



Westside Area Plan

Historic Context Statement: Outreach #2

LA County Planning
December 2023



This presentation covers the work that LA County Planning’s consultants at Historic Resources Group completed for the Westside Area Plan’s Historic Context Statement. This presentation accompanies the draft document that we have released for public review on our website.

Agenda

- Historic Context Statement (HCS) Definition
- HCS Purpose
- HCS Timeline and Process
- HCS Communities
- Components of an HCS
- Historical Events and Impacts
- Significant Themes and Architectural Styles
- Review the HCS and How to Provide Feedback



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What is a Historic Context Statement (HCS)?

- Is a document that identifies the important themes relevant to the history and development of the built environment of a geographic area
- Establishes periods of significance for these themes and their associated property types
- Is *not* a definitive or comprehensive community history, but rather an analytical framework
- Provides the background information for future historic resources surveys, which take a closer look to identify properties eligible for historic designation



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An HCS is a document that identifies the important themes relevant to the history and development of the built environment of a geographic area. The HCS establishes periods of significance for each of these themes and identifies property types that best tell the story of those themes. A HCS is not a definitive or a comprehensive history. Rather, it highlights the patterns of development, history, and culture that shaped the built environment over time. It also provides background information for future historic resources surveys. And *surveys* identify properties that are eligible for historic designation – so, the properties that could be County Landmarks one day.

HCS Purpose

- Provides an analytical framework for identifying and evaluating resources in subsequent historic resources surveys
- Provides the foundation for future research
- Informs the Westside Area Plan by:
 - Revealing the land development history of the planning area
 - Providing recommended goals, policies and implementation programs that support preservation of historic resources while accommodating necessary growth and development
 - Informing the Cultural Resources section of the WSAP's EIR



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As I mentioned, the HCS will provide the foundation for subsequent historic resource surveys by identifying the characteristics that historic resources should reflect in order to be considered an important representation of that resource type (registration threshold / designation criteria). And it also provides a foundation for future research.

This project is a subproject of the Westside Area Plan project. And it will *inform* the plan by:

- Revealing the land development history of the planning area. Specifically, an HCS identifies the aspects of geography, history, and culture that significantly shaped the physical development of the planning area.
- Additionally, the HCS findings will roll over into the goals, policies, and implementation programs. These will support the preservation of historic resources while accommodating necessary growth and development.
- Lastly, the HCS will inform the Cultural Resources section of the plan's EIR.

Timeline and Process

1. Hold a public meeting to introduce project to the public and request community input: *October 2023*
2. Consultant (HRG) completes windshield surveys and conducts research and interviews
3. Draft HCS
4. Present draft HCS to LA County Planning for feedback: *November 2023*
5. Present draft HCS to the public for feedback: *December/January 2023*
6. Present draft HCS to the Historical Landmarks and Records Commission (HLRC) for feedback: *March 2024 (tentative)*
7. Finalize HCS: *Spring 2024*

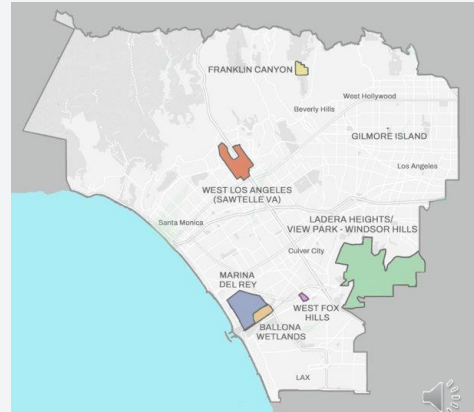


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This slide outlines the schedule and process for the -HCS. We held a virtual public meeting in October. Our consultants conducted research and windshield surveys and have drafted a HCS which the County has reviewed. We are now sharing the draft HCS with the public before we bring it to the Landmarks Commission.

Which communities were studied for this project?

- Ladera Heights, View Park, and Windsor Hills
- Marina Del Rey
- Ballona Wetlands
- Westside Islands (West LA/Sawtelle VA, West Fox Hills, Franklin Canyon, Beverly Hills Island, Gilmore Island)



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The HCS studied the communities of Ladera Heights, View Park, Windsor Hills, Marina Del Rey, Ballona Wetlands, and the Westside Islands of West LA/Sawtelle VA, West Fox Hills, Franklin Canyon, Beverly Hills Island, and Gilmore Island.

Components of an HCS

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You will find the following in the HCS:

Introduction

Scope and Methodology – describes the study area, research methodology, reviews previous studies

Historic Context Overview

General History – provides an overview of major periods in the area’s history; touches on the pre-contact period of Native American life, before 1542; Spanish and Mexican Periods, from 1542-1848; and American control and settlement, beginning in 1848 and continuing through today. You’ll find general development and annexation history of the Westside Plan Area in this chapter.

Community Specific Development Histories – provides more focused history of each community mentioned in the previous slide. You will also find a timeline of important events and the lasting impacts they had on the built environment.

Significant Themes and Associated Property Types – the meat of the report. This chapter breaks down the historically significant themes of the planning area, such as residential development of the 20th century and subthemes such as streetcar suburbs versus auto-oriented suburban development, and housing discrimination. For these themes, it provides eligibility standards—these are standards that help determine which buildings, structures, or objects, or groupings of buildings, are eligible for

historic designation. This is based on when the resource was built, the property type, which aspects of historic integrity are important for that theme, and the reasons for its significance.

Architecture and Design – focuses on architectural styles present in the Westside Plan Area. For each, this chapter provides photos of extant examples and lists character-defining features (usually physical features of a resource that convey its significance. For Spanish Colonial Revival, for example, you'll find towers; round, pointed, or parabolic arched openings; and sometimes decorative grilles made of wood, wrought iron, or plaster.

Bibliography

Appendix A – identifies topic areas for further study; lists potential sites of significance and historically significant people

Appendix B – overview of architect and builders active in the plan area's development

Appendix C – defines terms such as 'character-defining features' and 'period of significance'; provides an overview of the different registration programs, including those of the National Register, California Register, and County Register.

Historical Events and Impacts

1924: Inglewood Oil Strike

Issues, Effects, and Responses:

- Inglewood Oil Field was established.
- Urban development curtailed in northern portions of Ladera Heights/View Park-Windsor Hills.
- Oil extraction continues to the present day.
- Oil extraction is increasingly understood to be incompatible with nearby residential uses.



Inglewood Oil Field c. 1930.
Los Angeles Times Photographic Archives.



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The HCS identified historical events and their impacts on the planning area. Here are three events and their impacts. Read about the others in the HCS.

Reading from the HCS:

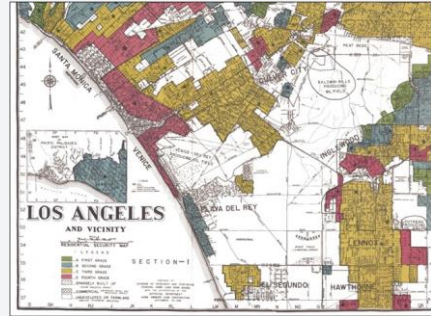
Exploration for oil in the area dates back to 1916, but the successful strike that established the Inglewood Oil Field occurred in 1924 by the Standard Oil Company. Demand was reduced during the Great Depression of the 1930s but oil extraction from the Inglewood Oil Field has continued to the present day.

Historical Events and Impacts

1920-1968: Housing Discrimination (Restrictive Covenants and Redlining)

Issues, Effects, and Responses:

- Restrictive covenants prohibit home sales to people of color ensuring all-White populations in suburban developments.
- Non-white populations face limited choices for home ownership regardless of financial status.
- Redlining directly associates non-White populations with home loan risk and blight further isolating mixed-race communities.



Example of a color-coded property appraisal map.
Los Angeles Public Library.



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The HCS has an entire section dedicated to the history of housing discrimination and its impacts on the area, including the fact that non-White populations were extremely limited in their options for home ownership, regardless of their financial status. This led to racial segregation and long-lasting equity issues.

To start, reading from the HCS:

In the 1920s and 1930s, private developers participated in institutionalized racism by attaching restrictive covenants to their new residential developments. Restrictive covenants were legal clauses written into property deeds dictating that a property owner could only sell or rent a property to “Caucasians,” otherwise the owner could lose the property. In some covenants, the excluded groups were mentioned by name, and invariably included “African Americans, Mexicans, Asians, and Jews.” A typical covenant lasted for 20 to 50 years. Local, state, and federal jurisdictions all became involved in promoting and enforcing restrictive covenants.

The HCS also discusses redlining, a practice through which the Federal Housing Administration and the Home Owners Loan Corporation – both created by the U.S. government – systematically denied mortgages, insurances loans, and other financial services to African Americans and other ethnic minorities through color-coded maps.

Historical Events and Impacts

1948-1980: White Flight (1948 Supreme Court strikes down restrictive housing covenants; Blockbusting; 1965 Watts Uprising; 1968 Fair Housing Act)

Issues, Effects, and Responses:

- Black families begin purchasing homes in View Park and Windsor Hills despite hostility, intimidation, and violence on the part of their White neighbors.
- The real estate industry spikes commissions by inducing fear-based panic selling by White homeowners in integrating communities. Vacated homes are sold to people of color at inflated prices.
- Middle- and upper-middle class Black families continue to purchase homes in View Park, Windsor Hills, and Ladera Heights and become the majority population by 1980.
- Along with neighboring Baldwin Hills, Ladera Heights/View Park-Windsor Hills become outstanding examples of Black achievement and community pride.



Musician Ray Charles and family in Windsor Hills c.1970.
Los Angeles Public Library.



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Although various courts tried to strike down these practices, it wasn't until 1968 that restrictive covenants were deemed illegal.

Reading from the HCS:

Beginning in the late 1950s, pioneering Black families purchased homes in the View Park-Windsor Hills area.

On the rare occasions when African Americans were able to purchase homes and become integration pioneers in White neighborhoods, they were often met with racial violence. Incidents of this nature were carried out in View Park, Windsor Hills, and Ladera Heights as the demographics of those neighborhoods changed.

Despite these intimidation efforts, Blacks persisted in their efforts to purchase homes and by the 1960 census, Black residents in View Park and adjacent Windsor Hills accounted for 4.2 percent of the area's population, with the majority living in View Park.

By 1970, Black residents in View Park, Windsor Hills, Leimert Park, and Baldwin Hills outnumbered Whites by a ratio of three to one. By the 1980s, the ratio had increased

to nine to one. Contrary to the scare tactics of the real estate industry however, the transition to a Black-majority did not result in community decline. On the contrary, Ladera Heights/View Park-Windsor Hills, along with neighboring Baldwin Hills, became a vibrant and proud community exemplifying Black achievement and success.

Significant Themes

- 20th-Century Residential Development
- 20th-Century Commercial Development
- 20th-Century Civic and Institutional Development
- 20th-Century Industrial Development
- Arts and Culture
- Infrastructure and Transportation



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The HCS identified the significant historical themes of the planning area. The HCS includes registration requirements for each theme. These requirements are the criteria for a historical resource to be designated for its association with the applicable theme. The themes are:

- 20th-Century Residential Development
- 20th-Century Commercial Development
- 20th-Century Civic and Institutional Development
- 20th-Century Industrial Development
- Arts and Culture
- Infrastructure and Transportation

Significant Themes

Theme: 20th Century Commercial Development

Subtheme: Post-World War II Commercial Development

Period of Significance: 1946-1980

Property Type Description:

Commercial property types include malls and shopping centers, department stores, supermarkets, coffee shops, fast-food restaurants, office buildings, and automobile showrooms.

Example: 4508 W. Slauson Avenue (1957)

Wich Stand Restaurant and Drive-in
(modern-day Simply Wholesome)



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One example that you'll find in the HCS is the sub-theme of Post-World War II Commercial Development under the theme of 20th-Century Commercial Development. The period of significance begins in 1946 and ends in 1980. Commercial property types include malls and shopping centers, department stores, supermarkets, coffee shops, fast-food restaurants, office buildings, and automobile showrooms. One example is the 1957 Google style Simply Wholesome on West Slauson Avenue, which was originally the Wich Stand Restaurant and Drive-In.

Architectural Styles

20th Century Revival Styles

English Revival

Character-Defining Features include:

- Asymmetrical façade and irregular massing
- Steeply-pitched gable roof with wood shake or composition roofing
- Plaster exterior wall cladding; decorative half-timbering or brick details are usually limited or omitted
- Tall, narrow divided-light windows, usually casement, often grouped horizontally or in bays; may have leaded diamond-shaped lights
- Prominent chimney



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The HCS covers the wide range of architecture found in the Westside Plan Area. For each, it provides photos of extant examples as well as character-defining features. For example, in an English Revival design, expect to find an asymmetrical façade and irregular massing; steeply-pitched gable roof with wood shake or composition roofing; and the other features mentioned on this slide.

Review the Draft HCS + Provide Feedback

- Find the Draft HCS here:
<https://planning.lacounty.gov/long-range-planning/westside-area-plan/> → Documents
- Feedback due **Monday, January 15, 2024**
- Email Paul Travis at paul@historicrosourcesgroup.com and Katrina Castaneda at KCastaneda@planning.lacounty.gov for questions, comments, and feedback.



<https://bit.ly/wsapdocs>



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You can find the draft report on our website by clicking on the Documents tab. Or you can scan the QR code on this screen.

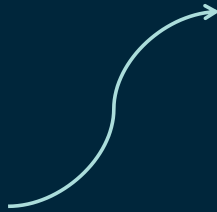
We're asking that you provide any feedback to us by email by January 15.



Thank you!



<https://bit.ly/wsapdocs>



Review HCS on our Project Website (Documents page):
<https://planning.lacounty.gov/long-range-planning/westside-area-plan/>

Feedback Submittal: paul@historicrosourcesgroup.com and
kcastaneda@planning.lacounty.gov **DUE** January 15

Area Plan Questions: WestsideAreaPlan@planning.lacounty.gov

