

SurveyLA

Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey

LOS ANGELES CITYWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT

Context: Commercial Development, 1850-1980

Theme: Commercial Identity, 1920-1980



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PREFACE

The theme “Commercial Identity, 1920-1980” is a component of Los Angeles’ citywide historic context statement and provides guidance to field surveyors in identifying and evaluating historic resources that are significant for their association with important local businesses. Refer to www.HistoricPlacesLA.org for information on designated resources associated with this theme as well as those identified through SurveyLA and other surveys.

INTRODUCTION

The Commercial Identity theme is used to evaluate resources associated with businesses that made important contributions to the commercial history of Los Angeles. Generally, these resources are the founding or the long-term location of a business that played an important role in commercial development of the city and, in some cases, the state or nation.

Evaluation Considerations

Properties significant under the Commercial Identity theme may overlap with other SurveyLA themes as follows:

- Properties that are significant examples of commercial building types may also be evaluated under associated Neighborhood Commercial Development themes, such as neighborhood restaurants.
- Properties significant for their design quality may also be evaluated under themes within the Architecture and Engineering context.
- Properties may also be significant for their association with important individuals under the Commercial Merchants, Builders, and Leaders theme.
- See also ethnic/cultural themes at <http://preservation.lacity.org/survey/historic-context> for those published to date.

CONTEXT

Los Angeles has a wide range of long-term businesses that have served residents, visitors, and tourists for decades. Properties identified as significant within this theme relate to the particular goods and services provided by a business and the role a business played in local commerce. Examples in Los Angeles range from small mom and pop neighborhood businesses, to companies that became regional in importance, to national franchises. While many are well-known legacy businesses coveted by neighborhood locals, others are far-reaching in reputation, serving as popular tourist destinations and icons of Los Angeles culture. And still others reflect associations with corporate identities and prototypes.



Since the 1956, the Bear Pit BBQ has been serving up Missouri style barbeque to the Mission Hills community. (SurveyLA)

Property types evaluated under this theme include food service, retail stores, and service related businesses. Identified examples include restaurants, bakeries, bars and taverns, mortuaries, nurseries, dry cleaners, hardware stores, and neighborhood markets. A large percentage of the businesses recorded under the Commercial Identity theme are food related.



Established in 1952, Valley Photo Service is the oldest full service camera shop in the the San Fernando Valley. (SurveyLA)



The Baked Potato jazz club has operated in Studio City since 1970. (@2015 Google StreetView)



Opened in 1947 on West Pico Boulevard, the Apple Pan served as the inspiration for the national restaurant chain Johnny Rockets and was frequented by actresses Dolly Parton, Lily Tomlin, and Jane Fonda during the filming of the 1980 movie Nine to Five. (SurveyLA)

Examples designated as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments (HCM) include the nation’s first See’s Candy Shop and Kitchen (HCM No. 959), the original Der Wienerschnitzel (HCM No. 1046), and the Munch Box hamburger stand (HCM No. 750). Other recorded examples of long-term Los Angeles businesses include Pink’s Hot Dogs, Musso and Frank Grill, Cole’s Restaurant, Tam O’Shanter, Pann’s Coffee Shop, The Bear Pit Bar-B-Q, and The Apple Pan.

Particularly noteworthy are long-term businesses owned and operated by individuals and families from a variety of ethnic/cultural backgrounds. Many of these are further discussed in the ethnic/cultural themes developed for SurveyLA.¹ These businesses evidence the overall history and development of an area as well as patterns of settlement, movement, and changing demographics.



Opened in 1956, the Munch Box – Historic-Cultural Monument No. 750 – has served its fair share of celebrities, including Roy Rogers and Dale Evans. (City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)



First immigrating to the United States from Greece as to enlist with the United States armed forces, George Panagopoulos later opened Pann’s Coffee Shop in 1958; the family still runs the restaurant today. (SurveyLA)

¹ Ethnic/cultural theme published to date can be found at <http://preservation.lacity.org/historic-context>. For information on themes in progress contact the Office of Historic Resources.

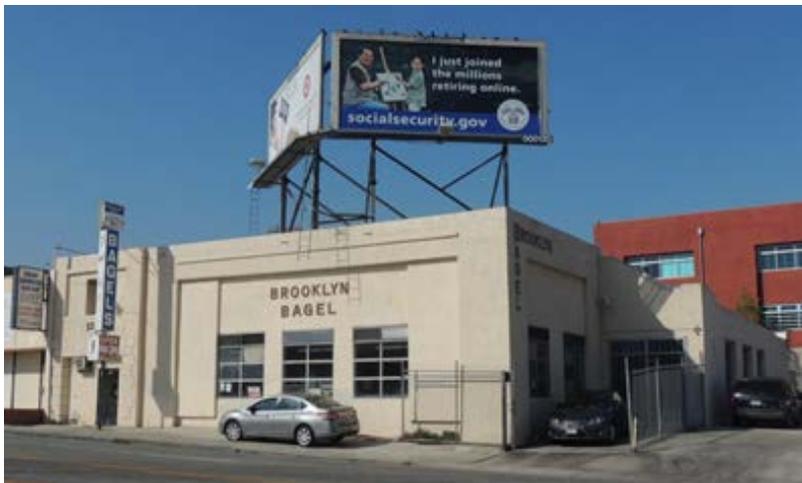


A long-time art and gift store in Chinatown, K.G. Louie Company was first established in downtown Los Angeles, but moved to this location at 432 Gin Ling Way in 1938 (City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)

Although historic districts are not common under this theme, three districts have been recorded for SurveyLA – the New Chinatown Commercial Historic District and Greater Chinatown Commercial Historic District,² significant for their association with Chinese American-owned and operated businesses in Chinatown, and the Beverly Boulevard Commercial Historic District, significant for its association with businesses important to the Beverly-Fairfax Jewish community.

Many of the properties recorded under this theme are highly significant within a neighborhood context. Because determining eligibility of properties for the National and California registers typically includes in-depth comparative analysis with similar resources, most properties under this theme were evaluated under City Historic-Cultural Monument criteria only.³

*2217 W. Beverly Boulevard, 1965
In continuous operation at this location since 1965, this is the second location of Brooklyn Bagel Bakery, founded by Seymour Friedman in 1953 on West Adams Boulevard. The bakery supplies bagels to many other popular Los Angeles restaurants including Canter's Deli and Nate n' Al's. (SurveyLA)*



² The districts in Chinatown were determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places through a Section 106 Review process determination in 1986 and are listed in the California Register of Historical Resources, However, since data for individual contributors in the district are not included in the State Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) the district was recorded and updated as part of SurveyLA using themes from the Citywide Historic Context Statement.

³ See the “Comparing Related Properties” section of National Register Bulletin 15: *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 1990, rev. 1991, 9. The California Register is based closely on the National Register. California Register instructions refer preparers to Bulletin 15 for further information on applying and interpreting the California Register criteria.

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Local criteria allow for discretion in considering the importance of neighborhood landmarks and generally provide greater leeway with regard to comparative analysis. However, further research and analysis may reveal that some properties meet significance thresholds for the National and California registers.



1903 S. Sawtelle Boulevard, 1934
Yamaguchi Bonsai Nursery was established at this site in 1949
(SurveyLA)



Norris Hardware has operated under the same family in Pacific Palisades since 1925. Originally located in the Pacific Palisades Business Block Building until 1956; the family store moved this location (originally a movie theater designed by master architect S. Charles Lee) in 1979. (SurveyLA)



El Salvador Café, at 575 E. Pico Boulevard in Downtown Los Angeles, was founded in 1950, making it one of the oldest Central American businesses in the city. (www.goodcleanliving.com)



3770 S. Motor Avenue, 1923
Long-time home of Palms Cycle Shop; Palms Cycle was established here in 1930. (SurveyLA)



911 W. Venice Boulevard was first established as a mortuary business in the 1920s and operated out of a residence. In 1931, the residence was replaced with the existing building. The current mortuary business, Kubota Nikkei Mortuary, has been in operation at this location since 1953. (SurveyLA)

Eligibility Standards for Commercial Identity

Summary Statement of Significance: A resource evaluated under this theme is significant in the area of commerce as the founding or long-term location of a business that made a significant contribution to the commercial history of Los Angeles. Resources may also be significant in the areas of ethnic heritage and social history for their association with ethnic-cultural groups as well as women's and LGBT history.

Period of Significance: 1920-1980

Period of Significance Justification: The 1920s is the time of the earliest recorded resource under this theme; 1980 represents the end date for SurveyLA, which may be extended over time.

Geographic Location: Citywide

Area(s) of Significance: Commerce; Ethnic Heritage; Social History

Criteria: **NR A** **CR 1** **Local 1**

Note: For SurveyLA, most properties within this theme were evaluated under local HCM criteria only. However, further research and analysis may reveal that some properties meet significance thresholds for the National and California registers.

Associated Property Type: Commercial/Commercial District

Property Type Description: Although any commercial property type can be significant under this theme, those evaluated generally include food service, retail stores, and service related businesses. Designated and known resources include restaurants, bakeries, bars and taverns, mortuaries, nurseries, dry cleaners, and markets. Property type also include commercial historic districts, particularly those associated with ethnic cultural groups.

Property Type Significance: Property types represent important long-term businesses that have contributed to commercial growth and development in Los Angeles. Properties may also be significant in the areas of social history and ethnic heritage or their association with ethnic - cultural groups, women's history and LGBT history.

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Commercial Development/Commercial Identity

Eligibility Standards:

- Is associated with a business that made an important contribution to commercial growth and development in Los Angeles
- Is the founding or the long-term location of a business significant in commercial history

Character-Defining/Associative Features:

- Retains most of the essential physical features from the period of significance
- May be associated with ethnic/cultural history, women's history, LGBT history
- Contributes to the commercial, social, and cultural history of Los Angeles
- May have particular significance for its association with a neighborhood or community in Los Angeles
- May be associated with businesses/corporations that have gained national importance
- May feature corporate designs, logos, and signs
- May have served as a prototype for other buildings and locations
- For the National Register, properties must possess exceptional importance if less than 50 years of age
- In most cases, the business is still in operation

Integrity Considerations:

- Should retain integrity of Location, Design, Feeling, Materials, and Association
- Setting may have changed (surrounding buildings and land uses)
- Some alterations may be acceptable if they were made during the period of significance for a business and if significance is not also based on architectural quality