

**RESULTS OF PHASE I ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SURVEY
2055 AVENUE OF THE STARS PROJECT
CENTURY CITY, CALIFORNIA**

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1.0 SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In September 2005, at the request of Manatt, Phelps, Phillips Los Angeles office Applied EarthWorks, Inc. (Æ), undertook preliminary archival research, reviewed the cultural resources records search, and made a site visit in advance of development of the 2055 Avenue of the Stars Project. The Project proponent proposes to construct residential units at the site of the former St. Regis Hotel in Century City, California. The Project area measures approximately three acres.

As currently defined, the proposed development is to occur at 2055 Avenue of the Stars, situated between Santa Monica Boulevard to the north, Avenue of the Stars to the east, West Olympic Boulevard to the south, and Century Park Way to the west within the community of Century City (hereafter referred to as the Project area [Figure 1]). The current Project area is located within the boundaries of the Rancho San Jose De Buenos Aires and was predominantly farmland until the early twentieth century. From the 1920s to the early 1960s the Fox Movietone and Twentieth Century Fox motion picture studios occupied the Project site. The Century City community development project saw the commercial development of the Project vicinity during the 1960s. The Century Plaza Tower, later the St. Regis Hotel was constructed in 1984.

Currently, proposed construction activities will result in subsurface disturbance and have the potential to impact archaeological resources, if any are present. Prior disturbances during construction of the Century Plaza Tower suggest that the potential to encounter archaeological deposits within the Project area will be low. Yet, previously undisturbed deposits may have survived in isolated pockets; therefore this document provides management recommendations.

1.2 LEGAL COMPLIANCE

The California Environmental Quality Act (California 1998) mandates public disclosure of a project's potential impacts on archaeological sites, historic properties, and Native American sacred places. With regard to cultural resources, CEQA specifies that where "a project may cause a substantial change in the significance of an historic resource" the project "may have a significant effect on the environment" (Section 21084.1). If the project has a potential to impact an archaeological site, the lead agency must determine whether the site is a historic resource. Accordingly, archaeological sites are historic resources when they are "listed in or determined eligible for listing in," the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR; Section 15064.5 [a]). The CRHR criteria define a significant cultural resource as one which:

- (A) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
- (B) Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
- (C) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or

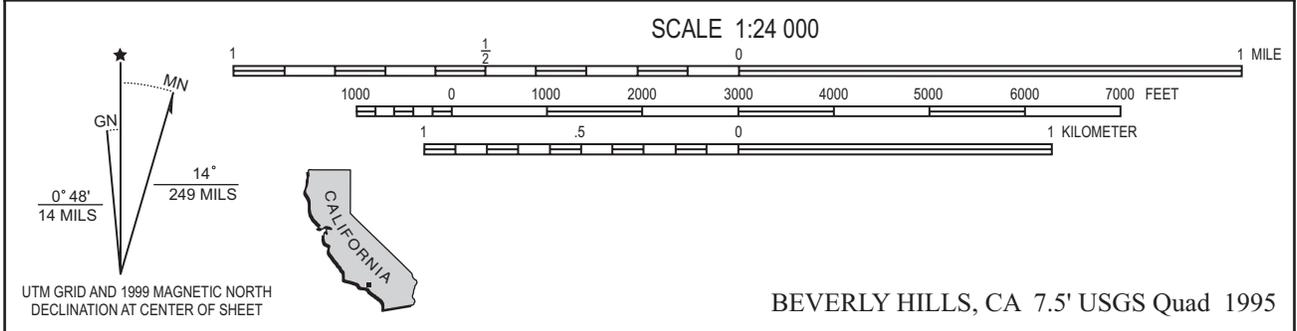
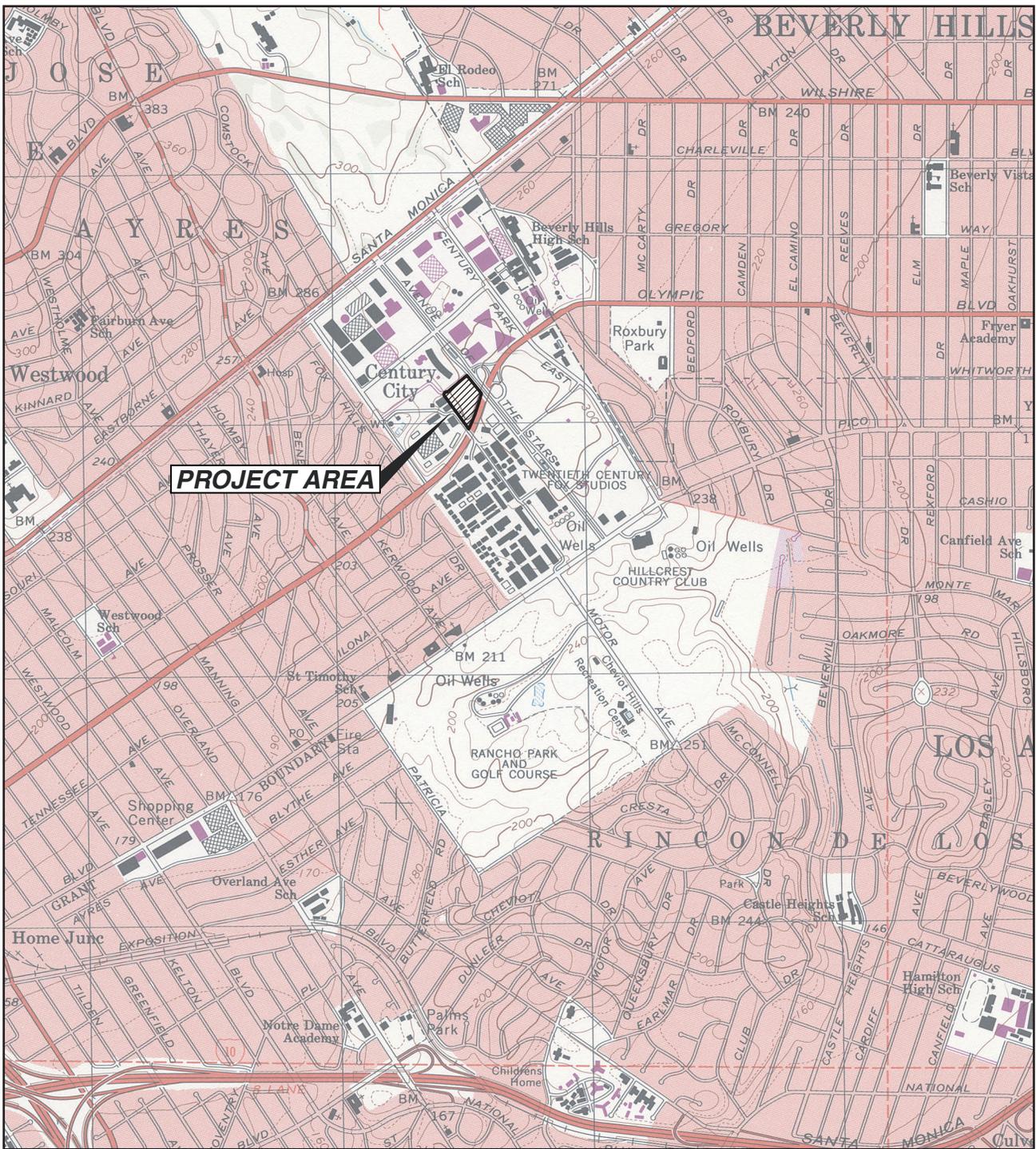


Figure 1 Project location.

- (D) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory and history. [CRHR Section 15064.5 (a)].

If an archaeological resource is not significant in terms of these criteria, it need not be considered further in the CEQA process. If the site is deemed significant, and if avoidance is not feasible, the project proponent must develop a plan for mitigating the effect of the Project on the qualities that make the resource significant. To mitigate impacts on cultural resources to a less than significant level as required by CEQA, site-specific treatment options should be developed where the potential to encounter resources is moderate to high. Where the potential for encountering resources is low, no treatment is necessary unless an unanticipated discovery is made.

2.0 PREHISTORY AND ETHNOHISTORY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

What follows is an overview of the cultural history of the Los Angeles Plain. It is intended to provide a context within which to evaluate the type, nature, and significance of prehistoric and ethnohistoric sites that may be encountered in the general Project area. The following discussion emphasizes the prehistoric chronological development of coastal southern California documented in a report *The People of Y'aanga?* (Goldberg et al. 1999), prepared for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California's Headquarters Project at Union Station. The ethnohistoric setting provides a general overview of the cultural practices of the Gabrieleno Tongva cultural group who occupied the Los Angeles region at the time of historic contact. A detailed presentation of these data is provided in *The First Angelinos* (McCawley 1996). Other native groups that occupied the region and have been directly associated with the historic Mission San Fernando will be discussed in more detail in the Historic Context.

2.2 EARLY CULTURES

A few archaeologists and nonprofessionals working in southern California have claimed that cultural remains of great antiquity have been found in the region. Most sites of purported great antiquity (in excess of 15,000 years) are centered in the Mojave and Colorado deserts or in coastal southern California. Perhaps the most widely publicized of these sites is the Calico Early Man Site in the desert portion of San Bernardino County (Schuiling 1979; Simpson 1980). Sites for which great antiquity is claimed have not been identified in the vicinity of downtown Los Angeles, and most archaeologists in California dismiss the purported "Early Man" period as unsubstantiated by scientific evidence.

2.3 THE 12,000 TO 7500 B.P. INTERVAL (TERMINAL PLEISTOCENE/EARLY HOLOCENE PERIOD)

This interval is characterized by a long period of human adaptation to environmental changes brought about by the transition from the late Pleistocene to the early Holocene. Between 13,000 and 10,000 B.P., climatic conditions became warmer and more arid and Pleistocene megafauna (large animals) gradually disappeared. The early occupants of southern California are believed to have been nomadic large-game hunters whose tool assemblage included percussion-flaked scrapers and knives; large, well-made stemmed, fluted, or leaf-shaped projectile points (e.g., Lake Mojave, Silver Lake); crescentics; heavy core/cobble tools; hammerstones; bifacial cores; and choppers and scraper planes.

2.4 THE 7500 TO 5000 B.P. INTERVAL (MIDDLE HOLOCENE PERIOD)

In the coastal and inland regions of southern California, this period of cultural development is marked by the technological advancements of seed grinding for flour and the first use of marine resources, such as shellfish and marine mammals. Overall, the general settlement-subsistence patterns of the Middle Holocene were exemplified by a greater emphasis on seed gathering. Adaptation to various ecological niches, further population growth, and an increase in sedentism

typify the subsequent periods of cultural history in southern California. This subsistence orientation, characterized by a heavy dependence on both hunting and plant gathering, continued into the historic period. The artifact assemblage of this period is similar to that of the previous period and includes crude hammerstones, scraper planes, choppers, large drills, crescents, and large flake tools. This assemblage also includes large leaf-shaped points and knives, manos and milling stones used for grinding hard seeds, and nonutilitarian artifacts, such as beads, pendants, charmstones, discoidals, and cogged stones (Kowta 1969; True 1958; Warren et al. 1961). The Topanga Complex is perhaps the best known component of the so-called Milling Stone Horizon in the vicinity of the Project region. Aside from the sites in Topanga Canyon, the only evidence of prehistoric occupation of the Los Angeles Basin dating to this interval is an occasional discoidal or cogged stone recovered from sites dating to more recent periods of prehistory.

2.5 THE 5000 TO 1500 B.P. INTERVAL (MIDDLE TO LATE HOLOCENE)

In general, cultural patterns remained similar in character to those of the preceding horizon. However, the material cultural at many coastal sites became more elaborate, reflecting an increase in sociopolitical complexity and efficiency in subsistence strategies (e.g., the introduction of the bow and arrow for hunting). Within the Los Angeles Basin, few sites have been identified that can be placed within this interval of prehistory. The components at CA-LAN-2 in Topanga Canyon are dated to this period. In addition, several sites south of Ballona Lagoon on the Del Rey bluffs contain a well-developed Intermediate Horizon, defined by Wallace and others as a period of diversified subsistence (Wallace 1978; Van Horn 1987; Van Horn and Murray 1985). Projectile points for the Ballona Bluffs sites are, in some cases, similar to those found at sites in the southeastern California deserts, specifically in the Pinto Basin and at Gypsum Cave. This suggests that the coastal occupants of this period were in close contact with cultures occupying the eastern deserts.

2.6 THE POST 1500 B.P. INTERVAL (LATE HOLOCENE)

Reliance on the bow and arrow for hunting along with the use of bedrock mortars and milling slicks mark the beginning of the tradition denoted as the “Late Prehistoric Horizon” by Wallace (1955) and the “Shoshonean Tradition” by Warren (1968), dating from about 1500 B.P. (A.D. 500) to the time of Spanish contact (approximately A.D. 1769). Late prehistoric coastal sites are numerous. Diagnostic artifacts include small triangular projectile points, mortars and pestles, steatite ornaments and containers, perforated stones, circular shell fishhooks, and numerous and varied bone tools, as well as bone and shell ornamentation. Elaborate mortuary customs along with generous use of asphaltum and the development of extensive trade networks are also characteristic of this period. The Late Horizon appears to represent increases in population size, economic and social complexity, and the appearance of social ranking.

2.7 ETHNOHISTORY

During the prehistoric period, the Los Angeles Basin was inhabited by the Gabrieleno people. The Gabrieleno are characterized as one of the most complex societies in native southern California, second perhaps only to the Chumash, their coastal neighbors to the northwest. This complexity derives from their overall economic, ritual, and social organization (Bean and Smith 1978:538; Kroeber 1925:621). The Gabrieleno Tongva, a Uto-Aztecan (or Shoshonean) group, may have entered the Los Angeles Basin as recently as 1500 B.P. Two theories prevail: perhaps they arrived from the southern Great Basin or interior California deserts, or that the Gabrieleno

Tongva peoples migrated into the Los Angeles region in successive waves over a lengthy period of time beginning as early as 4000 B.P. Gradually these Uto-Aztecan peoples began to displace the previous Hokan-speaking occupants of the southern coastal region. Early ethnographers report that the Gabrieleno Tongva were flanked by speakers of the Hokan languages: the Chumash to the north and the Diegueño to the south (Kroeber 1925:578–580).

In early protohistoric times, the Gabrieleno Tongva occupied a large territory reportedly including the entire Los Angeles Basin. This region encompasses the coast from Malibu to Aliso Creek, parts of the Santa Monica Mountains, the San Fernando Valley, the San Gabriel Valley, the San Bernardino Valley, the northern parts of the Santa Ana Mountains, and much of the middle to the lower Santa Ana River. They also occupied the islands of Santa Catalina, San Clemente, and San Nicolas. Within this large territory were more than 50 residential communities with populations ranging from 50 to 150 individuals. The Gabrieleno Tongva had access to a broad and diverse resource base. This wealth of resources, coupled with an effective subsistence technology, well developed trade network, and ritual system, resulted in a society that was among one of the most materially wealthy and culturally sophisticated cultural groups in California at the time of contact. For a more detailed discussion of the Gabrieleno Tongva's technology, subsistence, cultural diversity, and ethnohistory, the reader is referred to McCawley's (1996) *The First Angelinos*.

3.0 HISTORIC CONTEXT

The current Project area is located in Rancho San Jose de Buenos Aires, one of several Spanish land grants established in the early 1800s. Rancho San Jose de Buenos Aires was granted by Manuel Micheltorena, Governor of the Californias, on February 24, 1843, to Maximo Alanis and comprised 4,438 acres (Conner 1941:35). In 1884, John Wolfskill purchased the rancho for \$40,000. The completion of the Santa Fe Railroad in 1886 sent land prices soaring and Wolfskill sold the land to the Los Angeles and Santa Monica Land and Water Company for \$438,000, more than 10 times the original price (Conner 1941:35). The company built a railroad and platted the town of Sunset. However, the venture failed and, in 1891, the land was quitclaimed back to Wolfskill and the remainder restored to farming (Conner 1941:35).

In 1926, William Fox, of the Fox Film Corporation acquired 300 acres of open country that included the current Project area (Wikipedia 2005). The Fox Hills studio originally covered 150 acres and was formally dedicated on August 29, 1926 (*Los Angeles Times*, August 26, 1926). The \$2,000,000 project included a \$300,000 scenic wall on Santa Monica Boulevard (*Los Angeles Times*, August 24, 1926), and various stage sets including American towns and Amazonian villages (*Los Angeles Times*, August 26, 1926). Earlier, in July of 1926, the Fox Film Corporation had purchased the patent to the Movietone sound system for recording sound onto film (Wikipedia 2005). To accommodate the increasing demand for talking motion pictures, construction began on a new plant at the Fox Hills location. Hailed as the “world’s largest talking picture studio” (*Los Angeles Times*, October 7, 1928), the \$10,000,000 facility was constructed between July and October 1928. The new studio encompassed the central 40 acres of the Fox property and was surrounded by a 14-foot high wall. The Fox-Movietone studio was opened on October 28, 1928 and more than 50,000 people attended the dedication ceremony, which was covered by the *Los Angeles Times*:

During the day thousands visited every nook and corner of the new establishment that is hidden behind a fourteen –foot wall entirely surrounding the studio. Of particular interest to the visitors were the four huge stage buildings; each containing two fully equipped stages and all of the other material required in the production of either sound or silent pictures. The ceremonies were broadcast over the radio and also were filmed by Fox-Movietone.

The plant includes twenty-seven buildings of reinforced concrete. These range in size and type from the huge stage buildings to the studio cottage of the stars. The gardens are patterned after the famous ones at Versailles, and the outstanding flower or shrub of each State in the Union is planted in the garden [*Los Angeles Times*, October 29, 1928].

The Fox Film Corporation and William Fox in particular suffered in the stock market crash of 1929. In 1935, a merger with Twentieth Century Pictures resulted in the formation of the Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation and the studios remained in use. Beginning in 1940 and continuing through World War II, the studio grew to 240 acres and purchases included land formerly belonging to the Westwood Hills Golf Course (Silverman 1988:70). The 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map depicts multiple structures located between Santa Monica Boulevard to the north, West Pico Boulevard to the south, Fox Hills Drive to the west, and public land to the east. Structures depicted include stages, prop storage, and “numerous frame and plaster sets”

throughout the lot. Within the current Project area the map depicts “scene docks” and “plaster storage” (Figure 2). All of the principal buildings were situated to the northwest and southwest of the current Project area.

The Century City development program of the early 1960s resulted in the sale of much of the Twentieth Century-Fox lot. Recognized as the “most expensive land purchase and development program undertaken in the Western United States” (*Los Angeles Times* April 17, 1961) the buyers, Webb & Knapp, Inc., of New York and Aluminum Co. of America (Alcoa) paid \$43 million for the 280-acre property (*Los Angeles Times* April 17, 1961). Bulldozers moved onto the back lot in July of 1961 and demolition of the old sets began (*Los Angeles Times* July 16, 1961). Twentieth Century-Fox leased back 80 acres to the south and the current Project area was subsumed into the Century City development that included hotels, apartments, office blocks, and shops. The 1966 USGS Beverly Hills 7.5' topographic quadrangle map depicts the Century Plaza Hotel to the north but no structures within the Project area. The 1979 Thomas Guide also depicts the Project area with no structures and the parcel appears to have been vacant between 1961 and 1984 when the Century Plaza Tower, now the former St. Regis Hotel was built.

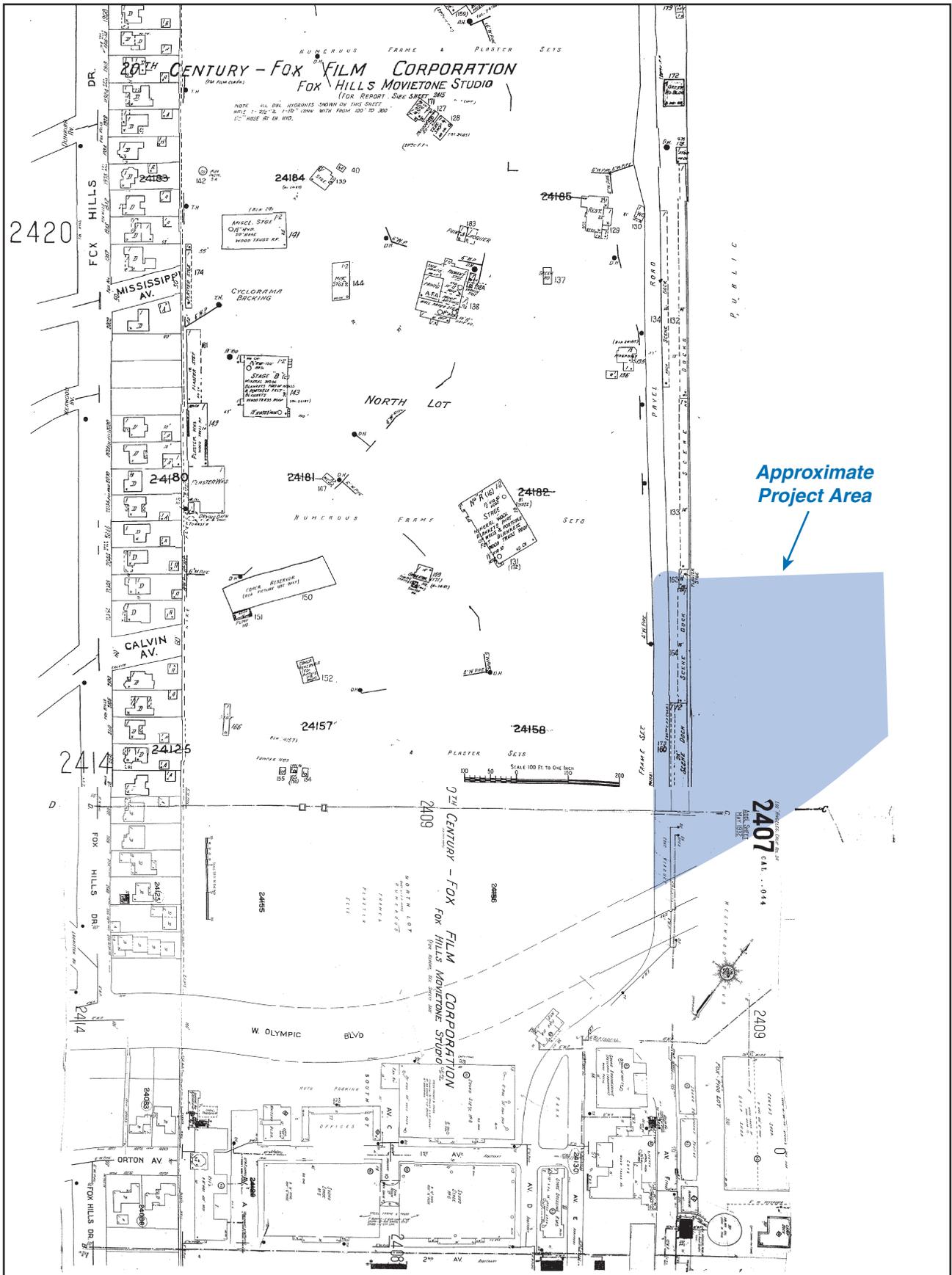


Figure 2 Approximate project area shown with 1926-1950 Sanborn map.

4.0 SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATIONS

4.1 METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

Limited archival research was undertaken to define prior land use within proximity of the Project area and to evaluate the potential for preservation of archaeological deposits. Historical maps, photographs, and other relevant historical documents and literature were gathered from several locations including the following regional facilities.

- Los Angeles Public Library
- Proquest Database
- South Central Coastal Information Center

The Historical Los Angeles Times database available through Proquest (<http://proquest.umi.com>) provided the majority of the information used to develop the historic context above. Maps and photographs were reviewed at the Los Angeles Public Library.

4.2 PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

Christopher A. Joseph & Associates submitted a records search request to the South Central Coastal Information Center at Fullerton. The results of the records search were then made available to Æ, following which, an augmented request was made. The records search results obtained from the South Central Coastal Information Center at Fullerton indicate that six cultural resources studies were previously conducted within a ½-mile radius of the Project area, and that one archaeological site has been reported. This archaeological resource does not lie within the Project area. No sites are listed on the archaeological Determination of Eligibility list and no isolated finds were recorded.

In addition, the California Points of Historical Interest (PHI), the California Historical Landmarks (CHL), the California Register of Historic Places (CRHP), the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the California State Historical Resources Inventory (HRI), and the City of Los Angeles Cultural Monuments listing were reviewed. To summarize:

- The California Point of Historical Interest list identified no properties within the area specified;
- The California Historical Landmarks register lists no properties within the area specified;
- The California Register of Historic Places identified lists no properties within the area specified;
- The National Register of Historic Places lists no properties within the area specified;
- The City of Los Angeles Cultural Monument register lists no properties within the area specified;
- The California Historic Resources Inventory list no properties within the area specified.

Among the six cultural resources studies undertaken in proximity to the Project area, the most relevant to the current assessment is the construction monitoring reports produced by LSA Associates, Inc. Construction activities within the current Twentieth Century-Fox lot were monitored in 1996 and 1998. An archaeological site (CA-LAN-2479H) was identified north of the intersection of Pico Boulevard and Fox Hills Drive, approximately 0.4 miles south of the current Project area. Numerous artifacts were identified during ground-disturbing construction activities and include various bottle and glass fragments, ceramic sherds and arc-light carbon rods. Also identified were unconsolidated structural rubble such as roofing shingles, plaster, milled lumber and wire nails. Deposits were distributed evenly throughout the fill and noted at depths as much as 20 feet. LSA concluded that the items were associated with movie sets located within the Twentieth Century-Fox studio. LSA also suggested that the items were buried during ca. 1936 construction activities at the studio. Additionally, it was concluded that similar deposits are likely to exist throughout a larger area “probably eventually encompassing the entire area covered by the original Fox Studios” (LSA Associates, Inc. 1998).

4.3 SITE INSPECTION

Keith Warren, Æ Historical Archaeologist, made a brief inspection of the Project area on August 31, 2005. He found that the former Century Plaza Tower and St. Regis Hotel is surrounded by paved and landscaped areas (Figure 3). The 30-story Century Plaza Tower was built in 1984 and included 322 rooms and subterranean conference rooms. Rennovations were made in 2000 when the building became the St. Regis Hotel.



Figure 3 Aerial view of Century City 1985. Century Plaza Tower lower right. Security Pacific National Bank Collection. On file at Los Angeles Public Library.

5.0 PROJECT AREA SENSITIVITY

5.1 PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL SENSITIVITY

Although no prehistoric sites have been previously recorded within ½ mile of the Project area, regional site utilization during prehistoric times is known to have occurred. For example, Los Angeles County is within the area of the Late Prehistoric Canaliño culture (Rogers 1929), which later evolved into the protohistoric Gabrielino and Chumash cultures. It is believed that Late Prehistoric/Canaliño occupations of the Arroyo Sequit site first occurred approximately 2,000 years ago and persisted until the Mission Period (ca. A.D. 1800 to 1830). Probably one of the richest sites in coastal southern California, the Malibu Site (CA-LAN-264) at the mouth of Malibu Creek, was occupied during this period. Located at Malaga Cove near Santa Monica Bay, it has yielded stratified midden deposit and prehistoric tools such as large mortars and long pestles, *Haliotis* shell fishhooks, tarring pebbles, and steatite vessels (Walker 1951).

Nonetheless, the integrity of the buried land surface at the Project area likely is poor. The construction of subterranean facilities such as parking lots, basements, and conference rooms associated with the Century Plaza Tower resulted in large-scale excavations during original hotel construction. These activities no doubt caused substantial impact to native subsoil. Undated photographs available at the Los Angeles Public Library depict immense excavations in Century City. Although these photographs do not provide specific locations, they illustrate typical construction methods. Additionally, current site plans provided by Manatt, Phelps, Phillips indicate further excavations of 45 feet below current grade to accommodate subterranean parking. If utilized prehistorically, archaeological deposits could remain intact. Yet, no known prehistoric sites exist in the immediate proximity to the Project area. Based on available evidence, the potential for intact prehistoric archaeological deposits must be considered low. However, any discovery of prehistoric archaeological remains would be considered a potentially significant archaeological discovery.

5.2 HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SENSITIVITY

Possible human habitation during the Rancho period and site utilization by Fox and Twentieth Century Fox studios likely resulted in the formation of historical archaeological deposits within the Project area. Construction methods discussed above undoubtedly resulted in the removal of such deposits and the potential for historical archaeological deposits to have survived is also considered low. However, isolated pockets of previously undisturbed native sediments may exist. Under these circumstances historical archaeological deposits may have survived. Any discovery of Rancho period or studio period era would be considered a potentially significant archaeological discovery.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Previous sections of this report, particularly the Historic Context, Summary of Findings, and Project Area Sensitivity, have outlined the potential for encountering significant archaeological resources within the Project area. Due to extensive and deep disturbances in the past, the potential for encountering historical archaeological resources is considered low. The potential for encountering prehistoric archaeological remains is also low, for the same reason.

Because little potential for encountering significant archaeological deposits exists, monitoring of ground disturbing activities should not be required. However, in the event of an unanticipated discovery, construction must be diverted and a qualified archaeologist must be consulted. An archaeologist must assess significance of the exposed archaeological discovery in accordance with California Register criteria. If a significant resource is identified during construction, the State Historic Preservation Office must be consulted regarding treatment options.

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