



Supplemental Historic Resources Survey Report Industrial Zone Properties in the Harbor Gateway Community Plan Area



Prepared for:

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



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Project Overview

This supplemental historic resources survey report (“Supplemental Survey Report”) summarizes additional field work conducted for SurveyLA in the industrially-zoned areas of the Harbor Gateway Community Plan Area (CPA).¹ This survey report is to be used in conjunction with the main survey report and associated appendices for this CPA, published in July 2012.² All survey work was conducted according to SurveyLA methodology as discussed in the Harbor Gateway main survey report.

Project Team

Additional survey work in the Harbor Gateway CPA was conducted by GPA Consulting. Personnel included Teresa Grimes, Principal Architectural Historian; Allison Lyons, Associate Architectural Historian; and Elysha Paluszek, Architectural Historian II. As-needed field work assistance was provided by intern Katie Rispoli. Teresa Grimes served as the project manager.

Survey Area

Description of Industrial Areas

The survey area (“Survey Area”) includes approximate 692 industrially-zoned parcels. They are located in concentrated pockets throughout the Harbor Gateway CPA. Of these, approximately 299 parcels were surveyed by SurveyLA. SurveyLA generally does not include properties constructed after 1980, or resources that have been designated under Federal, state, or local programs. The map below illustrates the boundaries of the CPA and the location of industrially-zoned parcels.

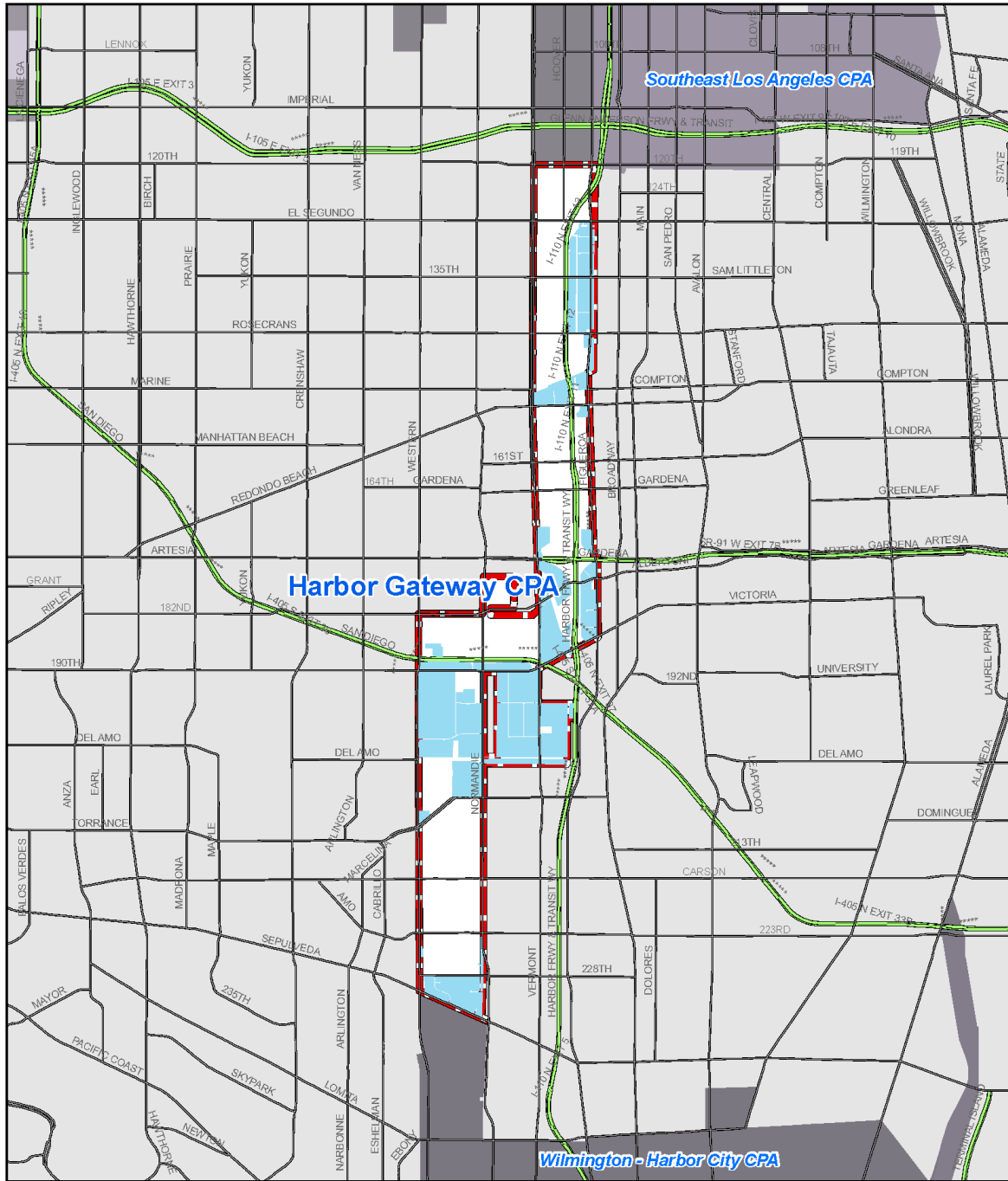
Industrially-zoned parcels in the Harbor Gateway CPA consist of a mix of industrial and non-industrial parcels, though the former predominates. Large portions of industrially-zoned land exist along the eastern boundary of the CPA on Figueroa Street, in the vicinity of 190th Street and Del Amo Boulevard, and along the southern boundary on Sepulveda Boulevard. Many of the industrially-zoned parcels in the CPA are developed with large-scale one-story industrial buildings and their associated surface parking lots. The area between 190th Street, Vermont Avenue, approximately Normandie Avenue,

¹ When this CPA was originally surveyed for SurveyLA, the Industrial Development context for the Citywide Historic Context Statement had not been developed. Therefore, industrially-zoned parcels could not be surveyed at that time. The context has since been completed. For this reason, survey teams have returned to this CPA to survey industrial parcels.



² The main survey report and all appendices for the Harbor Gateway CPA can be found at <http://preservation.lacity.org/survey-la-findings-and-reports>.

and Knox Street is dominated by an office park with multi-story office buildings, green space, and surface parking lots. Non-industrial uses include commercial and institutional. Very few residential buildings are located on industrially-zoned parcels in the Harbor Gateway CPA.

Survey Area Map with Industrially-Zoned Parcels



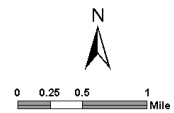
Industrial Zoning

Los Angeles Department of City Planning

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Harbor Gateway CPA
Survey Area



Industrial-Zoned Area Development History

For much of the first half of the twentieth century, the area known today as Harbor Gateway (as known as the “shoestring strip”) was sparsely populated and remained mostly rural with homes scattered throughout.³ The pace of development did not increase until World War II. Factories began moving into the area during this period.

The Harbor Gateway CPA did not develop industries specific to the area. The area’s industrial development was largely an extension of the industry in neighboring cities and communities, especially Torrance. Torrance was planned as a model industrial city in 1911 by Olmsted & Olmsted. Development became more established in the 1920s in that area, though it did not extend into Harbor Gateway until later in the twentieth century when industrial development became denser. The industries in the CPA often had a Torrance or Gardena address, rather than a Los Angeles one. This happened to businesses, residences, and industries throughout the Harbor Gateway area.

Industrial development also followed the more general trends of the region. Many of the industries that opened in the area were common to greater Los Angeles. Some, such as McDonnell Douglas, played prominent roles in the defense industry, which developed during World War II. The company, based in Long Beach, opened a plant in the area during this period. It closed in 1992. Much of the World War II-period and postwar period factories and warehouses have largely been replaced by later industrial development.

Companies with headquarters in the area included Harvey Aluminum, Montrose Chemical Corporation of California, and Shell Oil Company. Harvey Aluminum (originally the Harvey Machine Company of Los Angeles) relocated to an existing industrial plant in 1946. Montrose Chemical Corporation occupied its site on Normandie Avenue from 1947 until 1982 (it is now a Superfund site due to chemical contamination). Shell Oil Company had a refinery in the area as well (now closed). Farmer Brothers Coffee has been in the area since 1912, and continues to occupy its plant on Normandie Avenue.

By the 1980s, the area around 190th Street began to transition from purely industrial uses to a mix of uses including commercial. Many oil refinery and manufacturing plants were replaced by offices buildings.⁴ Other manufacturing plants and factories were once located in the CPA along Normandie Avenue, but many have been replaced by warehouses.

³ The area was known as the “shoestring strip” until 1985, at which time it was given the name Harbor Gateway.

⁴ Sheryl Stolberg, “In Search of an Identity: Area Lacks a Sense of Community,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 1, 1989, 13.

Industrial property types found in the Harbor Gateway CPA include industrial parks, factories, food processing, and building materials-related properties such as metal shops.

Summary of Findings

The following discussion of Contexts, Themes, and Property Types relates to resources on industrially-zoned parcels identified and recorded as eligible for designation.

Summary of Property Types

The Harbor Gateway CPA contains a small sampling of extant industrial property types, representing a number of periods of development. Industrial property types that were documented and evaluated as historically, culturally, or architecturally significant include a metal shop, a machine shop, and a telephone exchange building. Other property types located on industrially-zoned parcels that were documented and evaluated as significant include a labor union hall and a fire station.

Summary of Contexts and Themes

Several of the Contexts and Themes developed for the SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement are represented in the industrially-zoned areas of the Harbor Gateway CPA. The following is a representative sampling of some of the more common Context/Theme combinations used in this phase of the survey. Each Context/Theme is illustrated with specific examples from the Survey Area. In most cases, only one example of a particular property type was recorded.

For a list of all resources identified in the Survey Area see the *Harbor Gateway Community Plan Area Industrial-Zoned Area Supplemental Appendices* at SurveyLA.org.

Context: Industrial Development, 1850-1980

Theme: Building the City, 1876-1965

Sub-Theme: Building Materials, 1900-1965

This Context/Theme was used to evaluate industrial properties significant for their association with the building materials industry in Los Angeles. These include metal shops, concrete ready mix plants, carpentry shops, and stone and masonry fabricators. Only one example – a metal shop – was found in the Harbor Gateway CPA. It was constructed by Steelbilt Inc. for steel sash manufacturing and later owned by Diamond Perforated Manufacturing, a producer of perforated metal for building purposes.



Address: 18355 S. Figueroa Street

Date: 1954

Name: Steelbilt Inc.

Context: Industrial Development, 1850-1980
Sub-Context: Manufacturing for the Masses, 1883-1989
Theme: Factories, 1887-1980

This Context/Theme was used to evaluate factories that produced goods for the public at large but did not fall under the other themes in this Context, such as bakeries and flour mills. The Farmer Brothers Coffee plant was recorded under this theme. The company was founded in 1912, though the buildings on the property today were constructed later.



Address: 20333 S. Normandie Avenue

Date: 1949

Name: Farmer Brothers Coffee

Context: Public and Private Institutional Development, 1850-1980

Sub-Context: Communications, 1875-1980

Theme: Telephone History and Development, 1881-1950

Sub-Theme: Telephone Exchange Buildings and Pay Stations, 1881-1950

This Context/Theme was used to evaluate a telephone exchange building. It was constructed by Pacific Telephone and designed by architect C. Day Woodward. This was the only example of the property type found in the Harbor Gateway CPA. It was also recorded under the Architecture and Engineering Context as an excellent example of Late Modernism.



Address: 17200 S. Vermont Avenue

Date: 1970

Context: Commercial Development, 1850-1980
Theme: Commercial Identity, 1850-1980

This Context/Theme was used to evaluate properties that are the long-time locations of a business significant to the commercial history of the Harbor Gateway CPA. Two examples were found and both are associated with the Japanese American community, the Fuku Bonsai Nursery and the Asahi Fancy Koi Company.



Address: 1052 W. 190th Street
Date: 1970
Name: Asahi Fancy Koi Company



Address: 544-546 W. 168th Street
Date: date unknown
Name: Fuku Bonsai Nursery

Context: Other, 1850-1980
Theme: Event or Series of Events, 1850-1980

The Other Context is used to capture unusual or unique property types for which a specific context/theme has not yet been developed. In the Harbor Gateway CPA, this Context/Theme was used to evaluate three properties including a World War II-period fire station, a union hall associated with organized labor, and a tool manufacturing facility.⁵



Address: 18030 S. Vermont Avenue
Date: 1941
Name: Fire Station #79



Address: 18349-18355 S. Figueroa Street
Date: 1956
Name: Steambitters, Welders, and Refrigeration Fitters Union Hall



Address: 15001 S. Figueroa Street
Date: 1954
Name: Burg Tool Manufacturing Company

⁵ The Labor History theme is currently in development.

For Further Reading

LSA Associates. "Draft Historic Context Statement, SurveyLA Industrial Development, City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California." Prepared for the City of Los Angeles, August 26, 2011.

Pitt, Leonard and Dale. *Los Angeles A to Z: An Encyclopedia of the City and County*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1997.

White, Michael D. *Port of Los Angeles*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2008.