

SurveyLA

Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey

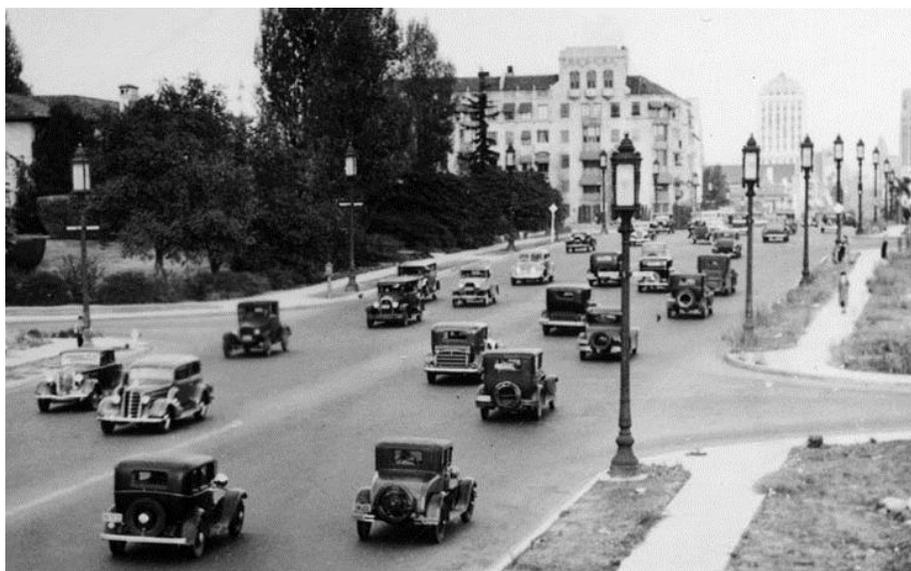
LOS ANGELES CITYWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT

Context: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT, 1850-1980

Sub-Context: Government Infrastructure and Services, 1900-1980

Theme: Public Works, 1900-1980

Sub-Theme: Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980



Prepared for:

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



June 2017

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	1
CONTRIBUTOR	1
INTRODUCTION	1
HISTORIC CONTEXT	2
STREET LIGHT TYPES	14
EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR STREET LIGHTS	31
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	33

PREFACE

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

CONTRIBUTOR

Daniel Prosser is a historian and preservation architect. He holds an M.Arch. from Ohio State University and a Ph.D. in history from Northwestern University. Before retiring, he was the Historic Sites Architect for the Kansas State Historical Society.

THEME INTRODUCTION

The theme of Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting looks at the evolution of this infrastructure element as part of the urban landscape. The street light serves the necessary purpose of illuminating the public path. But in the process it can provide that path with an object of beauty, laid out in a rhythmic line that gives a sense of order, and when lit at night a touch of elegance.

Most cities adopt a single standard light design, with perhaps one variation for commercial streets and another for residential. Los Angeles has historically taken a different path. There was, to be sure, a standard minimal lamp that the City would provide. But there was also the opportunity for individual developers and associations of property owners to pick a design of their choosing. Once that choice was privately made, and privately paid for, the City took over responsibility for power and maintenance.

The result is that Los Angeles has a greater variety of street light types than most other comparable cities. Individual neighborhoods, particularly in well-off areas, can be identified by their lights. Certain commercial districts – Wilshire and Hollywood Boulevards most notably – came up with their own unique street light forms. Even Downtown, where one would expect to see standardization, contains different types from different eras.

Groupings of street lights are generally evaluated under this theme although rare and isolated examples may be individually significant. Street lights may also be contributing features of residential and commercial historic districts

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

Evaluation Considerations:

The theme of Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting may overlap with other SurveyLA themes as follows:

- Themes within the Residential Development and Suburbanization context, in respect to the role of developers giving identity to their projects with particular street lights.
- The theme of Municipal Water and Power, within the Public and Private Institutional Development context, in respect to the relationship between street lighting and municipal power development.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Street lighting in Los Angeles can be divided into three periods. The first consists of the era before the use of incandescent electric lamps. This period lasted from the late 1860s until the early 1900s and included both gas lamps and electric arc lamps. The second period encompasses street lighting that used vertically mounted incandescent lamps, and lasted from the early 1900 until just before the Second World War. During this time poles were relatively low in height, placed close together, and often highly ornamented. The third period began in the postwar years after 1945 and is characterized by street lights that used High Intensity Discharge, or HID, lamps, such as mercury and sodium vapor, enclosed in horizontally mounted optical assemblies. These required poles that were relatively taller, spaced further apart, and were generally of utilitarian design, albeit with occasional examples of elegantly modernist forms.



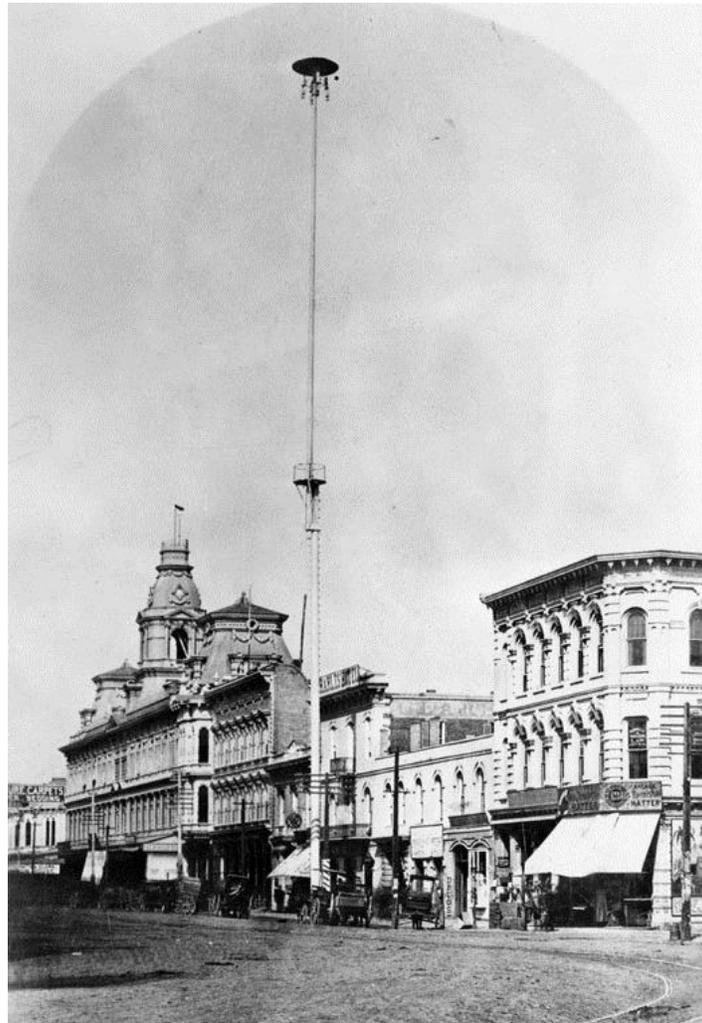
*Gas street light in the early 1870s
San Pedro Street, near Second Street
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

Early Street Lighting

The first street lighting system in Los Angeles used gas. In 1867 the City granted a franchise for lamps to the Los Angeles Gas Company. The gas was distilled from natural asphalt and later from oil, and a lamplighter had to ride from lamp to lamp every night. The first lamps went in around the Plaza, and then were placed along the major commercial streets. Eventually 136 lamps covered the still compact city.¹



*Brush arc lamps on 150-foot mast the early 1880s
Main Street looking north from Commercial (Aliso) Street
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

¹ "Early Los Angeles Street Lights," Water and Power Associates Website, www.waterandpower.org; Eddy S. Feldman, *The Art of Street Lighting in Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1972), 1.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

By the early 1880s the technology of direct-current electric arc street lighting had become commercially successful. The so-called Brush lamps produced an extremely intense light that required the installation to be placed high above the street on a mast. In September of 1882 a private contractor had installed seven of these Brush lights on masts 150 feet tall. Each light had three arc lamps, which provided the lighting equivalent of a full moon at street level. Five were Downtown, while the other two were in early residential neighborhoods, at Avenue 22 and North Broadway in Lincoln Heights and at First Street and Boyle in Boyle Heights.²

By 1887 Los Angeles had thirty-six of these arc-light masts. Fifteen were the full 150 feet and contained three lamps. Two others were also 150 feet high, but held a single lamp. The rest were single-lamp installations on masts sixty feet high. In addition to Downtown and the older residential districts, they were located in places such as the top of Bunker Hill, to the west on Orange Street, which later became Wilshire Boulevard, and around the train stations.³

The installations were problematic. They required constant maintenance and climbing the mast was not an easy task. They became more practical in 1900, when the direct-current Brush lamps were replaced with alternate current arc devices. Although considered outdated within a few years after that, the masts lasted in some locations until 1922.⁴

The Llewellyn Electrolier, 1905-1915

By the early 1900s, improvements to alternate-current incandescent lighting made possible a new and more attractive mode of street illumination. This was known as the electrolier. It consisted of an ornamental lamp post topped by a cluster of incandescent lamps enclosed in glass globes. The post itself was treated as a classical column, with a plinth-like base, a slightly tapered and often fluted shaft, and a capital-like top made up of the cluster of globes.⁵

The technical characteristics of the electrolier made them prominent feature in the streetscape. Even with multiple lamps, the light given off was not great. Most had a single large globe that gave off 32-candle power, and two to six smaller globes that each produced 16 candlepower. This was in contrast to

²C. L. Howland, the contractor, formed what became the Los Angeles Electric Company, later the Los Angeles Gas and Electric Company, to provide power the lamps, and also sold electricity to private individuals and businesses. "Early Los Angeles Street Lights;" Feldman, *Art of Street Lighting*, 22-29.

³ "Early Los Angeles Street Lights;" Feldman, *Art of Street Lighting*, 29.

⁴ "Early Los Angeles Street Lights;" Feldman, *Art of Street Lighting*, 30, 38.

⁵ The Bureau of Street Lighting refers to any free-standing assembly of base, post, and lamp, manufactured and marketed as a single entity, as an electrolier. Utilitarian street lights, discussed below, which are hung from existing power poles that serve other purposes, are not considered electroliers. See "Early Los Angeles Street Lights."

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

the 3000 candle power of the Brush arc lights. Therefore, electroliers had to be placed relatively close together. Nor could they be tall.⁶

The result was a row of highly visible, evenly spaced lamp standards at pedestrian scale. In the generally chaotic commercial environment of the early twentieth century, this introduction of classically-inspired fixtures, of uniform design and spacing, gave the boulevards a degree of elegance previously unknown. The effect was particularly striking at night, when the globes created a linear Great White Way.⁷

Supplying these lamps to Los Angeles was the Llewellyn Iron Works. The company fabricated a variety of electrolier configurations featuring a single large globe and two to six smaller globes. All followed the classical treatment of a heavier base and a more slender shaft. All the globes were spherical, but the seven-lamp form could be provided with a finial atop the large globe.⁸



*Seven-globe Llewellyn electroliers, 1914
Broadway, Looking North from Eighth Street
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

The first use of Llewellyn electroliers took place along Broadway. In May of 1905 the City installed 135 posts topped with seven-globe configurations. The project was paid for by the Broadway Boulevard Association, a group of local property owners who assessed themselves to fund what they saw as a

⁶ "Early Los Angeles Street Lights;" Feldman, *Art of Street Lighting*, 31, 43.

⁷ Feldman, *Art of Street Lighting*, 43.

⁸ "Early Los Angeles Street Lights."

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

device to improve the street's appearance and thereby increase commerce. This use of an assessment on those benefiting from the improvement was the pattern followed thereafter.⁹

The popularity of the electrolier soon spread to other Downtown streets. Within a year Hill, Main and Spring Streets had installed Llewellyn fixtures. They were typically five-globe rather than seven, allowing Broadway to maintain its image as the brightest of the Great White Ways. Eventually other Downtown and neighborhood commercial districts gained Llewellyns. By 1912 the Llewellyn had reached the San Fernando Valley, with the business section of Sherman Way that later became Van Nuys Boulevard lined with five-globe electroliers. As late as 1947 five-globe Llewellyns were still in use along South Olive Street just north of Pico Boulevard.¹⁰



*Dual upright electroliers in the early 1930s
Broadway at Third Street
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

⁹ "Early Los Angeles Street Lights;" Feldman, *Art of Street Lighting*, 31, 35.

¹⁰ "Early Los Angeles Street Lights;" Feldman, *Art of Street Lighting*, 35; "Olive Street at Pico Blvd" (Order Number 00068368), Photo Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

The Dual Upright Electrolier, 1915-1940

The dominance of the Llewellyn lasted for about a decade. By 1915 the lamp itself had evolved beyond the standard incandescent. That year the Mazda C became available. It was a gas-filled lamp with a coiled tungsten filament operating in an inert gas, either nitrogen or argon. It was more powerful and required less maintenance than the traditional incandescent.¹¹

For commercial districts, the most common form to make use of the new lamp was the dual upright electrolier. The lamps were modeled on torches, with the globes around the lighting elements oval or acorn in shape, and topped by finials. The base and shaft, like those of the Llewellyn, mimicked a classical column. Significant, given the growing importance of the streetcar, was the option that provided an extended center pole from which trolley wires could be suspended.¹²

The most common of these dual uprights was the UM-1906, manufactured by the Union Metal Company of Canton, Ohio. Union Metal produced variations at different heights of this basic electrolier, and other manufacturers, such as Lalux, Marbelite and Permestand, also made dual uprights that can still be found throughout the city. But the UM-1906 was the most common and is the basis for the dual-upright reproduction currently offered by the Bureau of Street Lighting for new installations.¹³

In January of 1920 the seven-globe Llewellyns along Broadway, from First to Tenth Streets (Olympic Boulevard), were replaced by 134 new dual uprights. The other Downtown streets, with their five-globe Llewellyns, soon followed. By the 1930s, the dual upright was ubiquitous. It could be found in neighborhood commercial districts such as Brooklyn Avenue (Cesar E. Chavez Avenue) in Boyle Heights. It could be found in high-density apartment districts such as St. Andrews Place near Eighth Street. It could even be found along the ocean front walkway at Venice beach.¹⁴

The Bureaucracy of Street Lighting

Beginning in the early 1900s, as incandescents replaced the earlier arc lamps, the City attempted to gain control over street lighting. In 1911 it created a Board of Municipal Art Commissioners, one duty of which was to rule on the acceptability of electrolier designs. The power of the City increased in 1916 when the Department of Public Service began to provide municipal power to streetlights.¹⁵

¹¹ Feldman, *Art of Street Lighting*, 17.

¹² "Early Los Angeles Street Lights." For examples of extended shafts for trolley lines see "Temple and Hill streets" (Order Number 00068219), Photo Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.

¹³ "Let Us Light Your Way" (Los Angeles: Bureau of Street Lighting, 2008), 12; Streetlight Survey, Los Angeles Bureau of Street Lighting.

¹⁴ "Commercial building, Brooklyn Avenue" (Order Number 00107880) and "From the sidewalk of St. Andrews Place" (Order Number 00069510), Photo Collection, Los Angeles Public Library; "Early Los Angeles Street Lights."

¹⁵ Feldman, *Art of Street Lighting*, 37, 41.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

The first effort of the City to install its own street lights took place in August of 1916 when the Department of Public Service lit Sycamore Grove Park in the Garvanza district of northeast Los Angeles. Later that same year the Department replaced the old arc lamps with recently-developed gas-filled incandescent bulbs on the streets of Garvanza. Providing power to these lights was the new City-owned Distributing Station Number 2 located at 225 Avenue 61 (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument Number 558).¹⁶

By the mid-1920s the City role in street lighting had become formalized. In 1925 the Department of Public Works created a Bureau of Street Lighting to establish criteria for all electroliers and to determine the location of units. A process evolved whereby private property owners chose a street light design from a list of types approved by the City, installed, and then paid for the system. At that point the City assumed ownership, supplied power, and provided maintenance.¹⁷

There were two ways by which property owners selected, installed, and paid for street lights. The first was for the developer of the property to undertake the effort before selling individual lots. The other was for local property owners, either residential or commercial, to create a lighting district, assess themselves for the cost, and choose a design.¹⁸

For those streets that had neither a developer-installed system nor a system paid for by a lighting district, the City on its own installed what it referred to as utilitarian units. These units took two forms. One was a simple lamp suspended from a metal arm and attached to a timber pole. The other was a lamp hung from a cable over an intersection, supported by two timber poles. The result was that the poorer areas of the city had a sparser and less attractive system of street lighting than the better-off neighborhoods.¹⁹

¹⁶ Feldman, *Art of Street Lighting*, 37; Jeffrey Herr, *Landmark L.A.: Historic-Cultural Monuments of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: City of Los Angeles, 2002), 466.

¹⁷ Feldman, *Art of Street Lighting*, 39-40.

¹⁸ Feldman, *Art of Street Lighting*, 39.

¹⁹ Feldman, *Art of Street Lighting*, 40.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980



*Utilitarian street lights in the 1920s
(Department of Water and Power)*

The Age of Variety, 1925-1950

Under the Bureau of Street Lighting's process, the better-off sections during the 1920s and 1930s gained a wide variety of lamp styles. Manufacturers of electroliers competed for business by marketing their designs to developers and lighting districts. All of this led to what one historian has called "the greatest profusion (if not confusion) of design of street lighting units to be found anywhere in the world."²⁰

The idea of a specialized electrolier for a business district was particularly popular in the late 1920s. The best known was the Wilshire Special, installed in 1928 along Wilshire Boulevard from Park View to Fairfax. Other upscale commercial districts, such as Westwood Village, followed suit with their own special types.²¹

²⁰ Feldman, *Art of Street Lighting*, 42.

²¹ Virginia Comer, *Streetlights* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Store, 1972), 36-39; Feldman, *Art of Street Lighting*, 3.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980



*Wilshire Special street lights in the 1930s
Wilshire Boulevard at Bronson Avenue
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Better-off residential areas such as Hancock Park and Toluca Lake also distinguished themselves by installing attractive street lighting, chosen from the variety of mass-produced electroliers marketed by manufacturers. Here the form was more modest, typically consisting of a single upright lamp enclosed in a spherical or, more typically by the 1920s, an acorn-shaped globe. The post was treated as column. Some were cast iron, with relatively complex base detailing and shaft fluting, while others were simpler and made of cast concrete.²²

²² Comer, *Streetlights*, 10-11.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980



*Single upright lamp with acorn globe in the 1930s
Residential street, Toluca Lake
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

By the late 1930s, the upright dual- and single-lamp electroliers were giving way to pendant forms, with a teardrop-shaped lamp facing downward and suspended from a short arm. The pendant could make good use of the early High Intensity Discharge (HID) lamps becoming increasingly common by the late 1930s. In place of a filament, the HID lamp ignited a gas. The most common in the early years of the HID was mercury vapor. It was a practical lamp by 1938, providing 400 watts of power. It had a life of almost four years, compared to the incandescent which could last six to eight months.²³

The initial HID lamps were designed to be installed vertically and used in pendant designs originally intended for incandescents. Beginning in the years just before the Second World War and extending into the late 1940s, these pendant electroliers with teardrop luminaires began appearing along commercial streets, in some cases taking the place of dual uprights. As with the earlier electroliers, pendants could be fitted with extensions to support trolley wires.²⁴

²³ Feldman, *Art of Street Lighting*, 18, 51.

²⁴ Feldman, *Art of Street Lighting*, 51. See Street Light Types below for examples of pendants with trolley extensions.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980



*Pendant electrolier with teardrop luminaire, 1949
Vine Street looking north from Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

The Davit Street Light, 1950-1980

The pendant electrolier, with its extended arm and down-facing lamp, was the basis for the street light that came to dominate the postwar period. This was the so-called davit form, named for the arm on hoists used for raising and lowering boats and anchors. Unlike the earlier pendants, davits were typically unornamented, characterized only by a clear differentiation between the post and the arm, which could be of different materials.

The davit used a different type of lamp, based on improvements in HID lighting technology. Lamps were horizontally-mounted, rather than vertically as with the earlier pendants. This permitted a larger lamp in a housing, or optical assembly, which included reflector and prisms to direct the light. Along with this change in the lamp size and orientation came improvements in the gasses used. Eventually, by the 1970s, sodium had replaced mercury as the most common form.²⁵

The result was a significant change in the height and spacing of street lights. The improvement in lighting power allowed the electroliers to be taller and placed further apart. Longer arms extended the lamp over the street, and the reflectors and prisms threw the light toward the center of the roadway. The horizontal orientation of the optical assembly, attached to a curved arm, inevitably gave this type of street light the popular name of cobra-head.²⁶

²⁵ Feldman, *Art of Street Lighting*, 18.

²⁶ Comer, *Streetlights*, 46-48; Feldman, *Art of Street Lighting*, 43, 53.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980



*Davit or cobra-head street lamp, 1964
6000 block of Van Nuys Boulevard
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

While less common than before the war, there were still special variations on the davit created for specific lighting districts. They varied from tasteful modernist forms on Bunker Hill and Century City, which combined the pole and arm into a single graceful entity, to the Hollywood Boulevard Special that came complete with ornamental stars. They also featured multiple lamp and arm clusters in locations ranging from Westwood to Van Nuys.²⁷

The davit was installed by the City in much the same way as pre-war electroliers. By the mid-1950s the City required all developers of new residential, commercial, or industrial properties to install street lighting as part of their projects. In existing areas, the process continued whereby the City would install a lamp, hung from existing timber poles, at an intersection or along streets and alleys no closer than every 300 feet. There was no cost for installation or maintenance, but the lamp was intended for minimal traffic safety and not considered a permanent system.²⁸

²⁷ See the specific Street Light Types below.

²⁸ "Let Us Light Your Way," 4-12.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

Otherwise, existing property owners along a particular stretch of street could petition for a lighting project. If at least sixty percent of the owners of the benefiting frontage signed the petition, a questionnaire went to all affected owners. If a majority of them approved, the project proceeded to design and cost estimates. Once they were complete, the property owners again vote to accept an assessment for the cost of the project.²⁹

Street Lighting Since 1980

In recent years there has been a growing respect for historic electroliers as character-giving elements within a streetscape. This has led to the restoration of existing street lights. In some cases, they have been relocated, examples being the Llewellyns now found in the historic Plaza and along Carroll Avenue. Elsewhere they have been kept in their original locations. A good example of this is the circa 1914 Windsor Square Special single upright electroliers along Plymouth, Windsor, Lorraine, and Irving Boulevards from just north of Wilshire Boulevard to Third Street.³⁰

There has also been a growing demand for reproductions of historic street lamps. Both new developers and existing owners have a City-approved choice of electroliers that include the dual-upright UM-1906 and a single pendant with teardrop lamp. In certain cases variations based on historic forms have been installed, such as the double-headed version of the 1940s-era pendants along Hollywood Boulevard and Vine Street.³¹

STREET LIGHT TYPES

The following are historically significant street light types. Because of the great number of different types, this examination restricts itself to those that have been called out as historically significant by SurveyLA and/or the Bureau of Street Lighting. When possible, the lamp description number has been given, based on data contained in the Bureau of Street Lighting's Street Light Survey and on the City of Los Angeles Street Lights Map – ArcGIS.³²

²⁹ "Let Us Light Your Way," 4-12.

³⁰ See Street Light Types below. Carroll Avenue is within the Angelino Heights Historic Preservation Overlay Zone and is a National Register Historic District. The Windsor Square Specials are within the Windsor Square Historic Preservation Overlay Zone.

³¹ "Let Us Light Your Way," 12.

³² The electroliers considered historically significant by the Bureau of Street Lighting are called out in the publication "City of Los Angeles – Bureau of Street Lighting" as well as in "Early Los Angeles Street Lights." The City of Los Angeles Street Lights Map – ArcGIS can be found at <http://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=fbea2cb239004e6ba4c4f01eb809bba4>.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

Incandescent Multiple Globe Electroliers, 1905-1915

The most common of the incandescent multiple globe electroliers of the early 1900s were those manufactured by the Llewellyn Iron Works of Los Angeles. The firm became so identified with this style of street light that any multiple globe electrolier became commonly known as a Llewellyn. The Llewellyn Iron Works, founded in 1889-1890 (sources differ) was one of the largest metal working facilities in Los Angeles. It manufactured structural steel – including that for the Bradbury Building – water and oil tanks, and mining and oil-drilling machinery, as well as ornamental metal work.³³



Five-globe Llewellyn

*Reinstalled on the east side of Main Street between First and Temple Streets, Downtown
(Photo by author)*

There were several variations of these so-called Llewellyns used Downtown. The earliest were the seven-globe electroliers, installed in 1905 on Broadway. On adjacent streets, five-globe Llewellyns were used. Hill Street featured a variety with spider-web-like ornament extending down from the arms, while Spring Street and Main Street had simpler forms with shallow brackets in place of the webs.³⁴

No Llewellyn is known to exist in its original location. But a number of five-globe Llewellyns have been reinstalled as ornamental lamps in public spaces. There is a good collection along the east side of Main

³³ *Los Angeles Herald*, September 3, 1905.

³⁴ "Early Los Angeles Street Lights."

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

Street between First and Temple Streets, opposite City Hall. A second collection exists around the historic Plaza at the center of the El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic Monument.



*Five-globe Llewellyn with pendant secondary globes
Carroll Avenue and West Edgeware Road, Angelino Heights
(Photo by author)*

All of the Llewellyns in the central business district appear to have had globes extending upright. Elsewhere forms were used that had a single large upright globe and surrounding suspended globes. Three-globe and five-globe examples have been relocated to Carroll Avenue between East and West Edgeware Roads in Angelino Heights. The five-globe electroliers are placed on corners and the three-globe types mid-block. Based on historic photographs, the five-globe electroliers appear to be the same as those which lit the commercial blocks of Van Nuys Boulevard in the San Fernando Valley, then called Sherman Way, around 1912.³⁵

An incandescent multiple-globe resource of individual historic significance is the Venice Canal street light, located at the corner of Altair Place and Cabrillo Avenue in Venice. It dates from circa 1906 and is

³⁵ "Early Los Angeles Street Lights." Carroll Avenue is within the Angelino Heights Historic Preservation Overlay Zone and is a National Register Historic District.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

a remnant of the original Venice-of-America developed by Abbot Kinney. It appears to be the only remaining original electrolier.³⁶



*Venice Canal street light
Corner of Altair Place and Cabrillo Avenue, Venice
(SurveyLA)*

Dual Upright Lamp Electroliers, 1920-1940

The most common dual upright lamp electrolier is the UM-1906. Variations of it still exist on many Downtown streets: Fifth Street from Flower to Main Streets, Fourth Street from Hill to Main Streets, Hope Street from Eighth Street to Venice Boulevard, Second Street from Hill to Main Streets, Sixth Street from Flower to Main Streets, Spring Street from First to Ninth Streets, and Third Street from Hill to Main Streets.³⁷

The UM-1906 was manufactured by the Union Metal Company of Canton, Ohio. The company was founded in 1906 to produce ornamental porch columns and pergolas. By 1909 it began marketing ornamental street lighting, with its first major catalog of electroliers issued in 1915. Union Metal eventually supplied more than 4400 towns and cities with street lights. The UM-1906 is currently offered by the Bureau of Street Lighting as an option for roadway street lighting.³⁸

³⁶ Venice Community Plan Area, Non-Parcel Resources Report, *SurveyLA*.

³⁷ Central City Community Plan Area, Non-Parcel Resources Report, *SurveyLA*; "Early Los Angeles Street Lights."

³⁸ Union Metal website, www.unionmetal.com.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980



*UM-1906 dual-upright electrolier
Main Street, south of First Street, Downtown
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

In addition to the standard UM-1906 there were a number of variations. One of the most significant was the UM-2502, which contained an extended center pole from which trolley wires could be suspended. Extant examples remain along Spring Street, between Cesar E. Chavez Avenue and First Street.³⁹

Variations of the UM 1906, the UM-2502, and similar dual uprights by other manufacturers also still exist in a number of outlying areas, generally neighborhood commercial in nature. They include the south side of Magnolia Avenue from Lankershim to Vineland and north side of Magnolia from Cleon to Cartwright in North Hollywood-Valley Village; 3400-3700 Slauson Avenue in Hyde Park; Seventh Street between Union and Garland Avenues in Westlake; La Cienega Boulevard between Airdrome Street and Olympic Boulevard, and Seventh Street between Catalina and Hoover Streets in the Wilshire area.⁴⁰

A good example of a small neighborhood commercial district installation is the row of dual-upright Permastand 7914 electroliers, dating from around 1925, that line Hyde Park Boulevard from Eleventh Avenue, past Crenshaw Boulevard, to West Boulevard in Hyde Park. The corner of Hyde Park and Crenshaw Boulevard was the historic center of the neighborhood, which was a separate city until

³⁹ Central City Community Plan Area, Non-Parcel Resources Report, *SurveyLA*; Streetlight Survey.

⁴⁰ North Hollywood-Valley Village Community Plan Area, Non-Parcel Resources Report, *SurveyLA*; West Adams-Baldwin Hills-Leimert Community Plan Area, Non-Parcel Resources Report, *SurveyLA*; Wilshire Community Plan Area, Non-Parcel Resources Report, *SurveyLA*.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

consolidated with Los Angeles in 1923. The Hyde Park Congregational Church (the site of which is L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument Number 18) once stood on the southwest corner.⁴¹

The electroliers were part of a general installation of dual uprights that extended north and south along Crenshaw Boulevard as well as east to west on Hyde Park. Similar electroliers existed as far north on Crenshaw as Leimert Park, as well as several blocks to the south, past the branch of the Los Angeles Public Library that was constructed to the south of the Congregational Church soon after consolidation.⁴²



*Dual upright electrolier
Hyde Park Boulevard from Eleventh Avenue to West Boulevard, Hyde Park
(SurveyLA)*

⁴¹ Herr, *Landmark L.A.*, 422; West Adams-Baldwin Hills-Leimert Community Plan Area, Non-Parcel Resources Report, *SurveyLA*. For background on the neighborhood business district, see the Hyde Park Section of the “Pre-Consolidation Communities of Los Angeles” historic context narrative.

⁴² See “Crenshaw in Hyde Park” photograph from circa 1937 (Los Angeles Public Library, order number 00098757) and “Crenshaw Boulevard near 65th Street” photograph from 1948 (Los Angeles Public Library, order number 00032454).

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

Single Upright Lamp Electroliers, 1914-1940

Many residential neighborhoods that developed just before the First World War and during the decade the followed chose mass-produced single-upright electroliers. While some of the early forms used Llewellyn-like spheres, most by the early 1920s featured acorn-shaped globes. Common types of single uprights are the CD-803 and the Marbelite 2000.⁴³

Extant examples can be found on Bronson Avenue from Adams to Jefferson Boulevards in West Adams. Bronson from Adams to Jefferson is a good example of a middle-class neighborhood on what was the developing edge of the city in the 1920s. By 1929 most of its lots had been filled by single-family homes and side-by-side duplexes, with an occasional two-story apartment building, all in the Spanish Colonial Revival Style. Most date from between 1923 and 1929, and all provided provision for automobiles. At the same time the nearby commercial Crenshaw Boulevard, then named Angeles Mesa Drive, was still undeveloped.⁴⁴



*Single upright electrolier with acorn globe
Bronson Avenue, between Adams and Jefferson Boulevards, West Adams
(SurveyLA)*

⁴³ Street Light Survey.

⁴⁴ Los Angeles County Assessor's Map; 1929 Sanborn Map; West Adams-Baldwin Hills-Leimert Community Plan Area, Non-Parcel Resources Report, SurveyLA.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

A significant variation on the single upright, with a more ornamented lamp, is the Lalux 71 electrolier that lines Verdugo Road from York Boulevard north to the Glendale line in Glassell Park. The installation dates from around 1925. Verdugo begins as a neighborhood commercial district around the intersection with York, and then becomes residential, with multi-family giving way to single-family. The line of column-like electroliers appears to continue on into the City of Glendale, thereby acting as a visually unifying element tying the two cities together along what was seen as a relatively major residential thoroughfare.⁴⁵



*Single upright electrolier with ornamented globe
Verdugo Road, from York Boulevard to Glendale city limits, Glassell Park
(SurveyLA)*

Specialty Electroliers 1910-1940

Unlike the mass produced dual- and single-uprights, specialty electroliers are those designed for a specific location. They are called out “Specials” in the Bureau of Street Lighting’s descriptions, rather than by their manufacturers’ numbers.

Historically significant early specialty electroliers can be found within the Windsor Square Historic Preservation Overlay Zone. The original Windsor Square subdivision, encompassed by Wilshire Boulevard in the south, Irving Boulevard on the east, Third Street on the north, and Plymouth Boulevard on the west, was laid out as an elite residential neighborhood in 1911.

⁴⁵ Northeast LA Community Plan Area, Non-Parcel Resources Report, *SurveyLA*; Street Light Survey.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

Among its original features were its Windsor Square Special electroliers, dating from 1914. They still line Plymouth, Windsor, Lorraine, and Irving Boulevards from just north of Wilshire to Third. They are essentially variations on the standard single-lamp upright, but feature a “WS” engraved on their base. They have been refurbished by the Bureau of Street Lighting.⁴⁶



Wilshire Special
Wilshire Boulevard from the 110 Freeway to Union Avenue
(SurveyLA)

The best known of the incandescent specialty electroliers is the Wilshire Special. There are approximately one hundred of the 1928-era originals left, extending along Wilshire Boulevard from the 110 Freeway on the east to Union Avenue on the West. The original lanterns are solid bronze and measure seven-and-one-half-feet tall from the base to the top of the finial.⁴⁷

A second specialty electrolier from the era is the Westwood Special. Installed in the late 1920s they originally lined the streets of Westwood Village. The blue and gold tiles at the base represented UCLA's colors. (Most were replaced in the early 1960s when the village decided that it needed better lighting. In some locations, such as along Broxton Avenue, scaled-down reproductions have been installed as

⁴⁶ Windsor Square Historic Preservation Overlay Zone Preservation Plan, Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources (2007-2007), 12-13, 79-80; City of Los Angeles – Bureau of Street Lighting, 3

⁴⁷ Westlake Community Plan Area, Non-Parcel Resources Report, SurveyLA.

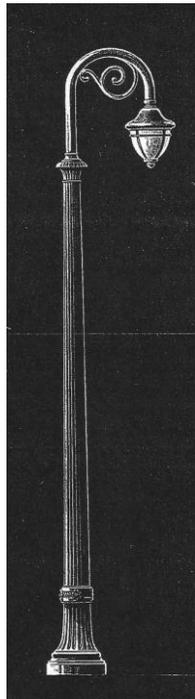
SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

pedestrian lighting. One original remains, as an exhibit, on the west side of Westwood Boulevard, just north of Kinross.)⁴⁸

Pendant Electroliers, 1920-1950

Pendants are a transitional form. They began as fixtures for incandescent lamps. But by the late 1930s they came to accommodate early HID lamps. These pendants differ from the later davits in that that the pendant lamps, either incandescent or HID, were contained in a traditional vertically-mounted tear-drop globe and not in a horizontally mounted optical assembly.



Benedict Canyon pendant
Benedict Canyon from DeCamp to Clear View, Bel-Air
(Bureau of Street Lighting)

The first pendants were ornate electroliers used in upscale residential districts. A significant example is the electrolier found along Benedict Canyon Drive from DeCamp to Clear View in Bel-Air. Benedict Canyon extends from Sunset Boulevard in Beverly Hills to Mulholland Drive. By the early 1930s perhaps one-third of the lots between Clear View and DeCamp contained homes. Officially called a UM-895-S,

⁴⁸ City of Los Angeles – Bureau of Street Lighting, 11, 20; Westwood Community Plan Area, Non-Parcel Resources Report, *SurveyLA*.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

the pendant takes the shaft of a standard single upright electrolier and adds what is called a Bishop's Crook lamp arm.⁴⁹

The Benedict Canyon pendant was relatively short, with a mounting height of thirteen feet six inches to the lamp center. Most pendants, however, were common along commercial rather than residential districts. As such they were generally at least ten feet taller, thereby able to accommodate early HID lamps.⁵⁰



*Olympic pendant with original teardrop lamp
Olympic Boulevard from Downtown to West Los Angeles
(SurveyLA)*

There are two historically significant pre-war pendant types serving commercial districts, for which intact extant resources remain. The first is the Olympic (UM-40314, also manufactured in double-arm form). It was designed for the newly renamed Olympic Boulevard, originally Tenth Street, and installed around 1925. Characterized by what were called dragon arms, the electroliers can still be found from along Olympic Boulevard from Downtown into West Los Angeles. (Most have had their original teardrop lamps replaced by horizontally-mounted optical assemblies.)⁵¹

The second historically significant pre-war type is the dual-pendant street light along Alameda Street in front of Union Station. Installed in 1939, it is a variation on the UM 40006 trolley pole, to which dual pendants were added (UM-40006Y-1). Similar variations of the dual-pendant with trolley pole can be

⁴⁹ Bel-Air-Beverly Crest Community Plan Area, Non-Parcel Resources Report, *SurveyLA*; Los Angeles County Assessor's Map; Streetlight Survey.

⁵⁰ The Olympic Special (UM 40314), discussed below, had a mounting height to the lamp center of 25 feet one inch. The CD-805 and CD-911, two popular pendants in the late 1930s and into the 1940s, had mounting heights of over 26 feet. All mounting heights are from the Streetlight Survey.

⁵¹ Streetlight Survey; West Los Angeles Community Plan Area, Non-Parcel Resources Report, *SurveyLA*; Westlake Community Plan Area, Non-Parcel Resources Report, *SurveyLA*.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

found in other parts of the city. There are several remaining along First Street, to the west and east of Broadway (UM-41020).⁵²



*Union Station dual pendant
800 block of North Alameda Street
(Photo by author)*

A standard pendant design became common in many commercial districts by the late 1930s. It consists of a curved arm with teardrop lamp. There were many models of these lights used, including the CD-805, CD-910, CD-911, and the UM-3678. They all resembled the pendant electrolier with teardrop lamp, illustrated in the photograph of Vine Street looking north from Hollywood Boulevard in the Historic Context above. Unfortunately, most extant pendants have had their original teardrop lamps replaced by horizontal optical assemblies. The pendant form has been duplicated in the historically-based Fluted Pole with Base and Teardrop Luminaire offered by the Bureau of Street Lighting as a roadway street light option.⁵³

There is a final historically significant installation of double pendants that took place after the war, in the late 1940s. This is the replacement of dual-uprights along Broadway in Downtown with CE-913s (which came in either a single or double pendant). This electrolier featured a stepped Art-Deco filial at the top

⁵² City of Los Angeles – Bureau of Street Lighting, 14; Streetlight Survey. First Street light data from ArcGIS Street Light Map for Los Angeles.

⁵³ *Let Us Light Your Way*, 12; Street Light Survey.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

of a square column with fluted corners. They are intact with their original teardrop lamps from First Street south to Eleventh (south of Eleventh Street the teardrop lamps have been replaced with more modern spheres).⁵⁴



*Double pendants with teardrop lamps
Broadway and Seventh Street, looking north
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

HID Davit Electroliers 1945-1980

The standard postwar davit or cobra-head electrolier, with an HID optical assembly (referred to as a cut-off luminaire) has many variations. Most resemble the standard davit from the 1960s shown in the photograph of the 6000 block of Van Nuys Boulevard in the Historical Context section above. But there

⁵⁴ Streetlight Survey. The double pendants appear to have been installed between 1947 and 1949. A 1947 photograph entitled "Busy Broadway looking north" from Seventh Street (Los Angeles Public Library, order number 00013781) shows the UM-1906s still in place. A 1949 photograph entitled "Enlarged downtown Newberry store" at Fifth and Broadway (Los Angeles Public Library, order number 00058337) shows CE-913s on Broadway and UM-1906s on Fifth Street.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

are several specialty designs that stand out as historically significant, due to their relationship to the neighborhood or commercial district of which they are a symbolic part.⁵⁵

An example of the transition from the pendant to the davit is the two headed specialty light (CD-950), dating from the mid-1950s, which can be found along Wilshire Boulevard, from Fairfax Avenue to beyond Wilton Place. It is significant for its use as an updated specialty electrolier to continue the tradition of the Wilshire Special of the late 1920s. While in form close to the pre-war pendants, the luminaires are not teardrop in shape, indicating the use of early optical assemblies. Also new is the side-by-side mounting, rather than the front-and back position as found in the Broadway pendants of the late 1940s.⁵⁶



Wilshire Double

*Wilshire Boulevard, from Fairfax Avenue to beyond Wilton Place
(SurveyLA)*

The most colorful of the postwar lights is the Hollywood Boulevard Special. Beginning around 1960 the existing electroliers were reconstructed. The original pole bases and shafts were retained, but the lamps were replaced by luminaires on short arms. The Hollywood Special is a rectangular housing, over seven feet in length, in which three lamps are housed. The face of each side of the housing is adorned by red stars.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ City of Los Angeles – Bureau of Street Lighting, 21; Streetlight Survey.

⁵⁶ Wilshire Community Plan Area, Non-Parcel Resources Report, *SurveyLA*.

⁵⁷ City of Los Angeles – Bureau of Street Lighting, 19.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980



Hollywood Special
Northwest corner of Hollywood Boulevard and Hudson Avenue
(Los Angeles Public Library)

Another historically significant davit is the Century City Special (CD-965). It was developed in the early 1960s for the Century City project in West Los Angeles. It features a visually continuous post and arm, and a large spherical pendant housing the optical assembly. It is a modernist rendition of the 1940s teardrop pendant. Its uniqueness allows it to act as an identifying element to Century City. The use of aluminum came about from the sponsorship of the development by the Aluminum Corporation of American (Alcoa).⁵⁸

⁵⁸ City of Los Angeles – Bureau of Street Lighting, 17; West Los Angeles Community Plan Area, Non-Parcel Resources Report, *SurveyLA*; Streetlight Survey. Similar in its apparent union of pole and arm is the Bunker Hill davit (CD-959), installed in sections of the Bunker Hill redevelopment area. It has a standard cobra head. See Street Light Survey.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980



Century City Special
Santa Monica Boulevard, looking west toward Century City,
(Los Angeles Public Library)

More recent is the Van Nuys Special (CD-955). This is a three-lamp davit that can be seen along Van Nuys Avenue from Burbank Boulevard on the south to Sherman Way on the north. This electrolier combines the multi-headed form found in the Wilshire Boulevard doubles of the 1950s with the elegant visually continuous pole-and-arm assembly of the Century City Specials. The Van Nuys Specials were installed in the early 1970s at the request of the local business community to give its commercial district a distinct look. The three-headed cobras are significant as street lights designed in scale and drama to fit the suburban commercial strip. They are late twentieth century versions of the Broadway Llewellyns.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ City of Los Angeles – Bureau of Street Lighting, 18. A similar design is the multi-headed cobras (CD-853) used as replacement lights along the median strip of Westwood Boulevard in Westwood Village. See City of Los Angeles – Bureau of Street Lighting, 11, and Street Light Survey.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980



Van Nuys Special

*Van Nuys Boulevard from Burbank Boulevard to Sherman Way, Van Nuys
(Bureau of Street Lighting)*

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR STREET LIGHTS

Summary Statement of Significance:	Resources evaluated under this sub-theme are examples of street lights dating from 1900 to 1980. Street lights are significant in the areas of Community Planning and Development and/or Art. They are integral to the planning, design, and development of commercial and residential areas of Los Angeles throughout the period of significance. They also evidence how the City of Los Angeles provided this municipal service over time and the ways in which the City and developers and/or private property owners often worked together in the selection of lights to provide neighborhoods and areas with a unique sense of identity. Street lights may also be significant for their high artistic value representing lighting standards and designs of various periods.
Period of Significance:	1900-1980
Period of Significance Justification:	The period of significance begins in 1900, with the introduction of the incandescent street lamp. It ends in 1980, the end date for SurveyLA.
Geographic Location:	Citywide; within residential neighborhoods and commercial centers (along major boulevards, throughout Downtown, and in Hollywood)
Area of Significance:	Community Planning and Development; Art
Criteria:	Local: 1/3 (Note: Street lights identified for SurveyLA were evaluated under local criteria only. However, street lights may also be character-defining features of historic districts eligible or designated under local, state, and federal programs.)
Associated Property Type:	Infrastructure - Water & Power – Street Lights
Property Type Description:	A street light is a device to provide lighting to public sidewalks and/or streets, by means of a lamp mounted on a post (referred to as an electrolier). Groupings of street lights are generally evaluated under this theme although rare and isolated

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

examples may be individually significant. Street lights may also be contributing features of residential and commercial historic districts.

Property Type Significance: See summary statement of significance above.

Eligibility Standards:

- Provides lighting for vehicular and pedestrian traffic
- Evidences street light standards and design during the period of significance

Character Defining / Associative Features:

- Retains most of the essential character-defining features of the style and type
- May be significant for their high artistic value
- May have been installed by developers and/or property owners as part of land development, particularly in upper class neighborhoods
- May represent a distinct lighting type specifically selected for a community/area
- May be contributing features of a historic district or may be significant as a grouping even if the surrounding area does not constitute a historic district
- Rare and isolated examples may be individually significant

Integrity Considerations:

- Should retain overall integrity of design, materials, location, and association
- May have been relocated for preservation purposes
- Retains the original pole; globe may have been replaced as long as it replicates the original style
- Reproduction lights are generally not eligible

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Public and Private Institutional Development/Government Infrastructure and Services/
Public Works/Street Lights and the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1900-1980

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

“City of Los Angeles – Bureau of Street Lighting,” Publication of the Bureau of Street Lighting, n.d.

City of Los Angeles Streets Light Map – ArcGIS

(<http://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=fbea2cb239004e6ba4c4f01eb809bba4>)

Comer, Virginia. *Streetlights*. Los Angeles: Balcony Press, 2000.

“Early Los Angeles Streetlights,” Water and Power Associates, Museum Website.

(<http://www.waterandpower.org/museum>)

Feldman, Eddy S. *The Art of Street Lighting in Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: Dawson’s Book Shop, 1972.

Gebhard, David, and Robert Winter. *An Architectural Guidebook to Los Angeles*, Revised Edition. Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 2003.

Herr, Jeffrey, editor. *Landmark L.A.: Historic-Cultural Monuments of Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: City of Los Angeles, 2002.

Let Us Light Your Way. Los Angeles: Bureau of Street Lighting, 2008.

Street Light Survey, Los Angeles Bureau of Street Lighting, n.d.