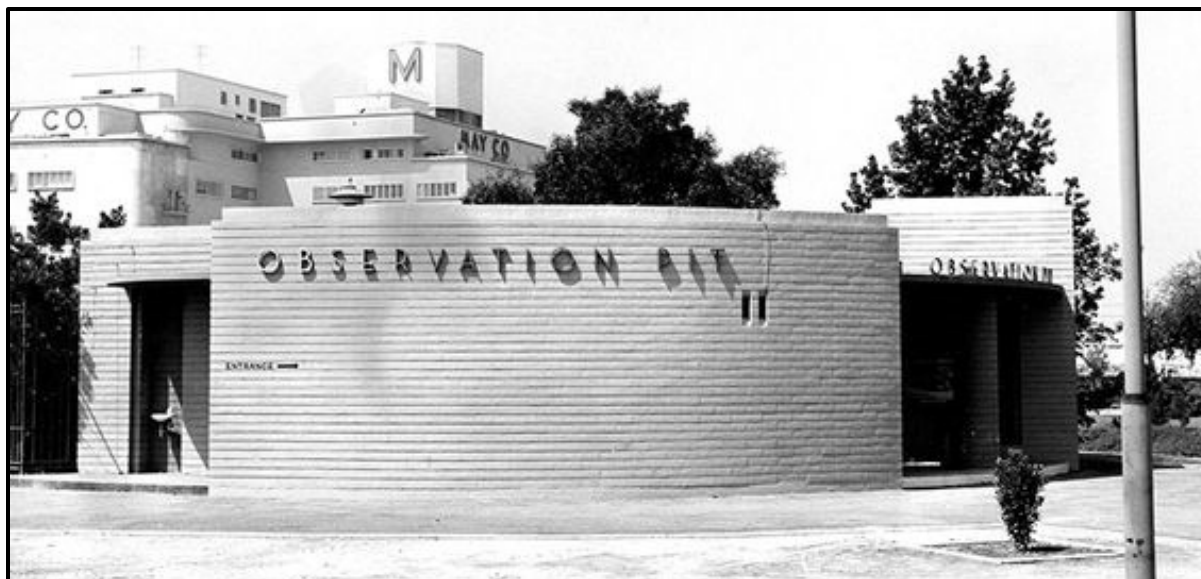
While the previous sections detailed nearly a century of development and evolving master planning efforts at Hancock Park in general, this section focuses on the context and development of the La Brea Tar Pits Museum and Grounds, with a focus on extant facilities.

### OBSERVATION PIT

The first institutional facility constructed at the property was the Observation Pit, completed in 1952 as part of a 1948 Master Plan. A larger museum had been proposed for the area north of Lake Pit as well, though lack of funding and an increased emphasis on LACMA constructions by the late 1950s and into the 1960s stalled further expansion.

Designed in the Mid-Century Modern style, the Observation Pit consists of a semi-circular, single-story building in Hancock Park's northwest corner (Figure 43 and Figure 44). The building was the park's first purpose-built facility devoted to the interpretation of the paleontology of La Brea Tar Pits. The building has an enclosed observation area, in which visitors descend to a below-grade platform overlooking the exposed excavation pit known as "Pit 101." Here, fossil remnants of prehistoric animals, trapped in tar, were (and remain) visible to both scientists and visitors; the building facilitated the critical purpose of Hancock Park going back to the 1920s, to reserve and preserve the park's resources for interpretive and educational purposes.<sup>119</sup>

Figure 43. Observation Pit, ca. 1952, west perspective



Source: La Brea Tar Pits & Museum, Natural History Museums of Los Angeles County

<sup>119</sup> Conover, 1949.

Figure 44. Interior of the Observation Pit, 1964 (left) and 1967 (right)



Source: Los Angeles Public Library, Photograph Collection

The building would serve as the primary museum building for the La Brea Tar Pits from its construction until the completion of the George C. Page Museum in 1977. It would remain open to the public until the mid-1990s, when the museum began focusing resources on excavating other portions of the property and security concerns about the priceless fossils were raised. The Observation Pit would remain closed until 2014, when it was repainted, the clerestory windows were uncovered, and the building was reopened to the public.<sup>120</sup>

### Architect | Harry Sims Bent

Harry Sims Bent was an architect, landscape architect, and planner who operated primarily in California and Hawaii during the first half of the twentieth century. In addition to designing numerous buildings, Harry Sims Bent is known for his involvement with several master planning efforts for parks and instructional campuses. His wholistic approach and multi-faceted design experience resulted in cohesive plans and compositions where buildings were successfully integrated into broader landscapes.

Born in New Mexico in 1895, Bent moved with his family to South Pasadena via Colorado during the early 1910s. Bent graduated from South Pasadena High School in 1914, after which he would attend the University of Pennsylvania to study architecture. After completing his studies, Bent began working for Bertram Goodhue Associates, ultimately moving back to the Pasadena area where he would work on many of Goodhue's Southern California commissions, including the Los Angeles Public Library (1924), the California Institute of Technology's (Cal Tech) Campus Master Plan, and many of the individual Cal Tech buildings.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>120</sup> "Observation Pit," La Brea Tar Pits & Museum. Available at: <https://tarpits.org/experience-tar-pits/observation-pit>. Accessed May 3, 2022; Stallworth, L., "La Brea Tar Pits Observation Pit Reopens After 2 Decades," *ABC 7 Los Angeles*, June 19, 2014. Available at: <https://abc7.com/la-brea-tar-pits-page-museum/125358/>. Accessed May 3, 2022.

<sup>121</sup> Blanchard, G. 2013. *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form – Mother Waldron Playground, Honolulu, Hawaii*, p. 16. Prepared for Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation.

In the late 1920s, Bent relocated to Honolulu, Hawaii on behalf of Bertram Goodhue Associates, where he would oversee the construction of the Academy of Arts building, followed by other commissions. However, by the 1930s, Bent was primarily operating as an independent architect and earned a reputation as one of the most talented architects practicing in Hawaii during the 1930s. Bent was responsible for the design of over 150 residences and other structures throughout Hawaii, which ranged in architectural style from more traditional revivals to increasingly more Moderne compositions, albeit with regionally inspired details and elements. Particularly notable commissions from this period include the C. Brewer Building, Hanahauoulis School, and the Pineapple Research Institute at the University of Hawaii.<sup>122</sup> However, his most celebrated work in Hawaii was through his involvement with the Honolulu Park Board, which hired him as the supervising architect for the design and construction of Ala Moana Park. Funded through the Civil Works Administration, an early New Deal program of the Roosevelt Administration, the park included entrance portals, sports facilities and pavilions, a banyan court, lawn bowling green, a canal bridge, and other features, all composed in a regionally inspired iteration of Art Moderne and Art Deco style. Bent would go on to design numerous parks in Honolulu, including the Mother Waldron Playground, Kawanakoa Playground, and Haleiwa Beach Park.<sup>123</sup>

During World War II, Bent left Honolulu and returned to Pasadena, where he worked independently through the remainder of his career. Bent would continue to design numerous buildings, including single-family residences, but is most well regarded for his master planning and landscape design work. Two of his major commissions in Southern California during this period include the master landscape plan for Hancock Park (1948) and the master plan for the Los Angeles County Arboretum (1950).<sup>124</sup>

## **Architecture | Mid-Century Modernism**

Mid-Century Modernism, or Regional Modernism, represents a middle ground between the formal, machine-age aesthetic of the International Style and a regional idiom reflecting local precedent, materials, topography, and identity. More of an architectural approach than a style, the various strains of Mid-Century Modernism became common throughout the United States in the postwar period, in particular in residential design, with Southern California becoming a world-famous center for modernist design and culture.

In the postwar period through the 1960s, as practiced in Southern California, Mid-Century Modernism took its cues from the region's first-generation modernist architects such as Richard Neutra, Rudolph Schindler, Gregory Ain, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Harwell Hamilton Harris. In the postwar period, second-generation practitioners included Raphael Soriano, Whitney Smith, A. Quincy Jones, and the architect of LACMA, William L. Pereira & Associates, among many others.

Mid-Century Modernism is characterized by an honest expression of structure and function, with little applied ornament. Aesthetic effect is achieved through an asymmetrical but balanced, rhythmic design composition, often expressed in modular post-and-beam construction. Whether wood or steel, post-and-beam construction allowed for open floor plans, ease of expansion, and generous expanses of glazing to heighten indoor-outdoor integration. Regional identity and character are reflected in the use of local materials and the view that extant topography (including sloped sites, landscaping, viewsheds) should be incorporated into the design. Infill panels of wood or glass are common, with glazing often extending to the gable. Buildings are generally one to two-stories, with an emphasis on simple, geometric forms. Capped with low-pitched gabled or flat roofs, a Mid-Century Modern building often displays wide eaves and cantilevered canopies, supported on spider-leg or post supports. Sheathing materials vary, with wood, stucco, brick and stone, or steel-framing and glass. Entrances are typically set flush with the ground, to

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<sup>122</sup> Fung Associates, Inc. 2011. *Hawaii Modernism Context Study*, pp. 105–106. Prepared for the Historic Hawaii Foundation. Honolulu, Hawaii.

<sup>123</sup> Blanchard, 2013, p. 16.

<sup>124</sup> Blanchard, 2013, p. 16.

enhance indoor-outdoor integration and to create an informal, domestic-scaled space. Windows are generally flush-mounted, with metal or wood frames.

In terms of materials, Mid-Century Modernism also included a mixture of industrial and natural materials, the latter of which often include locally sourced materials reflective of regional character. While primarily used in residential design, the Mid-Century Modern approach to design was utilized for a wide variety of property types throughout the United States in the postwar period.

## **GEORGE C. PAGE MUSEUM, 1975–1977**

By 1975, the La Brea Tar Pits was attracting upwards of 400,000 visitors each year, and since the original dig, more than half a million specimens had been recovered.<sup>125</sup> Up until this point, however, the Museum of Natural History in Exposition Park still served as the principal location for viewing fossils (and for storage of the larger collection).

By this time, the County had held Hancock Park for over 50 years, but the original vision of constructing a museum for the paleontological finds of the La Brea Tar Pits had not come to fruition. While many plans for the park’s museum facilities had come and gone, the only dedicated facility constructed for interpretive purposes remained the 1952 Observation Pit. In the mid-1970s, after more than half a century of active excavations, curation, and education, plans for a museum dedicated to the La Brea Tar Pits and its Pleistocene-era treasures finally moved forward in earnest.

The catalyst arrived in the form of a multi-million dollar donation from Los Angeles entrepreneur George C. Page. A self-made businessman and native of Nebraska, Page had moved to Los Angeles in ca. 1918, at the age of 16, with little in the way of resources or contacts.<sup>126</sup> Through the years, he eventually built a successful business; during his lean years, Page recalled that he frequented the many free tourist attractions that Los Angeles had to offer, including the La Brea Tar Pits. Reflecting on this time in 1990, Page recounted that he had been “fascinated by the puddles that had trapped saber-toothed cats, mastodons and other ancient animals,” but at the same time “dismayed to learn that the only way he could see the fossilized bones was the travel seven miles to the Museum of Natural History in Exposition Park”: ““What a pity they haven’t been exhibited on the site where they were found,”” he later said.<sup>127</sup>

As with Hancock’s gift in the 1920s, Page’s gift to the County came with a key condition: that he hold an active (decisive) role in the selection process for an architect as well as for the museum design. Toward this end, Page is said to have rejected the proposals of five well-known architects and instead turned to two young, Pasadena-based architects, Willis E. Fagan and Franklin W. Thornton.<sup>128</sup> Consequently, using their own funds, the architects

spent a month touring the museums of America, asking professionals what they would do differently if they could re-create their institutions. Finally, they came to Page with a proposal. ‘You’ve taken [the fossils] out of the ground here,’ the young architects said of the La Brea discoveries. ‘Why don’t we put them back in?’<sup>129</sup>

Their 1974 plans devised a method for doing this, with the concept of a burial mound-like form, partially below grade and integrated into the surrounding site through sloped berms, visually and physically preserving green space within Hancock Park. Atop the mound was a large platform with a Brutalist-style

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<sup>125</sup> “County Will Get Tar Pits View Station,” 21 December 1975, *Los Angeles Times*, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; “La Brea Museum Will Be Built Near Tar Pit Area,” 20 April 1975, *Los Angeles Times*, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>126</sup> Biederman, 1990.

<sup>127</sup> Biederman, 1990.

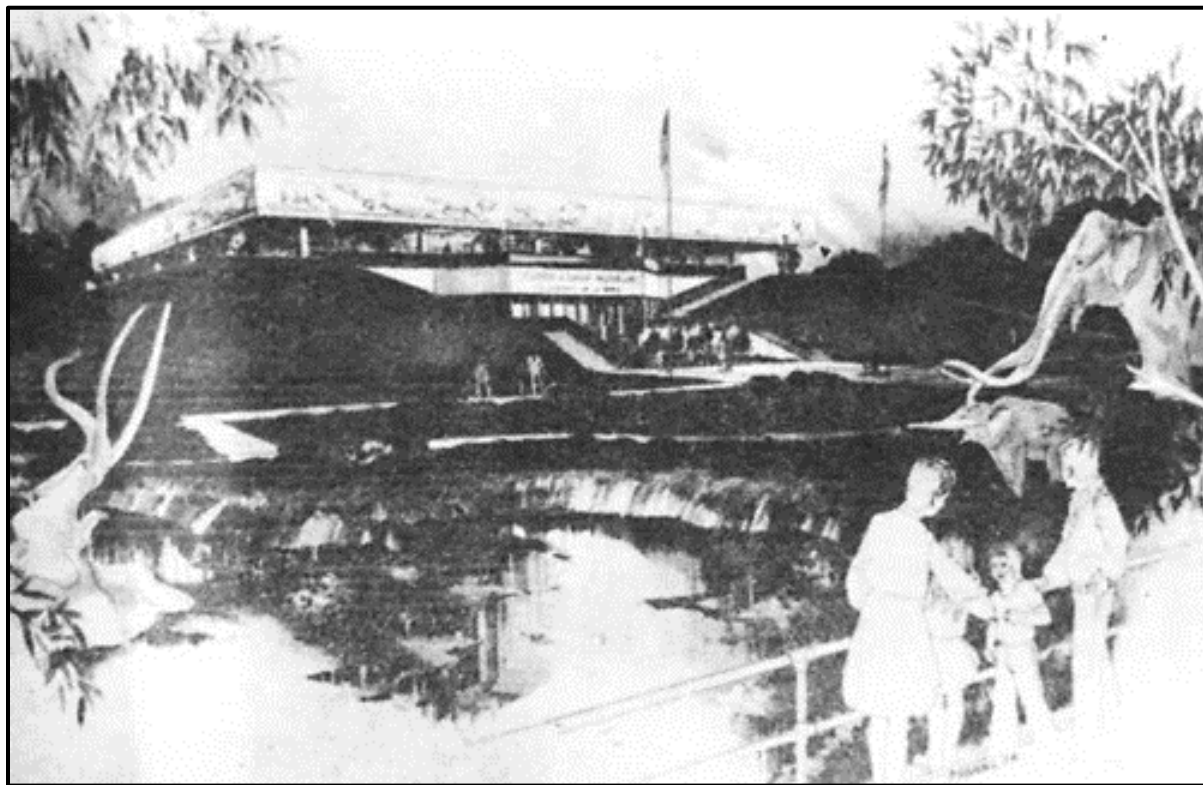
<sup>128</sup> Biederman, 1990.

<sup>129</sup> Biederman, 1990.



pavilion structure defined by an expansive projecting frieze (Figure 45). The fiberglass frieze is intended to appear as carved stone with a continuous bas relief sculpture depicting scenes from the Pleistocene period, prepared by sculptor Manuel La Paz and supported by an exposed space frame roof structure.<sup>130</sup> Throughout the construction process, Page is said to have provided design guidance and overseen construction by operating out of a recreational vehicle-turned makeshift construction trailer on the site.<sup>131</sup>

**Figure 45. Artistic rendering of the George C. Page Museum, La Brea Tar Pits, ca. 1975**



Source: *Park La Brea News*, April 24, 1975

The metaphor of the burial mound was powerful in its symbolism of returning the fossils soon to be exhibited at the facility to a state of being underground, while also transporting the visitor to a different time period, ultimately creating an immersive experience. This was framed in the entrance progression into the building, which followed a formal and symmetrically composed descent into the museum, flanked by the surrounding berms and monumentality of the exposed building elements of the second floor. The interior atrium space and its collection of lush plantings also was intended to evoke the sense of a Pleistocene garden, transporting the visitor back in time.

The site selected for the new museum was located towards the northeast corner of Hancock Park, set between the existing surface parking lot to the north, the Lake Pit to the south, and Curson Avenue to the east. The area was largely defined by the large open field that dominated this portion of Hancock Park; a small comfort station building and walkway were also present at the location.<sup>132</sup> These features were demolished to allow for the construction of the museum (Figure 46).

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<sup>130</sup> Dreyfuss, J. 1977. "George C. Page Museum: Trip Back in Time," *Los Angeles Times*, August 7, 1977.

<sup>131</sup> Oliver, M. 2000. "George C. Page; Philanthropist Founded La Brea Museum," *Los Angeles Times*, November 30, 2000, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>132</sup> Willis, Fagan & Associates. 1975. "Survey and Demolition Plan" Sheet No. A-1 in the Original Drawing set for the George C. Page Discoveries of La Brea Museum, 5801 Wilshire Boulevard (February 18, 1975). On file with the Museums of Natural History of Los Angeles.

Ultimately, the museum's location in Hancock Park presented numerous challenges during construction. Located in the vicinity of the tar pits, both existing to the south and previously infilled to the north, the museum location rested on tar seeps with a shallow water table that created a difficult environment for below-grade construction. To account for this, project engineers developed a system wherein the museum would sit on a gas-proof rubber and nylon membrane, which would be sandwiched between a bed of sand and a working slab cap. A reinforced concrete slab was then constructed above these elements with the intention of creating a hull-like structure that would allow the building to "float" on the pressure related to the gases and liquids of the site.<sup>133</sup>

**Figure 46. George C. Page Museum façade, 1978, southwest perspective**



*Source: Los Angeles Public Library*

In the interior, the principal exhibit designer for the Page Museum was James H. Carmel, a faculty member at the Cranbrook Institute of Science. From 1939 to the 1970s (with an absence during his service in World War II), Carmel served as Preparator, Trustee, and Head of Exhibit Section at Cranbrook until accepting a position with the Page Museum, to help design the museum's exhibits.<sup>134</sup> In addition, exhibits were developed by consultants from universities, museums, and even Disneyland. The goal was developing new ways to present fossils and exhibits that would engage the visitor beyond the traditional interpretive programming.<sup>135</sup> Page was also cognizant of the size of the museum and extent of the exhibits, aiming to create an accessible and inviting environment. Along these lines, for example, more typically domestic materials, such as carpeted flooring, were selected for increased comfort.

Focal points of the museum—and features that continue to set the museum apart—are the exposed structure of the atrium ceiling, the open atrium with landscaping, and the working laboratory, framed with windows, through which visitors can view museum staff working (Figure 47). Among similar museums,

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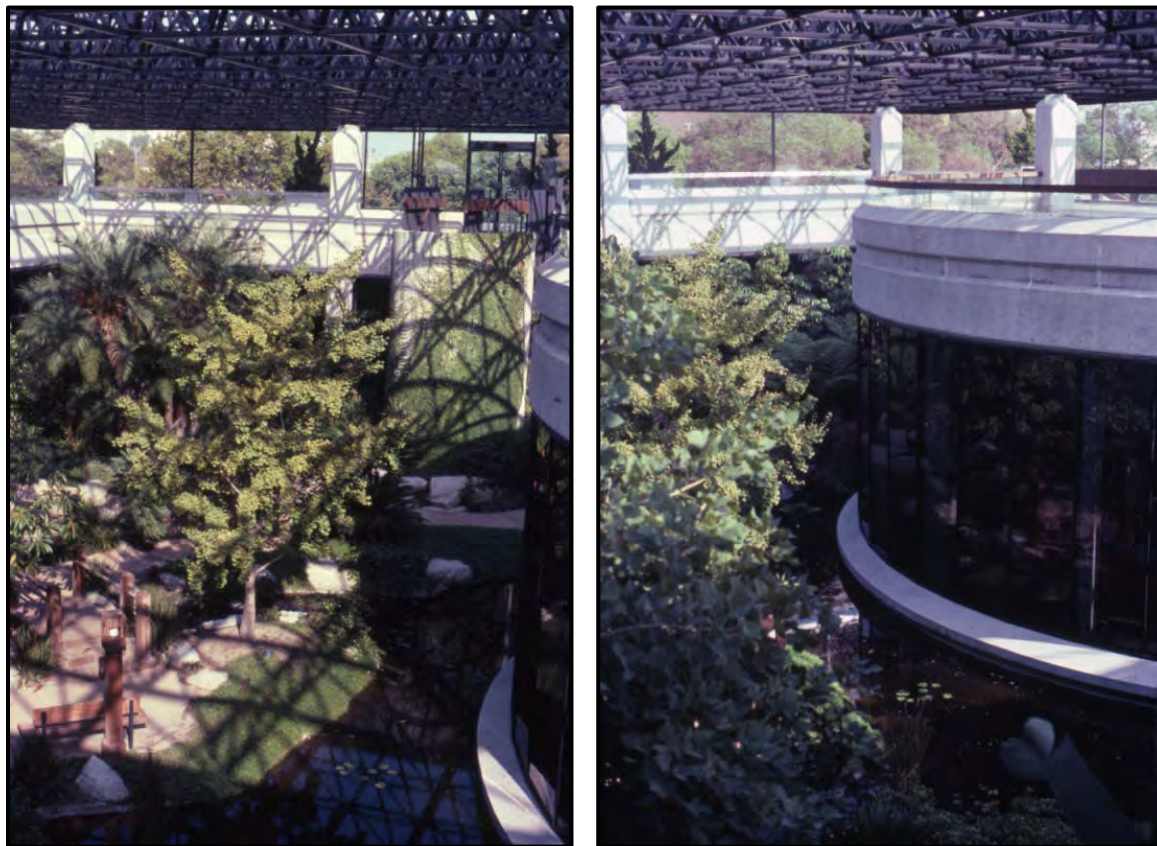
<sup>133</sup> Dreyfuss, 1977.

<sup>134</sup> "James H. Carmel, Curiosity and Wonder: Life at Cranbrook and Beyond," 11 May 2022, Cranbrook Kitchen Sink, Cranbrook Center for Collections and Research. Available at: <http://https://cranbrookkitchensink.com/tag/james-h-carmel/>. Accessed 15 June 2022.

<sup>135</sup> Oliver, 2000.

the fishbowl feature is often cited as the first and only of its kind, with a working laboratory that is the site of scientific research and that serves the educational objective of the museum.<sup>136</sup>

**Figure 47. Open atrium at center of Page Museum, ca. 1980**



*Source: Los Angeles Public Library*

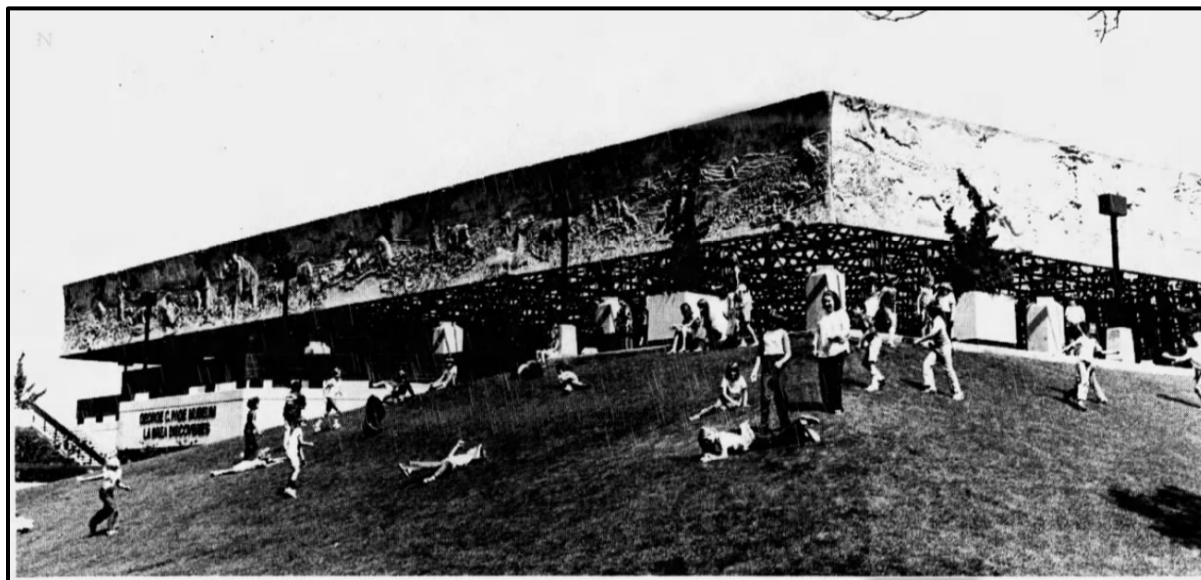
The museum was completed to great acclaim in 1977. It immediately became a celebrated, sought-after institution along Wilshire Boulevard's emerging Museum Row. The experiential qualities of the design—including its form and mass, the circular interior layout that created a natural progression through the exhibition spaces, and carefully curated and even interactive exhibits—all created a highly engaging space that did not overwhelm visitors.<sup>137</sup> The domestic scale and materials of the museum's interior made it informal and accessible to children and adults alike; the sharply raised berms circling the building also became a highlight as a feature that integrated the building into the broader landscape. The berms provided new spaces to congregate and vantage points for experiencing the park. The berms were adopted by many young visitors (across generations) as a quasi-play structure, where they could run and roll down the hill (Figure 48).

<sup>136</sup> Oliver, 2000; Biederman, 1990.

<sup>137</sup> Dreyfuss, 1977.



Figure 48. Hancock Park's Page Museum, with schoolchildren playing on berms



Source: *Los Angeles Times*, August 7, 1977

Since the Page Museum opened in 1977, changes have been relatively minimal. Aside from ongoing maintenance work and various improvements to interior spaces, fixtures, and finishes, the building has largely retained its original design, particularly along the exterior and surrounding site, setting, and landscapes. The most notable changes include the installation of the two monumental statues flanking the primary entrance progression, replacement of the original wood guard rail along the second floor, and the installation of new handrails to the primary entrance ramps and flanking exterior stairways.

### Architects | Thornton & Fagan Associates

The Page Museum was designed by the Pasadena-based architecture firm of Thornton & Fagan Associates. Founded by architects Franklin W. Thornton and Willis E. Fagan, Thornton & Fagan operated in the region from 1970 until 1980, completing a range of residential, commercial, and institutional commissions predominantly in Pasadena and the surrounding San Gabriel Valley.<sup>138</sup> Their most well-known building appears to have been the Page Museum, a commission awarded to them in 1975 through the efforts of George C. Page (as described above). Additional known and publicized works, all in Pasadena, include the Late Modern-style Pasadena Medical Arts Building (50 Bellefontaine Street), constructed in 1974; "Tara West," a 1978 Georgian Revival-style residence at 640 Oak Knoll Circle inspired by the plantation home in the film *Gone with the Wind*; and the Late Modern-style Bridge House at 819 Las Palmas Road, constructed in 1979.<sup>139</sup>

In 1980, Thornton & Fagan merged with the firm Urban Design Disciplines. The resulting firm was reorganized as Thornton, Fagan, Brant, and Rancourt, Inc. (TFBR), with the addition of principals Daniel L. Rancourt and Marilyn Brant, an architect and planner, respectively.<sup>140</sup> Thornton and Fagan also maintained a development company, founded in 1975 and known as Thornton & Fagan, Inc. Available records suggest that the development company focused on a mixture of residential and commercial developments in the Pasadena area and San Gabriel Valley communities. Projects included the Neo-Mediterranean Revival-style La Canada Crest Condominiums (2145 La Cañada Crest, La Cañada-

<sup>138</sup> "TFBR, New Architectural Firm, Opens in Pasadena," *Los Angeles Times*, May 4, 1980.

<sup>139</sup> "Four-Story Building Going Up in Pasadena," *Los Angeles Times*, March 24, 1974; Ryon, R., "Pasadena Home Copies Mansion of Famous Film," *Los Angeles Times*, July 2, 1978; Advertisement "Hot Property - 819 Las Palmas Road, Pasadena," *Los Angeles Times*, April 1, 1977.

<sup>140</sup> "TFBR, New Architectural Firm, Opens in Pasadena," *Los Angeles Times*, May 4, 1980.

Flintridge), constructed in 1980, and the Neo-Queen-Anne-style multi-family residential development of Page's Victorian Court (444 S. Los Robles Avenue, Pasadena).<sup>141</sup>

### **Franklin W. Thornton, AIA**

Franklin Wilberforce Thornton was born in Los Angeles in 1934.<sup>142</sup> His father, Hugh Thornton, worked as a sales representative for Palos Verdes Estates in the 1920s, but by the 1940s had shifted to a career in landscape architecture.<sup>143</sup> Thornton grew up in the Los Angeles area and ultimately attended Pasadena City College, where he studied architecture and graduated in 1958.<sup>144</sup> Sources illuminating his early years of professional practice were not available; by 1970, he had formed a partnership with his colleague Willis E. Fagan, which would define his career over subsequent decades. Thornton eventually started his own architecture practice, in addition to his shared projects with Fagan. The extent of his solo work is largely undocumented, though some single-family residences in the late 1980s have been attributed to him.<sup>145</sup> Available sources suggest he continued to practice architecture into subsequent decades, primarily throughout the San Gabriel Valley.

### **Willis E. Fagan**

Willis Endford Fagan was born in October 1938 in the city of Daloa in then-French West Africa (now Ivory Coast). His parents, Anne and Thomas Fagan, were missionaries from Northern Ireland and Canada, respectively, who had been living and working in Africa during the late 1930s and early 1940s. In 1942, the Fagans migrated to Canada and lived in the Toronto, Ontario, region before emigrating to the United States in 1948, where they settled in the San Gabriel Valley.<sup>146</sup> Fagan lived in the San Gabriel Valley throughout high school, ultimately graduating from Rosemead High School in 1956.<sup>147</sup>

By the early 1960s, Fagan was working as an architectural draftsman in the San Gabriel area.<sup>148</sup> In 1970, Fagan partnered with Frank Thornton to form Thornton & Fagan Associates, which they continued to operate over the following decade, in addition to their development company Thornton & Fagan, Inc. While scant available information has been identified on Fagan's career starting in the 1980s, sources suggest that he continued to practice architecture, working in the Pasadena-San Gabriel area. He remains most widely known for his work designing the Page Museum.

## **Architecture | Brutalism**

Constructed in 1977, the Page Museum exhibits elements of the Modernist variation known as "Brutalism." This style was developed in Europe during the mid-twentieth century and popularized through the works of renowned Swiss architect Le Corbusier and British architects Alison and Peter Smithson. The term "Brutalism" is thought to have derived from the French phrase *beton brut*, meaning raw concrete, in reference to the use of unfinished concrete as the primary design feature, both in terms of articulation of forms and materiality. The reliance on unfinished concrete and the projection of structure

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<sup>141</sup> "La Canada Crest Plans Month-Long Open House," *Monrovia-News Post*, October 5, 1980; Advertisement "Preview Opening – Page's Victorian Court," *Los Angeles Times*, August 2, 1980.

<sup>142</sup> Franklin Wilberforce Thornton in "California Birth Index, 1905-1995." Available at: <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/5247/>. Accessed April 27, 2022.

<sup>143</sup> "Palos Verdes Estates," *Los Angeles Evening Express*, February 27, 1926; Frank Thornton in "1940 U.S. Federal Census." Available at: <https://www.ancestry.com>. Accessed April 27, 2022.

<sup>144</sup> Franklin W. Thornton in "U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900-1999." Available at: <https://www.ancestry.com>. Accessed April 27, 2022.

<sup>145</sup> "Arcadia Manor Listed for \$1.39 Million," *Los Angeles Times* February 24, 1990.

<sup>146</sup> Willis Endford Fagan in "U.S. Border Crossings from Canada to U.S., 1895-1960." Available at: <https://www.ancestry.com>. Accessed April 27, 2022.

<sup>147</sup> Willis Endford Fagan in "U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900-1999." Available at: <https://www.ancestry.com>. Accessed April 27, 2022.

<sup>148</sup> Records show that Fagan entered Canada in September 1956 and returned to the United States in May 1957, which corresponds with the school year calendar. While this suggests that Fagan may have enrolled in a drafting program in Canada during this period, no supporting evidence has been found at this time.



as ornamentation through strong geometric elements was intended to create a universal and honest architectural style.<sup>149</sup>

Developed as an architectural philosophy in the 1950s, the concept of Brutalism evolved into a more codified style during the 1960s as it gained popularity in the United States. It represented a reaction to the minimalist and glazing-centric treatments of other Modernist architectural styles and was often combined with elements and architectural details of other emerging styles from the period, namely New Formalism, Expressionism, and Structuralism. This transitional nature of Brutalism as part of the broader Modern architectural movement, particularly in the 1960s, results in a variety of compositions that can range from more traditional/classical and symmetrical forms to more futuristic and irregular designs. The unifying aspects found in Brutalism include strong tectonic, angular, and sculptural forms expressed through exposed concrete throughout, which in turn lends to a monumentality and heaviness that was seen as a direct reaction to the light and airy qualities of other Modern styles. These bulky and proportionally exaggerated compositional qualities translated into a perceived permanence, which was appealing in the design for several civic, institutional, and commercial buildings during this period.<sup>150</sup>

Significant examples of Brutalist civic and institutional buildings in the Los Angeles area include:

- **Glendale Municipal Services Building** (633 E. Broadway, Glendale), A.C. Martin & Associates and Merrill W. Baird, 1966
- **St. Basil Catholic Church** (3611 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles), A.C. Martin & Associates, 1969
- **Glendale Central Library** (222 E. Harvard Street, Glendale), Welton Becket & Associates, 1973
- **Inglewood Civic Center** (1 Manchester Boulevard, Inglewood), Charles Luckman Associates and Robert Herrick Carter, 1973
- **Braille Institute of America** (741 N. Vermont Avenue, Los Angeles), William L. Pereira & Associates, 1975
- **Japanese American Community and Cultural Center** (244 S. San Pedro Street, Los Angeles), Kazumi Adachi, Kiyoski Swano, and Hideo Matsunaga, 1978 to 1983

## Overview of Construction Chronology

This section provides a general construction chronology for Hancock Park and the La Brea Tar Pits complex and facilities, focusing on significant construction activities and master planning efforts directly preceding and ever since the property's donation to the County of Los Angeles. This section provides a concise summary of the construction history provided in Section 5 (Historic Setting and Context).

Table 3 below describes the highlights in the construction chronology of Hancock Park and the La Brea Tar Pits. Following the timeline, a visual overview of the site's history is provided in a series of historic aerial photographs, in Figure 49 through Figure 55.

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<sup>149</sup> Paul, D. *SurveyLA Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey - Citywide Historic Context Statement, Architecture and Engineering 1850-1980, LA. Modernism 1919-1980, Late Modern 1966-1990*, pp. 26-27. Prepared for the City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources.

<sup>150</sup> Paul, pp. 27-28.

**Table 3. Timeline of Construction at Hancock Park and La Brea Tar Pits**

DATE	EVENT
1828:	Provisional land grant Rancho La Brea given to Antonio Jose Rocha
1850s:	Rancho La Brea purchased by brothers John and Major Henry Hancock. Henry and wife Ida later construct a ranch home on the banks of the Lake Pit at an unknown date
1860s- 1880s:	Hancock excavates “brea” tar material from the property, marking the beginning of the various tar pits throughout the property
1883:	Major Hancock passes away, and Rancho La Brea is transferred to his wife and children
1900s:	Ida Hancock leases a portion of Rancho La Brea to the Salt Lake Oil Company for oil exploration; the company in turn develops the Salt Lake Oil Fields The Hancocks establish their own oil venture, the Rancho La Brea Oil Company, and begin producing oil, amassing a vast fortune in the process
1901:	Oil exploration and geological studies result in some of the earliest discoveries of prehistoric fossils on the site, prompting multiple excavations in subsequent years
1913- 1915:	Hancock family grants exclusive rights to excavate fossils at Rancho La Brea to the Los Angeles County Museum of History, Science, and Art, which creates over 100 pits over a two-year time frame G. Allan Hancock begins coordinating with the County to donate the land around the tar pits following the completion of the excavations
1916:	Hancock announces first official donation of 32-acres of land to the County Paul G. Thiene and Lloyd Wright plan for Hancock Park released, which includes an Olmstedian-like design with areas of Beaux-Arts formalism; plans are not implemented, though negotiations continue
1923:	Negotiations for Hancock’s donated land, now comprising 25 acres, are finalized
1924:	Donation of Hancock Park to the County is made official County announces initial site improvements
1926:	Revised plan for “Pleistocene Park” released Plan similar to 1916 Thiene and Wright design, with meandering pathways, central lawns, preservation of oil lakes, expanded excavation pits, and prominent entrances at Wilshire Boulevard “Pleistocene Park” also includes plans for a museum on the banks of the Lake Pit, with an ornamental footbridge connecting the museum to Wilshire Boulevard
1928:	Perimeter plantings and footpaths for entry to the park are installed
Ca.1930:	Stone walls installed around open excavation pits, and stone foot bridge added Spanish Colonial Revival-style groundskeeper residence, operations building, and service yard constructed at the easter perimeter of the park
1938:	New comfort stations, drainage and water conveyance systems, and repairs to the stone masonry walls and footbridge constructed
1940:	New plans for Hancock Park issued, which includes a prominent, circular pathway and radiating, meandering networks throughout the park The 1940 plan was not ultimately implemented
1948:	Harry Sims Bent hired as architect and planner for a new, multi-year Hancock Park Master Plan

**DATE EVENT**

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- 1947- Master Plan Phase 1 commences, with site upgrades, new comfort stations, improved  
1952: water conveyance, restored streambed, new circulation pathways
- 1952: Master Plan Phase 1 concludes, culminating in addition of Observation Pit
- 1958: Celebrated landscape architect Ralph Cornell hired to develop plan for Hancock  
Park, which would include museum north of Lake Pit.  
While plans are not implemented, they inform future studies and design development
- 1959: Potential plans for a new fine arts complex in Hancock Park (which will become  
LACMA) considered in feasibility study
- 1961: William L. Pereira & Associates hired to develop a campus plan and design for  
LACMA, Hancock Park, and a La Brea Tar Pits museum
- 1962: The eastern portion of Hancock Park is redeveloped  
Alterations include construction the surface parking lot in the northeast corner of the  
site, chain-link security fencing around excavation pits and Lake Pit, new comfort  
station and pathways around Lake Pit
- 1964: LACMA completed and opened to the public
- 1967: New plan developed for Hancock Park and La Brea Tar Pits complex, focused on  
re-envisioning the eastern portion of the park  
Plans include addition of statuary of Pleistocene animals at select locations  
throughout the park, including along the banks of the Lake Pit
- 1969: New excavations begin in the center of the park (which continue to the present day)  
Support facilities added include shafts, buildings, and sheds for excavation  
operations, security fencing, and temporary and permanent shade structures
- 1974: Plans announced for a new La Brea Tar Pits Museum  
Donor George C. Page selects Thornton, Fagan & Associates as project architect
- 1975: Construction on the George C. Page Museum commences
- 1977: George C. Page Museum is completed and opens to the public  
Related site-design changes include new network of pathways fanning out from new  
axial entrance at park's southeast corner, as well as a new plaza northeast of Lake Pit
- 1980s: Additions and reconfigurations at the rear of LACMA results in reconfiguration of  
the concentric pathways surrounding Observation Pit
- 1989: LACMA's Pavilion for Japanese Art opens northwest of Lake Pit
- 1994: Hancock Park Master Plan prepared by Hann/Olin completed, outlining proposed  
changes to Hancock Park and the La Brea Tar Pits Museum and Grounds
- 1999: Redevelopment of Hancock Park landscape concludes, with upgrades including  
reconfiguration of pathways, addition of comfort stations, amphitheater and seat wall  
installation in park's northwest quadrant, picnic area, reconfiguration of statues,  
stream restoration, 60,000 plantings, reconfiguration of Page Museum entry plaza,  
removal of the Lake Pit observation deck, and redevelopment of southwest entrance  
to Hancock Park, with circular entrance plaza
- 2014: Observation Pit refurbished and reopened to the public  
Site improvements completed during this time include new wayfinding and  
interpretive signage, upgrades to 1999 comfort station, new security fencing, and  
reconfiguration of excavation site at Project 23 to create a more pleasant and  
cohesive aesthetic for Hancock Park

**DATE EVENT**

2019: Plans to redevelop the La Brea Tar Pits Museum and Grounds announced to the public

2020: Demolition of the original LACMA complex commences for construction of a new LACMA building

**Figure 49. Project site, 1928; showing Lake Pit, perimeter trees, and diagonal entry path in northwest corner, which led to Hancock ranch house northeast of Lake Pit (and extant as of 1928)**



Source: Environmental Data Research, 2022



**Figure 50. Project site, 1938; shows perimeter trees and diagonal entry path in northeast corner leading to Hancock ranch house**



Source: Environmental Data Resources, 2022

**Figure 51. Project site, 1956; as of 1956, Hancock residence had been removed, perimeter trees were mature, diagonal entry path intact and extended along northern expanse of the Lake Pit, and northeast parking lot and adjacent pathways (which are extant) had been added**



Source: Environmental Data Resources, 2022



Figure 52. Project site, 1971; LACMA now occupies southwestern quadrant of Hancock Park



Source: Environmental Data Resources, 2022

Figure 53. Project site, 1977; the Page Museum opens in 1977, realizing a 50+-year-old goal for the La Brea Tar Pits complex; the Page's orthogonal, pyramidal site reads clearly in this aerial photo



Source: Environmental Data Resources, 2022



Figure 54. Project site, 1994; the Pavilion for Japanese Art is now adjacent, to the west, to Lake Pit



Source: Environmental Data Resources, 2022

Figure 55. Project site, 2007; shows master plan enhancements from late 1990s, most notably in northwestern quadrant, as well as the truncation of Hancock Park at northwest border with LACMA; Observation Pit now marks the western boundary of La Brea Tar Pits complex



Source: Environmental Data Resources, 2022

## 6. HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY AND RESULTS

This section provides an overview of previously identified historic resources and of the results of a field survey of properties within the CEQA Area of Potential Effects (APE). For purposes of this study, the CEQA APE encompasses the project site and all directly adjacent or facing parcels.

### Previously Identified Historic Resources

Within the CEQA APE, 11 properties have been previously identified as historical resources pursuant to CEQA (Table 4). All 11 resources were identified through the City of Los Angeles citywide survey undertaking, SurveyLA; corresponding SurveyLA reports are cited throughout this section. None of these properties are included on the County of Los Angeles’s Historical Landmark Registry.

**Table 4. Previously Identified Historic Resources within CEQA APE**

Address(es) / Assessor’s Parcel Number	Property/Building Name   Inside or Outside Project Footprint	Built Date	CHR Status Code (Eval Source)
5801 Wilshire Boulevard (5508-016-902) (5905 Wilshire Boulevard in parcel data)	La Brea Tar Pits Historic District (inside project footprint)	Various	3S (SurveyLA)
5801 Wilshire Boulevard (5508-016-902) (5905 Wilshire Boulevard in parcel data)	George C. Page Museum (inside project footprint)	1977	3S (SurveyLA)
5801 Wilshire Boulevard (5508-016-902) (5905 Wilshire Boulevard in parcel data)	Hancock Park, Observation Pit (inside project footprint)	1952	3S (SurveyLA)
5905 Wilshire Boulevard (5508-016-902)	Pavilion for Japanese Art (outside project footprint)	1982–1988	3S (SurveyLA)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Street (north), Hauser Boulevard (east), 6 <sup>th</sup> Street (south), Fairfax Avenue (west)	Park La Brea Garden Apartments Historic District (outside project footprint)	1943 and 1951	3S (SurveyLA)
5757 W. Wilshire Boulevard (5508-015-009)	Prudential Square (outside project footprint)	1948	3S (SurveyLA)
5814 W. Wilshire Boulevard (5089-008-031) (5816 & 5818 W. Wilshire Boulevard)	Craft and Folk Art Museum (outside project footprint)	1930	3CS (SurveyLA)
5820 W. Wilshire Boulevard (5089-010-002)	Hancock Park Building (outside project footprint)	1958	3CS (SurveyLA)
5828 W. Wilshire Boulevard (5089-010-001) (710 S. Stanley Avenue, 5826 W. Wilshire Boulevard)	CMAY Gallery (formerly Arthur Murray Dance Studio) (outside project footprint)	1941	3S (SurveyLA)
5850 W. Wilshire Boulevard (5089-011-002) (5856 & 5858 W. Wilshire Boulevard)	Office Building (outside project footprint)	1951	3CS (SurveyLA)

**KEY**

3S—Appears eligible for National Register as an individual property through survey evaluation

3CS—Appears eligible for California Register as an individual property through survey evaluation

In addition, the records search of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) identified three previously recorded cultural resources: LAN-159 (P-19-000159; an archaeological site containing Native American-affiliated artifacts, in the northwest portion of the project site), LAN-1261H (P-19-001261; a historic-period refuse component associated with 1860s asphalt mining, located north of the lake pit); and P-19-171007 (Hancock Park-La Brea District, California Historical Landmark No. 170, determined NRHP-eligible under Criterion A; scientific contribution of fossils and the study of paleontology).

## Evaluation of Properties in CEQA APE

Field surveys and research were conducted to field check previous findings and to identify and research of-age, previously unevaluated properties within the CEQA APE. Table 5 summarizes the results of these efforts and Figure 56 present a visual overview of historical resources within the CEQA APE.

**Table 5. Field Survey Results**

#	Address(es) / Assessor's Parcel Number	Property/Building Name   Inside or Outside Project Footprint	Built Date	Historical Resource? (CHR Status)
1	5801 Wilshire Boulevard (5508-016-902) Recorded in County parcel data as 5905 Wilshire Boulevard	La Brea Tar Pits Historic District (inside project footprint); previously recorded as P-19-171007 (Hancock Park-La Brea District, California Historical Landmark No. 170, determined NRHP-eligible Criterion A; scientific contribution of fossils and the study of paleontology)	Various	Yes   3CS
2	5801 Wilshire Boulevard (5508-016-902) Recorded in County parcel data as 5905 Wilshire Boulevard	George C. Page Museum (inside project footprint)	1977	Yes   3S; 3CB
3	5801 Wilshire Boulevard (5508-016-902) Recorded in County parcel data as 5905 Wilshire Boulevard	Observation Pit (inside project footprint)	1952	Yes   3S; 3CB
4	5905 Wilshire Boulevard (5508-016-902) Eastern segment of LACMA, same address but separate parcel	Pavilion for Japanese Art (outside project footprint)	1982–1988	Yes   3S
5	555 S. Ogden Drive/5509-004-013 (1943) 5900 Lindenhurst Avenue/5509-004-010 (1943) 530 Alandele Avenue/5509-004-007 (1943) 501 S. Fuller Avenue/5509-004-006 (1943) 5721 W. 6th Street/5509-004-004 (1943)	Park La Brea Garden Apartment Historic District (outside project footprint) District bounded by 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street (north), Hauser Boulevard (east), 6th Street (south), Fairfax Avenue (west).	1943 and 1951	Yes   3S
6	600 S. Curson Avenue (5508-015-006)	"Museum Terrace" Apartments (outside project footprint)	1986	No   6Z (1)
7	640 S. Curson Avenue (5508-015-008)	"One Museum Square" Apartments (outside project footprint)	2021	No   6Z (1)
8	5757 W. Wilshire Boulevard (5508-015-009)	Prudential Square (outside project footprint)	1948	Yes   3S
9	5800 W. Wilshire Boulevard (5089-010-005)	Office building (outside project footprint)	1958	No   6Z (2)
10	5814 W. Wilshire Boulevard (5089-010-003)	Craft and Folk Art Museum (outside project footprint)	1930	Yes   3CS
11	5820 W. Wilshire Boulevard (5089-010-002)	Hancock Park Building (outside project footprint)	1958	Yes   3CS
12	5828 W. Wilshire Boulevard (5089-010-001) (710 S. Stanley Avenue, 5826 W. Wilshire Boulevard)	CMAY Gallery (formerly Arthur Murray Dance Studio (outside project footprint)	1947 (LA Co Tax Assessor)	Yes   3S
13	5850 W. Wilshire Boulevard (5089-011-002) (5856 and 5858 W. Wilshire Boulevard)	Office Building (outside project footprint)	1951	Yes   3CS
14	APN 5089-011-154	Vacant land	N/A	N/A
15	5900 Wilshire Boulevard (5086-021-038) Oversized parcel extends to S. Ogden Drive; includes the following addresses: 5950 W. Wilshire Boulevard; 714–716 and 717–719 S. Genesee Avenue; and 5904–5950 W. Wilshire Boulevard	Mutual Benefit Life Plaza (outside project footprint)	1969–1971	Yes   3CS

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 La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan Environmental Impact Report, Los Angeles*

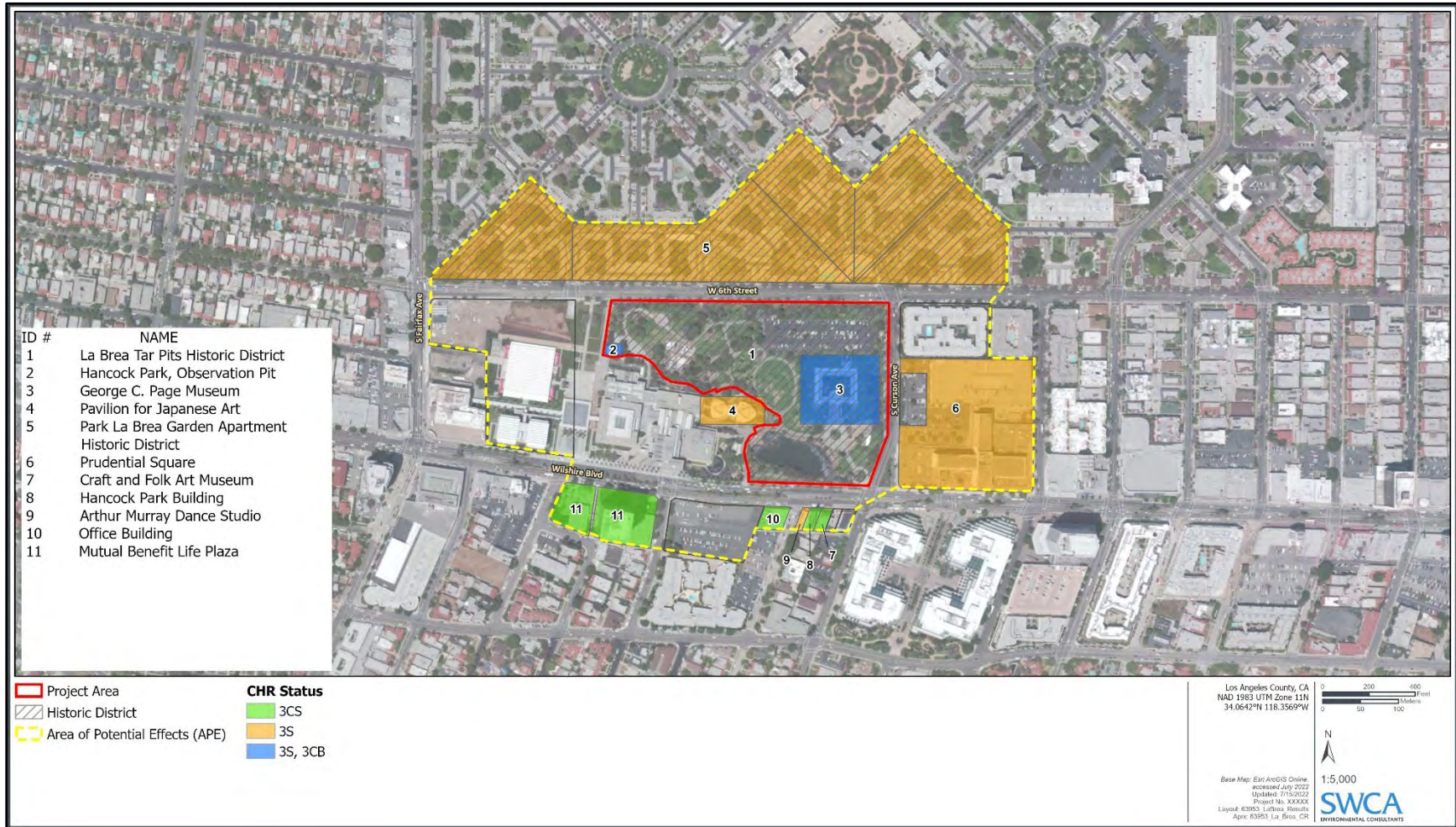
#	Address(es) / Assessor's Parcel Number	Property/Building Name   Inside or Outside Project Footprint	Built Date	Historical Resource? (CHR Status)
16	5905 Wilshire Boulevard (5508-017-009); western segment of LACMA, same address as eastern segment, different APN	Los Angeles County Museum of Art (outside project footprint)	Various	No (new museum under construction)

KEY

- 3B— Appears eligible for NR both individually and as a contributor to an NR eligible district through survey evaluation
- 3S—Appears eligible for NR as an individual property through survey evaluation
- 3CB— Appears eligible for CR both individually and as a contributor to a CR eligible district through survey evaluation
- 3CS—Appears eligible for California Register as an individual property through survey evaluation
- 6Z (1)—Less than 50 years old and not of exceptional significance
- 6Z (2)—More than 50 years old but lacks historical integrity



Figure 56. Field survey results



## **Properties within Project Footprint**

The following sections provide information on each of the properties within the CEQA APE, beginning with the project site, then progressing from north, east, south, and west through the area of potential indirect effects (i.e., the adjacent and facing parcels). Character-defining features for the historical resources within the project footprint are included.

### **1. LA BREA TAR PITS HISTORIC DISTRICT | 5801 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD CHR STATUS CODE: 3CS**

Based on research and site visits completed for this study, the La Brea Tar Pits Historic District **appears eligible for landmark designation at the state, county, and city levels**. The district was previously recorded as P-19-171007 (Hancock Park-La Brea District, California Historical Landmark No. 170, determined NRHP-eligible Criterion A; scientific contribution of fossils and the study of paleontology). The district meets Criteria 1/1/1 as a unique, significant collection of resources and related cultural institutions and facilities specifically designed to recover, curate, and display those resources to the public, in an example of cultural/institutional development in Los Angeles extending back nearly a century.

Due to its eligibility for the CRHR and for local county and city listing, the La Brea Tar Pits Historic District is **a historical resource for purposes of CEQA**.

The La Brea Tar Pits Historic District consists of related cultural/paleontological resources, site/landscape features, and institutional facilities reflecting the story of over 100 years of scientific excavation, study, public education, and exhibition of one of the world's most significant concentrations of Pleistocene-age fossils.

Located on Wilshire Boulevard's Miracle Mile, the historic district is bounded by Wilshire, Curson Avenue, 6th Street, and the adjacent Los Angeles County Museum of Art complex and Japanese Pavilion. Excluding these two museums, the historic district boundaries correspond to those of Hancock Park. While Hancock Park itself, in terms of its topography, circulation corridors, and landscaping, has changed over time (with significant changes completed in the 1990s, as noted in Section 5), the extant contributing elements of this cultural landscape are intact and convey the historic district's significance.

In 2014/2015, the La Brea Tar Pits complex was found eligible as a historic district for the NRHP, CRHR, and for local listing through SurveyLA. The property was found to be eligible for listing in the NRHP and CRHR, as well as designation as a Los Angeles HCM under Criteria A, 1, and A, respectively with significance under two contexts. The reasons for significance for each were described in the following manner: the district was found to be a historical resource as an "excellent and extremely rare example of an intact archaeological and paleontological district in a densely developed urban area," and for its "association with the development of county-owned cultural institutions along Miracle Mile in Los Angeles."<sup>151</sup>

Due to recent changes to the site's topography, pathways, and landscaping, in particular through the northwestern quadrant of the park, however, the district does not appear eligible for the NRHP. The period of significance begins in the Pleistocene era and ends in 1977; this end date marks the culmination of over 50 years of effort to build a dedicated museum within the La Brea Tar Pits complex. In 1977, the Page Museum opened to display the paleontological resources on the site of their discovery.

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<sup>151</sup> Architectural Resources Group. 2015. Appendix C: Historic Districts and Planning Districts. In *Survey LA Historic Resources Survey Report – Wilshire Community Plan Area*, p. 958. Prepared for City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources.

Fossils and interpretive exhibits had previously, primarily, been exhibited at the Natural History Museum in Exposition Park.

(Character-defining features of the Page Museum and Observation Pit, which are individually eligible, are described below.)

In spite of alterations to the park overall, the rarity and significance of the site’s paleontological resources and the buildings constructed to facilitate their active study and exhibition reflect a history of institutional and cultural development in Los Angeles (if not the entire United States) that is unique.

Table 6 provides a visual overview of each character-defining feature, along with its era/date of construction. The historic district’s character-defining features include but may not be limited to these components.

**Table 6. Character-Defining Features and Components, La Brea Tar Pits Historic District**




Photo	Character-Defining / Contributing Feature	Era / Date of Construction
	Lake Pit	Lake pit excavated in 19 <sup>th</sup> century
	Excavation pits	Resources dating to Pleistocene era; facilities through present day
	Oil Creek	Topographic feature







Photo	Character-Defining / Contributing Feature	Era / Date of Construction
	<p>Oversized parcel with significant amount of open space</p>	<p>Circa 1910s through present day; by the 1920s, the site's contrast with surrounding areas, which were being subdivided and developed, had become obvious. This contrast intensified with commercial development on Wilshire spearheaded by Ross and became pronounced with the completion of Metropolitan Life's Park La Brea complex.</p>
	<p>Perimeter trees and other mature trees within the park</p>	<p>Circa 1920s through 1977</p>
	<p>Southeast corner entrance from Wilshire Boulevard</p>	<p>Circa 1920s</p>
	<p>Remnant stone walls (Pit 9 and 13); these walls are assumed to date to the 1930s addition of stone walls encircling pit sites throughout the northwestern quadrant of the park</p>	<p>1930s</p>



Photo	Character-Defining / Contributing Feature	Era / Date of Construction
	Observation Pit	1952
	Statuary depicting prehistoric animals	Various
	G. Allan Hancock memorial, placed in 1963 (east of Japanese Pavilion, north of Lake Pit)	1963
	Page Museum	1977



Photo	Character-Defining / Contributing Feature	Era / Date of Construction
	<p>Page Museum topography, including berm</p>	<p>1977</p>
	<p>Circulation corridors and pathways (i.e., diagonal entry path, path adjacent to the Lake Pit, and pathways in north-central portion of the park flanked with mature trees</p>	<p>1920s through 1970s</p>
	<p>Overall spatial relationships between buildings, structures, open space, park/recreational areas, resources, and natural features</p>	<p>Various</p>

Figure 57 presents an overview of the district’s primary contributing features, followed by a series of photographs illustrating some of these features (Figure 57 through Figure 59).

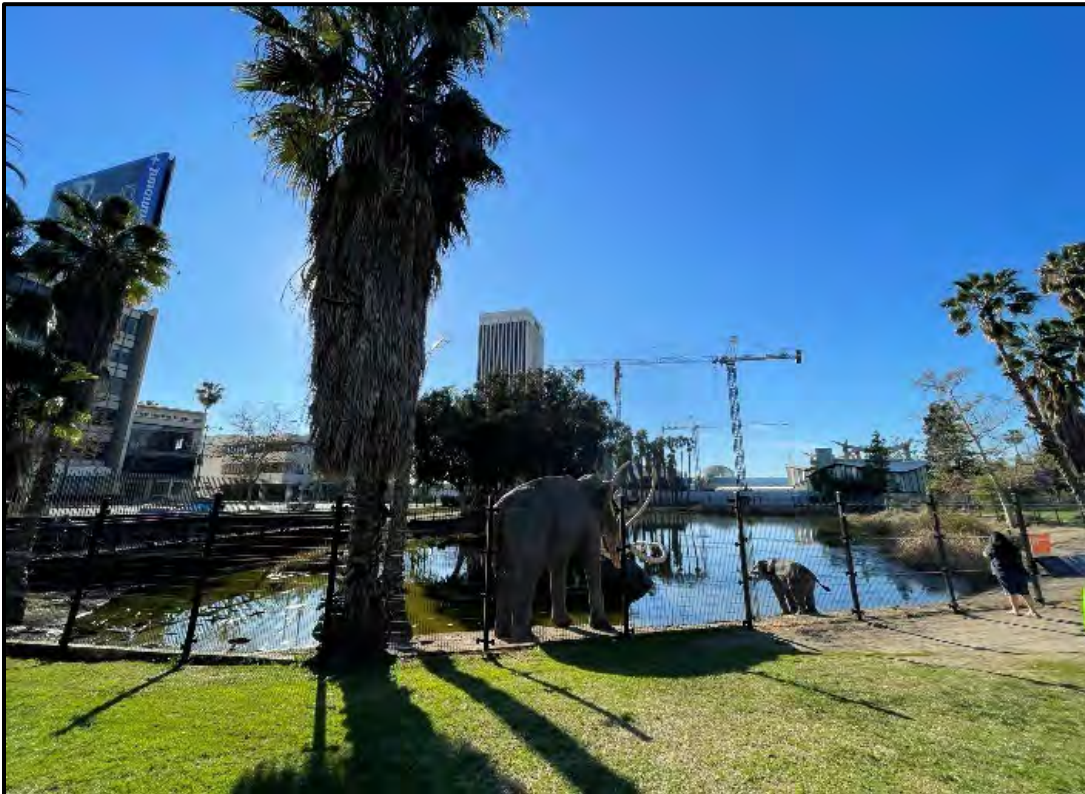
Figure 57. Overview of La Brea Tar Pits Historic District, contributing features



Source: SWCA, 2022



**Figure 58. Overview of La Brea Tar Pits Historic District, Page Museum, with pyramid-like site, berms, and adjacent lawn (top) and Lake Pit (bottom)**



Source: SWCA, 2022



**Figure 59. Overview of La Brea Tar Pits Historic District, active dig sites (Pits 3, 4, 61/67) (top) and mature trees framing park, concentrated along northern and eastern borders of park (bottom)**



Source: SWCA, 2022



## 2. PAGE MUSEUM, LA BREA TAR PITS | 5801 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD CHR STATUS CODE: 3S

In 2015, the 1977 Page Museum was identified as eligible for inclusion in the NRHP and CRHR and for designation as a local HCM as part of SurveyLA. The building was documented as an “excellent example of Late Modern institutional architecture, designed by local architecture firm Thornton and Fagan.”<sup>152</sup> The building is noted for having exceptional architectural significance and was determined eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C and using Criteria Consideration G (“Properties that Have Achieved Significance within the Past 50 Years”). The survey also found the Page Museum eligible for the CRHR and as a local HCM under Criteria 3/3, respectively.

The building has not changed significantly since it was documented and evaluated as part of the 2015 survey; this study carries forward the finding of NRHP, CRHR, and local HCM eligibility for the Page Museum. In addition, the property appears eligible under County Criterion 3. Therefore, the property qualifies as **a historical resource for purposes of CEQA**.

The primary character-defining features of the Page Museum include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- “Burial mound” berm/ pyramidal massing of the building and site
- Expansive adjacent lawn on the west
- Prominent fiberglass frieze with bas relief Pleistocene scenes and pronounced overhangs
- Structural space frame that supports the frieze and seems to float above podium level
- High degree of indoor-outdoor integration
- Open-air configuration at the podium level, with fiberglass frieze opening onto the central atrium
- Open, central atrium space with landscaping
- Symmetrical design composition, of the building and its site
- Sloped berms with turf plantings integrated into the exterior wall of the museum’s ground floor
- Descending entrance on south, flanked by stairways leading to upper podium at the second-floor
- Laboratory space open to public view (interior)

Figure 60 through Figure 64 present current (2022) views of the Page Museum.

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<sup>152</sup> Architectural Resources Group. 2015. Appendix A: Individual Resources. In *Survey LA Historic Resources Survey Report – Wilshire Community Plan Area*, p. 164. Prepared for the City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources.

Figure 60. Principal (south-facing) entrance to Page Museum, southeast perspective (top) and south perspective (bottom)



Source: SWCA, 2022



**Figure 61. Page Museum, elevated berm and lawn (top) and frieze, open roof/podium, and interior atrium (bottom)**



Source: SWCA, 2022



**Figure 62. Page Museum and berm, northeast elevation**



Source: SWCA, 2022

**Figure 63. Page Museum podium and berm, west elevation**



Source: SWCA, 2022



**Figure 64. Open-air atrium, with landscaping, in center of Page Museum**



Source: SWCA, 2022

### 3. OBSERVATION PIT, LA BREA TAR PITS | 5801 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD CHR STATUS CODE: 3S

In 2015, the Observation Pit was documented in SurveyLA as an “excellent example of Mid-Century Modern institutional architecture, designed by notable local architect Harry Sims Bent.”<sup>153</sup> The 1952 building was determined eligible for listing in the NRHP and CRHR, and for local HCM designation under Criteria C/3/3, respectively.

The building has not changed significantly since it was documented and evaluated as part of the 2015 survey; this study carries forward the finding of NRHP, CRHR, and local HCM eligibility for the Observation Pit (Figure 65). In addition, the property appears eligible under County Criterion 3. Therefore, the Observation Pit **qualifies as a historical resource for purposes of CEQA.**

The primary character-defining features of the Observation Pit include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Circular layout;
- One-story, horizontal and cylindrical massing;
- Flat roof profile with circular skylight openings and irregular parapet;
- Brick masonry as the primary material, both at the exterior and interior;
- Deeply recessed open-air entrance with low-profile canopy integrated into the roof profile;
- Band of window openings along the southern portion of the cylindrical façade;
- Pronounced cylindrical support columns with brick masonry veneer;
- Below-grade organization of the interior space;
- Full-height, cylindrical open interior volume at the center of the building framing the exposed excavation pit and fossils;
- Pedestrian stairs and observation platforms along the perimeter of the interior with metal guard rails; and
- Park setting and surrounding landscape.

<sup>153</sup> Architectural Resources Group, 2015, Appendix A, p. 163.



**Figure 65. Observation Pit, main entrance (top) and interior (bottom); proposed project does not include changes to this building**



Source: SWCA, 2022

## **Properties outside Project Footprint, within CEQA APE**

This section provides information on properties outside the project footprint but within the CEQA APE.

### **1. PAVILION FOR JAPANESE ART, LACMA | 5905 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD | CHR STATUS CODE: 3S**

In 2015, the Pavilion for Japanese Art, built in 1988, was identified as a historical resource eligible for listing in the NRHP and CRHR and for designation as a local HCM as part of SurveyLA. The building was found eligible as an “[e]xcellent example of an Organic style institutional building, designed by notable architect Bruce Goff and completed by notable architect Bart Prince.”<sup>154</sup> Goff’s arresting and expressionistic design incorporates folded panel walls suggestive of tatami mats and a roof superstructure reminiscent of Japanese basketry. The building is noted for having exceptional architectural significance and was determined eligible for NRHP listing under Criterion C and using Criteria Consideration G “Properties that Have Achieved Significance within the Past 50 Years”). The survey also found the Late Modern-style Pavilion for Japanese Art eligible for the CRHR and as a local HCM under Criteria 3/3, respectively. The building has not changed significantly since it was evaluated in 2015; this study carries forward the finding of NRHP, CRHR, and local HCM eligibility for the Pavilion for Japanese Art (Figure 66). In addition, the property appears eligible under County Criterion 3. The building is therefore **considered to be a historical resource for purposes of CEQA.**

**Figure 66. Pavilion for Japanese Art, rear elevation (front elevation currently not accessible due to LACMA construction)**



Source: SWCA, 2022

<sup>154</sup> Architectural Resources Group, 2015, Appendix A, p. 164.



## 2. PARK LA BREA GARDEN APARTMENT HISTORIC DISTRICT | CHR STATUS CODE: 3S

In 2015, as part of SurveyLA, Park La Brea Garden Apartment Historic District was identified as a historical resource eligible for the NRHP, CRHR, and as a local HPOZ under criteria C/3/3 as “an excellent example of a 1940s–1950s garden apartment complex in the area, unique in Los Angeles for its inclusion of high-rise as well as low-rise multi-family residential buildings.”<sup>155</sup>

The district was found eligible under the context of Residential Development and Suburbanization, 1850–1980, subcontext of Multi-Family Residential Development 1910–1980, theme of Multi-Family Residential, 1910–1980, and the property type residential multi-family/garden apartment complex.

The district was designed by Leonard Schultze & Associates with Earl T. Heitschmidt. Park La Brea’s buildings are “arranged in an innovative radial plan, with intersecting interior streets converging on circular landscaped areas. The two-story buildings are largely U-shaped, surrounding landscaped courtyards, and are in a Modern interpretation of the American Colonial Revival style. ...There are no apparent alterations.”<sup>156</sup>

The Park La Brea Garden Apartment Historic District is bounded by 3rd Street (north), Hauser Boulevard (east), 6th Street (south), and Fairfax Avenue (west). The parcels directly facing the project site across W. 6th Street, and therefore within the APE, are: 1) 555 S. Ogden Drive/5509-004-013 (1943); 2) 5900 Lindenhurst Avenue/5509-004-010 (1943); 3) 530 Alandele Avenue/5509-004-007 (1943); 4) 501 S. Fuller Avenue/5509-004-006 (1943); and 5) 5721 W. 6th Street/5509-004-004 (1943).

The buildings within the CEQA APE have not changed significantly since they were documented as part of the 2015 survey (Figure 67 and Figure 68); this study carries forward the finding of NRHP, CRHR, and local HPOZ eligibility for the Park La Brea Garden Apartment Historic District. Both the district as a whole and each contributing building within the CEQA APE is **considered to be a historical resource for purposes of CEQA**.

Figure 67. Overview of Park La Brea Garden Apartment Historic District



Source: SWCA, 2022

<sup>155</sup> Architectural Resources Group. 2015. Appendix B: Historic Districts, Planning Districts and Multi-Property Resources. In *Survey LA Historic Resources Survey Report – Wilshire Community Plan Area*, p. 986. Prepared for the City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources.

<sup>156</sup> Architectural Resources Group, 2015, Appendix B, p. 986.

**Figure 68. Overview of Park La Brea Garden Apartment Historic District, adjacent to the north, across 6th Street, from proposed project site**



Source: SWCA, 2022

### **3. 600 S. CURSON AVENUE (5508-015-006) | CHR STATUS CODE: 6Z**

This property was constructed in 1986 and remodeled extensively between approximately 2018 and 2021, according to building records on file with the City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety (Figure 69). The property was not evaluated as part of SurveyLA, due to its date of construction. Available sources do not indicate that the property was designed by a master architect, and the property does not appear to possess exceptional significance. Therefore, this property **is not a historical resource pursuant to CEQA.**



Figure 69. 600 S. Curson Avenue, “Museum Terrace” Apartments



Source: SWCA, 2022



#### 4. 640 S. CURSON AVENUE (5508-015-008) | CHR STATUS CODE: 6Z

This property was constructed in 2021 (Figure 70). Available sources do not indicate that the property was designed by a master architect, and the property does not appear to possess exceptional significance. Therefore, this property is **not a historical resource pursuant to CEQA**.

Figure 70. 640 S. Curson Avenue, “One Museum Square” apartments



Source: SWCA, 2022

## 5. PRUDENTIAL SQUARE | 5757 W. WILSHIRE BOULEVARD | CHR STATUS CODE: 3S

In 2015 SurveyLA identified this historical resource as eligible for listing in the NRHP and CRHR and for designation as a local HCM. The 1948 office complex known as Prudential Square was designed by Wurdeman and Becket. Listed in Los Angeles County Tax Assessor data as 5757 W. Wilshire Boulevard, the Prudential Square complex spans the addresses of 5711–5779 W. Wilshire Boulevard

The property was found eligible under the context of Architecture and Engineering, 1850–1980, subcontext of L.A. Modernism, 1919–1980, theme of Post-War Modernism, 1946–1976, Corporate International, 1946–1976, under the commercial property type. The property meets NRHP Criterion C, CRHR Criterion 3, and local HCM criteria 3 as an “[e]xcellent example of a Corporate International style office and retail building on Wilshire’s Miracle Mile, designed by notable local firm Wurdeman and Becket. This property was the first Corporate International building on Wilshire Boulevard and at the time of its construction was the largest of its type in the city.”<sup>157</sup>

This building complex has not changed significantly since it was evaluated as part of the 2015 survey; this study carries forward the finding of NRHP, CRHR, and local HCM eligibility for Prudential Square (Figure 71). The building is therefore **considered to be a historical resource for purposes of CEQA.**

**Figure 71. 5757 W. Wilshire Boulevard, Prudential Square**



Source: SWCA, 2022

<sup>157</sup> Architectural Resources Group, 2015, Appendix A, p. 227.



## 6. 5800 W. WILSHIRE BOULEVARD | CHR STATUS CODE: 6Z

This 1958 office building was surveyed but not found eligible through the citywide survey, SurveyLA.

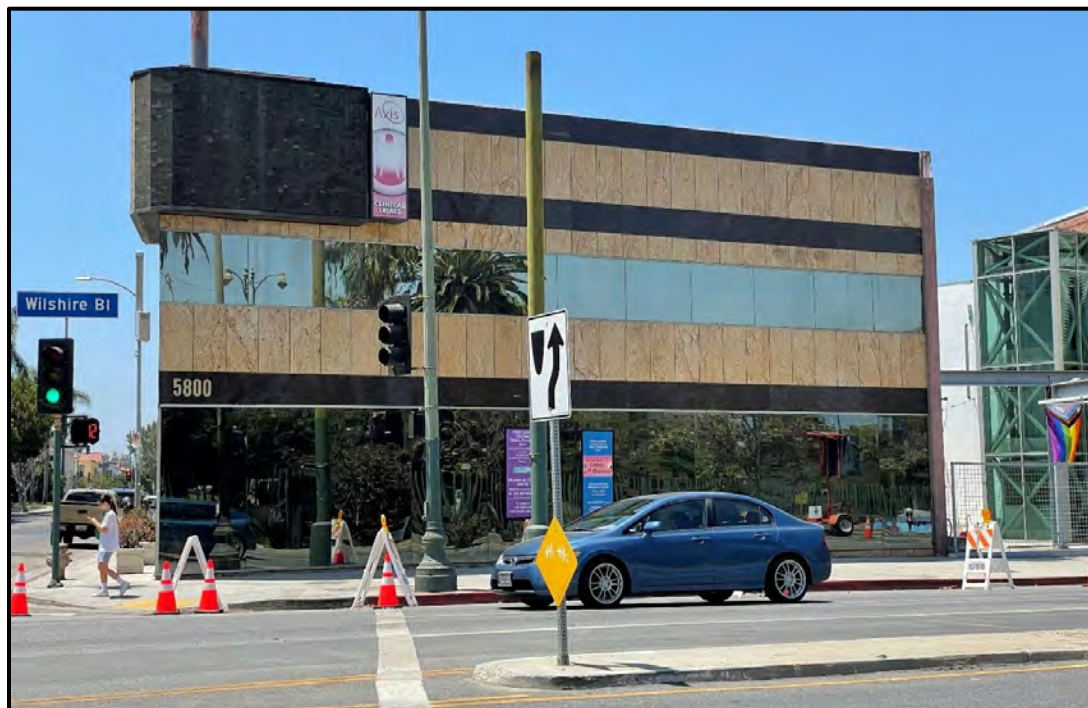
According to building records on file with the City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, the most significant changes to the exterior of the property occurred in 2002. In 2002, permits were pulled for the following changes: 1) remove 40 feet of concrete shear wall at the ground floor at façade and replace with steel moment frames; 2) cut four openings measuring 5 feet by 5.3 feet at the ground floor of east wall; 3) extend lobby stairway from second floor to roof; 4) add 4 feet masonry parapet walls at roof; 5) in-fill all (seven) openings along west property line, along adjacent property at 5806 Wilshire; 6) revision to stairway, roof enclosure; 7) exterior façade alterations, new stairs and structural alterations, new window openings in east and west walls.

Due to these and other alterations, the current appearance of the property does not reflect its construction era; the building does not display the typical character-defining features of a postwar office building (Figure 72).

Available research did not indicate that the property has a significant association with events, patterns of development, or individuals significant in the history of the city, region, state, or nation.

The property **is therefore not a historical resource pursuant to CEQA.**

Figure 72. 5800 W. Wilshire Boulevard, south elevation



Source: SWCA, 2022

## 7. CRAFT AND FOLK ART MUSEUM | 5814 W. WILSHIRE BOULEVARD | CHR STATUS CODE: 3CS

In 2015 Survey LA identified the Craft and Folk Art Museum, built in 1930, as a historical resource eligible for listing in the CRHR and as an HCM. Listed in Los Angeles County Tax Assessor data as 5814 W. Wilshire Boulevard, the Craft and Folk Art Museum spans the addresses of 5814–5818 W. Wilshire Boulevard. Displaying an American Colonial Revival/French Revival style, the property was found eligible under the context of Neighborhood Commercial Development, 1875–1960, and the theme/subtheme of Neighborhood Commercial Development, 1875–1960/Early Neighborhood Commercial Development, 1880–1930, as a commercial property. The property meets CRHR Criterion 1/local HCM Criterion 1 under this context and theme as a “[r]are example of early neighborhood commercial development on Wilshire’s Miracle Mile and an unusual two-story example of the property type. ...Due to alterations including window and door replacements, the property does not retain sufficient integrity for listing in the National Register.”<sup>158</sup>

The property was also found eligible under the context/subcontext of Public/Private Institutional Development, 1850–1980/Cultural Development and Institutions, 1850–1980 and the theme/subtheme of Visual Arts, 1888–1980/Producing, Displaying and Supporting Visual Arts, 1888–1980. The property meets CRHR Criterion 1/HCM Criterion 1 under this context/theme “as the long-time location of the Craft and Folk Art Museum, an important institution on Wilshire’s Miracle Mile. The museum has been in continuous operation here since 1973.”<sup>159</sup>

This building has not changed significantly since it was documented and evaluated as part of the 2015 survey; this study carries forward the finding of CRHR and local HCM eligibility for the Craft and Folk Art Museum (Figure 73). The property is therefore **considered to be a historical resource for purposes of CEQA.**

Figure 73. 5814 W. Wilshire Boulevard, Craft and Folk Art Museum, detail (top) and context (bottom)



Source: SWCA, 2022

<sup>158</sup> Architectural Resources Group, 2015, Appendix A, p. 228.

<sup>159</sup> Architectural Resources Group, 2015, Appendix A, p. 228.



## 8. HANCOCK PARK BUILDING | 5820 W. WILSHIRE BOULEVARD | CHR STATUS CODE: 3CS

In 2015, SurveyLA identified the Hancock Park office building as a historical resource eligible for listing in the CRHR and for designation as a local HCM. This 1958 International Style/Mid-Century Modern-style office building was designed by architects Jack H. MacDonald and Cejay Parsons. The property was found eligible under the context of Architecture and Engineering, 1850–1980, subcontext of L.A. Modernism, 1919–1980, theme of Post-War Modernism, 1946–1976, Corporate International, 1946–1976. The property was found to meet CRHR Criterion 3/HCM Criterion 3 as an “Excellent example of a Corporate International style commercial building on Wilshire’s Miracle Mile.”<sup>160</sup>

This building has not changed significantly since it was documented and evaluated as part of the 2015 survey; this study carries forward the finding of CRHR and local HCM eligibility for the Hancock Park Building (Figure 74). The property is therefore **considered to be a historical resource for purposes of CEQA.**

Figure 74. 5820 W. Wilshire Boulevard, Hancock Park Building



Source: SWCA, 2022

<sup>160</sup> Architectural Resources Group, 2015, Appendix A, p. 228.

## 9. CMAY GALLERY (FORMERLY ARTHUR MURRAY DANCE STUDIO) | 5828 W. WILSHIRE BOULEVARD | CHR STATUS CODE: 3S

In 2015, SurveyLA identified 5828 W. Wilshire Boulevard as a historical resource eligible for listing in the NRHP and CRHR and as an HCM. The property also occupies the addresses of 710 S. Stanley Avenue and 5826 W. Wilshire Boulevard. The property was found eligible under the context of Architecture and Engineering, 1850–1980, subcontext of L.A. Modernism, 1919–1980, theme of Post-War Modernism, 1946–1976, Mid-Century Modernism, 1945–1970. The property meets NRHP Criterion C, CRHR Criterion 3, and local HCM Criterion 3 as an “Excellent example of a Late Moderne...dance studio on Wilshire’s Miracle Mile, designed by notable local architect Stiles O. Clements.”<sup>161</sup>

This building has not changed significantly since it was documented and evaluated as part of the 2015 survey; this study carries forward the finding of NRHP, CRHR, and local HCM eligibility for 5828 W. Wilshire Boulevard (Figure 75). The property is therefore **considered to be a historical resource for purposes of CEQA**.

Figure 75. 5828 W. Wilshire Boulevard



Source: SWCA, 2022

<sup>161</sup> Architectural Resources Group, 2015, Appendix A, p. 229.



## 10.5850 W. WILSHIRE BOULEVARD | CHR STATUS CODE: 3CS

In 2015 SurveyLA identified the building at 5850 W. Wilshire Boulevard as an historical resource eligible for listing in the CRHR and as an HCM. This International Style office building was designed in 1951 by notable local architect Stiles O. Clements. The property was found eligible under the context of Architecture and Engineering, 1850–1980, subcontext of L.A. Modernism, 1919–1980, theme of Post-War Modernism, 1946–1976, Corporate International, 1946–1976, under the commercial property type. The property was found to meet CRHR Criterion 3 and local HCM Criterion 3 as an “[e]xcellent example of a Corporate International-style commercial building on Wilshire's Miracle Mile, designed by notable local architect Stiles O. Clements. Due to alterations including window and door replacements, the property does not retain sufficient integrity for listing in the National Register.”<sup>162</sup>

This building has not changed significantly since it was documented and evaluated as part of the 2015 survey; this study carries forward the finding of CRHR and local HCM eligibility for 5850 W. Wilshire Boulevard (Figure 76). The property is therefore **considered to be a historical resource for purposes of CEQA.**

Figure 76. 5850 W. Wilshire Boulevard



Source: SWCA, 2022

<sup>162</sup> Architectural Resources Group, 2015, Appendix A, p. 229.

## 11. VACANT LAND (5089-011-154)

This empty parcel was not evaluated or documented as it does not include a built-environment resource.

## 12. MUTUAL BENEFIT LIFE PLAZA | 5900 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD | CHR STATUS CODE: 3CS

Designed in 1969–1971 by master architects William Pereira and Gin D. Wong, the Mutual Benefit Life Plaza was found eligible for listing in the CRHR and as an HCM in 2015 by SurveyLA under the context of Architecture and Engineering, 1850–1980, subcontext of L.A. Modernism, 1919–1980, theme of Post-War Modernism, 1946–1976, Corporate International, 1946–1976. The property was found to meet CRHR Criterion 3 and local Criterion 3 as an “[e]xcellent example of a Corporate International-style commercial building on Wilshire’s Miracle Mile, designed by notable local architects William Pereira and Gin D. Wong.”<sup>163</sup> The property was found ineligible for the NRHP due to alterations.

This building has not changed significantly since it was evaluated as part of the 2015 survey; this study carries forward the finding of CRHR and local HCM eligibility for 5900 W. Wilshire Boulevard (Figure 77). The property is therefore **considered to be a historical resource for purposes of CEQA.**

Figure 77. Mutual Life Benefit Plaza, 5900 W. Wilshire Boulevard



Source: SWCA, 2022

<sup>163</sup> Architectural Resources Group, 2015, Appendix A, p. 230.



## 13. LACMA | 5905 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD | CHR STATUS CODE: N/A

As of July 2022, the New Formalist-style campus of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, designed by William L. Pereira in 1965, has been demolished. Construction of a new museum is underway, and the site does not presently contain built environment elements.

## 7. IMPACTS ANALYSIS

### Thresholds of Significance

Under CEQA, a project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. Substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource is defined as physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of a historical resource would be materially impaired. The significance of a historical resource is materially impaired when a project demolishes or materially alters those physical characteristics that convey the significance of the resource and justify its inclusion (or eligibility for inclusion) in the NRHP, CRHR, or local register. In general, a project that follows the *Secretary's Standards*<sup>164</sup> and associated guidelines shall be considered as mitigated to below the level of significance.<sup>165</sup>

Resources located within the project footprint may be subject to direct impacts. Those resources located in the CEQA APE but not within the project footprint may be subject to indirect impacts.

### Identification of Impacts

This report identified three historical resources within the project footprint: La Brea Tar Pits Historic District, George C. Page Museum, and Hancock Park Observation Pit.

In terms of properties within the project footprint, full build-out of the proposed project as described in this report **would result in significant adverse direct impacts** to historical resources. Specifically, project implementation would result in significant physical changes, partial demolition, and new construction affecting the following two of the three historical resources such that they would no longer convey the reasons for their significance:

- La Brea Tar Pits Historic District (5801 Wilshire Boulevard)
- George C. Page Museum (5801 Wilshire Boulevard)

For the third historical resource within the project footprint—the Observation Pit—**no significant adverse impacts** are anticipated; the property would not be altered as a result of project implementation as currently conceived and described in this report. (If the project changes, potential impacts to the Observation Pit would need to be considered, bearing in mind that use of the *Secretary's Standards* would mitigate potential adverse effects to less than significant.)

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<sup>164</sup> Weeks, K.D., and A.E. Grimmer. 1995. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstruction Historic Buildings*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service.

<sup>165</sup> California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3. CEQA Guidelines. Section 15064.5(b).

In terms of properties outside the project footprint but within the CEQA APE, project implementation **would not be expected to result in significant adverse indirect impacts** resulting in material impairment to adjacent historical resources. Full build-out of the proposed project would not be expected to alter the setting and feeling of adjacent historical resources such that they would no longer convey the reasons for their significance. Although the project site's design configuration will change, new elements to be added are compatible in terms of land use and the relatively low profile of new construction when viewed from adjacent historical resources.

The following impacts analysis addresses each historical resource within the CEQA APE. At present, the La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan consists of a wide range of preliminary plans. Although changes are proposed to the Page Museum, which is a historical resource, schematic-level detail is not yet available to characterize and assess each proposed alteration for compliance with the *Secretary's Standards*. Given the level of design available and the extended construction window, this impacts analysis therefore addresses the proposed project with a focus on the nine principal project components included in the master plan:

- Page Museum Renovations (#1)
- Wilshire Gateway Entry Plaza and Lake Pit (#2)
- Enhanced Central Green (#3)
- Revamped Pit 91 (#4)
- New Museum Building (#5)
- New Public Promenade (#6)
- New Pedestrian Path (#7)
- 6th Street Entry Gateway (#8)
- Support Building (#9)

For ease of review, the proposed site plan map for the La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan is presented below, with the nine major project components labeled and numbered. The following impacts analysis cross-references the project components and numbers shown in Figure 78.

Figure 78. Elements of the Proposed Site Plan, La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan



## **Discussion of Direct Impacts**

This section addresses the potential **direct significant adverse impacts** to identified historical resources within the project footprint. Impacts are discussed in terms of changes to character-defining and contributing features of historic resources.

### **1. LA BREA TAR PITS HISTORIC DISTRICT (INSIDE PROJECT FOOTPRINT)**

As noted in Section 6 (Historic Resources Survey and Results), the La Brea Tar Pits Historic District consists of numerous related contributors and character-defining features embodying the district's significance. This includes archaeological and paleontological resources (considered in separate reports); related buildings and structures; landscaping and hardscaping features; and site-plan configuration and spatial relationships characterizing the property. Taken together, these elements reflect a shared story of nearly 100 years of purposeful preservation of the Hancock Park land and its resources, scientific excavation and curation, and design and construction of facilities for public education and exhibits.

In addition, as described in Section 5 (Historic Setting and Context), master planning efforts for Hancock Park, which included a long-term plan for an on-site museum, stopped and started over the years. As a result, the district and its components display an eclectic character, developed in phases.

The proposed project envisions a comprehensive, unified master plan/design for the La Brea Tar Pits, which has been a long-term goal for Hancock Park. The proposed master plan is intended to expand scientific research and enhance the visitor's experience through a continuous, thematic circulation route, the addition of more shade structures and expanded, enhanced facilities, and an aesthetic upgrade for facilities, landscaping and hardscaping, and the park. Overall, the master plan would more explicitly integrate and brand Hancock Park and the La Brea Tar Pits for pedestrians approaching or passing on Wilshire Boulevard and on 6th Street, with proposed new gateways, signage, and fencing.

As a reimagining of the La Brea Tar Pits complex, the proposed project introduces a series of new features, buildings, structures, circulation corridors, and other elements that would fill-in and divide the components of the historic district, shifting the setting and feeling of the historic district and removing some of its character-defining features. The proposed project design is preliminary; however, as presently envisioned, the project elements that would impact contributing components and character-defining features of the historic district are described below. (Map labels for each project component, as shown in Figure 78, are noted in this section for ease of review.)

#### **Page Museum Renovations (#1), New Public Promenade (#6), and New Museum Building (#5)**

These project elements have the most immediate, direct impact to the historic district (as well as the Page Museum and its character-defining features and site, discussed specifically below). These changes focus on the principal built-environment resource and a focal point of the historic district, the Page Museum.

As noted previously, among the primary character-defining features of the Page Museum are its orthogonal site, which includes not just the museum but the raised berm surrounding and defining it on each side; the expansive lawn adjacent to the west, which contributes to the visual primacy and prominence of the Page Museum; and the relative absence of numerous other built-environment features around it.

The proposed project would eliminate the berms on the west and north elevations. Furthermore, a sizable portion of the northwest corner of the museum would be demolished and replaced to accommodate a



connection point to the new museum building and the covered, curved arcade and promenade. As shown in Figure 79, berms along the west and north would be built-up to create a curved public promenade; the new museum building would also be constructed behind the Page Museum. The new site design and construction would envelop and extend the Page Museum and its site along the west and north elevations.

In this way, the primacy of the Page Museum within the existing site design would be diminished; at present, the museum is a stand-alone focal point of the La Brea Tar Pits complex. As envisioned, the proposed project would incorporate the Page Museum into a connected three-part complex, with a pathway replacing the character-defining berms on the west and north. The new museum building would also compete with the Page Museum to the point of making it appear to be a supplemental annex to the larger new facility.

### **Wilshire Gateway Entry Plaza & Lake Pit (#2)**

This project element would replace the diagonal pathway leading into the park in the southeast corner (a character-defining feature) with a curved pathway and entry plaza. A pedestrian bridge and pathway would lead over the Lake Pit, which would replace the main entrance/walkway to the park and visually divide the Lake Pit. The visibility of the lake and statues from Wilshire Boulevard, in particular westbound, would potentially be diminished, thus affecting the visual role the La Brea Tar Pits play in the surrounding environment.

In addition, without additional project detail, it is not possible at the present time to eliminate from consideration possible physical impacts to the lake itself from the bridge's structural elements.

When considered in tandem with other master plan elements affecting character-defining features, this project component would impact the aspects of "setting" and "feeling" of the historic district (as described in Section 3, Regulatory Setting) and would contribute to the overall loss of integrity.

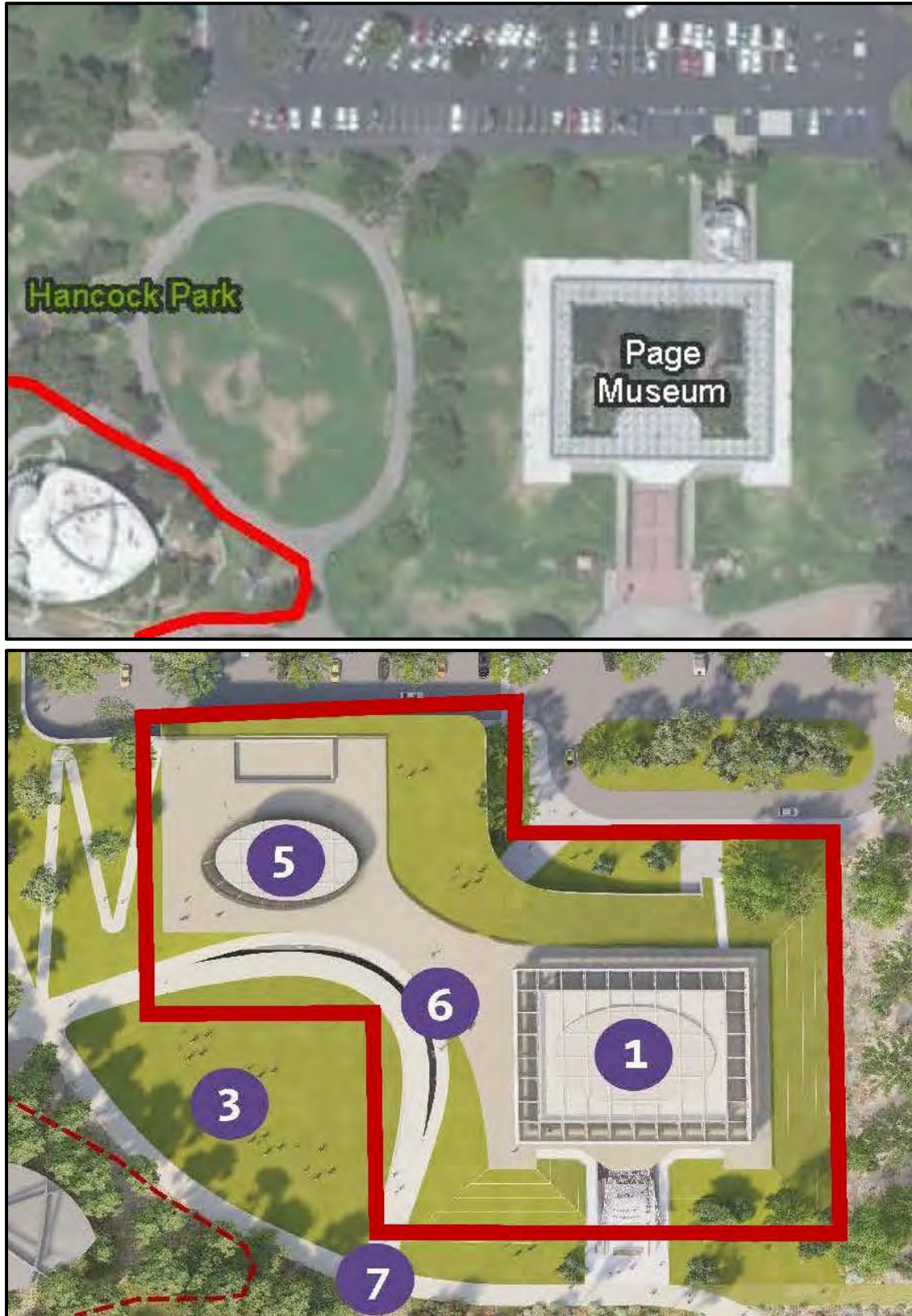
### **Enhanced Central Green (#3)**

This project element would affect the lawn west of the Page Museum, which is considered a character-defining feature of the historic district. The lawn would be retained, but the size would be reduced. At present, the lawn provides an open space and unimpeded view to the Page Museum. In the proposed project, the lawn would be enveloped in the new, curved pedestrian path. When considered in tandem with other master plan elements affecting character-defining features, this project component would impact the aspects of "setting" and "feeling" of the historic district (as described in Section 3, Regulatory Setting) and would contribute to the overall loss of integrity.

### **Revamped Pit 91 (#4)**

This project element would not affect identified character-defining features or contributing elements of the La Brea Tar Pits Historic District such that, on its own, it would cause or contribute to a significant adverse impact to the La Brea Tar Pits Historic District. This project element would retain the contributing feature (tar pits) and replace temporary construction and buildings with a permanent exhibition area. The extended chain fencing would be removed. The project would construct viewing areas around each of the tar pits, with improved pit protection zones and fencing, seating, and interpretive signage. The project would remove and replace noncontributing temporary storage and research buildings adjacent to Project 23.

Figure 79. Current site configuration (top) and project elements #1 (Page Museum Renovations), #5 (New Museum Building), and #6 (New Public Promenade) (bottom)



### **New Pedestrian Path (#7)**

The New Pedestrian Path would create a unified circulation corridor throughout the park and would shift the main entrance/approach. Affected character-defining features include the diagonal entrance/walkway at the corner of Wilshire Boulevard and Curson Ave (as noted above), historic trees along the north; and the overall configuration of park features connected by meandering paths. Contributing pathways include the southeast entry diagonal path, the path along the northside of the Lake Pit, and the tree-shaded paths west of the parking area.

When considered in tandem with other master plan elements affecting character-defining features, this project component would impact the aspects of “setting” and “feeling” of the historic district (as described in Section 3, Regulatory Setting) and would contribute to the overall loss of integrity.

### **6th Street Entry Gateway (#8) and Support Building (#9)**

These project elements would not affect identified character-defining features or contributing elements of the La Brea Tar Pits Historic District such that a distinct, direct or indirect impact to the La Brea Tar Pits Historic District would be expected.

Table 7 summarizes the primary character-defining features of the district, along with those project components most relevant in terms of potential impacts, and the aspects of integrity most likely to be impacted by project implementation.

In summary, for the eligible La Brea Tar Pits Historic District, full build-out of the proposed project, with the variety of design updates, upgrades, and new construction planned for the site would result in a **significant adverse direct impact** to the district (direct impacts to the Page Museum are addressed separately below). Implementation of the master plan, which represents a comprehensive redesign of Hancock Park, would erode and interrupt the eclectic but cohesive character-defining features of this historic district such that it would no longer convey the reasons for its significance as a CRHR and locally eligible historic district. Each one of the project elements on its own would not affect the district’s eligibility to the extent that it would be materially impaired (except for alterations to the Page Museum, addressed below).

Cumulatively, however, the implementation of all these changes would result in a significant adverse impact to the La Brea Tar Pits Historic District. The loss of eligibility of the resource represents material impairment and an impact to the environment.

**Table 7. Potential Impacts on Character-Defining Features, La Brea Tar Pits Historic District**

Primary Character-Defining Feature	Is feature retained?	Relevant and/or Adjacent Project Component/s	Aspects of integrity potentially impacted by project element implementation	Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation in potential noncompliance with project element
Oversized, sparsely developed parcel, with large swaths of open park space	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>New Museum Building (#5) and New Public Promenade (#6)</b> would reduce open park space with additional construction</li> <li>▪ The site's oversized parcel and some open space/recreational areas would be retained though diminished</li> </ul>	Setting; Feeling	<p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.</p>
Lake Pit	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Wilshire Gateway Entry Plaza &amp; Lake Pit (#2) and New Pedestrian Path (#7)</b> would change the configuration of the corner entrance to the park</li> <li>▪ The Lake Pit, which is one of the key contributing resources to the historic district; would be preserved</li> <li>▪ A pathway and bridge would lead over the Lake Pit</li> </ul>	Setting	<p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 2: The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 4: Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.</p>
Mature trees framing Hancock Park, with concentrations along the north and east	Partially	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Landscaping plan</b> would remove a number of the historic trees appearing to date to the 1920s establishment of Hancock Park</li> </ul>	Design; Setting; Feeling	<p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 2: The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 4: Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.</p>
Page Museum and its site, with pyramidal massing, square plan, and sharply raised berms; visual prominence of Page Museum (see Table 8 for potential impacts to individually eligible Page Museum)	Partially	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Page Museum Renovations (#1), New Museum Building (#5), and New Public Promenade (#6)</b> would change these character-defining features</li> <li>▪ West and north berms would be removed/built up to accommodate promenade</li> <li>▪ Pyramidal massing would be mostly replaced</li> <li>▪ Open-air roof, podium, and central atrium, would be covered</li> <li>▪ Visual primacy of the Page Museum would be diminished</li> </ul>	Design; Materials; Workmanship; Setting; Feeling	<p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 2: The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 3: Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 5: Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired</p>
Observation Pit	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Circulation corridors and landscaping adjacent to the Observation Pit have been altered over time</li> <li>▪ The closest project element, a portion of the <b>New Pedestrian Path (#7)</b>, would resemble the land use patterns, hardscaping, and circulation corridors already adjacent to this historic resource</li> </ul>	Some changes to adjacent Setting (but minimal given level of recent alteration in landscaping in the northwest quadrant of Hancock Park)	Complies with Secretary's Standards
Corner entrance with diagonal entry path at Wilshire Boulevard	Partially	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Wilshire Gateway Entry Plaza and Lake Pit (#2)</b> would shift the corner entrance to a new entry point further west on Wilshire Boulevard</li> <li>▪ This project element would remove the character-defining diagonal entry and pathway</li> </ul>	Design; Setting; Feeling	<p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 2: The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 3: Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 5: Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired</p>



Primary Character-Defining Feature	Is feature retained?	Relevant and/or Adjacent Project Component/s	Aspects of integrity potentially impacted by project element implementation	Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation in potential noncompliance with project element
Circulation corridors/pathways, including east-west pathways leading from parking lot and north-south pathway northwest from central lawn	Partially	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Enhanced Central Green (#3), New Museum Building (#5), New Pedestrian Path (#7)</b> would alter/replace some of the character of character-defining circulation corridors and pathways of the historic district</li> <li>▪ Pathways and circulation corridors dating to the period of significance, which reflect the district's development over time, would be replaced with a unified system and series of designed pathways and landscaping; new construction would interrupt or remove these extant features</li> </ul>	Setting; Feeling	<p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.</p>
Remnants of 1930s stone walls in northwestern portion of site	Unknown; it is possible that implementation of the Master Plan could remove this feature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Landscaping plan and/or facilities upgrades to tar pits and seep sites could impact this feature and other extant remnants of stone walls</li> </ul>	Design; Materials; Setting; Feeling	<p>Unknown at this time because the project is conceptual in nature and the Master Plan does not provide specific information on whether the remnants of 1930s stone walls would be retained or removed. The potential exists for impacts to adjacent historical resources through construction staging, construction activities, and implementation of project landscaping. Construction staging activities should be carefully designed to plan for and avoid any adjacent historical resources (including but not limited to details regarding off-site staging, parking, equipment and material storage, movement, and use).</p>
Significant paleontological resources on the site, including various dig and studies sites	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Revamped Pit 91 (#4)</b> would remove temporary facilities that are not considered character-defining</li> <li>▪ The significant resources would be preserved</li> <li>▪ Temporary facilities would be replaced and upgraded</li> </ul>	None; the improved facilities would enhance visibility of these significant cultural resources	<p>While the project complies with the Secretary's Standards at this stage of the design process, the potential exists for impacts to adjacent historical resources through construction staging and construction activities. Construction staging activities should be carefully designed to plan for and avoid any adjacent historical resources (including but not limited to details regarding off-site staging, parking, equipment and material storage, movement, and use).</p>

## 2. PAGE MUSEUM, LA BREA TAR PITS (INSIDE PROJECT FOOTPRINT)

Full build-out of the proposed project would result in a **direct, significant adverse impact** to the Page Museum, which is an historical resource pursuant to CEQA (eligible for the NRHP, CRHR, and as a local HCM). Therefore, the project would cause an impact to the environment through material impairment of a historical resource.

While the project plans remain preliminary at this stage, they include elements that do not comply with the *Secretary's Standards*. Not all projects that depart from the *Secretary's Standards* cause significant adverse impacts; however, the remodel of the Page Museum, in addition to including seismic and systems upgrades necessary for the building's long-term viability, also includes major alterations to key character-defining features. These alterations include:

- Elimination of the sharply raised berms on the west and north elevations of the museum site
- Eliminating the indoor-outdoor integration provided by the open roof, podium, and central atrium, by adding a roof structure and photovoltaic panels and enclosing the open space at the podium with fenestration
- Adding windows beneath the Pleistocene-era frieze, which will diminish the museum's high degree of indoor-outdoor integration and the visual prominence of the frieze as one of the key character-defining features of the museum
- Shifting the principal entrance to the new museum building; the principal, descending entrance ramp to the Page Museum would be retained physically but converted in use to serve as an outdoor classroom space; the main entrance to the museum would shift to the annex to the west
- Demolition of a portion of the museum's northwest corner
- A site redesign in which the Page Museum, which is presently a prominent, stand-alone feature, would be incorporated as one component of an integrated, connected three-part complex, including built-up berms on the west and north, a public promenade, and new museum building; new construction does not include visual, physical distinctions and separations between the old and the new
- Construction of the new museum building, which, though on par with or slightly higher than the Page Museum, would visually compete with the Page Museum

Taken together, these planned alterations to the Page Museum would compromise its historic integrity to the point that the historical resource would no longer convey the reasons for its significance.

Table 8 below provides an overview of the affected character-defining features for each project component, as applicable and to the extent that project-level detail is available.

Project plans for the Page Museum are preliminary at this stage of the design process. However, as currently envisioned, though the Page Museum would be retained, implementation of the proposed project would be expected to result in a **significant adverse direct impact** to the historic resource, which is currently eligible for the NRHP, CRHR, and as a local HCM. The loss of eligibility of the Page Museum represents material impairment to the historical resource and an impact to the environment.

**Table 8. Potential Impacts to Character-Defining Features, Page Museum Renovations**

Primary Character-Defining Feature	Is feature retained?	Conceptual Project Plans	Aspects of integrity potentially impacted by project element	Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation in potential noncompliance with conceptual project element
Oversized one-story mass/height	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The height of the building would be retained</li> <li>Seismic upgrades would be achieved through addition of shear-wall supports that would be concealed from view</li> </ul>	N/A	Could comply with Secretary's Standards (if seismic upgrades are, as described, hidden and any significant historic fabric that is disturbed by the construction is repaired and re-installed or replaced in-kind).
Prominent fiberglass frieze with bas relief Pleistocene scenes and pronounced roof overhangs	Partially	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The roof frieze would be retained</li> <li>Windows would be installed beneath the frieze, sealing the open space presently characterizing the podium</li> </ul>	Design; Workmanship, Materials; Feeling	Rehabilitation Standard No. 2: The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided. Rehabilitation Standard No. 5: Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved. Rehabilitation Standard No. 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment. Rehabilitation Standard No. 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.
Fishbowl-like laboratory space in museum interior	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The fishbowl-like laboratory would be retained</li> </ul>	While at a preliminary design stage, this project element would not be expected to result in significant adverse impacts if all project components are designed to comply with the Secretary's Standards	Could comply with Secretary's Standards (if character-defining features of the laboratory space are retained and/or replaced in-kind).
Burial mound-like site with sharply raised berms with turf plantings on each side, pyramidal massing, and a square plan	Partially	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Berms on the west and north would be removed and built up to accommodate New Public Promenade (#6)</li> <li>Site's pyramidal massing would be replaced</li> <li>Topography and character of west and north berms would be changed to accommodate promenade connecting Page Museum with new building, via curved arcade</li> </ul>	Design; Setting; Feeling	Rehabilitation Standard No. 2: The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided. Rehabilitation Standard No. 5: Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved. Rehabilitation Standard No. 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment. Rehabilitation Standard No. 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.
Symmetrical design composition, building and site	Partially	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Symmetrical design composition of the Page Museum itself would be largely retained</li> <li>Symmetrical design composition of the site would not be retained</li> <li>Page Museum site would be changed and incorporated into/extended by the curved New Public Promenade (#6) and new museum building (#5)</li> </ul>	Design; Setting; Feeling	Rehabilitation Standard No. 2: The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided. Rehabilitation Standard No. 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment. Rehabilitation Standard No. 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.
Descending entrance progression on south elevation into the center of the building, flanked by mirror stairways leading to the upper podium at the second-floor	Partially	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Page Museum's primary entrance would shift to serve as an outdoor classroom</li> <li>The entrance would remain operational</li> <li>New ADA-accessible ramps would flank the outdoor classroom space</li> <li>A cantilevered shade structure is proposed for the Page Museum entrance, which is presently open-air</li> </ul>	Design; Materials; Feeling	Rehabilitation Standard No. 2: The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided. Rehabilitation Standard No. 5: Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved. Rehabilitation Standard No. 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment. Rehabilitation Standard No. 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Primary Character-Defining Feature	Is feature retained?	Conceptual Project Plans	Aspects of integrity potentially impacted by project element	Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation in potential noncompliance with conceptual project element
Indoor-outdoor integration; open-air roof; open configuration at the podium level overlooking atrium	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indoor-outdoor integration of the Page Museum itself would be severely diminished</li> <li>Open-air configuration of the roof and podium would be covered/sealed</li> <li>Open-air roof would be covered, with proposed materials to include photovoltaic panels</li> <li>Windows would be installed at the podium level, closing the open-air design</li> </ul>	Design; Materials; Workmanship; Feeling	<p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 2: The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 5: Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.</p>
Open central atrium with landscaping	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The open, central atrium with landscaping would be removed and replaced</li> </ul>	Design; Materials; Workmanship; Feeling	<p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 2: The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 5: Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.</p>
Visual primacy as principal built-environment feature of historic district	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New construction on site, including the New Museum Building (#5) and New Public Promenade (#6) along with changes to the Enhanced Central Green (#3) would diminish the Page Museum's visual primacy at the La Brea Tar Pits Historic District</li> </ul>	Design; Setting; Feeling	<p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.</p> <p>Rehabilitation Standard No. 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.</p>



### 3. OBSERVATION PIT (INSIDE PROJECT FOOTPRINT)

The proposed project does not include changes to the Observation Pit. In addition, the site and surroundings have already been updated and altered over time, and the closest project element, a portion of the New Pedestrian Path (see Figure 78, Project Element #7) would resemble the land use patterns, hardscaping, and circulation corridors already adjacent to this historical resource. Therefore, **no significant adverse direct impacts** to the Observation Pit are expected to result from project implementation.

#### *Discussion of Indirect Impacts*

In summary, **no significant adverse indirect impacts** of adjacent historical resources would occur with implementation of the proposed master plan. This finding, described in more detail below, is based on the overall compatibility of master plan elements in terms of land use, general character, mass/scale, and design and that indirect effect would not result in material impairment of adjacent historical resources. This finding is also based on the assumption that protective precautions related to construction activities and staging locations will be taken as the conceptual plans evolve.

The following section addresses each of the proposed project's eight adjacent historic resources.

#### 1. PAVILION FOR JAPANESE ART

Implementation of the proposed master plan would not be expected to result in significant, adverse indirect impacts to the point of material impairment of the Pavilion for Japanese Art.

The surrounding land uses, which currently consist of landscaping, pathways, and the elements of the tar pits complex, would be retained, albeit with a new design configuration. In terms of new construction, the new museum building (see Figure 78, Project Element #5) planned for the park's northwestern quadrant would be located at a significant distance from the Pavilion for Japanese Art; the scale/mass and design of the new museum building as it is characterized at this stage of the design process would not be expected to overwhelm or otherwise significantly impact the setting and feeling of the Pavilion for Japanese Art to the point that it would no longer convey the reasons for its significance. The closest project element to the Pavilion for Japanese Art would be the New Pedestrian Path (see Figure 78, Project Element #7); at present, this area of the park already includes various walkways and landscaping.

In addition, the Pavilion for Japanese Art is closest to/oriented towards the new LACMA facility, which represents a more significantly altered change in setting than the master plan for the La Brea Tar Pits.

In summary, the master plan elements adjacent to the resource would be compatible in terms of use, character, mass/scale, and design and **no significant adverse indirect impacts** are expected to the Pavilion for Japanese Art from project implementation.

This finding is based on the assumption that protective precautions related to construction activities and staging locations will be taken as the project plans evolve.

#### 2. PARK LA BREA GARDEN APARTMENT HISTORIC DISTRICT

Implementation of the proposed project would not be expected to result in significant, adverse indirect impacts to the point of material impairment of the Park La Brea Garden Apartment Historic District.

This large historic district forms the northern border of the CEQA APE for this project analysis. The contributors to the district are located across a wide expanse of West 6<sup>th</sup> Street and screened by the mature trees and landscaping of Hancock Park. Master plan elements facing the Park La Brea Garden Apartment Historic District would be compatible in terms of land use, character, mass/scale, and design. In addition, the new museum building (see Figure 78, Project Element #5), which would be across 6<sup>th</sup> Street, is sited at enough of a distance and exhibiting a modest mass/scale that it would not be expected to result in material impairment to the historic resource such that it would no longer convey the reasons for its significance.

In summary, **no significant adverse indirect impacts** are expected to result from project implementation to the Park La Brea Garden Apartment Historic District.

### **3. PRUDENTIAL SQUARE (5757 W. WILSHIRE BOULEVARD)**

Implementation of the proposed master plan would not be expected to result in significant, adverse indirect impacts to the point of material impairment of Prudential Square (5757 W. Wilshire Boulevard).

This 1948 office complex, designed by Wurdeman and Becket, occupies the CEQA APE's southeast corner. Surrounding land uses would be retained, as the La Brea Tar Pits would remain a public park with hardscaping/pathways, landscaping and open space, interspersed with institutional facilities and tar pits/excavation sites, albeit with a new design configuration and additions. The closest project element to Prudential Square would be the Wilshire Gateway Entry Plaza & Lake Pit (see Figure 78, Project Element #2). This element would renovate the existing entrance to the La Brea Tar Pits at Wilshire Boulevard and South Curson Avenue. A large, shaded canopy would stretch down Wilshire Boulevard and curve around to South Curson Avenue to create a new welcome pavilion and shaded entry plaza. These changes to the corner entrance to the park retain the existing land uses and are compatible in terms of character, mass/scale, and design when seen from the perspective of this facing historic resource.

In summary, **no significant adverse indirect impacts** would be expected to result to Prudential Square from project implementation.

### **4. CRAFT AND FOLK ART MUSEUM (5814 W. WILSHIRE BOULEVARD)**

Implementation of the proposed master plan would not be expected to result in significant, adverse indirect impacts to the point of material impairment of the Craft and Folk Art Museum (5814 W. Wilshire Boulevard).

Constructed in 1930, the Craft and Folk Art Museum is an American Colonial Revival/French Revival style building located south of the proposed project site, across Wilshire Boulevard. The facing, extant land uses would be retained, as the La Brea Tar Pits would remain a public park with hardscaping/pathways, landscaping and open space, interspersed with institutional facilities and tar pits/excavation sites, albeit with a new design configuration and additions. The closest project element to the Craft and Folk Art Museum would be the Wilshire Gateway Entry Plaza & Lake Pit (see Figure 78, Project Element #2). This project element would renovate the existing entrance to the La Brea Tar Pits at Wilshire Boulevard and South Curson Avenue. A large, shaded canopy would stretch down Wilshire Boulevard and curve around to South Curson Avenue to create a new welcome pavilion and shaded entry plaza. In addition, from this vantage point of Wilshire Boulevard, the New Pedestrian Path (see Figure 78, Project Element #7) would add a curved walkway over the Lake Pit that would be visible from across Wilshire Boulevard. However, these changes retain the existing land uses and are compatible in terms of character, mass/scale, and design when seen from the perspective of this adjacent historic resource.

In summary, **no significant adverse indirect impacts** would be expected to result to the Craft and Folk Art Museum from project implementation.

## 5. HANCOCK PARK BUILDING (5820 W. WILSHIRE BOULEVARD)

Implementation of the proposed master plan would not be expected to result in significant, adverse indirect impacts to the point of material impairment of the Hancock Park Building (5820 W. Wilshire Boulevard).

Located south of the project site across Wilshire Boulevard, the Hancock Park Building was designed in 1958 in the International/Mid-Century Modern style by architects Jack H. MacDonald and Cejay Parsons. The building is located south of the proposed project site, across Wilshire Boulevard. The facing, extant land uses would be retained, as the La Brea Tar Pits would remain a public park with hardscaping/pathways, landscaping and open space, interspersed with institutional facilities and tar pits/excavation sites, albeit with a new design configuration and additions. The closest project element to the Hancock Park Building would be the Wilshire Gateway Entry Plaza & Lake Pit (see Figure 78, Project Element #2). This project element would renovate the existing entrance to the La Brea Tar Pits at Wilshire Boulevard and South Curson Avenue. A large, shaded canopy would stretch down Wilshire Boulevard and curve around to South Curson Avenue to create a new welcome pavilion and shaded entry plaza. In addition, from this vantage point of Wilshire Boulevard, the New Pedestrian Path (see Figure 78, Project Element #7) would add a curved walkway over the Lake Pit that would be visible from across Wilshire Boulevard. However, these changes retain the existing land uses and are compatible in terms of character, mass/scale, and design when seen from the perspective of this adjacent historic resource.

In summary, **no significant adverse indirect impacts** would be expected to result to the Hancock Park Building from project implementation.

## 6. CMAY GALLERY (FORMERLY ARTHUR MURRAY DANCE STUDIO, (5828 W. WILSHIRE BOULEVARD)

Implementation of the proposed master plan would not be expected to result in significant, adverse indirect impacts to the point of material impairment of the CMAY Gallery (5828 W. Wilshire Boulevard).

Located south of the project site across Wilshire Boulevard, CMAY Gallery (formerly the Arthur Murray Dance Studio) was designed in 1947 by notable local architect Stiles O. Clements in the Late Moderne style. The building is located south of the proposed project site, across Wilshire Boulevard. The facing, extant land uses would be retained, as the La Brea Tar Pits would remain a public park with hardscaping and pathways, landscaping and open space, interspersed with institutional facilities and tar pits/excavation sites, albeit with a new design configuration and additions. The closest project element to the CMAY Gallery would be the Wilshire Gateway Entry Plaza & Lake Pit (see Figure 78, Project Element #2). This project element would renovate the existing entrance to the La Brea Tar Pits at Wilshire Boulevard and South Curson Avenue. A large, shaded canopy would stretch down Wilshire Boulevard and curve around to South Curson Avenue to create a new welcome pavilion and shaded entry plaza. In addition, from this vantage point of Wilshire Boulevard, the New Pedestrian Path (see Figure 78, Project Element #7) would add a curved walkway over the Lake Pit that would be visible from across Wilshire Boulevard. However, these changes retain the existing land uses and are compatible in terms of character, mass/scale, and design when seen from the perspective of this adjacent historic resource.

In summary, **no significant adverse indirect impacts** would be expected to result to the CMAY Gallery from project implementation.

## **7. OFFICE BUILDING (5850 W. WILSHIRE BOULEVARD)**

Implementation of the proposed master plan would not be expected to result in significant, adverse indirect impacts to the point of material impairment of the office building at 5850 W. Wilshire Boulevard.

Located south of the project site across Wilshire Boulevard, 5850 W. Wilshire Boulevard was designed in 1951 in the International Style by well-known local architect Stiles O. Clements. The building is located south of the proposed project site, across Wilshire Boulevard. The facing, extant land uses would be retained, as the La Brea Tar Pits would remain a public park with hardscaping/pathways, landscaping and open space, interspersed with institutional facilities and tar pits/excavation sites, albeit with a new design configuration and additions. The closest project element to 5850 W. Wilshire Boulevard would be the Wilshire Gateway Entry Plaza & Lake Pit (see Figure 78, Project Element #2). This project element would renovate the existing entrance to the La Brea Tar Pits at Wilshire Boulevard and South Curson Avenue. A large, shaded canopy would stretch down Wilshire Boulevard and curve around to South Curson Avenue to create a new welcome pavilion and shaded entry plaza. In addition, from this vantage point of Wilshire Boulevard, the New Pedestrian Path (see Figure 78, Project Element #7) would add a curved walkway over the Lake Pit that would be visible from across Wilshire Boulevard. However, these changes retain the existing land uses and are compatible in terms of character, mass/scale, and design when seen from the perspective of this adjacent historic resource.

In summary, **no significant adverse indirect impacts** would be expected to result to 5850 W. Wilshire Boulevard from project implementation.

## **8. MUTUAL BENEFIT LIFE PLAZA (5900 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD)**

Implementation of the proposed master plan would not be expected to result in significant, adverse indirect impacts to the point of material impairment of the Mutual Benefit Life Plaza (5900 W. Wilshire Boulevard).

Located southwest from the project site across Wilshire Boulevard, the Mutual Benefit Life Plaza was designed in 1969–1971 by notable local architects William Pereira and Gin D. Wong. The building complex is located southwest of the proposed project site, across Wilshire Boulevard. The facing, extant land uses would be retained, as the La Brea Tar Pits would remain a public park with hardscaping/pathways, landscaping and open space, interspersed with institutional facilities and tar pits/excavation sites, albeit with a new design configuration and additions. Although not directly adjacent, the closest project element to 5850 W. Wilshire Boulevard would be the Wilshire Gateway Entry Plaza & Lake Pit (see Figure 78, Project Element #2). In addition, from this vantage point southwest of the project site, the New Pedestrian Path (see Figure 78, Project Element #7) would add a curved walkway over the Lake Pit that would be partially visible from across Wilshire Boulevard to the southwest. However, these changes retain the existing land uses and are compatible in terms of character, mass/scale, and design when seen from the perspective of this adjacent historic resource.

In summary, **no significant adverse indirect impacts** would be expected to result to 5900 W. Wilshire Boulevard from project implementation.



## 8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of this study, SWCA identified **two separate, significant and unavoidable direct adverse impacts to historical resources**: one to the La Brea Tar Pits Historic District, and the other to the Page Museum.

Based on available project information, following full build-out of the La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan, neither the La Brea Tar Pits Historic District nor the Page Museum would be expected to remain historical resources pursuant to CEQA. The project would retain the Page Museum and numerous contributing features of the historic district. However, the character-defining and contributing features of both historical resources could be significantly altered to the point that they would no longer be anticipated to retain eligibility.

At present, the Page Museum is individually eligible for the NRHP, CRHR, as a County landmark, and as City HCM. The La Brea Tar Pits Historic District is eligible as a historic district for the CRHR and at the County and City level.

This loss of eligibility translates into material impairment, as neither property would qualify as a historical resource pursuant to CEQA following project implementation.

In terms of indirect impacts, this study concluded that, based on available project information, **no significant indirect adverse impacts** would result from project implementation. The proposed project does not yet include detailed information on construction staging locations or activities, which may impact adjacent historical resources. Based on this, it is recommended that the EIR include enforceable mitigation measures for historical resources construction monitoring to ensure that any construction staging activities are designed to avoid potential indirect impacts to adjacent historical resources.

Due to the likelihood of direct, significant adverse impacts to historic resources, the Draft EIR must include a range of feasible alternatives and mitigation measures. Alternatives may include but not necessarily be limited to options exploring reduced project alternatives that would achieve most project objectives while reducing impacts to historical resources to less than significant. Enforceable mitigation measures and/or project design features to address in the EIR will include options that are feasible, have a proportional nexus with the project impacts, and are capable of reducing, avoiding, or mitigating impacts, at the project- and program-level.

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