Los Angeles Department of City Planning
RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

HEARING DATE: March 6, 2014
TIME: 10:00 AM
PLACE: City Hall, Room 1010
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Location: Soto Street crossing Mission Road and Huntington Drive
Council District: 14
Community Plan Area: Northeast Los Angeles
Area Planning Commission: East Los Angeles
Neighborhood Council: LA-32
Legal Description:

PROJECT: Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the PACIFIC ELECTRIC'S SOTO STREET BRIDGE

REQUEST: Declare the property a Historic-Cultural Monument

APPLICANT: El Sereno Historical Society and Highland Park Heritage Trust

PREPARER: Charles J. Fisher
140 S. Avenue 57
Los Angeles, CA 90042

OWNER: City of Los Angeles

RECOMMENDATION

That the Cultural Heritage Commission:

1. **Not declare** the property a Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.7.

2. **Adopt** the report findings.

MICHAEL J. LOGRANDE
Director of Planning

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Ken Bernstein, AICP, Manager
Office of Historic Resources

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Lambert M. Giessinger, Preservation Architect
Office of Historic Resources

Attachment: Historic-Cultural Monument Application
CRITERIA

The criterion is the Cultural Heritage Ordinance which defines a historical or cultural monument as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon) building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles, such as historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified, or which are identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history or which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction, or a notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his age.

SUMMARY

Constructed in 1936, this concrete and steel bridge was originally built to accommodate a Pacific Electric rail car line, crossing over the intersection of Mission Road and Huntington Drive to relieve congestion. The bridge now carries auto traffic and forms a section of Soto Street. It exhibits character defining features of the Art Deco style.

The bridge spans 490 feet and consists of two central steel girder spans and several arched concrete spans on either side of the steel section. The columns run at an oblique angle under the bridge, creating an asymmetrical arrangement. Facing the eastern or western side of the bridge there are more concrete arches to the left of the steel portion than the right. Concrete pylons flanking the ends of the steel span are adorned as decorative, semi-circular, fluted columns. Outer columns supporting the concrete spans have a curbed bracket feature leading to a rectangular, fluted panel. A portion of these panels have an additional corbel feature attached to them which supports a shallow bent arch projecting above the road surface. Trolley poles that now serve as light fixtures are set atop the corbels, pocketed to the ends of the bent arches.

The bridge approach to the north is supported by concrete walls decorated with arched reliefs. Concrete stairs on either side of this section, located where the spans meet the approach, originally served rail passengers. Simple, decorative tubular railings adorn the staircases and a portion of the approach.

The Soto Street railroad bridge was part of the Pasadena Short Line built by Henry Huntington in 1901. The original at-grade crossing where the bridge now stands was considered one of the busiest intersections in the region and quite hazardous. The rail line and streets met at an awkward, oblique angle, Mission Road was a main highway for auto traffic to Pasadena and other northeast communities, and all rail cars serving Pasadena passed through the intersection. In 1909, five family members were killed at the intersection prompting public calls for an above-grade crossing. However, the bridge was not built for another 27 years, apparently, not until Depression-era economics made it more financially feasible. The bridge was a joint project between The City of Los Angeles, the State, and Pacific Electric Railway, with much of the funding coming from the federal Works Project Administration.

The subject structure carried all of the Pasadena bound cars for the Pacific Electric Railway while in service from 1936 to 1951. The Short Line was abandoned in 1951 and the bridge paved to serve Pacific Electric's bus service.
In 2001, the bridge was evaluated for eligibility as a historic resource as part of the Bridge Improvement Program, Bureau of Engineering, City of Los Angeles. The report findings from this evaluation concluded that:

“It [the Soto Street Bridge] retains many of the Art Deco ornamental elements for qualification under Criterion C, Design and Construction. These elements are significant, although they do not appear to be strong enough to warrant an upgrading of the structure to Category 4, Eligible for the National register.”

In 2002, a CA Department of Parks and Recreation form was completed regarding the bridge. This form summarized the significance as:

“The bridge [Soto Street Bridge]... has lost its historic function and lacks integrity of materials, design, feeling and association. It therefore, does not appear to be eligible for listing in the National Register... [or] listing in the California Register of Historical Resources.”

In 2004, the City Council approved the demolition and replacement of bridge and the project’s environmental clearance, a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND). The MND included an assessment of potential cultural resources in the project area, with a finding that no structures, including the bridge, appeared eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The assessment did not specifically evaluate the bridge’s eligibility for local designation.

In 2008, the bridge was referenced in the SurveyLA Draft Historic Context Statement under the theme “Private Transportation: Railroad and Street Railway” within the context of “Government and Private Institutional Development, 1913-1945.” The theme narrative included the Soto Street Bridge among more than 50 remaining features of early transportation development in Los Angeles, “...eligible for at least local recognition based upon the significance that street railway technology had upon the development patterns of Los Angeles.”

The bridge was one of six known resources identified as eligible for local designation under the property type “Bridges/Viaducts” that are associated with the Pacific Electric Railway. This list of known resources was compiled by SurveyLA consultants prior to field survey work, so additional resources may be added to this list as they are found in the field through physical survey. Currently, SurveyLA has not surveyed the Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan Area, in which the bridge is located, so its historic eligibility has not been assessed through observation by SurveyLA consultants.

Alterations to the bridge include demolition of the railway tracks, and installation of a modern bridge railings and chain link fencing around the pedestrian staircases.

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DISCUSSION

The written nomination by Charles J. Fisher argues that the property meets specified Historic-Cultural Monument criteria: "embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction" as an example of an Art Deco style bridge; and "historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified," for its association with the Pacific Electric Company and the development of Northeast Los Angeles communities.

Although the bridge was constructed in 1936 in the Art Deco style and retains original building materials and elements, it does not constitute a particularly outstanding or distinctive example of this style. The bridge's design as a whole does not appear to represent a highly significant example of Art Deco design, nor does it exemplify the remarkable design quality found in the bridges already designated as City Historic-Cultural Monuments.

The bridge is associated with the Pacific Electric Company's railway system, which was unquestionably significant to the development of Los Angeles. However, the construction of this bridge in 1936 came relatively late in the history of the Pacific Electric system, decades after this system shaped Los Angeles' growth and evolution. The Soto Street Bridge is also one of many remaining remnants of the Pacific Electric system, some of which may better convey the essence of this significant railway system. The 2008 SurveyLA draft context statement narrative identified six extant bridges associated with the Pacific Electric Company's railway system, as well as other buildings, substations, overpasses, and tracks associated with the Pacific Electric system and other early transportation lines in Los Angeles. Finally, the removal of the railway's tracks and installation of modern bridge railings have somewhat compromised the ability of the bridge to convey its historic association with the Pacific Electric system.

Therefore, the Pacific Electric's Soto Street Bridge does not meet the criteria for designation as a Historic-Cultural Monument within the City of Los Angeles.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting of January 16, 2014, the Cultural Heritage Commission voted to take the application under consideration. On February 6, 2014, the Cultural Heritage Commission toured the subject structure.
HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT
APPLICATION

TYPE OR PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

IDENTIFICATION

1. NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT PACIFIC ELECTRIC'S SOTO STREET BRIDGE

2. STREET ADDRESS SOTO STREET OVER MISSION ROAD AND HUNTINGTON DRIVE (BRIDGE NO. 53C0013)
   CITY LOS ANGELES ZIP CODE 90032 COUNCIL DISTRICT 14

3. ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO. 5209-030-000 AND 5211-019-000

4. COMPLETE LEGAL DESCRIPTION: TRACT PORTION OF THE PACIFIC ELECTRIC RAILROAD RIGHT OF WAY KNOWN AS THE "PASADENA SHORT LINE" DEEDED TO THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES, AS PER MAP FILED IN BOOK 14084, PAGE 307 OF OFFICIAL RECORDS OF THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES BLOCK N/A LOT(S) (SEE ATTACHED) ARB. NO. N/A

5. RANGE OF ADDRESSES N/A

6. PRESENT OWNER CITY OF LOS ANGELES BUREAU OF ENGINEERING
   STREET ADDRESS 201 N. FIGUEROA STREET, 3RD FLOOR
   CITY LOS ANGELES STATE CA ZIP CODE 90012 PHONE (213) 482-7030 EMAIL :
   OWNER IS: PRIVATE PUBLIC X

7. PRESENT USE AUTOMOBILE BRIDGE ORIGINAL USE LIGHT RAIL BRIDGE (RED CAR)

DESCRIPTION

8. ARCHITECTURAL STYLE ART DECO

9. STATE PRESENT PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE OR STRUCTURE (SEE OPTIONAL DESCRIPTION WORKSHEET)

(SEE DESCRIPTION WORKSHEET)
HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT APPLICATION

NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT: PACIFIC ELECTRIC'S SOTO STREET BRIDGE

10. CONSTRUCTION DATE: FACTUAL ___________ 1936 ___________ ESTIMATED ___________

11. ARCHITECT, DESIGNER, OR ENGINEER: CITY ENGINEERING DEPT. STATE HIGHWAY BRIDGE DIVISION & PACIFIC ELECTRIC

12. CONTRACTOR OR OTHER BUILDER: ___________ L. E. DIXON COMPANY ___________


14. CONDITION: ☑ EXCELLENT ☐ GOOD ☐ FAIR ☐ DETERIORATED ☐ NO LONGER IN EXISTENCE

ALTERATIONS: ☑ Railroad tracks were removed and bridge paved over and converted to automotive use in 1951. Centenary wire poles were topped and converted to street lights at that time.

15. THREATS TO SITE: ☑ None known ☐ Private development ☐ Vandalism ☑ Public Works Project

16. IS THE STRUCTURE ☑ ON ITS ORIGINAL SITE ☐ MOVED ☐ UNKNOWN

17. SIGNIFICANCE

18. SOURCES (LIST BOOKS, DOCUMENTS, SURVEYS, PERSONAL INTERVIEWS WITH DATES) LOS ANGELES CITY BUILDING PERMITS PER ATTACHED. LA COUNTY ASSESSORS RECORDS. LOS ANGELES COUNTY SUBDIVISION MAPS. LOS ANGELES TIMES ARTICLES AND WIKIPEDIA HISTORY OF THE PACIFIC ELECTRIC (VERIFIED SOURCES).

DATE FORM PREPARED: OCTOBER 18, 2013 __ PREPARER'S NAME: CHARLES J. FISHER __ ORGANIZATION: EL SERENO HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND HIGHLAND PARK HERITAGE TRUST __ STREET ADDRESS: 140 S. AVENUE 57 __ CITY: HIGHLAND PARK __ STATE: CA __ ZIP CODE: 90042 __ PHONE: (213) 256-3593

E-MAIL ADDRESS:  ARROYOSECO@HOTMAIL.COM
DESCRIPTION WORK SHEET

TYPE OR PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

THE __________________________ IS A ____________________ STORY,

NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT  NUMBER OF STORES

__________________________  ________________

ART DECO  LINER  PLAN  BRIDGE

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE (E.G. LINES & SHADES)  PLAN SHAPE  (SEE CHART)  STRUCTURE USE (RESIDENCE, ETC.)

WITH A ____________________________________________ FINISH AND  STEEL ______________ TRIM.

MATERIAL: SHINGLE, WOOD SHINGLES, BRICK, STucco, ETC.  MATERIAL: SHINGLE, METAL, ETC.

ITS __________________________  __________________________  __________________________

ROOF SHAPE (SEE CHART)  ROOF IS  MATERIAL: CLAY TILE, ASPHALT OR WOOD SHINGLES  WINDOW MATERIAL,

N/A  N/A  N/A  N/A

WINDOW TYPE (DOUBLE PANE, SLIDING UP & DOWN, CASMENT OPENS OUT, HORIZONTAL SLIDING, ETC.)

THE ENTRY FEATURES A STEEL PLATFORM OVER THE MAIN ROADWAY & SEVERAL CONCRETE ARCHES OVER SECONDARY ROADWAYS

DOOR LOCATION (RECESSED, CENTERED, OFF CENTER, CORNER, ETC.)

WITH A ____________________________________________  DOOR. ADDITIONAL CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS

ENTRY DOOR STYLE (SEE CHART)

OF THE STRUCTURE ARE THREE DISTINCT PORTIONS OF THE STRUCTURE THAT CONSIST OF TWO CONCRETE END

IDENTIFY ORIGINAL FEATURES SUCH AS PORCHES (SEE CHART), BALCONIES, NUMBER AND SHAPE OF DOORS (SEE CHART).

APPROACHES AT THE NORTH AND SOUTH ENDS OF THE BRIDGE WITH A CENTRAL STEEL PLATE RAILROAD TYPE BRIDGE

NUMBER AND LOCATION OF CHIMNEYS, SHUTTERS, SECONDARY FINISH MATERIALS, PARAPETS, METAL TRIM, DECORATIVE TILE OR LUST STORE, ARCHES.

ELEVATED AT THE CENTER DECK OVER THE MAIN ROADWAY. PASSENGER ACCESS WAS VIA TWO CONCRETE STAIR.

ORNAMENTAL WOODWORK, SYMMETRY OR ASYMMETRY, CORNICES, PEDIMENT, TOWERS OR TURRETS, BAY WINDOWS, RALF TIMBERING, MOLDING, ETC.

CASES TO A LOADING PLATFORM ON THE NORTH APPROACH. THERE WERE AND STILL ARE NO OTHER SIDEWALKS OR

VERTICALITY: FORMALITY OR INFORMALITY, GARDEN WALLS, ETC.

RAILINGS ALONG THE TOP OF THE BRIDGE. THE RAILINGS WHERE THE LOADING AREAS WERE ARE OF A DECORATIVE PIPE

ADDITIONAL DEFINING ELEMENTS

DESIGN. ADDITIONAL DECORATIVE DETAILS ARE OF AN ART DECO STYLE, INCLUDING FLUTED SEMI CIRCULAR PIERS AT

ADDITIONAL DEFINING ELEMENTS

THE ENDS OF THE APPROACHES BY THE STEEL CENTER DECK WITH TROLLEY CENTENARY POLES, (NOW USED AS LIGHT

ADDITIONAL DEFINING ELEMENTS

POLES) BEING POCKETED AT THE ENDS OF SHALLOW BENT ARCHES ON THE CONCRETE SECTION AND EACH BEING

ADDITIONAL DEFINING ELEMENTS

INSERTED INTO AN ELABORATED CORBEL FASTENED TO A DECORATIVE PLATE. EACH PLATE IS ELABORATED DOWNWARD

ADDITIONAL DEFINING ELEMENTS

INTO A CURVED BRACKET ATTACHED TO A BENT COLUMN. PIERS BELOW THE STEEL SECTION ARE ALSO ORNAMENTED

ADDITIONAL DEFINING ELEMENTS

IN THE ART DECO STYLE. BENTS AT THE ABUTMENT ARE CHARACTERIZED BY CLOSED SHALLOW DIVIDED ARCHES.

ADDITIONAL DEFINING ELEMENTS

WHICH FUNCTION AS A RETAINING WALL. THE SIDES OF THE STEEL DECK ARE DIVIDED BY EVENLY PLACED VERTICAL

ADDITIONAL DEFINING ELEMENTS

BARS FORMING BOXES. THE DECK IS HELD TOGETHER BY ROUND RIVETS.

ADDITIONAL DEFINING ELEMENTS

SECONDARY BUILDINGS CONSIST OF  THERE ARE NO SECONDARY BUILDINGS

IDENTIFY GARAGE, GARAGE SHED, ETC.

SIGNIFICANT INTERIOR SPACES INCLUDE  THERE ARE NO INTERIOR SPACES

IDENTIFY ORIGINAL FEATURES SUCH AS WOOD PANELING, MOLDINGS AND TRIM, SPECIAL GLASS WINDOWS.

ORNATE CEILINGS, PLASTER MOLDING, LIGHT FIXTURES, PAINTED DECORATION, CERAMIC TILE, STAIR BALUSTRADES, BUILDING FURNITURE, ETC.

ORNATE CEILING, PLASTER MOLDING, LIGHT FIXTURES, PAINTED DECORATION, CERAMIC TILE, STAIR BALUSTRADES, BUILDING FURNITURE, ETC.

HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT APPLICATION

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
Significance Work Sheet

Complete One or Both of the Upper and Lower Portions of This Page

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

THE PACIFIC ELECTRIC’S SOTO STREET BRIDGE IS AN IMPORTANT EXAMPLE OF

NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT

ART DECO ARCHITECTURE

AND MEETS THE CULTURAL HERITAGE ORDINANCE BECAUSE OF THE HIGH QUALITY OF ITS DESIGN AND THE RETENTION OF ITS ORIGINAL FORM, DETAILING AND INTEGRITY.

AND/OR

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

THE PACIFIC ELECTRIC’S SOTO STREET BRIDGE WAS BUILT IN 1936

NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT YEAR BUILT

THE PACIFIC ELECTRIC RAILROAD AND ART DECO ARCHITECTURE WAS IMPORTANT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOS ANGELES BECAUSE THE PACIFIC ELECTRIC WAS THE ONE OF THE MAJOR FORCES IN MAKING LOS ANGELES A WORLD CLASS CITY BY CREATING A TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT ALLOWED PEOPLE TO BUILD IN MORE REMOTE AREAS AND HAVE AN EASY, INEXPENSIVE MEANS OF COMMUTING TO JOBS AND OTHER OBLIGATIONS AND TO GO TO RECREATION AREAS, SUCH AS THE BEACH AND THE MOUNTAINS. THE PACIFIC ELECTRIC RAILROAD WAS CREATED IN 1901 BY RAILROAD EXECUTIVE HENRY HUNTINGTON AND BANKER ISAIS W. HELLMAN. AS A VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD (RUN BY HIS UNCLE, COLLIS P. HUNTINGTON), HENRY HUNTINGTON HAD A SOLID BACKGROUND IN ELECTRIC TROLLEY LINES IN SAN FRANCISCO WHERE HE OVERSAW THE SP’S EFFORT TO CONSOLIDATE MANY SMALLER STREET RAILROADS INTO ONE ORGANIZED NETWORK. HELLMAN, THE PRESIDENT OF THE NEVADA BANK, SAN FRANCISCO’S LARGEST, BECAME ONE OF THE LARGEST BOND HOLDERS FOR THESE LINES AND HE AND THE YOUNGER HUNTINGTON DEVELOPED A CLOSE BUSINESS RELATIONSHIP. THE SUCCESS OF THEIR SAN FRANCISCO TROLLEY ADVENTURE AND HELLMAN’S EXPERIENCE IN FINANCING SOME EARLY LOS ANGELES TROLLEY LINES, LED THEM TO INVEST IN THE PURCHASE OF SOME EXISTING DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES LINES WHICH THEY BEGAN TO STANDARDIZE AND ORGANIZE INTO ONE NETWORK CALLED UNDER THE LOS ANGELES RAILWAY. WHEN HIS UNCLE COLLIS DIED, HENRY LOST A BOARDROOM BATTLE FOR CONTROL OF THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC, TO UNION PACIFIC PRESIDENT E.H. HARRIMAN. HUNTINGTON THEN DECIDED TO FOCUS HIS ENERGIES ON SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA. IN MAY 1901 HELLMAN, WHO HAD BEEN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA’S
LEADING BANKER FOR ALMOST THREE DECADES, WROTE HENRY HUNTINGTON THAT "THE TIME IS AT HAND WHEN WE SHOULD COMMENCE BUILDING SUBURBAN RAILROADS OUT OF THE CITY." HELLMAN ADDDED HE ALREADY TASKED ENGINEER EPES RANDOLPH TO SURVEY AND LAY OUT THE COMPANY'S FIRST LINES WHICH WOULD BE TO LONG BEACH. IN 1901, HUNTINGTON AND HELLMAN INCORPORATED A NEW ENTITY, THE PACIFIC ELECTRIC RAILroad, WAS FORMED TO CONSTRUCT THESE NEW ELECTRIC RAIL LINES TO CONNECT LOS ANGELES WITH SURROUNDING CITIES. HELLMAN AND HIS GROUP OF INVESTORS OWNING THE CONTROLLING MAJORITY OF STOCK (DOUBLE THAT OF HUNTINGTON'S) AND THE NEWSPAPERS OF THE TIME REFERRED TO IT AS THE HUNTINGTON-HELLMAN SYNDICATE, USING SURROGATES, THE SYNDICATE BEGAN PURCHASING PROPERTY AND RIGHTS-OF-WAYS. THE NEW COMPANY'S FIRST MAIN PROJECT, THE LINE TO LONG BEACH, OPENED FOR BUSINESS IN JULY 1902. ORIGINALY A SEPARATE RIGHT OF WAY FOR THE PACIFIC ELECTRIC, THE ROAD WAY FOR HUNTINGTON DRIVE NORTH IS NOW IN THE ORIGINAL RIGHT OF WAY. RAILROADS WERE ONLY ONE PART OF THE ENTERPRISE. REVENUE FROM PASSENGER TRAFFIC WAS RARELY ENOUGH TO TURN MUCH PROFIT (IF ANY), ALTHOUGH THE CARRYING OF FREIGHT USUALLY DID. BUT THE REAL MONEY FOR THE INVESTORS WAS IN THE SUPPLYING OF ELECTRIC POWER TO THESE NEW COMMUNITIES AND IN REAL ESTATE. TO GET RAILROADS AND ELECTRICITY TO THEIR TOWNS, LOCAL GROUPS WOULD OFFER THE HUNTINGTON INTERESTS OPPORTUNITIES IN LOCAL LAND. SOON HUNTINGTON AND HIS PARTNERS HAD SIGNIFICANT HOLDINGS IN THE LAND COMPANIES DEVELOPING NAPLES, BAY CITY (SEAL BEACH), HUNTINGTON BEACH, NEWPORT BEACH AND REDONDO BEACH. WITH THE PURCHASE OF SEVERAL LOCAL PASADENA LINES IN 1901 AND 1902, HUNTINGTON ESTABLISHED WHAT BECAME KNOWN AS THE "PASADENA SHORT LINE", WHICH SERVED AS THE MAJOR PE LINE INTO PASADENA. (A SECOND LINE, ORIGINALLY ESTABLISHED BY MOISES HAZELTINE SHERMAN AND ELI CLARK IN 1895, WENT ALONG PASADENA AVENUE (N. FIGUEROA STREET) AND THROUGH SOUTH PASADENA. THAT LINE WAS ABANDONED BY THE PE IN 1936, THE YEAR THE SOTO STREET BRIDGE WAS BUILT.) AS A MAIN LINE INTO THE SAN GABRIEL VALLEY, THERE WERE EVENTUALLY FOUR SETS OF TRACKS THAT CAME UP ALONG SOTO STREET AND THEN SETTLED INTO THE MEDIAN STRIP ON HUNTINGTON DRIVE. THE CROSSING AT MISSION STREET, IN EL SERENO, WAS PARTICULARLY HAZEROUS WITH THE TRACK CROSSING THE ROAD AT AN ANGLE AND AUTOMOBILE TRAFFIC INCREASING EACH DAY. BY 1935 THERE WERE ABOUT 43,000 AUTOS AND 560 TRAINS CROSSING THERE
LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

PARCEL NO. 1:

THAT PORTION OF LOT 2 OF OMAHA HEIGHTS IN THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AS PER MAP FILED IN BOOK 52, PAGES 69 AND 70 OF MISCELLAINEOUS RECORDS, IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAID COUNTY, DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

BEGINNING AT A POINT IN THE NORTHEAST LINE OF SAID LOT 2 OF OMAHA HEIGHTS, SAID POINT BEING SOUTH 52° 33' EAST 40.16 FEET FROM THE MOST NORTHERLY CORNER OF SAID LOT 2, SAID POINT BEING THE INTERSECTION OF THE WESTERLY LINE OF SOTO STREET WITH THE SOUTHEASTERLY LINE OF HUNTINGTON DRIVE SOUTH AS SAID STREET ARE SHOWN ON THE MAP OF THE PACIFIC ELECTRIC RAILWAY COMPANY TO CITY OF LOS ANGELES, AS PER MAP RECORDED IN BOOK 14084, PAGES 305 THROUGH 307, INCLUSIVE OF OFFICIAL RECORDS OF SAID LOS ANGELES COUNTY; THENCE SOUTH 9° 48' EAST 197.37 FEET; THENCE NORTH 80° 10' WEST 94.95 FEET; THENCE NORTH 9° 48' EAST 23.06 TO A POINT IN THE SOUTHEAST LINE OF MISSION ROAD AS SAID STREET IS SHOWN AND DELINIATED ON THE SAID MAP OF THE PACIFIC ELECTRIC RAILWAY COMPANY TO CITY OF LOS ANGELES; THENCE NORTH 37° 27' EAST, ALONG SAID SOUTHEAST LINE OF MISSION ROAD/HUNTINGTON DRIVE SOUTH TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

SAID LAND IS SHOWN AD DELINIATED AS PARCEL NO. 1 OF THE MAP OF THE PACIFIC ELECTRIC RAILWAY COMPANY TO CITY OF LOS ANGELES, AS PER MAP RECORDED IN BOOK 14084, PAGES 305 THROUGH 307 OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY.

PARCEL NO. 2:

THAT PORTION OF LOT "A" OF TRACT NO. 3249, IN THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AS PER MAP FILED IN BOOK 36, PAGES 5 THROUGH 7, INCLUSIVE OF MAPS, IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAID COUNTY, DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

BEGINNING AT THE MOST NORTHERLY CORNER OF LOT "F" OF GRIDER AND HAMILTON'S ROSE HILL, AS PER MAP FILED IN BOOK 6, PAGE 16 OF MAPS IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY, SAID POINT BEING IN THE EASTERLY LINE OF SAID LOT "A" OF TRACT NO. 3249, SAID LOT "A" BEING THE FORMER RIGHT OF WAY OF THE PACIFIC ELECTRIC RAILROAD (NOW HUNTINGTON DRIVE NORTH); THENCE SOUTH 9° 31' 15" EAST A DISTANCE OF 173.43 FEET TO THE TRUE POINT OF BEGINNING; THENCE CONTINUING SOUTH 9° 31' 15" ALONG SAID EASTERLY LINE OF SAID LOT "A" A DISTANCE OF 86.4 FEET TO A TWO INCH IRON PIPE SET AT THE SOUTHEAST CORNER THEREOF BEING IN THE NORTHWESTERLY LINE OF HUNTINGTON DRIVE SOUTH; THENCE SOUTH 37° 17' 00" ALONG THE SOUTHERLY LINE OF SAID LOT "A" A DISTANCE OF 154.65 FEET TO THE SOUTHWEST CORNER THEREOF; THENCE NORTH 9° 37' 15" EAST, ALONG THE NORTHWESTERLY LINE OF SAID LOT "A" A DISTANCE OF 223.68
FEET; THENCE SOUTH 80° 10' EAST A DISTANCE OF 71.65 FEET TO THE TRUE POINT OF BEGINNING.

SAID LAND IS SHOWN AD DELINIATED AS PARCEL NO. 2 OF THE MAP OF THE PACIFIC ELECTRIC RAILWAY COMPANY TO CITY OF LOS ANGELES, AS PER MAP RECORDED IN BOOK 14084, PAGES 305 THROUGH 307, OFFICIAL RECORDS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

PARCEL NO. 3

THAT PORTION OF SOTO STREET, MISSION ROAD AND HUNTINGTON DRIVE SOUTH THAT IS SITUATED DIRECTLY BETWEEN THE LINES OF PARCELS 1 AND 2 OF THIS DESCRIPTION.

NOTE: THE ABOVE LEGAL DESCRIPTION IS AN APPROXIMATION OF THE LOCATION OF THE BRIDGE, BASED ON EXISTING MAPS, BUT DOES NOT REPRESENT A SURVEY OF THE DESCRIBED LINES.

SAID PARCEL IS SHOWN AND DELINIATED ON SAID LAND IS SHOWN AD DELINIATED AS PARCEL NO. 1 OF THE MAP OF THE PACIFIC ELECTRIC RAILWAY COMPANY TO CITY OF LOS ANGELES, AS PER MAP RECORDED IN BOOK 14084, PAGES 305 THROUGH 307 OF OFFICIAL RECORDS OF THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES.

SAID LEGAL DESCRIPTION REFERS TO THE LAND OCCUPIED BY A BRIDGE THAT IS APPROXIMATELY 70 FEET WIDE AND 490 FEET IN LENGTH.
Historic Correspondence
Mr. Panhorst:

In the case of the Mission Road Grade Separation project, which is on a Feeder Road in Los Angeles City, the following information will be of value to Mr. Durkee, who, I understand, is preparing agreements with railroads.

It would seem desirable to have a three party agreement with State, Pacific Electric Railway and the City of Los Angeles being parties. All three are in agreement that the public convenience and safety require the elimination of hazard to life at the railroad crossing.

The tracks of the railway are designated as the Pasadena Short Line of the Pacific Electric Railway Company. There are four existing tracks. There will be four tracks when the project is completed.

The crossing will be located over Mission Road at the intersection of Mission Road, Huntington Drive and Soto Street, all of which roads are under the jurisdiction of the City of Los Angeles.

The railway company has prepared complete contract plans.

The contractor should be required to enter into an agreement with the railway and to furnish bonds in the sum of $20,000 to safeguard the railway from damages due to his operations.
The State will contract the work for building the structure to support the railway tracks and retaining walls to support track approaches and all necessary street work and street drainage except the railway company will install the steel superstructure which is to be furnished by the State's contractor.

The railway company will do all work necessary to maintain railway traffic, including the construction of any temporary track support, shoo-fly track, track grading and other adjustment, signal adjustment, rearrangement of poles, trolley, telephone and telegraph lines on railway right of way and adjustment of its drainage facilities and will furnish such assistance as it may consider necessary to supervise construction operations and keep proper cost records, and insure the safety of operation of its trains and other facilities during construction. Railway will voluntarily contribute necessary easement for right of way for highway purposes across its property. Upon the completion of the work the railway will maintain its tracks and other facilities and any supporting walls parallel to the tracks which may be built to support its road bed also the superstructure built to support its tracks.

The City of Los Angeles will furnish any necessary right of way and will assume all costs for damages to private property caused by the grade change. The City will be responsible for the maintenance of all street work, sidewalks, curbs, gutters and highway drainage facilities and also for the maintenance of piers and abutments in the highway and for the
maintenance of any illuminating or flashing devices which may be installed to protect highway traffic.

It is proposed to effect separation of grade by raising the four track line of the railway, supporting same on a concrete and steel viaduct so that highway traffic may proceed under same at present grade.

The following information which deals with the proposed method of construction will be of interest to the specification writers.

Assuming the tracks are numbered from east to west, 1, 2, 3 and 4, it is proposed to throw easterly tracks 1 and 2 out of service and carry all train traffic on tracks 3 and 4 while the easterly half of the structure and the complete fill under track 1 and partial fill under track 2 is being built. It is then proposed to carry railroad traffic on tracks 1 and 4, the extreme easterly and extreme westerly tracks, so that fill under track 2 may be completed. It is then proposed to place railway traffic on the two easterly tracks 1 and 2 while the westerly half of the bridge and its approaches are being constructed.

Foundation explorations indicate that piling are needed under the structure and walls. The railroad seems to feel that the cheapest form of construction is to dig holes and fill same with concrete. On account of the height of the ground water and the nature of the ground formation I am inclined to feel that it would be better to drive piles and probably make use of Raymond type. The Pacific Electric apparently is not very strong for the use of creosoted piles.
During the construction of the crossing spans it is proposed to close Mission Road over the tracks and divert traffic on to Huntington Drive North and Soto Street.

Mr. Halsey of the Pacific Electric is taking up with the property owners the matter of securing dirt from the bluffs on the southeast corner. (The railway has under advisement the matter of permitting the State's contractor to do the track grading work.)

It might be well in the agreement with the railway to have a general paragraph stating that the railway and State by mutual agreement may vary the work to be done by each.

The Art Commission of the City has approved plans which have been submitted. So far as we can see the plans are satisfactory except that flashers should be installed at the ends of the center pier and that a slight raise of track grade is desirable to eliminate the expense of lowering pavement under the bridge.

Charles West Jones

CWJ:MD
Bridge Condition Report
General Description

Name: MISSION ROAD UNDERPASS, N.O.E. VILLAGE-LOS ANGELES

Location: Jct. Huntington Drive, Mission Road, and Soto Street.

Description: Steel through (3) plate girder spans on reinforced concrete piers on Raymond concrete piles; reinforced concrete (8) girder spans on reinforced concrete (4) column bents on Raymond concrete piles. Approximate skew 65° Lt. (Steel 0° concrete spans).

Spans: 1 @ 7.5' cantilever, 3 @ 32.5', (2 @ 22.9', 1 @ 26.8', 1 @ 29.7' not full width of bridge), 2 @ 44.8', (1 @ 29.7', 1 @ 26.8', 2 @ 29.7' not full width of bridge). Total length 491'.

Roadway width: 2 @ 32.0' between concrete curbs. Sidewalks 2 @ 6.5'.

Connecting roads: 4 @ 25.5' between concrete curbs.

Alignment: Good. Intersection of 3 highways, Pinal.

Width: Good.


Waterway: Not a factor.

Vertical clearance: 14'-0" under steel plate girders. (See diagram)

History

Date built: 1936 By Div. of Highways. Contract No. 914P0PS013

Designed by: Pacific Electric Railway.

Plans: Complete as built in Bridge Dept. files.

Remarks

cc: Mr. Wilson.
District VII.
City of Los Angeles.
NEW BRIDGE PLAN TOLD: Project to Aid Traffic Flow Structure Planned ...  
Los Angeles Times (1859-Current File), Mar 15, 1936;  
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times (1881-1989)  
pg E1

NEW BRIDGE PLAN TOLD

Project to Aid Traffic Flow

Extensive Grade Separation Will Safeguard One of West’s Busiest Intersections

Structure Planned to Carry

Four Street-Box Car Tracks

Over Throughfare

... newly built and planned for the Los Angeles area is one of the most ambitious programs of grade separation construction ever undertaken in the West.

There are eight streets aggregating in east toward Mar Vista.

The importance of grade separation in the Los Angeles area is many times greater than in any other municipalities in the Western Empire. And the flow of traffic and street cars is tremendous.

One of the most important of such bridges ever planned for this locality is the new four track bridge, the Pacific Electric Bridge now under construction here. This bridge will be carried over Mission Road near the intersection of this street and Huntington Drive.

There are formed one of the important intersections in the West and north of it there are many streets which also serve as park way and are used by many cars. In addition to the cars traveling on Mission Road, there are over 100 street cars daily with most of the cars being at peak hours.

GRADE SEPARATION PLAN

The grade separation structure here is where Mission Road intersects the new street across the street, will be a 600 foot span. Construction will begin immediately and the work will be completed within the next year. The engineering design has been planned for the best possible service.

The structure will be of steel and will consist of three main parts: the bridge deck, the approach, and the abutments. The bridge deck will be of the most modern design and will be constructed of reinforced concrete. The approach will be of concrete also and will be designed to carry traffic efficiently.

One of the most important grade separation projects in the area has been planned for the Mission Road and Pacific Electric Bridge. The structure shown in the above is the design for the grade separation structure. The bridge will be 400 feet long exclusive of approach and will be constructed of concrete, with a center span of 600 feet.

The structure will be of the most modern design and will be constructed of reinforced concrete. The approach will be of concrete also and will be designed to carry traffic efficiently. The bridge deck will be of the most modern design and will be constructed of reinforced concrete. The engineering design has been planned for the best possible service.

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How New Projects Will More Closely Knit This Metropolitan Area

Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File); Aug 30, 1936;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times (1881-1989)

pg. E1

How New Projects Will More Closely Knit This Metropolitan Area

In the above comprehensive drawing, Charles H. Owens shows four highly important developments that by quickening traffic flow will more closely knit the Los Angeles metropolitan area. The rapid upbuilding of the area has greatly increased traffic in all directions within it in recent years. The constructions as shown and described in the diagramatic drawing, will greatly shorten travel time between the heart of Los Angeles and many neighboring localities. Photograph, lower left, depicts near completion of the Pacific Electric-Manchester-Firestone Boulevard grade separation. Photograph, lower right, is of the new 480-foot grade-separation project at the intersection, one of the world's busiest, where Mission Road unites with South Huntington Drive. North Huntington Drive joins Mission Road near this intersection, and Soto street heads into South Huntington Drive near it. This structure was designed jointly by the city engineering department, the State Highway bridge division and the Pacific Electric.

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Work Speeded on New Grade Separation

Work is being rushed on the grade separation project at the junction of Huntington Drive and Mission Road. Thousands of automobiles, trucks and street cars pass this point daily and considerable congestion will be avoided upon its completion. The above photo was taken by a party from the Los Angeles zone office of the Hudson Motor Company. The car is a Hudson eight sedan.

NEW GRADE SEPARATION WILL SPEED UP TRAFFIC

Construction work on the new grade separation where Mission Road joins Huntington Drive is being rushed to completion, according to word brought back by an inspection party who visited the scene of this important bottle-neck traffic juncture in a new Hudson eight sedan last week.

ONE OF MANY

The grade separation structure, which is one of the many projects undertaken by the Pacific Electric for the alleviation of vehicular traffic conditions in the congested areas in and around Los Angeles will be 450 feet long, exclusive of lengthy approach fills, and will cost nearly a half million dollars.

TRAFFIC HEAVY

The project, which is scheduled to be completed before the end of the year, is expected to end the bottle-neck conditions which have prevailed at this point because of the movement here of approximately 43,000 vehicles and 550 street cars daily.

The grade separation project, the Hudson eight party was told, was designed jointly by the city engineering department, the State highway's bridge division and the...
NEW UNDERPASS OPENED TO TRAFFIC

One of the first cars to drive through the Mission Road-Huntington Drive underpass was a new Ford V-8 sedan, pictured above driving south from Huntington Drive on to Mission Road. Built with Federal funds at a cost of more than $430,000, the underpass eliminates a dangerous, heavily-traveled Pacific Electric crossing.

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Plea for Bus Line Heard

P.E. Asks State Rail Board for Permission to Abandon Car Service

Proposal of the Pacific Electric Railway Co. to abandon its Alhambra-San Gabriel-Temple City streetcar service and substitute buses was heard yesterday by the State Railroad Commission.

The proposed bus service would follow almost the same route taken by the rail cars at present, with the exception of leaving Los Angeles. Bus service would start from Sixth and Los Angeles Sts. to Aliso St.; then to Lyon St.; to Macy St. and on to Mission Road and Huntington Drive to the suburban areas.

CARS OUTMODED

H. O. Marier, passenger traffic manager for the utility, said the present lines are not paying dividends. He said the rail cars in use are of the type built in 1913 and are of wooden structure. New rail cars, of which 13 or 14 would be necessary to continue operation of streetcar service, would cost $22,000 each, whereas 10 45-passenger buses could be obtained at $13,500 each, he said.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE

According to General Superintendent George F. Squires of the rail company, the buses under the proposed schedules would make 63 outbound trips and 62 inbound to Los Angeles, running at 29-minute intervals instead of present 20 minutes of the streetcars.

Squires said the time of the runs would vary according to the traffic hours, taking more time when the traffic was heavy. He said the new rail cars would not speed the service.

PRESIDENT EXPLAINS

President O. A. Smith of the Pacific Electric said the company needed the buses because of the high cost of the rail cars under its new rehabilitation program.

Opposing the abandonment plea were City Attorneys of Los Angeles, Alhambra and Pasadena.

Asking for a continuance of the matter were Attorneys Gilmore Tillman, James B. Ogg and Burton Noble of the respective cities. Tillman asked for the continuance because the application should be consolidated with the proposed abandonment of the Oak Knoll and Short Line streetcar services to Pasadena. Ogg said he neither opposed nor favored the matter but would like to have more time to consider the change of service.
PE Trolley Lines Yield to Busses

Monrovia-Glendora, Sierra Vista and Pasadena Red Cars End Runs

The big red cars rumbled for the last time yesterday on the Monrovia-Glendora and Sierra Vista rails and Pasadena Short Line. A fleet of Pacific Electric busses was to take over early today.

New motor coaches—clean, fast, efficient, modern—replaced the familiar red railway cars that performed dependably and picturesquely for almost half a century.

The passing of the red cars will be mourned as a part of a long-gone but better time. To some old-timers the tracks themselves reflect sentimental memories of a simpler era.

Citizens Look Back

Take, for example, Mr. and Mrs. Ben Overturf of 241 E Walnut Ave, and Mr. and Mrs. Harry Good, 607 E Lemon Ave, who rode the first car into Los Angeles when the Monrovia line was opened in April, 1893.

Yesterday the two couples boarded one of the last cars and made the round trip between Monrovia and Los Angeles. The Pacific Electric took note. G. F. Bums, vice-president of the company, met them at the 6th and Main Sta Station. He gave the women corsages.

Big Fire Recalled

"There's no forgetting that first ride," Mrs. Good said, "because when we rode into Los Angeles a big fire was burning down an old frame building—the original Broadway Department Store at its present site."

Mrs. Overturf said she and her husband had lived in Monrovia for 49 years.

"We've always lived within sight of the car line," she said. "My, how we'll miss them. We wanted to celebrate our golden wedding anniversary next February by taking a red car ride to Los Angeles. We took the trip today instead."

The Monrovia line was extended to Glendora in December, 1897, and the event was marked by a big party in the Glendora Opera House with all of Glendora there.

The Pasadena Short Line, built in 1892, was one of the first extensions of the Pacific Electric system.

The company detailed routes of the new busses as follows:

MONROVIA-GLEN DORA LINE—From Los Angeles Terminal via 6th St, San Pedro St, Aliso St, Mission Road, Huntington Drive (south side), Main St, Huntington Drive (San Marino), Holly Ave, Huntington Drive, 1st Ave (Arcadia), Colorado Blvd, Mayflower Ave, Olive Ave (Monrovia), Shamrock Ave, Huntington Drive, Foothill Blvd, (through Duarte and Azusa) Citrus Ave, Foothill Blvd, and Michigan Ave, to Pacific Electric Station, Glendora.

Return via reverse route to Holly Ave, thence via Huntington Drive (north side), Mission Road, Aliso St, San Pedro St, 5th St, and Maples Ave to Los Angeles Terminal.

PASADENA VIA SHORT LINE—From Los Angeles Terminal via 6th St, San Pedro St, Aliso St, Mission Road, Huntington Drive (south side), Main St, Huntington Drive, Fremont Ave, Huntington Drive (north side), and Fair Oaks Ave. to Walnut St. (Pasadena).

Return via Fair Oaks Ave, Huntington Drive (north side), Mission Road, Aliso St, San Pedro St, 5th Street and Maples Ave to Los Angeles Terminal.

SIERRA VISTA LOCAL LINE—From Los Angeles Terminal via 6th St, San Pedro St, Aliso St, Mission Road, Marengo St, Soto St, and Huntington Drive (south side), to Sierra Vista Station.

Return via Huntington Drive (north side), Moulton St, Huntington Drive (south side), Soto St, Marengo St, Mission Road, Aliso St, San Pedro St, 5th St, and Maples Ave to Los Angeles Terminal.

On the three lines, coaches operate from Los Angeles Street Motor Coach Terminal, daily except Sundays and holidays, from beginning of service to 7 p.m. After 7 p.m. daily and all day Sundays and holidays, coaches leave from 6th and Main St. Terminal.

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TRAECT NO. 3249

I hereby certify that we are the owners of the land described as follows:

Lot One, Block Four, Plat No. W, in the City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles, State of California, which land is more particularly described as follows:

The land described herein is a tract of land located in the City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles, State of California, and is more particularly described as follows:

[Description of tract and boundaries]
Pacific Electric's Soto Street Bridge

Photographs

Pacific Electric's Soto Street Bridge, view from Huntington Drive South, October 17, 2013

Pacific Electric's Soto Street Bridge, view from Huntington Drive North, c1936
Pacific Electric's Soto Street Bridge, view from Soto Street, October 17, 2013

Pacific Electric's Soto Street Bridge, view from Huntington Drive North, May 15, 1937
Pacific Electric's Soto Street Bridge, view of Art Deco detailing October 17, 2013

Pacific Electric's Soto Street Bridge, view of Art Deco pylon, October 17, 2013
Pacific Electric's Soto Street Bridge, view of Art Deco pylon and cantenary pole as light pole, October 17, 2013

Pacific Electric's Soto Street Bridge, view of underside of bridge, October 17, 2013
Pacific Electric's Soto Street Bridge, approach to bridge, in 1951

Pacific Electric's Soto Street Bridge, view as Soto Street after 1951 conversion in 1956
Pacific Electric's Soto Street Bridge, view of road work in 1937

Pacific Electric's Soto Street Bridge, view road work in 1959
Pacific Electric's Soto Street Bridge, view of Mission Road and Soto Street before bridge, c1935

Pacific Electric's Soto Street Bridge, view of Mission Road and Soto Street after bridge was built, 1936
Pacific Electric's Soto Street Bridge, view former cantenary pole as light pole, October 17, 2013

Pacific Electric's Soto Street Bridge, view Art Deco pylon and steel span, October 17, 2013