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Executive Summary

This document is the Cultural Resources Assessment for the Channel 35 Studio Relocation Project (Project) proposed by the City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering (LABOE). This document reports a Phase I cultural resources assessment conducted in compliance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). LABOE proposes the design and construction of a new Digital Television Studio within the historic Masonic Hall and Merced Theater. In addition, LABOE proposes seismic retrofitting of the Pico House. The three buildings are adjacent to one another in an area bounded by the Los Angeles Plaza (Plaza), Sanchez Street to the east, North Main Street to the west, and Arcadia Street to the south. AECOM conducted archival research and completed surveys to identify cultural resources within the Project area. AECOM also conducted a cultural resources records search at the South Central Coastal Information Center housed at California State University, Fullerton. The records search revealed that the entirety of the Project area has been previously evaluated. All three buildings within the Project area are located within the Los Angeles Plaza Park Historic-Cultural Monument (LAHCM 64/2310) and are also contributing resources to the Los Angeles Plaza Historic District (also known as the El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park), which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) (NRIS 72000231) in 1972. In addition, one archaeological resource, P-19-120014 is a historic refuse deposit in the Merced Theater building. Several other historical properties were also identified within 250 feet of the Project area.

In compliance with Assembly Bill 52, AECOM contacted tribal parties interested about the Project. A letter was sent to the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) on April 14, 2015, to request a Sacred Lands File (SLF) search. The NAHC responded by fax on May 12, 2015. The NAHC identified nine Native American representatives who may have knowledge of the Project area. Each of these individuals was contacted by letter or email on April 20, 2015. Those who did not respond were contacted by phone on June 19, 2015. In the course of the follow-up calls, two individuals expressed concern about the Project. Both individuals recommended Native American monitors from their respective organizations.

The Project is located in an area of high sensitivity for cultural resources. One archaeological resource, P-19-120014, is located in the Merced Theater. Other, undocumented historic and prehistoric remains may exist within the Project area. The Project area is underlain by deep alluvial deposits dating to the last 10,000 years, and such deposits have the potential to contain significant archaeological resources. At the time of European contact, the Project area was occupied by the Gabrielino, who maintained a large village, Ya’angna, in the vicinity. The Gabrielino village was later the site of the historic Pueblo of Los Angeles, and the Project is within the boundaries of the original land grant for the pueblo. Under Spanish control, the Project vicinity grew into a thriving residential community and commercial center. Due to the long occupation of the Project vicinity from prehistoric to modern times, monitoring of ground-disturbing activities by a qualified archaeological monitor is recommended.

An architectural history survey of the Merced Theater and Masonic Hall was completed by Mr. Jeremy Hollins on April 6, 2015, and the Pico House on September 24, 2015. Mr. Hollins meets the Secretary of Interior Professional Qualifications Standards (36 CFR Part 61) in the disciplines of Architectural History
and History. The survey analyzed the current conditions, historic integrity, and retention of character-defining features, as well as compared the proposed Project plans with in-field observations and background information to complete the Project’s effects assessment. Within the Project area there are three previously recorded cultural resources: the Masonic Hall, Merced Theater, and Pico House. These properties are contributing resources to the NRHP-listed Los Angeles Plaza Historic District, and are listed as part of the Los Angeles Plaza Park Historic-Cultural Monument (LAHCM 64/2310). This assessment concludes the Project has been planned and designed consistent with the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. The Project will retain, restore, repair, and appropriately replace portions of the property from its period of significance that contribute to its historic integrity, while making other slight compatible alterations in non-character-defining features and spaces that preserve the property’s historical and architectural value. Therefore, under CEQA, the Project will have a less than significant impact to the three built environment historical resources (Masonic Hall, Merced Theater, and Pico House) in the Project area, since the improvements will be consistent with the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.
Chapter 1 Introduction

This document presents the results of a Phase I cultural resources assessment conducted for the Channel 35 Studio Relocation Project (Project) to be constructed by the City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering (LABOE). The Information Technology Agency has been working with LABOE to relocate the operations of Los Angeles City View Channel 35, the City’s public access television station. The Project will allow the City to relocate the public television station from its present private leased space to City-owned property, in conformance with the City’s asset management policy. This document was prepared in support of a Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21000 et seq., and the State CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations Section 15000 et seq.

Report Organization

This report is organized following the Archaeological Resource Management Reports (ARMR): Recommended Contents and Format guidelines, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), Office of Historic Preservation, State of California, 1990. These guidelines provide a standardized format and suggested report content, scaled to the size of a project. This report first includes a Project description, including Project location and setting, and proposed Project work. Next, the environmental and cultural settings of the Project area are presented. This is followed by the archival research methods and results, which also include a description of the Sacred Lands File (SLF) search and discussion of the results. In addition, a paleontological records search and the results are provided. Then, survey methodology and results are described. The final section summarizes the results of the cultural resources investigation and provides recommendations and conclusions for mitigation, as well as an effects analysis in accordance with CEQA Guidelines.

Project Location

The Project is located in downtown Los Angeles, in the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, within unsectioned City Lands of Los Angeles of the Los Angeles U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute quadrangle map (Figure). The Project area has been established as the Project footprint, which includes three historic buildings in Los Angeles Plaza Historic District located on a city block bounded by the Los Angeles Plaza (Plaza) to the north, Sanchez Street to the east, Arcadia Street to the south, and North Main Street to the west. The Project area encompasses 416-424 North Main Street. These buildings together account for the west half of Assessor’s Parcel Number 5408-008-905.

Project Description

LABOE plans to seismically retrofit three existing historic buildings, the Pico House (424 North Main Street), Merced Theater (420 North Main Street), and Masonic Hall (426 North Main Street). The seismic retrofit activities will be implemented to serve the purposes of Los Angeles City View Channel 35, the City’s public access television station. The Project entails the design and construction of a new Digital Television Studio within the Merced Theater and the Masonic Hall. To utilize the buildings for studio use, both buildings must receive an extensive retrofit to the structural, mechanical, and plumbing
systems. A ramp and elevator structure must also be installed to facilitate Americans with Disability (ADA) access and equipment loading. The elevator tower will be a free-standing helix-shaped structural form. The basements of both the Merced Theater and Masonic Hall will be utilized as the hub for the television studio’s data center and building infrastructure. Finally, the Pico House will not house studio operations, but will require additional structural reinforcement to provide seismic stability to the entire building group. The Pico House is expected to remain vacant.

Overall, approximately 18,000 square feet of existing building space in the Merced Theater and Masonic Hall would be rehabilitated to accommodate the studio’s needs. The basement of both structures would be utilized as the hub for the television studio’s data center and building infrastructure. A public lobby, live audience television studio, and equipment checkout and storage facilities would be located within space on the first floor. The second floor would consist of two studios and the master control room. The third floor would contain open office space, conference rooms, a lunch room, and access to the roof deck. The following provides more information regarding the specific alterations to the buildings from improvements associated with the Project, based on plans current as of October 2015.

**Interior Improvements – Merced Theater and Masonic Hall**

Interior rehabilitation of these buildings would mostly involve the removal of non-original tenant improvements. Partitions, doors, ceilings, mechanical ducts, plumbing, unused electrical equipment, and finishes would be removed throughout the Merced Theater and Masonic Hall for new tenant improvements. New improvements would include new roofing and new plumbing, electrical, and mechanical distribution. In addition, on the third floor, non-original floor and framing would be removed for the replacement of the existing stairs.

The Masonic Hall is primarily composed of materials added as part of the repairs made in the 1960s. These materials include the interior plaster, molding, stairways, and restrooms, and are not original or historic materials. The interior of the Merced Theater has been stripped of its non-structural historic fabric, materials, and arrangements. Therefore, the remaining fabric in the Merced Theater is structural and includes fluted columns on the first floor and stringers to the historical stairway (these would be retained). The Merced Theater’s fluted columns and historical stairway would be restored or repaired with in-kind materials. To meet current structural requirements for gravity floor loads and lateral diaphragm strength, the existing historical floor framing would be removed from the first and second floors and replaced with steel framing. To allow for new door and hallway openings, portions of historic brick wall would be cut into between the Merced Theater and Masonic Hall.

**Exterior Retrofits – Merced Theater and Masonic Hall**

No improvements would be made to the form appearance, exterior features, and arrangements along the Main Street and Sanchez Street elevations. The south elevation, along Arcadia Street, contains a second-story balcony, a detailed entablature on the Masonic Hall, and an exterior brick and concrete stairway on the Merced Theater, which are non-historic materials and fabric, constructed in the 1960s. In 1954, during construction of U.S. 101, the structures adjacent to the Masonic Hall and Merced Theater were demolished, exposing the west façades of both buildings. In the 1960s, the State of California invested in the two structures to update the west elevations, since they were now exposed
and no longer connected to adjacent buildings. It was at this time that the balcony, detailed entablature, and stairway were added.

Exterior retrofits would be limited to the west, non-historic elevation. New openings would be made in the Masonic Hall to allow for new doors and staff access. To allow for the installation of an elevator at the rear of the Masonic Hall, the south end of the balcony would be removed and rebuilt in a straighter configuration, with a similar appearance and form as the existing balcony. (In the Project drawings, the balcony is also identified as a porch.) In addition, several non-original windows would be converted to door openings to provide access to the elevator walkway and the new balcony above the Masonic Hall. Improvements would also be made to the existing parking lot to accommodate three Channel 35 vans.

**Seismic Retrofits – Masonic Hall, Merced Theater, and Pico House**

The structural systems of the Pico House, Merced Theater, and Masonic Hall would be tied together and require a coordinated structural retrofit to ensure the structures act as one during an earthquake, due to their interconnected nature, and as the most cost-effective solution for all three buildings. Structural retrofit activities would include the addition of walls and frames to reinforce the lateral system, a combination of mat and spread foundations, and composite slabs and beams to reinforce the gravity system. After construction of the structural components is complete, the Pico House would also be up to date with the City’s current Building Code. It should be noted that this design may be based on reduced seismic forces as allowed by the Historical Building Code.

Lateral system retrofits to the Merced Theater and Masonic Hall would involve the use of a reinforced concrete shear wall system. The system would be overlain against the existing unreinforced brick walls and would use dowels to secure the new reinforcing to the existing brick. Lateral system retrofits to the Merced Theater and Masonic Hall would also involve a steel brace within the interior of the third floor. Within the Pico House, the lateral system retrofits would consist of a steel frame system. In addition, various frames, outriggers, chords and collectors, and walls, as well as a truss and diaphragm strengthening would also be added to the Pico House.

The foundation systems of the Merced Theater and Masonic Hall would include a combination of mat and spread foundations. Mat foundations would be located at each shear wall and spread foundations would be located at each column. The foundation for the Pico House would include spread foundations located at each frame and outrigger.

Gravity system retrofits to the Merced Theater would involve a concrete slab system at the first and second floors. The slab system would be supported by girders and beams. To create an open studio space, columns would also be installed on the first and second floors. Girders and beams would be included to support the loading requirements of the new balcony to be added to the existing roof of the Masonic Hall. In addition, new joists would be added between the existing wood joists on the third floor of the Merced Theater and the first and second floors of the Masonic Hall. Six-inch slabs would also be installed at the basement levels of both buildings. As part of this, excavation will occur in the basements to a depth of approximately 14 feet, and include the removal of 11,000 cubic feet of soil.
Regulatory Setting
In California, cultural resources include archaeological and historical objects, sites, and districts; historic buildings and structures; cultural landscapes; and sites and resources of concern to local Native American and other ethnic groups.

State Regulations
Compliance procedures are set forth in CEQA, California PRC Sections 15064.5 and 15126.4. The primary applicable state laws and codes are presented below.

California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (2001)
In the California Health and Safety Code, Division 7, Part 2, Chapter 5 (Sections 8010–8030), broad provisions are made for the protection of Native American cultural resources. The Act sets the state policy to ensure that all California Native American human remains and cultural items are treated with due respect and dignity. The Act also provides the mechanism for disclosure and return of human remains and cultural items held by publicly funded agencies and museums in California. Likewise, the Act outlines the mechanism with which California Native American tribes not recognized by the federal government may file claims to human remains and cultural items held in agencies or museums.

California Public Resources Code, Section 5020
This California code created the California Historic Landmarks Committee in 1939, and authorizes DPR to designate Registered Historical Landmarks and Registered Points of Historical Interest.

California Public Resources Code, Section 5097.9
Procedures are detailed under California PRC Section 5097.9 for actions taken whenever Native American remains are discovered. No public agency, and no private party using or occupying public property, or operating on public property, under a public license, permit, grant, lease, or contract made on or after July 1, 1977, shall in any manner whatsoever interfere with the free expression or exercise of Native American religion as provided in the U.S. Constitution and the California Constitution; nor shall any such agency or party cause severe or irreparable damage to any Native American sanctified cemetery, place of worship, religious or ceremonial site, or sacred shrine located on public property, except on a clear and convincing showing that the public interest and necessity so require. The California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), pursuant to Sections 5097.94 and 5097.97, shall enforce the provisions of this chapter.

California Health and Safety Code, Section 7050.5
Under this code, every person who knowingly mutilates or disinters, wantonly disturbs, or willfully removes any human remains in or from any location other than a dedicated cemetery without authority of law is guilty of a misdemeanor, except as provided in California PRC Section 5097.99. In the event of discovery or recognition of any human remains in any location other than a dedicated cemetery, there shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains until the coroner of the county in which the human remains are discovered has determined the remains to be archaeological. If the coroner determines that the remains are not subject to his or her authority, and if the coroner recognizes the human remains to be those of a Native
American, or has reason to believe that they are those of a Native American, he or she shall contact, by telephone within 24 hours, the NAHC.

**California Health and Safety Code, Section 7051**
Under this code, every person who removes any part of any human remains from any place where it has been interred, or from any place where it is deposited while awaiting interment or cremation, with intent to sell it or to dissect it, without authority of law, or written permission of the person or persons having the right to control the remains under Section 7100, or with malice or wantonness, has committed a public offense that is punishable by imprisonment in the state prison.

**California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 4307**
Under this state preservation law, no person shall remove, injure, deface, or destroy any object of paleontological, archaeological, or historical interest or value.

**California Environmental Quality Act**
CEQA and its guidelines (CERES 2009) require the evaluation of potential impacts to “historical resources” that are defined as resources listed in or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). Under California PRC Section 5024.1, the CRHR was established to serve as an authoritative guide to the state’s significant historical and archaeological resources. The CRHR consists of historical resources that are (a) listed automatically, (b) listed following procedures and criteria adopted by the State Historical Resources Commission, and/or (c) nominated by an application and listed after a public hearing process. The criteria for listing historical resources in the CRHR are consistent with those developed by the National Park Service for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), but have been modified for state use to include a range of historical resources that better reflect the history of California.

Generally, under CEQA, a historical resource (these include the historic built-environment and historic and prehistoric archaeological resources) is considered significant if it meets one of the four (4) criteria for listing in the CRHR. These criteria are set forth in CEQA Section 15064.5, and defined as any resource that:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States;
2. Is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history;
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values; or
4. Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

Historical resources must also possess integrity, the authenticity of a historical resource’s physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource’s period of significance, and retain enough of this historic character or appearance to be recognizable as a historical resource and to convey the reasons for this significance. Integrity is evaluated with regard to the retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.
Historical resources may include built environment and archaeological resources, as well as “unique paleontological resources” or “unique geologic features.” In addition to historic properties listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP that are automatically considered historical resources under CEQA, the CRHR includes designated California Historic Landmarks, California Points of Historical Interest, and certain locally identified historic resources (see Local Regulations section below). CEQA also requires that mitigation measures to reduce or avoid impacts to historical resources be incorporated into a project, and a range of alternatives be considered that could substantially lessen significant impacts to historical resources. Section 15064.5 of CEQA also assigns special importance to human remains and specifies procedures to be used when Native American remains are discovered. These procedures are detailed under California PRC Section 5097.98.

Impacts to “unique archaeological resources” and “unique paleontological resources” are also considered under CEQA, as described under PRC Section 21083.2. A unique archaeological resource implies an archaeological artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that without merely adding to the current body of knowledge there is a high probability that it meets one of the following criteria:

(a) The archaeological artifact, object, or site contains information needed to answer important scientific questions, and there is a demonstrable public interest in that information;

(b) The archaeological artifact, object, or site has a special and particular quality, such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type; or

(c) The archaeological artifact, object, or site is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

The lead agency shall first determine whether an archaeological resource is a historical resource before evaluating the resource as a unique archaeological resource (CEQA Guidelines 15064.5 [c] [1]). A non-unique archaeological resource is an archaeological artifact, object, or site that does not meet the above criteria. Impacts to non-unique archaeological resources and resources that do not qualify for listing in the CRHR receive no further consideration under CEQA.

Under CEQA, a project would result in a significant impact to historical resources if it results in a direct or indirect substantial adverse change to the resource. A significant impact would occur if a project would directly or indirectly diminish any of the characteristics that qualify or define a historical resource. A significant impact may be resolved with mitigation measures to avoid the impact or to reduce the impact to a level of less than significant.

**Local Regulations**

The following section contains the policies of the City of Los Angeles and the Central City Community Plan Area as applicable towards cultural resources.
City of Los Angeles Environmental Quality Act Guidelines
The City of Los Angeles Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (1981, amended July 31, 2002) contains three articles. Article I declares that in 2002, the City adopted the State CEQA Guidelines, contained in title 15, California Code of Regulations, Sections 150000 et seq., and incorporates all future amendments and additions to those guidelines as may be adopted by the State. Article II defines the activities by City agencies that are exempt from the requirements of CEQA. Article III defines the categorical exemptions, which are organized by classes of projects that have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment and are therefore exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

City of Los Angeles, Administrative Code, Division 22, Chapter 9, Article 1 (Ordinance No. 178,402), 1962
Ordinance No. 178,402 established the Cultural Heritage Commission to identify and protect architectural, historical, and cultural buildings, structures, and sites that are important to the City of Los Angeles’ history and cultural heritage. The Cultural Heritage Commission oversees the designation and protection of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments. Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments are defined as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located on site), building, or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles, including historic structures or sites, that:

- Reflect or exemplify the broad cultural, political, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or community; or
- Are identified with historic personages or important events in the main currents of national, state, or local history; or
- Embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type specimen, are inherently valuable for a study of a period, style, or method of construction; or
- Are notable works of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.

City of Los Angeles, Municipal Code, Chapter I, Article 2, Section 12.20.3 (Ordinance No. 175891), 1979 (amended 2004)
This code contains procedures for the designation and protection of new Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZs) for any area of the City of Los Angeles with buildings, structures, landscaping, natural features, or lots having historic, architectural, cultural, or aesthetic significance. The ordinance describes the powers and duties of HPOZ boards and the review processes for projects within HPOZs. The City of Los Angeles Department of Planning establishes and administers HPOZs in concert with the city council.

City of Los Angeles General Plan, Conservation Element, 2001
The Conservation Element contains the following objectives pertaining to the protection of the archaeological, paleontological, cultural, and historic resources in the City of Los Angeles:

- Protect the City of Los Angeles’ archaeological and paleontological resources for historical, cultural, research and/or educational purposes.
- Protect important cultural and historical sites and resources for historical, cultural, research, and
community educational purposes.

The identification and protection of significant archaeological and paleontological sites and/or resources known to exist or identified during land development, demolition, or property modification activities is to be achieved through the establishment of permit processing, monitoring, enforcement, and periodic revision of regulations and procedures by the departments of Building and Safety, City Planning, and Cultural Affairs.

City of Los Angeles, Cultural Heritage Masterplan, 2000
The Cultural Heritage Masterplan is a multifaceted historic preservation strategy to address major preservation issues and to guide and coordinate preservation activity in the City of Los Angeles. The document establishes a citywide framework for developing public policies involving the preservation and care of the City’s cultural resources and contains numerous important policy recommendations on historic preservation within the City.

Central City Community Plan, City of Los Angeles Plan Area, 2009
The Community Plan supports a renewed interest in converting historic commercial and industrial buildings to residential uses. The Community Plan identifies the need to preserve and rehabilitate historic areas with sensitivity to their architectural integrity. In addition, the Community Plan seeks to protect important cultural and historical sites and resources for historical, cultural, research, and community educational purposes.
Chapter 2 Project Setting

Environmental Setting
The Project is located in a relatively flat area of the western Los Angeles Basin. The basin is formed by the Santa Monica Mountains to the northwest, the San Gabriel Mountains to the north, and the San Bernardino and San Jacinto Mountains to the east. The basin was formed by alluvial and fluvial deposits derived from these surrounding mountains. Prior to urban development and the channelization of the Los Angeles River, the Los Angeles Basin, including the Project area (located less than 0.75 mile west of the present-day Los Angeles River channel), was likely covered with marshes, thickets, riparian woodland, and grassland. Prehistorically, the floodplain forest of the Los Angeles Basin formed one of the most biologically rich habitats in Southern California. Willow, cottonwood, and sycamore, and dense underbrush of alder, hackberry, and shrubs once lined the Los Angeles River as it passed near present-day downtown Los Angeles. Although, historically, most of the Los Angeles River was dry for at least part of the year, shallow bedrock in what is now the Elysian Park area north of downtown forced much of the river’s underground water to the surface. This allowed for a steady year-round flow of water through the area that later became known as downtown Los Angeles.

Cultural Setting
This section summarizes the current understanding of major prehistoric and historic developments in and around Los Angeles. This brief overview provides a context within which the cultural resources that might be encountered in the Project area may be considered and evaluated. The Project-specific context, discussing development of the Project area over time, can be found in Chapter 3 (Archival Research).

Prehistory
Following the seminal work of William Wallace (1955) and Claude Warren (1968), the prehistory of the Southern California coastal region is typically divided into Early, Middle, and Late Periods, with an initial Paleo-Indian period dating to the late Pleistocene and early Holocene.

Paleo-Indian Period
In the Southern California coastal region, the earliest evidence of human occupation comes from a handful of sites with early tools and some human remains that have been dated from 7,000 years ago to greater than 10,000 years old. These include the nearby Baldwin Hills and Los Angeles Mesa sites where construction activities in the 1920s and 1930s uncovered human remains in deep alluvial deposits. The human remains were tentatively dated to 10,000 to more than 20,000 years old (Moratto 1984:53). Recent research into the Los Angeles Mesa materials suggests that the early dates should be considered tentative, and that some studies suggest a date of no more than 5,000 years old for some of the individuals (Brooks et al. 1990).
Early Period (5000 to 3000 B.C.)
Although people are believed to have inhabited what is now Southern California beginning at least 11,000 years B.C. (Arnold et al. 2004), the first solid evidence of human occupation in the Los Angeles Basin dates to roughly 7000 B.C. and is associated with a period known as the Early Period or the Millingstone Horizon (Wallace 1955; Warren 1968). Millingstone populations established permanent settlements that were located primarily on the coast and in the vicinity of estuaries, lagoons, lakes, streams, and marshes where a variety of resources, including seeds, fish, shellfish, small mammals, and birds, were exploited. Early Period occupations are typically identified by the presence of handstones (manos) and millingstones (metates). Sites from this time period typically contain shell middens, large numbers of milling implements, crude core and cobble tools, flaked stone tools, distinctive cogged stone implements, and infrequent side-notched dart points (Fenenga 1953). The focus at inland sites appears to be in plant food processing and hunting. Along the coast, populations invested in maritime food gathering strategies, including close-shore and deep-sea fishing, as well as shellfish collection (Grenda 1997).

Middle Period (3000 B.C. to A.D. 1000)
Although many aspects of Millingstone culture persisted, by 3000 B.C., a number of socioeconomic changes occurred, as understood through changes in material culture (Erlandson 1994; Wallace 1955; Warren 1968). These changes are associated with the period known as the Middle Period or Intermediate Horizon (Wallace 1955). The mortar and pestle were introduced during this period, suggesting an increased reliance on hard plant foods such as acorns (Altschul and Grenda 2002). Increasing population size coincides with intensified exploitation of terrestrial and marine resources (Erlandson 1994). This was accomplished, in part, through use of new technological innovations such as the circular shell fishhook on the coast, and, in inland areas, use of the mortar and pestle to process an important new vegetal food staple, acorns, and the dart and atlatal, resulting in a more diverse hunting capability (Warren 1968). A shift in settlement patterns from smaller to larger and more centralized habitations is understood by many researchers as an indicator of increasingly territorial and sedentary populations (Erlandson 1994). During the Middle Period, specialization in labor emerged, trading networks became an increasingly important means by which both utilitarian and non-utilitarian materials were acquired, and travel routes were extended.

Late Period (A.D. 1000 to 1782)
The Late Prehistoric period, spanning from approximately A.D. 1000 to the Spanish Mission era, is the period associated with the florescence of contemporary Native American groups. The Late Period is notable for a dramatic increase in the number of habitation and food processing sites. These sites include more bone tools, numerous types of Olivella shell beads, circular fishhooks, and occasional pottery vessels (Miller 1991). Between A.D. 1000 and 1250, small arrow-sized projectile points, of the Desert side-notched and Cottonwood triangular series, were adopted along what is now the Southern California coast (Altschul and Grenda 2002). Following European contact, glass trade beads and metal items also appeared in the archaeological record. Burial practices shifted to cremation in what is now the Los Angeles Basin and northern Orange County. However, at many coastal and most Channel Island sites, interment remained the common practice (Moratto 1984).
Some researchers argue that the changes seen at the beginning of this period reflect the movement of Shoshonean speakers from the eastern deserts into the area that is now the Southern California coast. Some researchers, though, suggest that the movement of desert-adapted Shoshonean speakers occurred as much as 2,000 years earlier (Bean and Smith 1978; Sutton 2009).

At the time of European contact, the Project vicinity was occupied by Shoshonean-speaking Gabrielino people who controlled what is now the Los Angeles Basin and Orange County down to Aliso Creek (Kroeber 1925). The northern San Fernando Valley was the northernmost extent of the territory occupied by people who the Spanish referred to as the Fernadeño, whose name was derived from nearby Mission San Fernando. The Fernadeño spoke one of four regional Uto-Aztecan dialects of Gabrielino, a Cupan language in the Takic family, and were culturally identical to the Gabrielino. The Tataviam and Chumash, of the Hokan Chumashan language family, lived to the north and west of this territory, respectively, and it is likely that the territorial boundaries between these linguistically distinct groups fluctuated in prehistoric times (Bean and Smith 1978; Shipley 1978).

Occupying what is now the southern Channel Islands and adjacent mainland areas of Los Angeles and Orange Counties, the Gabrielino are reported to have been second only to their Chumash neighbors in terms of population size, regional influence, and degree of sedentism (Bean and Smith 1978). The Gabrielino are estimated to have numbered around 5,000 in the pre-contact period (Kroeber 1925). Maps produced by early explorers indicate the existence of at least 40 Gabrielino villages, but as many as 100 may have existed prior to contact with Europeans (Bean and Smith 1978; McCawley 1996; Reid 1939 [1852]).

Prehistoric subsistence consisted of hunting, fishing, and gathering. Small terrestrial game was hunted with deadfalls, rabbit drives, and by burning undergrowth, and larger game such as deer were hunted using bows and arrows. Fish were taken by hook and line, nets, traps, spears, and poison (Bean and Smith 1978; Reid 1939 [1852]). The primary plant resources were the acorn, gathered in the fall and processed with mortars and pestles, and various seeds that were harvested in late spring and summer and ground with manos and metates. The seeds included chia and other sages, various grasses, and islay or holly leafed-cherry (Reid 1939 [1852]).

**History**

Early European exploration of the coastal and inland trade routes of what became California began in the 1500s, but more than a century passed before Spain mounted a concerted colonization effort. The historical era in California begins with Spanish colonization and is often divided into three distinctive chronological and historical periods: the Spanish or Mission Period (1542 to 1821), the Mexican or Rancho Period (1821 to 1848), and the American Period (1848 to present).

**Spanish Period (1542 to 1821)**

Before direct Spanish settlement, more than two centuries of sporadic European exploration had spread disease and European goods throughout what became California, from the coasts and bays to the mountains and deserts. Introduced diseases reduced Native American populations in the area by as much as 75% (Larson et al. 1994).
The Portola Expedition of 1769 was likely the first time that Europeans made direct contact with the people living in the vicinity of the Project area (Johnston 1962). Passing through what is now the Los Angeles area, Portola reached the San Gabriel Valley on August 2, 1769, and traveled west through a pass between two hills where they encountered the Los Angeles River and camped on its east bank near the present-day North Broadway Bridge. Father Juan Crespi, who was traveling with Portola and documenting their travels, recorded that they “entered a spacious valley, well grown with cottonwoods and alders, among which ran a beautiful river. This plain where the river runs is very extensive and ... is the most suitable site for a large settlement” (The River Project 2001). Father Crespi goes on to describe this “green, lush valley,” its “very full flowing, wide river,” the “riot of color” in the hills, and the abundance of native grapevines, wild roses, grizzly, antelope, quail, and steelhead trout. Father Crespi observed that the soil was rich and “capable of supporting every kind of grain and fruit which may be planted.” The river was named El Rio y Valle de Nuestra Senora la Reina de Los Angeles de la Porciuncula.

Gabrielino villages are reported by early explorers to have been most abundant near the Los Angeles River, in the area north of what is now downtown known as the Glendale Narrows, and those areas along the river’s various outlets into the ocean. Among those villages north of what is now downtown Los Angeles were Maawnga near present-day Griffith Park; Totongna and Kawengna in the present-day San Fernando Valley; Hahamongna, northeast of present-day Glendale; and, closest to the Project area, the village of Ya’angna, in present-day downtown Los Angeles. At the time of Portola’s visit, the village of Ya’angna is reported to have supported a population of at least 200 (Gumprecht 1999), and was later reported to have contained anywhere from 500 to 1,500 huts, implying an even greater population (Reid 1939 [1852]). The exact location of Ya’angna continues to be debated, although some believe it to have been located at the site of the present-day Civic Center (McCawley 1996). This settlement, widely regarded as a precursor of modern Los Angeles, was abandoned by 1836.

Gabrielino populations were particularly devastated by early Spanish colonization efforts, such that, by the late 1800s, very few Gabrielino people remained in their native homeland. Some fled to refuges with their kin farther inland or to villages of neighboring tribes to the north or south (Kroeber 1925). Many others perished from disease and conflict with the invading Spanish, who established the Pueblo of Los Angeles in the middle of Gabrielino territory. This early colonial pueblo quickly became a major political and economic center due to its strategic location along natural transportation corridors that ran east to west and north to south.

Missions were established in the years that followed the Portola expedition, the fourth being the Mission San Gabriel Arcangel founded in 1771 near the present-day city of Montebello. By the early 1800s, the majority of the surviving Gabrielino population had entered the mission system. The Gabrielino inhabiting present-day Los Angeles County were under the jurisdiction of either Mission San Gabriel or Mission San Fernando. Mission life promised the Native Americans security in a time when their traditional trade and political alliances were failing, and epidemics and subsistence instabilities were increasing (Jackson 1999).
On September 4, 1781, twelve years after Crespi’s initial visit, El Pueblo de la Reina de Los Angeles was established, not far from the site where Portola and his men camped. Watered by the river’s ample flow and the area’s rich soils, the original pueblo occupied 28 square miles and consisted of a central square surrounded by 12 houses and a series of 36 agricultural fields occupying 250 acres, plotted to the east between the town and the river (Gumprecht 1999). Los Angeles’ original central square was located near the present-day intersection of North Broadway and Cesar E. Chavez Boulevard, less than 0.25 mile northwest of the Project area.

An irrigation system to carry water from the river to the fields and the pueblo was the community’s first priority, and it was constructed almost immediately. The main irrigation ditch, Zanja Madre, was completed by the end of October 1781. It was constructed in the area of present-day Elysian Park, and carried water south along present-day Alameda Street to the pueblo and beyond to the fields and orchards (Gumprecht 1999).

By 1786, the flourishing pueblo attained self-sufficiency, and funding by the Spanish government ceased (Gumprecht 1999). Fed by a steady supply of water and an expanding irrigation system, agriculture and ranching grew. By the early 1800s, the pueblo produced 47 cultigens. Among the most popular were grapes used for the production of wine (Gumprecht 1999). Vineyards blanketed the landscape between present-day San Pedro Street and the Los Angeles River. By 1830, an estimated 100,000 vines were being cultivated at 26 Los Angeles vineyards (Gumprecht 1999).

**Mexican Period (1821 to 1848)**

Alta California became a state when Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821. Independence and the removal of economic restrictions attracted settlers to the town of Los Angeles, and it slowly grew in size and expanded to the south and west. The population nearly doubled during this period, increasing from 650 to 1,250 between 1822 and 1845 (Weber 1982:226). Until 1832, Los Angeles was essentially a military post, with all able-bodied males listed on the muster rolls and required to perform guard duty and field duty whenever circumstances required. The Mexican Congress elevated Los Angeles from pueblo to city status in 1835, declaring it the new state capital (Robinson 1979:238–239).

After independence, the authority of the Alta California missions gradually declined, culminating with their secularization in 1834. Although the Mexican government directed that each mission’s lands, livestock, and equipment be divided among its converts, the majority of these holdings quickly fell into non-Indigenous hands. Mission buildings were abandoned and fell into decay. If mission life was difficult for Native Americans, secularization was worse. After two generations of forced dependence on the missions, they were suddenly disenfranchised. After secularization, “nearly all of the Gabrielinos went north, while those of San Diego, San Luis, and San Juan overran this county, filling the Angeles and surrounding ranchos with more servants than were required” (Reid 1977 [1851]:104).

The first party of American immigrants arrived in Los Angeles in 1841, although Americans and Mexicans had previously been tied through commerce. As the possibility of a takeover of California by the United States loomed large, the Mexican government increased the number of land grants in an effort to keep the land in the hands of upper-class Californios, including the Domínguez, Lugo, and Sepúlveda families.
(Wilkman and Wilkman 2006:14–17). Mexican Governor Pío Pico and his predecessors made more than 600 rancho grants between 1833 and 1846, putting most of the state’s lands into private ownership for the first time (Gumprecht 1999). Having been established as a pueblo, property within Los Angeles could not be dispersed by the governor, and this task instead fell under the city council’s jurisdiction (Robinson 1979).

**American Period (1848 to Present)**

The United States took control of California after the Mexican-American War of 1846, and seized Monterey, San Francisco, San Diego, and the state capital, Los Angeles, with little resistance. Local unrest soon bubbled to the surface, and Los Angeles slipped from American control in 1847. Approximately 600 U.S. sailors, Marines, Army dragoons, and mountain men converged under the leadership of Colonel Stephen W. Kearney and Commodore Robert F. Stockton in early January of that year to challenge the California resistance. Hostilities officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, in which the United States agreed to pay Mexico $15 million for the conquered territory, which included California, Nevada, and Utah, and parts of Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, and Wyoming. The conquered territory represented nearly half of Mexico’s pre-1846 holdings. California then joined the Union in 1850 as the 31st state (Wilkman and Wilkman 2006:15).

The discovery of gold in Northern California in 1849 gave rise to the California Gold Rush, leading to an enormous influx of American citizens in the 1850s and 1860s. These “forty-niners” rapidly displaced the old rancho families, and Southern California’s prosperity in the 1850s was largely a result of the increased demand for cattle, both for meat and hides, created by the Gold Rush. Southern California was able to meet this need, and the local ranching community profited handsomely (Bell 1881:26).

The 1850s witnessed a number of important changes for Los Angeles. An act of the state legislature incorporated the city on April 4, 1850, granting it all the rights, claims, and powers formerly held by the pueblo. In July of that year, the city elected a mayor, treasurer, assessor, and marshal, along with a seven-member Common Council. Six of the seven original members of the Common Council had been either native born or naturalized citizens of Mexico, prior to gaining American citizenship (Guinn 1915:270–271). The Common Council voted to continue a number of the established laws of the Mexican city council (the *ayuntamiento*), and also put in place a number of new ordinances to address new problems and concerns.

As a result of growing population and the increasing diversion of water, the once plentiful water supply provided by the Los Angeles River began to dwindle. The once extensive flood plain dried up, the lushly forested landscape had been cleared for construction materials and fuel, and the tens of thousands of head of cattle, horses, and sheep owned by ranchers had decimated the local grasses (Gumprecht 1999).

Between the 1920s and 1930s, the population more than doubled in Los Angeles, making it the fifth largest metropolis in the United States. Despite this, competition with local passenger lines and highways, and the rising popularity of the automobile, caused a loss of intra-California and interstate passenger railroad service revenues (Livingstone et al. 2006). To adapt to the new business
environment, the railroad companies reconfigured their operations in the 1930s and 1940s. In the 1930s Los Angeles’ Chinatown was demolished, and Union Station built in its place (located approximately 600 feet east of the Project area).

**Los Angeles Plaza**

Los Angeles Plaza Historic District contains the site of the original pueblo (town) of Los Angeles, and encompasses the Plaza and historic buildings constructed between 1818 and 1926. The Plaza area served as the center of the Los Angeles community throughout the 19th century as a community gathering place for fiestas, religious festivals and other celebrations (Poole and Ball 2002:98). The historic monument is roughly bounded by Spring, Macy, Alameda and Arcadia Streets and its architectural style types range from old Mexican adobe to Italianate to Spanish Churrigueresque. Historic buildings within the Plaza area include the Pico House (1870), Merced Theater (1870), and Masonic Hall (1854), as well as the Plaza church (founded 1784) and the Avila Adobe (1818), the oldest Los Angeles residence (Poole and Ball 2002:97).

Originally founded east of its present location and laid out in a rectangular shape, the Plaza was moved several times. Around 1830, the Plaza was moved to its current location, just east of the Plaza church. From the Plaza, dirt roads extended outward into the town and through vineyards and fields to neighboring missions, ranchos, and San Pedro Bay. After the Mexican American War (1846–1848), Mexico ceded Alta California to the United States. In 1850, Los Angeles was incorporated as a city. By 1860, the prominent early settlers who had built town houses around the Plaza began moving back to their ranchos or building homes in other areas. Chinese residents moved in and formed the city’s first Chinatown. After locally kiln-fired bricks became available in the 1850s, builders began using brick construction in the area, including a brick reservoir in the Plaza for water storage. In 1869, the Plaza was officially dedicated as a public park. Soon thereafter, Alta California’s former Mexican governor, Pio Pico, attempted to revitalize the area by constructing a luxury hotel, the Pico Hotel, adjacent to the Plaza. Plaza development continued and, by 1871, it had been configured into a circular shape and a fountain and a central statue were added. The Plaza was landscaped with orange and cypress trees in 1875, as well as Moreton Bay fig trees in 1878 (Poole and Ball 2002:98). Over the years, the Plaza was redesigned and re-landscaped several more times. Nearby streets were also extended, widened, and realigned, while new construction continued. During the mid-1870s, railroads and horse-drawn trolleys arrived and, by 1890, the city population reached over 50,000. In 1884, the city’s first fire station, the Plaza Firehouse, was built at the Plaza’s southeast corner. As the city grew, the business district moved south and, by 1890, the Plaza was no longer the city’s commercial or social center. The last buildings constructed in the Plaza area were the Plaza Methodist Church and the Plaza Community Center (Biscailuz Building), completed in 1926 (HRG 1997a:11–14).

By the 1920s, the Plaza area was severely deteriorated. The construction of what is now Union Station led to the demolition of the original Chinatown, but left the Plaza intact. A local revitalization effort led to Olvera Street, at the Plaza’s north end, being closed to vehicle traffic and re-opened as a Mexican marketplace in 1930. During the 1940s and 1950s, however, several historic Plaza buildings were demolished to make way for U.S. 101 and an expanded approach to Union Station. To preserve the area, the State of California designated the 44-acre El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park in 1953. Later
alterations to the street and some buildings attempted to create a more unified image, and the Plaza’s existing bandstand was installed in 1962. The State transferred park ownership to the City of Los Angeles in 1989 and, in 1990 the city accepted the park (HRG 1997a:14–16).

Pico House
The Pico House, built between 1869 and 1870, was designed by famed 19th century Los Angeles architect Ezra F. Kysor for Pio Pico, California’s last Mexican governor. It was the first three-story building in Los Angeles and was noted for its beautiful central courtyard with fountain and tropical foliage. “Its parlor became a rendezvous for the socially elect, and the flower filled patio with its fountain, was the delight of all who dined there” (Goss 1955:139). The Pico House was financed through the sale of Pico’s lands in the San Fernando Valley, including an 8,800-acre property, Rancho Bartolo, which later became the city of Whittier. The building has the largest footprint and floor area of all structures in the Pico-Garnier blocks of the Los Angeles Plaza Historic District.

Construction on the Pico House, a three-story Italianate stone and brick building, began on September 4, 1869, and was completed by June 19, 1870, for $85,000. The Pico House provided hotel guests with 82 bedrooms and 21 parlors, as well as bathrooms and water closets. Many of the bedrooms opened into the interior court. The ground floor was reserved for commercial activity and hotel use, containing the hotel office and lobby, a reading room, bar, two dining rooms, and two stores, including one store occupied by the Wells Fargo Express Company (Hunt 1972:5). The bar later moved to what was the first dining room at the northwest corner. Three dining rooms faced the Plaza, two on the second floor and one on the ground floor. The kitchen was outfitted with the most modern equipment available. The second floor consisted of suites and a public parlor. From the gallery around the interior court on the second floor, guests accessed a private entrance to the Merced Theater, which allowed them to reach their seats without walking along the street. The third floor consisted exclusively of sleeping rooms. The hotel was built with indoor plumbing and gas lighting. Wide sliding glass doors were located on Sanchez Street to allow carriages to drive in. A dumbwaiter was used for delivering baggage to the second and third floors. There were two interior courts in the hotel, one used as a service area that opened from the rear entrance on Sanchez Street and another larger court with balconies. The large court had a circular cast iron fountain. The grand double staircase, a defining feature, led to the second floor, where there was a drawing room, billiard room, and guest suites.

Alterations
The hotel’s original construction consisted of exterior brick bearing walls supporting wood-framed floors and the roof. The building was renovated during the 1870s and a second formal opening took place in October 1875. Around 1882, a balcony was added to the Plaza and Main Street façades, and then demolished in 1897. In addition, a portico visible in an 1884 photograph of the west elevation, which was not part of the original construction, was removed before 1906. Pico lost ownership of the hotel in 1880. The Pico House became the National Hotel in 1892 (until 1920), and the parapet inscriptions were changed to reflect the new name. In 1930, Los Angeles city authorities condemned the building’s upper floors and for years only the ground floor was used. The State of California acquired the building in 1953 (HRG 1997a:19).
Between 1909 and 1922, the building received new plumbing, new partitions, plastering, an iron stairway in the courtyard, reroofing, and electric wiring. Alterations included removal of balcony columns and burnt partitions in the interior courts. Work was done by architects John P. Kempel and Walter E. Erkes. During the 1960s, doors and windows were altered, the façade was restored, the exterior courtyard was renovated, and the east elevation openings were altered. In addition, basic heating and air conditioning (HVAC), plumbing, and electrical work were done, as well as interior reconfiguration and substantial structural work. A new staircase at the south end of the building in the courtyard was added in the 1960s. In the 1980s, the building was seismically strengthened. The bearing walls were subsequently strengthened by reinforced pilasters and horizontal beams poured in place into slots cut into the brick walls from the inside. Steel columns and beams were added to strengthen the floor framing and additional reinforced concrete walls have been constructed (HRG 1997:19–24). The wood, double-hung windows currently installed in the building match the design and scale of the original, but were added most likely between 1997 and 2000. The frames in which they reside retain their historic patterning and materials.

**Merced Theater**

The Merced Theater, the first building constructed in Los Angeles specifically for the presentation of dramatic performances, was constructed for businessman William Abbot in 1870 and named after his wife, Maria Merced Garcia (Poole and Ball 2002:102). Like the Pico House, the Merced Theater was designed by famed Los Angeles architect Ezra F. Kysor in the Italianate architectural style and constructed between the Pico House to the north and the Masonic Hall to the south. When Pio Pico prepared to build the Pico House, he and Abbott stipulated that the partition wall would be made twice as thick as originally anticipated so that Abbot could incorporate his side into a building. The centerline of the wall was to coincide with the property line and the height was planned at two stories with an option to build three stories at a later date. The north foundation, shared with the Pico House, was constructed of Yellowstone masonry with mortar. Footings for the west and east walls were constructed of brick masonry.

The Merced Theater’s ground floor was originally used as a saloon for the Pico House. The ground floor later served commercial purposes. The theater, which operated from 1870 to 1877, was on the second floor and living accommodations for the Abbot family were on the third floor.

**Alterations**

A portico was added to the west elevation in 1875, supported by three fluted wood columns with square bases and capitals (HRG 1998:19). The columns, supporting the canopy with tall dosserets, were edged with a corbeled cornice topped by a balustrade with decorative finials. Based on Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, it appears that the portico was removed between 1906 and 1920. By the early 20th century, the upper floors had been converted into inexpensive sleeping rooms. The painted inscription on the arched portion of the parapet that reads “L.A.’s 1st Theater Mercedes” is thought to have been added some time in the 1940s. Because of the inscription’s inaccuracy, the “es” part was painted out in 1984 (HRG 1998:20).
The State purchased the building in 1954, and most of the original interior was removed in the 1950s or 1960s. The Merced Theater underwent a series of renovations on its façade and interior spaces during the 1960s and 1980s. Most alterations involved changing the storefront windows and doors, adding partitions and laying a new floor. The Merced Theater’s bearing walls have been strengthened by reinforced concrete pilasters and horizontal beams poured in place into slots cut into the brick walls from the inside; which appears to have occurred c. 1980. Iron columns bisect the long east-west spaces in the basement and first floor. The third-floor framing and roof framing does not appear to be original and is shored up by wood timbers from the second floor (HRG 1998:19–20). The building was vacant from 1985 through 2014 (LAC 2015). The wood, double-hung windows currently installed in the building match the design and scale of the original, but were added between 1997 and 2000. The frames in which they reside retain their historic patterning and materials.

**Masonic Hall**

The Masonic Lodge in Los Angeles was formerly organized in 1854. In 1858, Lodge 42 requested mason William Hayes Perry and his partner James Brady to build a lodge room on the second floor of a building they were constructing at 426 North Main Street for their carpentry and furniture-making business. Lodge 42 loaned Perry and Brady the money for construction. The Masonic Hall, a two-story unpainted brick building, was completed later that year. The Masons paid rent of $20 a month for their meetings until 1868, when they moved to larger quarters (Poole and Ball 2002:102). The building’s first floor was originally designed for store space and lodging on the second floor, until the Masons began using the second floor for meetings. The earliest known photograph dates to 1870 and shows the west elevation of the Masonic Hall and the Pico House.

After the Masons left the building, it was primarily used as a furniture and cabinet making store that was noted for its coffins. By the turn of the century, it was used for cheap lodging and as a pawn shop. In the early 1950s it was threatened by the construction of the Hollywood/Santa Ana Freeway. However, Masons associated with California State Park and members of Los Angeles Lodge 42 intervened to save the building and make it part of the El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park. In 1981, the building was rededicated as a meeting place for Los Angeles City Masonic Lodge 814. Through the early 2000s, it operated as a museum and housed historic records (Poole and Ball 2002:103).

**Alterations**

During the 1870s, the Main Street façade was altered to make it conform more closely to the architectural styles of the Pico House and adjacent Merced Theater. A bracketed cornice and stucco pilasters were added, and the second-floor windows were shuttered. The building was clad in stucco and a balcony was added to the second floor. The Masonic Lodge was restored by the State in the 1950s and, in 1960, the Masons furnished it. Work done by the State included the addition of brick veneer on the east and south elevations. By the 1990s, the first floor had sustained fire damage and lost substantial historic fabric. The bearing walls of the Masonic Hall have been strengthened by reinforced concrete. The wood windowframes and doors currently installed in the building match the design and
scale of the original, but were added between 1997 and 2000 to replace the originals. The window frames retain their historic patterning and materials.
Chapter 3 Archival Research

Archival research for this Project was conducted by Kyle Griffith on April 8, 2015, and by Maria Wiseman on May 4, 2015, at the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) housed at California State University, Fullerton. The research focused on the identification of previously recorded cultural and paleontological resources within the Project area and within a 250-foot radius of the Project area.

Cultural Resources Records Search

The cultural resources records search at SCCIC included review of previously recorded archaeological site records and reports; historic site and property inventories; and historic maps, including Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. Inventories of the NRHP, CRHR, California State Historic Resources Inventory, California Historical Landmarks, and California Points of Interest were also reviewed to identify cultural resources within both the Project area and study area. The entirety of the Project area has been previously surveyed and/or investigated. The records search revealed that six cultural resource investigations were previously conducted within 250 feet of the Project (Table 1). These studies include an assessment of a feature found beneath the Merced Theater Building, an assessment of the El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park, a historic park resource management plan of El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park, a historic archaeological investigation of the Los Angeles Plaza Church, and two archaeological monitoring reports.

Table 1. Previous Surveys Conducted within 250 feet of the Project Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Report (LA-)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chance, Paul G.</td>
<td>2567</td>
<td>Assessment of an Archaeological Feature Beneath the Merced Theater Building, El Pueblo De Los Angeles State Historic Park</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chance, Paul G.</td>
<td>3986</td>
<td>A Cultural Resources Assessment of the Plaza El Pueblo De Los Angeles State Historic Park</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hale, Alice E., and Scott Savastion</td>
<td>8532</td>
<td>Archaeological Monitor Report: the Plaza House, 507–511 North Main Street, Los Angeles, California</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singer, Clay A.</td>
<td>1071</td>
<td>Preliminary Historic Archaeological Investigation at the Los Angeles Plaza Church</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The records search also indicated that 18 cultural resources have been previously recorded within 250 feet of the Project area. Five of these resources are contained within or overlap with the Project area. These five resources are P-19-002791, P-19-120014, P-19-167017, P-19-171566, and P-19-171572, indicated by an “**” in Table 2 below.
### Table 2. Previously Recorded Cultural Resources within 250 feet of the Project Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Permanent Trinomial (CA-LAN-)</th>
<th>P-Number (P-19-)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Eligibility Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CA-LAN-007(H)</td>
<td>000007</td>
<td>Sparse prehistoric groundstone deposit; Historic period dump for Chinatown</td>
<td>1850–1870</td>
<td>Not evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-LAN-1112</td>
<td>001112</td>
<td>Old Plaza Church</td>
<td>1822</td>
<td>Not evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>002791*</td>
<td>Pico-Garnier Block</td>
<td>1858–1906</td>
<td>Not evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>002928</td>
<td>Los Angeles Gas Works</td>
<td>1867–1912</td>
<td>Not evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100515</td>
<td>Historic trash scatter</td>
<td>1840–1900</td>
<td>Not evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>120014*</td>
<td>Historic refuse within Merced Theater</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Not evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>167016</td>
<td>Old Plaza Fire House plaque</td>
<td>1884 for building; 1960 for plaque</td>
<td>Not evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>167017*</td>
<td>Los Angeles Plaza / Plaza Area / Plaza Park</td>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Found eligible for NRHP and CRHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>167020*</td>
<td>El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic District</td>
<td>1818–1864</td>
<td>Listed in NRHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>167106</td>
<td>First Los Angeles Cemetery Site</td>
<td>1823–1853</td>
<td>Not evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>171566*</td>
<td>Merced Theater</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Found eligible for NRHP and CRHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>171572*</td>
<td>Pico House / Pico Hotel</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Found eligible for NRHP and CRHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>171605</td>
<td>Brunswig Drug Co. – Laboratory</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Found ineligible for NRHP and not evaluated for CRHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>171606</td>
<td>Beaudry Building</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Not evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>171611</td>
<td>Brunswig Drug Co. – Packing and Warehouse</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Found ineligible for NRHP and not evaluated for CRHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>171613</td>
<td>Los Angeles Gas Company, Brunswig Annex</td>
<td>1897</td>
<td>Not evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>173140</td>
<td>Nuestra Senora La Reina De Los Angeles/Plaza Church</td>
<td>1822</td>
<td>Listed in NRHP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3. Previously Recorded Historic Properties within 250 feet of the Project Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Permanent Trinomial (CA-LAN-)</th>
<th>P-Number (P-19-)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Eligibility Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>174908</td>
<td>Lugo Adobe (Site Of) – Bronze Plaque Placement</td>
<td>1937 / 1939</td>
<td>Listed in NRHP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P-19-002791 is the Pico-Garnier Block of El Pueblo de Los Angeles. This block includes six buildings within the area bounded on the east by Los Angeles Street, on the south by Arcadia Street, on the west by Main Street, and on the north by the central Plaza courtyard. Included in this area are the Masonic Hall; Merced Theater; Pico House; the 425 N. Los Angeles Street Building; the Garnier Building; and the Old Chinese Store, West Wing. These buildings were constructed between 1858 and 1906.

P-19-120014 is a refuse deposit located in the Merced Theater Building (P-19-171566). The deposit was encountered during the excavation of two 24-inch-deep by 12-inch-wide utilities trenches at a depth of approximately 8 to 10 feet below street level. The feature appeared to have been a pit approximately 4 feet wide dug into the natural alluvium and then backfilled with dark soil and historic debris. The total depth of the pit exceeded 3½ feet. Artifacts found within the deposit included bricks and other building materials, coal, barrel hoops, metal fragments, sawed faunal bone fragments, undecorated white ceramic fragments, bottle glass, and three ceramic bottles. Two of the ceramic bottles bore the maker’s mark "MIDLAND POTTERY / MELLING," and the third bore the maker’s mark "GROSVENOR / GLASGOW." The maker’s marks and the presence of the feature in the 1869 building indicate that the feature was deposited after 1869. When the feature was discovered, it was evaluated as potentially eligible for the NRHP under Criteria A and D (Chace 1979). The excavated materials were curated by El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park, and the remaining feature was preserved in place. The entirety of this resource is located within the Project area.

P-19-167020 is the El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic District. The district is roughly bounded by Spring Street, Cesar Chavez Avenue, Alameda Street, Arcadia Street, and Old Sunset Boulevard. The district includes 22 contributing resources built between 1818 and the early 20th century. Included among these contributing resources are the Masonic Lodge, Merced Theater, and Pico House. El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic District was listed in the NRHP on November 3, 1972. The entirety of the Project area is contained within this resource.

**Historic Property Data File**

The Historic Property Data File was consulted to identify historic properties within 250 feet of the Project area. A total of 20 properties were identified, including the Masonic Lodge, Merced Theater, and Pico House (Table 3). The Historic Property Data File noted that the three buildings were each found eligible for the NRHP and the CRHR. Resources within the Project footprint are designated by an "***" in Table 3 below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Permanent Trinomial (CA-LAN-)</th>
<th>P-Number (P-19-)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Eligibility Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>167014</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Garnier Block / Garnier Building</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Not evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>167016</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Old Plaza Firehouse</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Found eligible for CRHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>167017</td>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Los Angeles Plaza / Plaza Area / Plaza Park</td>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Found eligible for NRHP and CRHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>167105</td>
<td>1858</td>
<td>Masonic Hall</td>
<td>1858</td>
<td>Found eligible for NRHP and CRHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>167106</td>
<td>1823</td>
<td>First Los Angeles Cemetery Site</td>
<td>1823</td>
<td>Not evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>171547</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Plaza / Plaza Bandstand / Kiosko</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Not evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>171549</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>La Placita de Dolores</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Not evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>171566*</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Merced Theater</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Found eligible for NRHP and CRHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>171572*</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Pico House / Pico Hotel</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Found eligible for NRHP and CRHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>171573</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Lugo House Site, Father Sierra Park</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Not evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>171606</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Beaudry Building</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Not evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>171607</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Vickrey / Brunswig Building</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Found eligible for NRHP and CRHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>171608</td>
<td>1883</td>
<td>Plaza House</td>
<td>1883</td>
<td>Not evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>171610</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Plaza Church Rectory and Offices</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Not evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>171611</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Brunswig Drug Co. – Packing and Warehouse</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Found ineligible for NRHP and not evaluated for CRHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>171613</td>
<td>1897</td>
<td>Los Angeles Gas Company, Brunswig</td>
<td>1897</td>
<td>Not evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>171616</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Turner Building</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Not evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>171617</td>
<td>1895</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Found ineligible for NRHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>173140</td>
<td>1822</td>
<td>Nuestra Senora La Reina De Los Angeles</td>
<td>1822</td>
<td>Listed in NRHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>174100</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Turner Building</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Found ineligible for NRHP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
California Historical Landmarks

California Historical Landmarks are buildings, structures, sites, or places that have been determined to have statewide historical interest. A search of California Historical Landmarks revealed five landmarks within 250 feet of the Project area (Table 4). Resources within the Project footprint are designated by an “*” in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: California Historical Landmarks within 250 feet of the Project Area**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monument Number (CHL-)</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>144</td>
<td>535 N. Main Street and 100-110 Cesar Chavez Ave.</td>
<td>Nuestra Senora La Reina De Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td>500 Block North Main Street</td>
<td>Los Angeles Plaza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>159*</td>
<td>430 N. Main Street</td>
<td>Pico House (Hotel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>171*</td>
<td>418 N. Main Street</td>
<td>Merced Theater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>730</td>
<td>501 N. Los Angeles Street</td>
<td>Old Plaza Firehouse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments

Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments (LAHCMs) are sites in Los Angeles that have been designated by the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission. A search of the LAHCMs found seven monuments within 250 feet of the Project area (Table 5). These include the Pico House (LAHCM-1013) and the Merced Theater (LAHCM-1012), which are also part of the larger Los Angeles Plaza Park Historic-Cultural Monument (LAHCM 64/2310). Resources within the Project footprint are designated by an “**” in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments within 250 feet of the Project Area**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monument Number (LAHCM-)</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>535 North Main Street/100-110 East Cesar Chavez Avenue</td>
<td>Nuestra Senora la Reina de Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>521 North Main Street</td>
<td>First Cemetery of Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Cesar Chavez Avenue and Los Angeles Street and 500 North Main Street and Plaza Park</td>
<td>Los Angeles Plaza Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1012*</td>
<td>418 North Main Street</td>
<td>Merced Theater (SM#71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1013*</td>
<td>430 N. Main Street</td>
<td>Pico House / Pico Hotel (SM#159)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1014</td>
<td>501 N. Los Angeles Street</td>
<td>Old Plaza Firehouse (SM#730)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sacred Lands File Search and Native American Contact

A letter was mailed to the NAHC on April 14, 2015. The letter requested that a SLF check be conducted for the Project and that contact information be provided for Native American groups or individuals that may have concerns about cultural resources in the Project area. The NAHC responded in a fax dated May 12, 2015, that the SLF search “failed to indicate the presence of Native American cultural resources in the immediate area.” But the response also noted that the “absence of specific site information in the sacred lands file does not indicate the absence of cultural resources in any Project area.” The NAHC then provided a list of nine individuals “who may have knowledge of cultural resources in the Project area.”

Letters were mailed to each individual provided on the NAHC contact list. Maps depicting the Project area and response forms were attached to each letter. On June 19, 2015, AECOM followed up with phone calls to those individuals who did not respond to the letters. As a result of the follow-up calls, two contacts expressed concerns about the project, and requested Native American monitoring. Further details of the Native American contact program are contained in confidential Appendix A.

Other Archival Research

Research was conducted in person or remotely to develop an evaluative historic context to place the resources in the Project area in their proper time, theme, and place. The following sources were accessed:

- The first official map of Los Angeles in E.O.C. Ord’s 1849 Plan de la Ciudad de Los Angeles. This map shows a series of buildings fronting the Plaza in the approximate location of the Pico House (Ord 1849).
• An 1873 *Map of the Old Portion of the City Surrounding the Plaza* notes on the plot facing the Plaza, “Jose Antonio Carrilo (first owner). Pio Pico, 1856 Pico House was built in 1869” (Ruxton 1873).
• The 1972 NRHP Nomination for the Los Angeles Plaza Historic District (Hunt 1972).
• A 2002 Getty Conservation Institute publication titled *El Pueblo The Historic Heart of Los Angeles* (Poole and Ball 2002).
• City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources
• Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey website (SurveyLA 2015)
• California Office of Historic Preservation Listed Historical Resources
• Existing Historic Structures Reports for the Pico House, Merced Theater, and Masonic Hall (HRG 1997a,b; HRG 1998).
Chapter 4 Archaeological and Built Environment Survey

Methods
An architectural history survey of the Merced Theater and Masonic Hall was completed by Mr. Jeremy Hollins on April 6, 2015, and the Pico House on September 24, 2015. Mr. Hollins meets the Secretary of Interior Professional Qualifications Standards (36 CFR Part 61) in the disciplines of Architectural History and History. The survey analyzed the current conditions, historic integrity, and retention of character-defining features, as well as compared the proposed Project plans with in-field observations and background information to complete the Project’s effects assessment. The Pico House survey was attended by LABOE staff, and the Merced Theater and Masonic Hall surveys were attended by LABOE staff and the Project Architect. These parties were able to provide additional information and answer questions regarding the Project improvements. The survey also considered the potential indirect effects to nearby historical resources that may be caused by visual, audible, or atmospheric intrusions; shadow effects; vibrations from construction activities; or change in access or use to nearby historical resources, as a result of the Project by determining the distance the Project improvements may be visible within nearby viewsheds.

Following completion of the field survey, the three properties within the Project area, the Masonic Hall, Merced Theater, and Pico House, were recorded and had their existing evaluations revalidated on the appropriate DPR 523 series forms (refer to Appendix B).

Results
Within the Project area are three previously recorded cultural resources: the Masonic Hall, Merced Theater, and Pico House. These properties are contributing resources to the NRHP-listed Los Angeles Plaza Historic District and are listed as part of the Los Angeles Plaza Park Historic-Cultural Monument (LAHCM 64/2310). The following provides an architectural description, discussion of character-defining features, integrity analysis, and evaluation summary of each building.

Pico House (424 North Main Street)
The Pico House, designed by architect Ezra F. Kysor, was constructed in 1869–1870 for Pio Pico, California’s last Mexican governor, in the Italianate architectural style. Erected as a luxury hotel, the three-story building’s prominent cornice with classically-styled corbels, pronounced moldings, low-pitched roof, double doors with arched transoms, and tall narrow arched fenestration with elaborated crowns reflect design philosophies of the Italianate style, popular from 1840 to 1885 (Plates 1, 2).

The Pico House is located at 424 North Main Street in Los Angeles, California. Oriented northeast-southwest, it lies just north of the intersection of North Main and Arcadia Streets, within the Los Angeles Plaza Historic District. Although the building appears rectangular, it has an irregular, U-shaped plan and
is wider at the south end than the north. The hotel has two decorative façades; the west elevation that fronts North Main Street and the north elevation that fronts the Plaza. The building abuts public sidewalks at its north and west elevations, while the east/rear elevation faces Sanchez Street. U.S. 101 runs northwest-southeast less than 200 feet south of the building, on the south side of Arcadia Street, and the Chinese American Museum is situated to the east, across Sanchez Street. At the south elevation, the top of the building’s “U” adjoins the adjacent Merced Theater, forming a roughly rectangular courtyard between the two buildings. As a result, only the west, north, and east elevations are visible from a public vantage point.

The Pico House has an irregular (roughly rectangular) plan with an interior courtyard and was constructed on a stone foundation. Sections of the coursed rubble stone foundation are visible at the east elevation. The building is clad in load-bearing brick, with stuccoed concrete plaster located on the north and west elevations. The roof is wood framed and almost flat with a low pitch to aid in drainage. Parapets centered at the north and west elevations rise above the roofline with the inscription “Pico House”. The main entry leads through a set of double doors on North Main Street, at the west elevation. All fenestration has been replaced but retains its original location, size, shape, and frames.

The west and north elevations are characterized by their symmetrical façades; recessed wood-paneled, double doors; and rows of nearly identical fenestration elements, reminiscent of a colonnade on the lower floor. Window hood moldings alternate between stories, with arched windows on the first and third floors and segmental arches on the second, which is a common design characteristic of the Italianate style to alternate window hood moldings between stories. All of the windows on the second and third floors are four-over-four, double-hung wood sash. A roof cornice with bracketed corbels wrap around both elevations. Molded rectangular panels with deep bands of trim are located beneath the corbels. Square pilasters are located between the window bays on both the second and third stories and between the doors on the first story. The brackets supporting the cornice are located centrally directly above the third-floor pilasters. This pattern is continued along both elevations. The west and north elevations boast two classically-inspired belt courses that articulate the buildings’ three distinct stories.

The west elevation (primary façade), which faces North Main Street, has a centered wood-paneled double door with two inset panes in each door and a two-paned transom above, divided by a vertical wood mullion, located on the first floor. The double-door is flanked by six identical two-pane fixed windows that mimic doors but are not operable. Each fixed window contains two inset glass panes and arched transoms above that are divided by a vertical wood mullion. The second floor contains a pair of segmental arch windows centered along the façade that are flanked to either side by six segmental arch windows. The third floor contains a pair of round arch windows centered along the façade that are flanked to either side by six round arch windows.

The north elevation faces the Plaza. Its first floor has a recessed, centered wood-paneled double door with two inset glass panes in each door and a two-paned arched transom above, divided by a vertical wood mullion. The double-door is flanked by five identical two-pane fixed windows that mimic doors but are not operable. Each fixed window contains two inset glass panes and arched transoms above that are divided by a vertical wood mullion. The second and third floors each display a band of 10 windows. The
second-floor windows are recessed, segmentally arched with four-over-four, double-hung wood sash. The third-floor windows are recessed and round arch, four-over-four double-hung wood sash.

The east elevation has a simple façade with brick cladding arranged in a common bond punctuated by a header row at every sixth course. The brick has been sandblasted and repointed with Portland Cement. Fenestration consists of irregularly arranged six-over-six, double-hung wood sash windows with broad wooden lintels and sills. At this elevation’s north section, three side-approach concrete steps with a steel railing lead to a recessed four-panel wood door with an arched brick crown. The concrete steps, railing, and door all appear to have been replaced and are non-historic materials. Farther south is a large wood double leaf gate. The gate features a wood transom with four rectangular vertical panels and an arched upper panel. All of the panes within the transom have been painted over. The gate is crowned by brick discharging arch. The building does not have a visible south elevation as the south elevation connects directly to the Merced Theater.

On the interior of the building, set off-center to the south side of the building, is a roughly rectangular-shaped courtyard that narrows slightly towards its north end. The courtyard leaves relatively wide spaces on the north and west sides, but narrower spaces on the east, and spaces for toilets and walkways on the south side where the Merced Theater’s north elevation forms the south wall of the Pico House. It boasts a perimeter arcade on all sides of the first and second floors, and on the east and south sides of the third floor. The cladding of the courtyard consists of both modern and historic materials, including sandblasted older brick, painted brick, re-used old brick, and a small area of unaltered old brick. Cast iron posts support the poured-in-place concrete roofs and decks, while steel guardrails line the second- and third-level walkways. Beneath the eaves are wood planks and rafters with angled tails. Fenestration is predominantly multi-panel wood doors with six-pane glass insets in the upper panel and two-pane rectangular transoms. Deep set windows facing the interior courtyard consist of four-over-four and six-over-six windows with single-hung and double-hung wood sash, respectively. These windows also exhibit broad wooden lintels and sills. The courtyard’s flooring design displays brickwork laid in a basket weave pattern and installed slightly off-center. The brickwork is framed by two rows of concrete panels and the outer walkway consisting of modern terracotta tiles. The north wall of the Merced Theater, the courtyard’s south side, has exterior concrete staircases, with modern iron railing and facing with modern terracotta tiles. Modern round light fixtures hang symmetrically spaced beneath the second-floor walkway to illuminate the first floor.

The only significant interior features associated with the Pico House that remain are the courtyard and a grand stair hall located on the west side of the building. Original wooden stairs, railings, plaster walls, and recessed niches characterize the stair hall’s tall open space through all three floors. The first-floor interior is mostly finished with modern carpet, drywall, and electrical wiring and AC units visible. The ceiling is largely exposed and has been painted black. Some historic paneling appears to have been retained near the grand staircase, as well as some interior doors and molding. Carpet has been placed on the grand staircase, but the original wood flooring is also visible along the edges of the carpet. The second floor boasts original paneling and molding within the stair hall, as well as some original paneling and wall treatments within one room. Much of the drywall on this floor has been replaced, but there is some remaining original plaster. The original flooring appears to have been removed in some areas and
all only plywood subflooring is visible. There are exposed wood beams located throughout this floor that appear to have been encased originally. There is also a small amount of modern carpet located on this floor. The ceiling is exposed along with modern wiring and piping. The third floor is almost entirely unfinished, with plywood subflooring and concrete stucco interior walls visible. It appears that at least one door within this story was blocked in with concrete block and there are visible electrical panels and wiring that appear modern. The windows lack interior molding on this floor. There is a metal staircase within the third floor that provides roof access. There is also a small amount of modern drywall visible.

**Character-Defining Features**

The following are the character-defining features identified as a result of this survey and past studies:

- Symmetrical façades
- Exterior wall configuration, including bay openings (since actual original windows have been replaced)
- Open air courtyard form and space
- Low pitched roof
- Cornice with classically-styled corbels
- Classically-inspired belt courses and applied pilasters
- Double doors with large inset panes and arched transoms
- Tall narrow arched, double-hung wood sash windows with elaborated hood moldings
- Existing sections of original stone foundation
- Existing sections of original brick cladding
- Grand Stair Hall configuration, interior grand double staircase form, with wooden stairs, railings, plaster walls, and recessed niches

**Integrity**

The Pico House is listed as a contributing resource to the Los Angeles Plaza Historic District. It was listed as contributing to the historic district for its significant association with “the living composite story of Los Angeles from Indian times prior to 1781 through Spanish, Mexican, and American periods to become the nation’s largest city in the Pacific basin. The Plaza area of Los Angeles offers a unique opportunity for telling the story of the founding and growth of the nation’s third-largest city.” Due to the age of the nomination, which dates to 1972, no specific NRHP criteria were identified, but due to its association with significant events related to the founding of the City of Los Angeles, the historical information presented in the nomination, its integrity, and its architectural composition, it appears significant under both Criteria A and C to the district. There was also no clear period of significance defined, but due to the enlargement of the historic district in 1981 to include structures through 1926, it would appear that the historic district’s period of significance would cover the construction dates of the contributing resources, which extends from 1818 to 1926 and would include the associated historical events, themes, and property types discussed in the NRHP nomination.
The Pico House has seen extensive interior alterations over time, including extensive seismic stabilization, but has received sensitive rehabilitations to its exterior windows and cladding. Though some buildings within the historic district’s vicinity have been demolished over time, sufficient extant structures remain to retain good integrity of setting. The building has not been moved and thus retains good integrity of location. Though interior alterations have occurred over time, both the interior courtyard and grand stair hall remain and the sensitive rehabilitation of the exterior has aided in the retention of significant exterior fabric, including fenestration patterns, cornice detailing, and the original foundation and cladding. Thus, the building retains good integrity of design, workmanship, feeling and association. Though it retains its historic appearance and numerous character-defining features, the lack of extensive original materials and the reconfiguration of interior spaces impair its historic integrity of materials.

Based on this survey, the building continues to retain its eligibility as a contributing resource to the NRHP- and LAHCM-listed historic districts.

Plate 1: Pico House, 424 North Main Street, view facing west
Plate 2: Pico House Interior Courtyard, 424 North Main Street, view facing northeast

Merced Theater (420 North Main Street)
The Merced Theater was constructed for businessman William Abbot in 1870 (Plates 3, 4). Abbot named the building after his wife Maria Merced Garcia. Like the Pico House, the Merced Theater was designed by architect Ezra F. Kysor in the Italianate architectural style. Situated between the Pico House to the north and the Masonic Hall to the south, the Merced Theater’s prominent cornice with classically-styled corbels, pronounced window moldings, and tall narrow arched windows with elaborated crowns reflect design philosophies of the Italianate style, popular from 1840 to 1885 (HRG 1997b:17).

The Merced Theater is located at 420 North Main Street in Los Angeles, California. It is oriented northwest-southeast and located at the northeast corner of the intersection of North Main and Arcadia Streets, within the Los Angeles Plaza Historic District. The building’s west (primary) façade faces North Main Street and abuts a public sidewalk. The south elevation’s lower floor abuts the Masonic Hall, while the east/rear elevation fronts Sanchez Street. The boundaries include U.S. 101, which runs northwest-southeast less than 200 feet south of the building; Main Street to the north; Arcadia Street to the south; and Sanchez Street to the east. The Chinese American Museum is situated immediately east across Sanchez Street. At the north elevation, the building adjoins the adjacent Pico House, forming a roughly rectangular courtyard between the two buildings. As a result, only the west, east, and upper south elevations are visible from the public right-of-way.

The Merced Theater is a three-story building with a basement. It has a roughly rectangular plan with a flat parapet roof and painted concrete plaster on the west elevation. The original construction consisted
of exterior brick bearing walls, laid in a six-to-one common bond that supports wood-framed floors and roof framing.

The west (primary) façade features classically-inspired horizontal belt courses and vertical pilasters that demarcate the three floors and four distinct bays. Pilasters on the first floor are capped with composite capitals designed to follow the Corinthian and Ionic Orders. Pilasters on the second and third floors are based on the simplified Doric type. The belt course between the first and second floors contains a series of small brackets, whereas the belt course separating the second and third floors only has brackets located directly above the pilasters. The heavy, bracketed roof cornice boasts slightly larger brackets located centrally and directly above the pilasters. There are urns located on top of the belt course that separates the second and third floors. The bracketed roof cornice is capped by four symmetrically spaced urn-shaped finials that flank a centered mission-shaped roof parapet. Four molded rectangular panels with deep bands of trim extend along the west elevation, just beneath the cornice. The molded panels display highly decorative patterning.

The first floor has two large wood doors with six inset glass panes and three-pane rectangular transoms above. The wood doors are flanked by folding steel gates. Cast-iron pilasters located at the first floor help support the masonry wall above. The second and third floors each feature four recessed arched, one-over-one, double-hung wood sash windows divided by pilasters. In addition, the third floor displays ornamental wood railings in front of each window, topped by two urn-shaped finials similar to those on the roof parapet, as well as keystones within the window arches.

The south elevation’s upper level is visible from the public view but is mostly concealed by the Masonic Hall building. The south elevation has brick cladding and multiple four-over-four, double-hung wood sash windows with simple, flat laced arches. Quoins are located at the southwest and southeast corners of the building and mark its extent. The east/rear elevation continues with brick cladding and boasts three, symmetrically spaced four-over-four, double-hung wood sash windows on each floor. There is also one small, fixed wood window visible within the basement level on this elevation.

The interior of the Merced Theater has been altered. On the first floor, the flooring has been covered with carpet and both the walls and ceiling have been re-clad in modern drywall. Original metal columnar supports remain, as well as the original entries. On the second and third floors, the flooring has been removed. New wiring, HVAC equipment, lighting, and plumbing are evident. Some modern walls have been added to the second and third stories, but overall both floors are almost entirely empty and open as staircases and doors have been removed. The structure of the roof can be clearly seen from the third floor, including structural reinforcements that appear to have been added since the historic period.

**Character-Defining Features**

The following are the character-defining features that have been identified as a result of this survey and past studies:
- Symmetrical façade
- Exterior wall configuration, including bay openings (since actual original windows have been replaced) along primary elevations
- Flat roof
- Masonry walls
- Mission-shaped parapet and urn-shaped finials
- Prominent cornice with classically-styled corbels
- Classically-inspired belt courses and masonry arrangements
- Tall narrow arched, double-hung wood sash windows with elaborated hood moldings
- Molded panels displaying highly decorative patterning
- Interior columns and locations
- Storefront configuration

**Integrity**

The Merced Theater is listed as a contributing resource to the Los Angeles Plaza Historic District. It was listed as contributing to the historic district for its significant association with “the living composite story of Los Angeles from Indian times prior to 1781 through Spanish, Mexican, and American periods to become the nation’s largest city in the Pacific basin. The Plaza area of Los Angeles offers a unique opportunity for telling the story of the founding and growth of the nation’s third-largest city.” Due to the age of the nomination, which dates to 1972, no specific NRHP criteria were identified, but due to its association with significant events related to the founding of the City of Los Angeles, the historical information presented in the nomination, its integrity, and its architectural composition, it appears significant under both Criteria A and C to the district. There was also no clear period of significance defined, but due to the enlargement of the historic district in 1981 to include structures through 1926, it would appear that the period of significance would be the construction dates of the contributing resources, which extends from 1818 to 1926 and would include the associated historical events, themes, and property types discussed in the NRHP nomination.

The Merced Theater has seen extensive interior alterations over time; however, it has also received sensitive rehabilitation treatments to the exterior windows and cladding. Though some buildings within the vicinity have been demolished, sufficient extant structures remain to retain good integrity of setting. The building has not been moved and thus retains good integrity of location. Though interior alterations have occurred over time, both interior columnar supports and the original entry ways remain, and the sensitive rehabilitation of the exterior has aided in the retention of significant exterior fabric, including fenestration patterns, cornice detailing, and the original cladding. Thus, the building retains good integrity of design, workmanship, feeling, and association. Though it retains its historic appearance and numerous character-defining features, the lack of extensive original materials and the reconfiguration of interior spaces impair its historic integrity of materials.

Based on this survey, the building continues to retain its eligibility as a contributing resource to the NRHP- and LAHCM-listed historic districts.
Plate 3: Merced Theater, 420 North Main Street, view facing east
(Source: Wikipedia.org)
Masonic Hall (426 North Main Street)
The Masonic Hall, constructed in 1858 by Perry and Woodworth contractors, is the oldest building in the Pueblo area south of the Plaza and was the first Masonic Lodge built in Los Angeles (Plates 5, 6). Like the Pico House and Merced Theater, the Masonic Hall’s cornice with classically-styled corbels, pronounced moldings, flat roof, and tall narrow arched windows reflect design philosophies of the Italianate style, popular from 1840 to 1885.

The Masonic Hall is located at 426 North Main Street in Los Angeles, California. It is oriented northwest-southeast, and situated at the northeast corner of the intersection of North Main and Arcadia Streets, within the Los Angeles Plaza Historic District. The building’s west (primary) façade faces North Main Street and abuts a public sidewalk. The north elevation is adjacent to the Merced Theater and the east/rear elevation fronts Sanchez Street. The south elevation is adjacent to an open parking lot. U.S. 101 runs northwest-southeast less than 200 feet south of the building, on the south side of Arcadia
Street, and Sanchez Street to the east. The Chinese American Museum is situated immediately east across Sanchez Street. Only the west, south, and east elevations are visible from the public view.

The Masonic Hall has a roughly rectangular plan, with patios at the south and west elevations, a basement, and symmetrical primary façade. The original construction consisted of brick bearing walls supporting wood-framed floors and a flat roof. The bearing walls were subsequently strengthened by reinforced concrete within the past 45 years. The primary façade (west) is finished with painted cement plaster. A single belt course wraps around the west and south elevations, between the roof and part of the way through the second-floor fenestration.

The west (primary) façade’s first floor features three identical, symmetrically spaced wood panel double doors. Each set of doors has four inset panes and a segmentally arched, two-pane transom. These doors were rehabilitated between 1997 and 2000 and appear to be of mostly modern fabric. A modern metal light fixture is mounted above each doorway. The second floor has three symmetrically-spaced, lancet arched wood double doors with twenty-pane glazing that are recessed back from the wall and further highlighted by shoulder arches on the main plane of the wall. The three doors are connected by a single, shallow balcony with an ornate iron railing, supported by six simple brackets. Between each of the doors on the second floor are stylized, simple Doric-style pilasters. These doors were also rehabilitated between 1997 and 2000, but appear to be largely from the historic period. The roof features a flat parapet atop corbelled brackets. A band of three plain, deeply recessed, molded rectangular panels is located along the west elevation, just beneath the corbels. Two large brackets are located centrally, immediately above the pilasters on the second floor. There are three, evenly spaced and smaller brackets located between the larger brackets under the cornice.

The south elevation has a complex, brick-clad façade. The brick is arranged in a common bond pattern, with every fifth course punctuated by a headlock row. The lower level entrances include a multi-panel double wood door with arched brick molding and adjacent single wood panel door. Brick coining defines the building at its corners. The south elevation is partially recessed back from the main plane of the building, creating a recessed alcove space that includes a three-story, exterior stairwell and walkway. There is a porch that wraps around this elevation that is supported by classically-inspired, slender metal columns. Porch railings are constructed of wood posts, rails, and balusters, and were added in the 1960s. The windows along this elevation are primarily nine-pane fixed. The porch and stairwell appear to have been rehabilitated recently and likely contain some non-historic fabric.

The east/rear elevation is very narrow and includes a single, paneled wooden door with a six-pane transom above, a small arched vent located near the roof, and a small section or curved parapet roof connecting the south elevation of the building to the Merced Theater.

The interior of the Masonic Hall has been greatly altered. The first floor has been almost completely gutted and was badly damaged during a fire. Nearly all of the drywall and molding have been destroyed and electrical panels and piping are exposed. The second floor of the Masonic Hall retains historic fabric, including door frames, a transom, molding, and wood paneling, and it appears that the flooring remains; though it has been painted over. At least some of the existing drywall appears to be historic, but the
ceiling has been removed and the wood roof structure is visible. A modern HVAC unit has been added to the ceiling and projects into the space. The internal staircase between the first and second floors also appears to have good integrity, including the original wood banister and balustrade.

**Character-Defining Features**

The following are the character-defining features that have been identified as a result of this survey and past studies:

- Symmetrical façade
- Low pitched roof
- Exterior wall configuration, including bay openings (since actual original windows have been replaced) along primary elevations
- Cornice with classically-styled corbels
- Classically-inspired belt courses
- Tall narrow arched and segmentally arched openings

**Integrity**

The Masonic Hall is listed as a contributing resource to the Los Angeles Plaza Historic District. It was listed as contributing resource to the district for its significant association with “the living composite story of Los Angeles from Indian times prior to 1781 through Spanish, Mexican, and American periods to become the nation’s largest city in the Pacific basin. The Plaza area of Los Angeles offers a unique opportunity for telling the story of the founding and growth of the nation’s third-largest city.” Due to the age of the nomination, which dates to 1972, no specific NRHP criteria were identified but due to its association with significant events related to the founding of the City of Los Angeles, the historical information presented in the nomination, its integrity, and its architectural composition, it appears significant under both Criteria A and C to the district. There was also no clear period of significance defined, but due to the enlargement of the historic district in 1981 to include structures through 1926, it would appear that the period of significance would be the construction dates of the contributing resources, which extends from 1818 to 1926 and would include the associated historical events, themes, and property types discussed in the NRHP nomination.

The Masonic Hall has seen extensive interior alterations over time; however, it has received sensitive rehabilitation treatments to the exterior windows and cladding. Though some buildings within the historic district’s vicinity have demolished over time, sufficient extant structures remain to retain good integrity of setting. The building has not been moved and thus retains good integrity of location. Though interior alterations have occurred over time, interior moldings, a wooden staircase, and wood flooring remain, and the sensitive rehabilitation of the exterior has aided in the retention of significant exterior fabric, including fenestration patterns, cornice detailing, and the original cladding. Thus, the building retains good integrity design, workmanship, feeling, and association. Based on this survey, the building continues to retain its eligibility as a contributing resource to the NRHP- and LAHCM-listed historic districts.
Plate 5: Masonic Hall, 426 North Main Street, View facing east
(Source: you-are-here.com)
Summary

Archival research and survey resulted in the identification of three historical resources that are 45 years or older in the Project area: the Pico House, the Merced Theater, and the Masonic Hall. All three buildings are currently listed in the NRHP as contributing resources to the Los Angeles Plaza Historic District. The buildings are also listed in the local register as part of the Los Angeles Plaza Park Historic-Cultural Monument (LAHCM 64/2310). A field review of the buildings’ respective condition indicates that there is no change to their contributing status within the Lost Angeles Plaza Historic District.

All three buildings remain eligible within the historic district as contributing resources as they retain sufficient historical integrity and character-defining features to convey their significance as part of the “founding and growth of the nation’s third largest city.” Though the three buildings have seen interior alterations caused by neglect, fire, and seismic stabilization measures, they retain sufficient amounts of
their historic integrity to convey their significance within the district, and to qualify as historical resources for purposes of CEQA.
Chapter 5 Management Recommendations

Archaeological Recommendations

The background research and survey indicate a high probability for buried archaeological resources within the Project area. The Project area is in the general vicinity of known Gabrielino villages and prehistoric archaeological sites and is located on the banks of an important water source, the Los Angeles River. Due to the movement of the Los Angeles River, prehistoric archaeological resources may be deeply buried in the Project area. In addition, the Project area is within 0.5 mile of the Los Angeles Plaza, the historic heart of El Pueblo de Nuestra Senora la Reina de los Angeles. The area has been intensively used since the early 19th century, and the structures in the Project footprint date to the latter half of the 19th century.

A known archaeological site, P-19-120014, was encountered within the Merced Theater and preserved-in-place. This site appears to date to the construction of the theater and could shed light on the builders of this NRHP-eligible building and on the development of 19th century Los Angeles.

Consequently, it is recommended that LABOE retain a qualified cultural resources specialist to monitor ground-disturbing activities from the surface to at least the base of younger Quaternary alluvium. This monitor must have the authority to divert work to quickly and safely examine archaeological finds and evaluate and determine appropriate treatment for the resource in accordance with California PRC Section 21083.2(i) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

In addition, it is recommended that LABOE retain a qualified Native American monitor to monitor ground-disturbing activities from the surface to at least the base of younger Quaternary alluvium. This monitor must have the authority to divert work to quickly and safely examine potential Native American cultural materials. If any Native American cultural material is encountered within the Project site, further consultation with interested Native American parties should be conducted to apprise them of any such findings and solicit any comments they may have regarding appropriate treatment and disposition of the resources. If human remains are discovered, work in the immediate vicinity of the discovery will be suspended and the Los Angeles County Coroner will be contacted. If the remains are deemed Native American in origin, the County Coroner will contact the NAHC, which will identify a Most Likely Descendant pursuant to PRC Section 5097.98 and California Code of Regulations Section 15064.5. Work may be resumed at the landowner’s discretion, but will only commence after consultation and treatment have been concluded. Work may continue on other parts of the Project while consultation and treatment are conducted.

Built Environment Recommendations

Archival research and survey resulted in the identification of three historical resources that are 45 years or older in the Project area: the Pico House, the Merced Theater, and the Masonic Hall. All three buildings are currently listed in the NRHP as contributing resources to the Los Angeles Plaza Historic
District. The Project plans to seismically retrofit three existing historic buildings and would rehabilitate the Merced Theater and Masonic Hall for use as a new Digital Television Studio for Los Angeles City View Channel 35. The following assesses the Project’s improvements to determine if a significant impact would occur to the historical resources.

This analysis finds that the proposed alterations planned for the Pico House, the Merced Theater, and the Masonic Hall are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, particularly the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. Per the National Park Service, rehabilitation is defined as the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values. Rehabilitation assumes that at least some repair or alteration of the historic building will be needed in order to provide for an efficient contemporary use; however, these repairs and alterations must not damage or destroy materials, features or finishes that are important in defining the building's historic character. The Standards for Rehabilitation include the following, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility of the repairs to the historic resource:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Overall, the proposed Project’s intention is to complete an adaptive use of the Merced Theater and Masonic Hall as a new television studio and the seismic retrofit of the Pico House, while making as few changes as possible to the character-defining features of the buildings, their sites, and environs. The Project has been carefully planned and designed to alter as little as possible historic fabric and materials. Most of the improvements will not directly affect any materials from the buildings’ period of significance, primarily altering non-original and non-historic materials installed post-1960s, or would not be visible from a public vantage point. The seismic retrofit improvements planned for the Pico House, the Merced Theater, and the Masonic Hall will be compatible with the character and historic and structural integrity of the buildings, while being compatible and appropriate with the buildings’ character-defining features and overall design and form.

The main exterior improvements to the Masonic Hall include the removal of the existing second-story balcony along the south and east portions of the building, including several columns, the railing, flooring materials, and portions of the decking—several columns and portions of the decking will remain—and the removal of a perimeter fencing. These elements were constructed in the 1960s, following the acquisition of the property by the State of California, and were changes that occurred outside of the building’s period of significance. In addition, along the south elevation of the Masonic Hall and the Merced Theater, several windows and doors will be removed and the alcove space that includes a three-story, exterior stairwell and walkway will be reconfigured; however, these are also 1960s elements and not located on one of the primary façades or elevations needed to convey the buildings’ significance (like the west elevation). In this location, a new elevator tower, shaped like a free-standing helix-shaped structural form, will be added along the south elevation; however, it will not cause a direct impact to historic fabric, materials, and arrangements, since this portion of the building was recently renovated in the 1960s. Though the tower will extend slightly higher than the roof of the nearby Pico House, it will not cause diminish the area’s setting or feeling, due to nearby existing modern development and will only be distinguishably visible from the south elevation (which is a non-historic and character-defining elevation).

The interiors of the Masonic Hall, Merced Theater, and Pico House have little to no historic fabric and materials present, with many of the original and historic appearances, arrangements, and forms no longer visible. Many of the walls and ceilings have been stripped bare or are part of the repairs made in the 1960s. The reconfiguration of the Merced Theater and the Masonic Hall for use as a television studio (no reconfiguring of interior spaces will occur at the Pico House) would create new rooms and spaces for use as editing and voice-over bays, remote staff offices, studio spaces, mechanical and equipment rooms, cubicles and office spaces, restrooms, green rooms, lobbies, and dressing rooms. While this will lead to new ceiling, wall, and floor finishes, partitions, and interior doorways, the interior of the buildings have minimal amounts of historic fabric and materials, and major character-defining features (like the structural columns or staircases) will be retained or rehabilitated with in-kind materials.
The seismic retrofit activities will be designed to strengthen and protect the three buildings, in order to sustain the continued use of them, and to protect the buildings from further seismic and structural damage. The improvements planned for the Merced Theater and the Masonic Hall will install a new reinforced concrete shear wall system and will be overlain against the existing unreinforced brick walls with dowels used to secure the new reinforcing to the existing brick. These improvements would not be visible and would be located behind the existing walls or planned for areas of the buildings that were heavily altered outside of the period of significance or no longer retain historic fabric and materials. The foundation improvements for the Merced Theater and within the Pico House, the lateral system retrofits will consist of a steel frame system. In addition, various frames, outriggers, chords and collectors, and walls, as well as a truss and diaphragm strengthening will also be added to the Pico House. These will be interior elements that will not be visible along the exterior of the building or alter and modify the existing form, appearance, and character of the Pico House. While several of the strengthening measures would be visible within the interior (like the outriggers and chords), the interior spaces where these elements are planned have been partially demolished or have been heavily altered recently, and would not impact or alter the character-defining features of the building.

Overall, the proposed improvements planned as part of the Project would be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. Based on the above analysis, the three historical resources will retain character-defining form and footprint, which are important to conveying a specific time, period, and property type associated with the Masonic Hall, Merced Theater, and Pico House. While there will changes to the buildings, the buildings will receive a new use that requires minimal to no changes of the defining characteristics and site of the resources. The overall historic character of the properties will be preserved, particularly along the major building elevations (like the west elevations) that are critical to demonstrating the properties’ significance. In addition, no materials will be inappropriately removed that characterize the properties, their arrangements, spaces, (remaining) workmanship, and composition. While there have been numerous changes to the buildings in the 1960s (that are older than 45 years), when the State of California completed alterations (like along the south and east elevations of the Masonic Hall), these changes have not achieved significance in their own right, since they are not associated with significant events or people, or reflect a design important to the historic context and appearance of the buildings. As a result, distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques from the periods of significance would be preserved and remain intact. Deteriorated and non-code-compliant features will be repaired or replaced in-kind (like the Merced’s Theater interior staircase). Major new construction, like the sculptural elevator tower, will not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work will also be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the properties and their setting.

This assessment concludes the Project has been planned and designed consistent with the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. The Project will retain, restore, repair, and appropriately replace portions of the property from its period of significance that contribute to its historic integrity, while making other slight compatible alterations in non-character-defining features and spaces that preserve the property’s historical and architectural value. Therefore, under CEQA, the Project will have a less
than significant impact to the three built environment historical resources (Masonic Hall, Merced Theater, and Pico House) in the Project area, since the improvements will be consistent with the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.
Project Personnel

AECOM personnel involved in the cultural resources assessment are as follows: Marc Beherec, Ph.D., Registered Professional Archaeologist (RPA), served as report author and conducted archival research; Kyle Griffith, B.A., and Maria Wiseman, M.A., conducted archival research; Leesa Gratreak, M.A. and Shoshana Jones, M.A., J.D., completed background research and evaluated the built environment resources; Jeremy Hollins, M.A. completed the field survey and effects analysis.
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California Environmental Resources Evaluation System (CERES)

California Office of Historic Preservation

Chace, Paul G.

Erlandson, Jon M.

Fenenga, Franklin

Goss, Maymie R. Krythe

Grenda, Donn Robert

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Gumprecht, Blake

Historic Resources Group (HRG)

Hunt, John

Jackson, Robert H.

Johnston, Bernice

Kroeber, A. L.

Larson, Daniel O., John R. Johnson, and Joel C. Michaeisen

Livingstone, David, Dennis McDougall, Susan Goldberg, and Wendy Nettles
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Los Angeles Conservancy (LAC)

McCawley, William

Miller, Bruce W.

Moratto, Michael J.

Ord, Edward O.C.

Poole, Jean Bruce, and Tevvy Ball

Reid, Hugo

Robinson, W.W.


Ruxton, A.G.


Shipley, William F.


SurveyLA


Sutton, Mark Q.


The River Project


Wallace, William J.


Warren, Claude N.


Weber, David J.


Wilkman, Jon, and Nancy Wilkman

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APPENDIX A

Native American Contact (Confidential)
APPENDIX B

DPR Forms (Confidential)