Historic Resources Survey Report
Reseda-West Van Nuys
Community Plan Area

Prepared for:
City of Los Angeles
Department of City Planning
Office of Historic Resources

Prepared by:
Architectural Resources Group, Inc.
Pasadena, CA

July 31, 2015
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Project Overview

This Historic Resources Survey Report (“Survey Report”) has been completed on behalf of the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning’s Office of Historic Resources (OHR) for the SurveyLA historic resources survey of the Reseda-West Van Nuys Community Plan Area (CPA). This project was undertaken from June 2014 to July 2015 by Architectural Resources Group (ARG).

This Survey Report provides a summary of the work completed, including a description of the Survey Area; an overview of the field methodology; a summary of relevant contexts, themes and property types; and complete lists of all recorded resources. This Survey Report is intended to be used in conjunction with the SurveyLA Field Results Master Report (“Master Report”), which provides a detailed discussion of SurveyLA methodology and explains the terms used in this report and associated appendices. The Master Report, Survey Report, and Appendices are available online at www.surveyla.org.

SurveyLA Methodology Summary

Below is a brief summary of SurveyLA methodology. Refer to the Master Report discussed above for more information.

Field Survey Methods

• Properties surveyed for SurveyLA are evaluated for eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources and for local designation as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments (HCM) or Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZ), commonly known as historic districts.

• Field surveyors cover the entire area within the boundaries of a CPA. However, only resources that have been identified as significant within the contexts developed for SurveyLA are recorded.

• Consultants making resource evaluations meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualifications Standards in Architectural History, History, or a related field.

• Surveys focus on identifying significant resources dating from about 1850 to 1980.

• All surveys are completed from the public right-of-way (from vehicles or on foot as needed).

• Digital photographs are taken of all evaluated resources.

• Field surveys do not include:
• Individual resources and historic districts (including HPOZs) that are already designated (listed in the National, California or local registers).

• Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles (CRA/LA) surveys conducted within the last five years.

• Potential HPOZ areas which have been surveyed within the last five years and are in the process of being designated.

**SurveyLA Resource Types**

SurveyLA identifies individual resources, non-parcel resources, historic districts and district contributors and non-contributors. Each of these is described below. Appendices A, B, and C of this Survey Report are organized by resource type.

- **Individual Resources** are generally resources located within a single assessor parcel such as a residence or duplex. However, a parcel may include more than one individual resource, if each appears to be significant.

- **Non-Parcel Resources** are not associated with Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs) and generally do not have addresses. Examples may include street trees, street lights, landscaped medians, bridges, and signs.

- **Historic Districts** are areas that are related geographically and by theme. Historic districts may include single or multiple parcels depending on the resource. Examples of resources that may be recorded as historic districts include residential neighborhoods, garden apartments, commercial areas, large estates, school and hospital campuses, and industrial complexes.

- **District Contributors and Non-Contributors** are buildings, structures, objects, sites and other features located within historic districts (such as residences, schools, and parks). Generally, non-contributing resources are those that are extensively altered, built outside the period of significance, or that do not relate to historic contexts and themes defined for the district.

- **Planning Districts** are areas that are related geographically and by theme, but do not meet eligibility standards for designation. This is generally because the majority of the contributing features have been altered, resulting in a cumulative impact on the overall integrity of the area and making it ineligible as a Historic District. The Planning District determination, therefore, is used as a tool to inform new Community Plans being developed by the Department of City Planning. These areas have consistent planning concepts, such as height, massing, setbacks, and street trees, which may be considered in the local planning process.
Project Team

The Reseda-West Van Nuys CPA survey team included the following personnel from ARG: Katie E. Horak, Principal, Architectural Historian and Preservation Planner; Mary Ringhoff, Associate, Architectural Historian and Preservation Planner; and Evanne St. Charles, Architectural Historian and Preservation Planner. Katie Horak served as project manager.

The project team also included Kevin Roderick, journalist, editor, and author of The San Fernando Valley: America’s Suburb. Kevin provided valuable expertise and input regarding the San Fernando Valley and its significant resources throughout all phases of the project.

Survey Area

Description of the Survey Area

The identified Survey Area corresponds with the boundary of the Reseda-West Van Nuys Community Plan Area, which is located near the center of the San Fernando Valley, north of the Santa Monica Mountains and approximately 23 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles. It is predominantly rectangular in shape, except where the boundary extends east near the north end of the CPA to encompass the Van Nuys Airport. The CPA’s northern boundary follows Roscoe Boulevard; the southern border runs along Victory Boulevard between Balboa Boulevard and Valjean Avenue, and along Oxnard Street between Corbin Avenue and Balboa Boulevard; and the western boundary follows Corbin Avenue. From the CPA’s northern boundary to the Southern Pacific right-of-way, its eastern boundary follows Sepulveda Boulevard; between the Southern Pacific right-of-way and Saticoy Street, it follows Gloria Avenue; and from Saticoy Street to the southern border of the CPA, the boundary runs along Valjean Avenue.

The Reseda-West Van Nuys CPA is located on the central floor of the San Fernando Valley; aside from gradual changes in elevation, the area is generally flat. No major land formations or natural waterways define the area. The Survey Area is bounded and shaped by human-made features, including two channelized tributaries, Aliso Canyon Wash and Bull Creek. These run roughly north-south in the CPA and connect to the Los Angeles River (diverted and channelized to its current route in the 1930s) at the southern edge of the CPA.

The major east-west arteries within the Survey Area are (from north to south): Roscoe Boulevard, Sherman Way, Vanowen Street, Victory Boulevard and Oxnard Street. The major north-south arteries within the Survey Area are (from east to west): Balboa Boulevard, White Oak Avenue, Reseda Boulevard, Tampa Avenue and Corbin Avenue.
Many of the wide avenues and boulevards that traverse the Survey Area historically served as connections to the commercial centers of Los Angeles and to major regional and national rail and automobile transportation routes. The routes remain mostly industrial and commercial in terms of zoning and land use. The Southern Pacific rail line, established in the early 20th century, largely runs north of the CPA (it cuts across the very northeast corner of the CPA at an angle), between Roscoe Boulevard and Parthenia Street; it is still an active freight rail route. A Pacific Electric red car route ran along Sherman Way between 1911 and 1952, connecting Reseda to Van Nuys, North Hollywood and Hollywood.

All of the major corridors in the Survey Area are laid in an orthogonal grid. There are several smaller concentrations of curvilinear, subdivision-based streets and cul-de-sacs throughout the CPA that developed after World War II.

The Reseda-West Van Nuys CPA includes two distinct communities and a section of one other community:¹

- **Reseda** comprises a large rectangular portion of the CPA, between Roscoe Boulevard, Victory Boulevard, Corbin Avenue and White Oak Avenue. It is bordered by Lake Balboa to the east and Winnetka to the west.

- **Lake Balboa** occupies roughly the center of the CPA, between Roscoe Boulevard, Victory Boulevard and White Oak Avenue, just west of the Van Nuys Airport. The area occupied by the community of Lake Balboa was originally part of Van Nuys; it was officially renamed in 2007.

- **Van Nuys**, which continues to the east, includes the irregularly-shaped eastern portion of the Reseda-West Van Nuys CPA, from just west of the Van Nuys Airport to the eastern boundary of the CPA.

The Reseda-West Van Nuys CPA comprises 23,404 parcels. Of these, roughly 22,157 were surveyed by the SurveyLA team. Properties not surveyed include buildings constructed after 1980 and resources designated under local, state and/or federal programs.

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¹ Neighborhood definitions and boundaries are somewhat subjective, varying according to source; this report uses the most widely accepted definitions with an eye toward capturing the general development patterns of the Reseda-West Van Nuys CPA, not parsing the exact divisions between neighborhoods as perceived today. Neighborhood names and boundaries are loosely derived from "Mapping L.A. - Los Angeles Times." Mapping L.A. Los Angeles Times. Web. 07 August 2014. <http://projects.latimes.com/mapping-la/neighborhoods/>.
Development History

Like the rest of the San Fernando Valley, the land currently occupied by the Reseda-West Van Nuys CPA was originally inhabited by members of the Tongva tribe. In 1797, the Spanish established Mission San Fernando, from which the valley would derive its name. When Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821, existing Spanish land grants in the San Fernando Valley were re-divided into a number of ranchos, including Rancho Ex-Mission San Fernando, Rancho Cahuenga, Rancho Los Encinos, and Rancho Tujunga. By the mid-19th century, many of Southern California’s rancho owners were beginning to sell off portions of their lands, and those in the Valley were no exception. In 1869, pioneer Isaac Lankershim led a small cohort of other German Jewish immigrants to form the San Fernando Valley Homestead Association; the group acquired a sizable portion of Rancho Ex-Mission San Fernando land, comprising much of the southern half of the San Fernando Valley, for $2 an acre. The men had intended to use the land for sheep farming, but a severe drought in the 1870s led them to experiment with dry wheat farming, which proved to be a huge success.

The San Fernando Valley’s first town, San Fernando, was established by state senator Charles Maclay in 1874 in anticipation of the Southern Pacific Railroad’s completion through the Valley. In that same year, Isaac Newton Van Nuys moved to California and became a stockholder in the San Fernando Valley Homestead Association. Soon after, he became a business partner and son-in-law of Isaac Lankershim (he married Lankershim’s daughter Susanna). Van Nuys played a large role in mapping the Valley and establishing boundaries between the Lankershim, Maclay and Porter townships. What became known as the Lankershim-Van Nuys ranch extended across the Valley and from south of present-day Roscoe Boulevard to present-day Mulholland Drive. When Lankershim died in 1882, his son, James B. Lankershim, went into business with Van Nuys. Together, they platted the town of Toluca near the Southern Pacific railroad tract in 1882. In 1896, the town was renamed Lankershim; and, in an effort to capitalize on the glamour of Hollywood, the community later adopted the name North Hollywood.

The construction of a Southern Pacific Railroad line through the Valley in the early 20th century brought increased commercial opportunities to the area. The corridor was built as a part of Southern Pacific’s Coast Line, which connected Los Angeles and San Francisco via a route that bisected the San Fernando Valley and crossed over the Santa Susana Pass. Its right-of-way runs largely north of the Reseda-West Van Nuys CPA.

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3 Roderick, 44.
A number of other major developmental changes were conceived in anticipation of the completion of the Los Angeles Aqueduct, which brought water to Los Angeles from the Owens Valley. Construction on the aqueduct began in 1908, and the San Fernando Valley’s promise of future water attracted many homesteaders and businessmen seeking a new life – and fortune – in the West. The prospect of a secure water source and improved infrastructure aided a major real estate boom, as the last of the vast Spanish ranchos gave way to smaller agricultural lots, fledgling commercial centers, and early residential subdivisions. In 1909, the Los Angeles Suburban Home Company syndicate purchased 47,500 acres of the San Fernando Valley for $2.5 million. The largest land transaction ever recorded in Los Angeles County, Tract 1000 (the same land the San Fernando Valley Homestead Association had acquired years earlier, minus the town of Toluca) comprised almost the entire San Fernando Valley south of today’s Roscoe Boulevard; it included Isaac Newton Van Nuys’ share of the Lankershim township and today contains multiple Los Angeles communities including Reseda, Van Nuys, and Sherman Oaks.5 The LASHC’s Board of Control included some of the most influential men in Los Angeles: Harrison Gray Otis, Harry Chandler, Otto Freeman Brant, Hobart Johnstone Whitley, and Moses Hazeltine Sherman. Each investor could choose a small holding to keep for himself, and members of the Board of Control kept the most valuable parcels.6

In order to lure potential buyers to the San Fernando Valley, the LASHC created three towns, sited miles apart across the center of the Valley: Van Nuys, Marian (named after Harrison Gray Otis’ daughter, Marian was renamed Reseda in the 1920s), and Owensmouth (which later became Canoga Park). Van Nuys was the first of the three to be developed; Owensmouth was founded in March of 1912 and Marian was founded in July of 1912.7 The Board of Control’s Los Angeles Times connections proved valuable, as the Times worked hard to promote the largely nonexistent communities as “The Wonder Towns of the San Fernando Valley.”8

To promote the sales of the syndicate’s land, Board of Control member Moses Sherman worked to establish a route of the Pacific Electric railway across the San Fernando Valley, connecting the region to Los Angeles. The line reached Van Nuys by 1911, continued through Marian, and ended in Owensmouth by 1912, proving a major boost to development in the area. Concurrent with the completion of the Pacific Electric line, Sherman Way was established as the first and most reliable traffic artery for commuters by automobile, running parallel to the streetcar route.9 The paved street boasted a separate lane for horses and wagons, electrical lighting, and thousands of trees and shrubs planted along the edges to make it feel like a grand paseo (and to hide the empty land that lay just beyond it).10

5 The transaction was so notable it was announced in a huge story on the front page of the Los Angeles Times on September 24, 1909. Roderick, 48.
6 Roderick, 56-57.
7 Roderick, 59-60.
8 Roderick, 57-58.
10 Roderick, 58.
On November 5, 1913, the Los Angeles Aqueduct opened, bringing water to the burgeoning city. Two years later, Valley residents voted in favor of annexation to the City of Los Angeles, and the communities of Van Nuys and Marian became part of the city. Other communities, including Owensmouth, Lankershim, and Chatsworth, were annexed between 1917 and 1923.

By the time of the town’s annexation, Marian’s central business district was well established at what is now the intersection of Reseda Boulevard and Sherman Way. A hardware store, blacksmith shop, and auto repair garage anchored the new commercial district; by 1929, the district also contained two lumber companies, two mills, a vegetable packing company, a feed store, a bank, a drugstore, a cobbler’s shop, a restaurant, and a butcher shop. The community’s earliest residential area grew up around the commercial core, with most of its houses constructed in the early to mid-1920s. In 1921, Marian’s name was changed to Reseda, the name of a popular garden plant.

Reseda’s growth was slow in comparison with that of Van Nuys, and the community was better known as an agricultural center than a commercial or residential hub. In 1930, Reseda had a population of 1,623 – meager next to Van Nuys, which had a population of 14,059 in the same year. In 1927, the town was described as “the center of more one-acre farms that any other section of the State,” where residents would raise chickens and rabbits, and grow berries, beets, walnuts, lettuce and lima beans. Among the larger industrial agriculture operations was the Runnymede Poultry Colony, which began on a small plot off of Lindley Avenue in July of 1927. Two years later, the operation had expanded to 80 acres and its hens produced approximately two million eggs a month. By 1944, the plant had grown to 228 acres, making it the world’s largest poultry producing plant at the time. Its site was subdivided and built out after World War II.

Like much of the San Fernando Valley, the Survey Area’s population grew during and after World War II. While the Reseda area provided much-needed wartime produce, including beans, lettuce and tomatoes, the east half of the Survey Area became home to both civilian and government defense activities centered around what is now the Van Nuys Airport. Established as Metropolitan Airport in 1928, the site became the Van Nuys Army Airfield during World War II. Several aircraft and defense manufacturing plants, including Lockheed Aircraft, Bach Aircraft, RCA, Marquardt and Radioplane, relocated to or near the airport during or soon after the war.

11 Sanborn Maps, 1929.
14 “Poultry Group Notes Growth of Two Years,” Los Angeles Times, 6 October 1929, D7.
16 “Los Angeles County,” Los Angeles Times, 2 January 1943, H4.
These manufacturing plants, along with the Lockheed and Vega plants in the nearby city of Burbank, brought thousands of workers to the Survey Area during the war. Residential development boomed as the demand for worker housing escalated.

In 1944, the United States Army opened Birmingham General Hospital at the corner of Vanowen Street and Balboa Boulevard. The hospital cared for injured Army veterans, many of whom were quadriplegic or paraplegic. Birmingham Hospital closed in 1950 and multiple Los Angeles Unified School District campuses now occupy the site, utilizing a handful of the original hospital buildings. In 1946, Field Photo Memorial Farm was formed on seven acres of land near Calvert Street and Lindley Avenue. The estate was originally owned by Hollywood studio publicity chief, Irving Briskin, who sold it to Field Homes, Inc., to commemorate 13 men who died while in service with the Field Photographic Branch, Office of Strategic Services (predecessor of the CIA), during World War II. The purpose of this branch, under command of director John Ford, was to shoot behind-the-scenes documentaries of the war. The site has since been developed.

Residential development skyrocketed in the Survey Area during the postwar period. Between 1945 and 1950, the San Fernando Valley’s population more than doubled to a total of 402,538 residents. Between 1940 and 1950, Reseda grew from a population of 3,725 to 14,810; Van Nuys grew from 28,268 to 79,973. Housing developers could barely keep up with the demand, resulting in the development of new neighborhoods that catered to a variety of income levels, ranging from economical tract houses to communities of custom-designed residences sited on large, half-acre lots. Many were designed in various iterations of the Ranch style, which was immensely popular at the time and also paid homage to the community’s rural roots and historically rustic culture.

New developments touting names such as Meadowlark Park (designed by notable architect Edward Fickett) and Louise Park Estates (developed by notable developer Julian Weinstock) advertised their single-family homes heavily in the Los Angeles Times. The Reseda work of Fickett and Weinstock illustrates the breadth of residential design in the Valley during the postwar period. The prolific and influential Fickett was known for his Contemporary Ranch and Mid-Century Modern designs for subdivisions all over the Valley; Meadowlark Park was one of many neighborhoods to boast a “modern” aesthetic of dynamic rooflines, floor-to-ceiling windows, and low, ground-hugging forms. Weinstock, an architect as well as a developer, designed and built numerous single-family residences in the Valley during the 1950s; he is best known for his Traditional Ranch neighborhoods, with rustic decorative elements evoking the Valley’s idealized rural past.

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17 Birmingham High School, on the hospital site, has a stadium that has hosted numerous high school sports championships as well as a 1967 concert featuring Jefferson Airplane and The Doors.
18 “Ranch Becomes Memorial to 13 Dead in War,” Los Angeles Times, 8 July 1946, A8.
19 Roderick, 122.
20 Ruscardon Engineers, 23.
The rapid residential development was accompanied by the rise of various commercial properties serving the day-to-day needs of the area’s steadily increasing population. Reseda’s 1920s business district, centered at the intersection of Reseda Boulevard and Sherman Way, saw construction of new one- and two-story commercial buildings, as well as local institutions like the Reseda Theater (designed by S. Charles Lee and completed in 1948). The commercial center’s development between the 1940s and 1960s greatly changed its appearance, but its low-scale and pedestrian orientation remained. Cheap land and a continuously improving highway system further aided automobile-oriented suburban development. Low-scale strip malls that catered to the automobile were developed along many of the community’s major boulevards.

Postwar institutional development included the construction of numerous new public school campuses in and around the new residential tracts, as well as churches and parks. Reseda High School, completed in 1955 at 18230 Kittridge Street, was the first high school to be built under the 1952 school bond program. Industrial operations also took root in the thriving area, including Anheuser-Busch’s brewery and bottling works on Roscoe Boulevard, opened in 1954. In 1966, the company constructed the 17-acre Busch Gardens amusement park, complete with a bird sanctuary, monorail, boat rides, bumper cars, and free beer with admission. Although the park closed in 1977, the brewery remains in operation.

The Van Nuys Army Airfield saw additional growth during the 1950s, including the extension of a runway to accommodate jet fighters; Sherman Way was routed into a tunnel under the runway at this time. In 1957, the property was renamed Van Nuys Airport. It continued to see private, commercial, and military uses for the next 30 years, with military use lessening over time and commercial aviation and aerospace operations expanding their footprints on the property. Today the Van Nuys Airport is one of the world’s busiest non-commercial airports, seeing hundreds of takeoffs and landings per day.

The Survey Area’s population continued to grow through the 1960s, and residential and commercial development continued apace. As in most other parts of the San Fernando Valley, the new housing subdivisions were not open to all; a long history of racially restrictive housing and ownership practices meant that most of the Valley remained “a thoroughly white domain” even through the post-World War II boom. Restrictive covenants had factored into patterns of town building and settlement going back to the Valley’s earliest history. While the Supreme Court had outlawed restrictive covenants in 1948, racism in the real estate market persisted.

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23 Roderick, 139.
through various off-the-record tactics including unofficial “gentleman’s agreements,” discriminatory lending practices, and brokers’ tendency to “steer” minorities to the historically diverse communities of Pacoima and San Fernando. These tactics made it nearly impossible for non-whites to purchase houses in the subdivisions that were being developed in and around Reseda. Deed restrictions and discriminatory practices were not effectively addressed until well into the 1970s.

The Survey Area continued to develop at a steady pace through the 1960s and into the 1970s, as any remaining open land was acquired by developers and subdivided into housing tracts. Reseda’s semi-rural identity slowly faded as the area suburbanized, although traces of it survive in the large lots that remain in several areas of the community. A rare survivor is a portion of the Jue Joe Ranch, established by Chinese immigrant Jue Joe in West Van Nuys in 1919; this incongruous property sits on the busy thoroughfare of Vanowen Street. New institutional and recreational properties continued to appear in the Survey Area during this time, including the Los Angeles Jewish Home for the Aged, established on Victory Boulevard in 1962; this was the second location of an institution founded as the Hebrew Home for the Aged in 1915. Its presence in Reseda reflected the growth of the San Fernando Valley’s Jewish population after World War II. Among the new recreational properties in the Survey Area was the public Van Nuys Golf Course, completed on airport property in 1968. Construction of LAUSD campuses continued, and included unusual facilities like Diane S. Leichman High School, constructed in 1971 as one of the first high school campuses in the LAUSD designed for developmentally disabled students.

The Survey Area weathered the 1971 San Fernando (Sylmar) earthquake fairly well, but its built environment saw significant damage in the 1994 Northridge earthquake. This temblor, which was actually centered directly beneath Reseda, not Northridge, killed 57 people and caused billions of dollars in damage. Many of the Survey Area’s single-family houses were damaged, most commonly seeing chimneys falling and porches cracking or shifting; as a result, chimney replacements are common throughout Reseda and west Van Nuys. Many commercial facades were also damaged, resulting in the modern alteration or outright demolition of some of the CPA’s oldest buildings.

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25 Roderick, 146.
26 Mary Corbin Sies and Christopher Silver, Planning the Twentieth-Century American City (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 104, 193.
Designated Resources

The following map depicts the location of designated resources within the Reseda-West Van Nuys CPA at the time of the survey. These include properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NR) and/or the California Register of Historical Resources (CR), as well as locally designated Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments (HCM) and Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZ). For the most up-to-date information on designated resources refer to ZIMAS.lacity.org and HistoricPlacesLA.org or contact the Los Angeles Department of City Planning’s Office of Historic Resources.
Reseda - West Van Nuys Community Plan Area

Designated Resources

Legend
- City Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM)
- Listed in the National Register; Listed in the California Register (Status Code 1)
- Formally determined eligible for listing in the National Register; Listed in the California Register (Status Code 2)
- City Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
Community Plan Area Survey Methodology

The survey of the Reseda-West Van Nuys CPA was conducted using the methodology established by the OHR for SurveyLA which includes the citywide Historic Context Statement and customized mobile Field Guide Survey System (FiGSS). Concurrent with the survey of the Reseda-West Van Nuys CPA, seven additional community plan areas were also surveyed, all located in the central and north San Fernando Valley.

Fieldwork was conducted in two phases: reconnaissance and documentation. The reconnaissance phase was conducted by the project managers and key staff of all eight CPAs, all of whom meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualifications Standards. This phase involved a detailed and methodical review of each neighborhood, street, and individual property within the Survey Area. It was during this phase that decisions were made about which properties and districts should be documented, and how those properties should be evaluated. During this initial reconnaissance phase, surveyors reviewed pre-loaded data submitted by community members to MyHistoricLA and developed lists of pre-field research tasks that would help inform the field survey. By making these decisions up front and as a team, this methodology ensures a more thoughtful approach to resource identification and evaluation, creates greater consensus among the field survey teams, and produces more consistent survey results across CPAs. This approach also substantially streamlines the next phase of field survey, enabling the field teams to document large numbers of properties quickly and efficiently.

For use in the reconnaissance phase, ARG created Geographic Information Systems (GIS) maps of each neighborhood; these maps were printed for use in the field. A blank map showing only street names, address numbers, and parcel lines was used by surveyors in the field for notes and comments about resources identified during the reconnaissance phase. Another map featured parcels shaded by decade of building construction, which helped to illustrate chronological development patterns and concentrations of resources.

Once the reconnaissance phase was completed, the documentation phase began. During this phase, fieldwork was conducted by teams of two. Properties that were identified during reconnaissance, along with those that had significant associative qualities identified in pre-loaded data in FiGSS, were recorded and evaluated for potential historic, cultural, or architectural significance. Documentation of each property included a digital photograph, recordation of historic features and subsequent alterations, and the reason for a property’s potential historic significance. It was also during the documentation phase that contexts and themes were applied and evaluation status codes were assigned.

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27 For more information about the SurveyLA methodology, see the SurveyLA Field Results Master Report.
Surveyed properties included residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial buildings, and important landscape and infrastructure features like street trees and pedestrian bridges. All fieldwork was conducted from the public right-of-way. Following the completion of fieldwork, all survey data was reviewed in detail by a qualified survey professional to ensure accuracy and consistency throughout the data set.

Survey teams conducted research on individual properties and neighborhoods throughout the field survey process. When specific information was needed in order to complete an evaluation, additional research was conducted. Sources included building permits, historical newspapers and periodicals, Sanborn maps, tract maps, and city directories. This research utilized the collections of the Los Angeles Public Library; Online Archive of California; University of Southern California (USC); University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA); California State University, Northridge (CSUN); the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety; the Los Angeles Assessor’s Office; the Los Angeles Department of Public Works; online repositories including Newspaperarchive.com and Ancestry.com; and the Library of Congress archives. This research helped with the identification of historic tract names and boundaries, names of tract subdividers, dates of subdivision, and original building uses and footprints.
Summary of Findings

The following discussion of Property Types, Contexts, and Themes relates to the resources identified and recorded as eligible for designation.

Summary of Property Types

The Reseda-West Van Nuys CPA is predominantly composed of residential neighborhoods dominated by single-family housing. Although a variety of other property types exist, the patterns of development in this area, primarily post-World War II suburbanization, were conducive to widespread single-family residential development, with associated commercial and institutional development.

Residential Properties

Reflective of the single-family development that characterizes the Survey Area, most of the residential properties identified by the survey are single-family residences representing various periods of development and architectural styles. A handful of intact single-family houses dating from the early 1910s to the late 1920s were recorded as representing the area’s earliest period of residential development. These properties are primarily located adjacent to Reseda’s historic commercial core. Outside of this area, some of the early residential properties are located on unusually large parcels, reflecting Reseda’s history of small-scale farms.

Aside from the early residential properties, the rest of the single-family residential properties are contributors to the one residential historic district identified by the survey: Louise Park Estates. This is a subdivision of Ranch-style single-family residences developed in 1956-1957 by notable Valley developer Julian Weinstock. The survey also identified two residential planning districts, Meadowlark Park and Tampa Country Estates.

One multi-family property was identified by the survey, the Tahitian Village courtyard apartment (1964), which was identified for its architectural merit as an excellent example of the Tiki/Polynesian style. Six mobile home parks dating from the 1940s to the 1960s were identified in the survey area; due to limited access and visibility, they were not evaluated for significance as part of this survey, though they were flagged for further research and analysis.

Commercial Properties

The survey identified a number of intact examples of commercial properties dating from the 1940s through the 1970s. Commercial resources in the Survey Area are primarily located along major commercial thoroughfares, including Sherman Way, Reseda Boulevard, Roscoe
Boulevard, and Saticoy Street. They include signs, restaurants, office buildings, a strip mall, a bank, a service station, a drive-thru market, and a mortuary. Several examples were identified as excellent examples of Mid-Century Modern or Googie architectural styles. A handful of properties were identified as long-term businesses that had been in continuous operation in the Survey Area for decades, including the 94th Aero Squadron restaurant, a Denny’s, and a Firestone.

In addition to individual commercial properties, one commercial planning district was identified, centered on the intersection of Reseda Boulevard and Sherman Way.

**Institutional Properties**

The Survey Area contains a number of institutional property types that serve the local communities. Common eligible institutional properties include churches, Los Angeles Unified School District campuses, and government buildings (from fire stations to Department of Water and Power facilities). Nearly all of those recorded are individually eligible as exemplary of the property type and/or their representative architectural styles. Several World War II-era air raid sirens were also identified.

Among the more prominent institutional properties identified in the survey are the Van Nuys Airport, the former site of Birmingham General Hospital (now containing several school campuses), and Reseda Park.

A number of institutional properties were recorded as non-parcel resources. These include air raid sirens; pedestrian bridges over the channelized Aliso Creek, Bull Creek, and the Los Angeles River; and street trees planted in public rights-of-way as municipal improvements. The CPA’s street trees include two intact segments of the Sherman Way street trees marking the 1910s route of the Pacific Electric line and new automobile thoroughfare.

**Industrial Properties**

The industrial resources of the Survey Area are typically utilitarian buildings and complexes located adjacent to the Van Nuys Airport, railroad lines, and major automobile thoroughfares; they are largely concentrated in the northeastern portion of the CPA. One of the more prominent industrial properties in the CPA is the Anheuser-Busch brewery, which has been in continuous operation at its Roscoe Boulevard location since 1954. Also notable is the Sound City recording studio, an entertainment industry property that was extremely important in the history of rock music.

The survey identified an early vernacular agricultural landscape, the Jue Joe Ranch, as a rare remnant of an early 20th century farming operation in west Van Nuys. The property is also significant for its association with Chinese American owner Jue Joe, who managed to build a
successful farming operation at a time when Chinese-born residents of California were legally blocked from owning property.

**Summary of Contexts and Themes**

A significant percentage of the contexts and themes of the Citywide Historic Context Statement are represented in the Reseda-West Van Nuys CPA. Following are examples of the common contexts and themes used in the survey and representative examples of eligible resources.

For a complete list of all individual resources identified as meeting eligibility standards and criteria for the National Register, California Register, and/or HCM/HPOZ, please refer to Appendix A.

Appendix B contains a complete list of all non-parcel resources identified as meeting eligibility standards and criteria for the National Register, California Register, and/or HCM/HPOZ.

For a complete list of historic districts identified as meeting eligibility standards and criteria for the National Register, California Register, and/or HCM/HPOZ, please refer to Appendix C.
Residential Development and Suburbanization, 1850-1980
Theme: Early Residential Development, 1880-1930
Sub-Theme: Early Single-Family Residential Development, 1880-1930

The Survey Area was sparsely populated prior to the arrival of water from the Los Angeles Aqueduct in 1913 and the annexation of Marian (Reseda) and Van Nuys to Los Angeles in 1915. Its first burst of development, from about 1911 to 1929, established the area as a residential haven but was small compared to the more intense and widespread development following World War II. As a result, intact examples from the earlier era are rare. Remaining early single-family residential development in the Reseda-West Van Nuys CPA includes modest Craftsman cottages and Spanish Colonial Revival residences from the 1910s and 1920s. There is a small concentration of these residences located just southwest of Reseda’s historic commercial core at Reseda Boulevard and Sherman Way. Others are scattered throughout the CPA, some on large parcels that likely once held small family farms.

Address: 18240 W. Erwin St.
Date: 1911

Address: 18602 W. Vanowen St.
Date: 1917

Address: 18916 W. Gault St.
Date: 1923

Address: 7012 N. Baird Ave.
Date: 1927
Residential Development and Suburbanization, 1850-1980
Theme: Postwar Suburbanization, 1938-1975
Sub-Theme: Suburban Planning and Development, 1938-1975

Most of the residential development in the Survey Area took place in the postwar era. One district in Reseda, Louise Park Estates, was found eligible under this Context/Theme. It is also significant for its collection of Ranch-style architecture and its association with developer Julian Weinstock. The district embodies the characteristics of suburban planning of the era. This Context/Theme was also used to evaluate a significant collection of unusually large street trees (evergreens) on Etiwanda Avenue, dating to a 1948 subdivision. Two other notable postwar suburbs were identified: Meadowlark Park and Tampa Country Estates. These districts have been altered over the years and do not appear to be eligible as historic districts due to compromised integrity; however, they may merit special consideration in the planning process.

**District:** Louise Park Estates Residential Historic District
**Period of Significance:** 1956-1957

**District:** Meadowlark Park Residential Planning District
**Period of Development:** 1953-1954

**District:** Tampa Country Estates Residential Planning District
**Period of Development:** 1955-1956

**Name:** Etiwanda Avenue Street Trees (tract feature)
**Date:** 1948
Commercial Development, 1850-1980
Theme: Commercial Identity, 1850-1980

This Context/Theme was used to evaluate a number of commercial properties in the Reseda-West Van Nuys CPA. Properties found eligible under this theme are significant as the locations of long-term businesses and, in most cases, whose buildings represent their commercial identity. These buildings are found eligible if they are the first or long-term location of a business of local, regional or national importance and have distinctive emblematic architectural details and signs that reflect their corporate identities. In the Survey Area, examples included unusual properties such as the 94th Aero Squadron restaurant, designed to look like a French farmhouse during World War I, as well as nationally known businesses like Denny’s and Firestone.

Address: 16320 W. Raymer St.
Name: 94th Aero Squadron Restaurant
Date: 1973

Address: 15540 W. Roscoe Blvd.
Name: Denny’s
Date: 1967

Address: 18051 W. Sherman Way
Name: Firestone
Date: 1955
Commercial Development, 1850-1980
Theme: Commercial Signs, 1906-1980

Business owners in the Survey Area responded to the pattern of wide boulevards and automobile-centered commercial development with prominent signs designed to attract motorists and create identifiable brands for their associated businesses. Eligible commercial signs in the Survey Area are excellent examples of their type and bear the iconic design features of their representative eras. Types represented including free-standing pylon and pole signs (like Arby’s Roast Beef and Ben’s Liquor), and projecting blade signs (Al’s Drive-In Liquor and Lucky 7 Liquor). All of the signs were recorded independently of their associated buildings, which were not included because they are no longer intact and/or are not significant.

Address: 17759 W. Saticoy St.
Name: Ben’s Liquor Sign
Date: 1956

Address: 18444 W. Saticoy St.
Name: Al’s Drive-In Liquor Sign
Date: 1951

Address: 19322 W. Vanowen St.
Name: Lucky 7 Liquor Sign
Date: 1953

Address: 6850 N. Reseda Blvd.
Name: Arby’s Roast Beef Sign
Date: 1969
Commercial Development, 1850-1980
Theme: Neighborhood Commercial Development, 1875-1960
Sub-Theme: Neighborhood Commercial Centers, 1875-1960

One commercial planning district was identified in the Survey Area; the Reseda Commercial Planning District is centered at the intersection of Reseda Boulevard and Sherman Way. This area was subdivided in the late 1910s-early 1920s as the original commercial core of Reseda, but most of its improvements (including paving) were not completed until the late 1920s. The district saw most of its development during the 1940s and 1950s, corresponding with Reseda’s postwar population boom; the Reseda Theater was constructed here in 1948. The district is characterized by its pedestrian scale and orientation. It has experienced many alterations over the years and does not appear to be eligible as a historic district due to compromised integrity; however, it may merit special consideration in the planning process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Reseda Commercial Planning District</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Sherman Way at Reseda Blvd., view west</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Reseda Commercial Planning District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Reseda Blvd. at Sherman Way, view north</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Reseda Commercial Planning District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Reseda Theater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architect</td>
<td>S. Charles Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>1948</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Public and Private Institutional Development, 1850-1980
Sub-Context: Education, 1876-1980
Theme: Public Schools and the LAUSD, 1876-1980
Sub-Theme: Post WWII Schools, 1946-1966

Responding to the need for new public schools in the post-World War II era, city voters passed three bond measures to fund new construction and improve existing facilities. A 1955 bond measure in particular aided the expansion of LAUSD facilities in the San Fernando Valley; 34 new Valley campuses were funded by this measure. These campuses reflect LAUSD school planning and design concepts of the period, like “building for learning,” which placed emphasis on fresh air, natural light, and color. They feature inventive site plans that encourage outdoor circulation. Due to the relatively common nature of these resources, only those examples that are highly intact in terms of buildings, site plan, and landscape were recorded as eligible.

Address: 8140 Vanalden Ave.
Name: Grover Cleveland High School
Date: 1960

Address: 18230 Kittridge St.
Name: Reseda High School
Date: 1955

Address: 18605 Erwin St.
Name: South Reseda Junior High School
Date: 1955

Address: 7839 Amestoy Ave.
Name: Stagg Street Elementary School
Date: 1957
Public and Private Institutional Development, 1850-1980
Sub-Context: Education, 1876-1980
Theme: Educational Development, 1900-1980

This Context/Theme was used to evaluate two Los Angeles Unified School District schools that are significant for their association with innovative developments in education. Among the many schools constructed and improved in the San Fernando Valley during the postwar period were several designed to provide services to specific student populations: students with physical or developmental disabilities. The Sven Lokrantz Special Education Center, designed by notable local architect Sidney Eisenshtat, takes the LAUSD tenet of “building for learning” to a new level; it has a central hub for physical and occupational therapy, with classrooms opening onto outdoor courtyards. The school is also significant for its architectural style, which is Mid-Century Modern with Googie elements. Diane S. Leichman High School was one of the first high school campuses in the LAUSD designed specifically to serve the needs of students with developmental disabilities; prior to 1970, all special needs children stayed in elementary schools until by state law they were graduated at the age of 18.

Address: 19451 W. Wyandotte St.
Name: Sven Lokrantz Special Education Center
Date: 1961
Architect: Sidney Eisenshtat

Address: 19034 Gault St.
Name: Diane S. Leichman High School
Date: 1971
Public and Private Institutional Development, 1850-1980
Sub-Context: Government Infrastructure and Services, 1850-1980
Theme: Municipal Parks, Recreation, and Leisure, 1886-1978

The Survey Area contains notable examples of municipal parks and recreation areas representing two different periods of development. Reseda Park was constructed between 1929 and 1931, funded by improvement bonds approved by Valley residents who saw the need for a public park. At the time it was established, the park was the only City-owned recreation center in the west Valley and one of only three City-owned parks in the entire San Fernando Valley. It saw a second period of development between 1960 and 1963, when another bond measure funded the construction of additional recreational facilities to serve the expanding postwar population. The Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area was developed by the City in cooperation with the US Army Corps of Engineers on land designated for flood control; it was established in 1951 and saw improvements until 1984. Over 2,000 acres in size, the park provides a combination of open space and active recreation facilities including golf courses, baseball fields, and an archery range. The majority of this park is located in the Encino-Tarzana CPA, with only its northwest corner within the Reseda-West Van Nuys CPA.

Name: Reseda Park
Location: Bounded by Reseda Blvd., Kittridge St., Etiwanda Ave., and Victory Blvd.
Period of Significance: 1929-1963

Name: Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area (NW corner)
Location: Southeast of the Victory Blvd.-White Oak Ave. intersection
Period of Significance: 1951-1984
Public and Private Institutional Development, 1850-1980  
Sub-Context: Military Institutions and Activities, 1850-1980  
Theme: Air Raid Sirens and Civil Defense, 1939-1960

Air raid sirens were installed throughout Los Angeles during the World War II and Cold War periods. Three eligible air raid sirens were identified in the Reseda-West Van Nuys CPA; two are examples of the Federal Model 500T “rotating” type and one is a Federal Model 5 “bird house” type.

**Location**: SW corner of Arminta St. and Reseda Blvd.  
**Name**: Air Raid Siren No. 112  
**Date**: circa 1940

**Location**: SW corner of Vanowen St. and Louise Ave.  
**Name**: Air Raid Siren No. 116  
**Date**: circa 1940

**Location**: Just south of 7921 Woodley Ave.  
**Name**: Air Raid Siren No. 206  
**Date**: circa 1940
Industrial Development, 1850-1980
Theme: Agricultural Roots, 1850-1965
Theme: Industrial Giants, 1870-1980

The Survey Area was originally agricultural in nature, but very few remnants of agricultural activities survive. The Jue Joe Ranch is significant as an extremely rare remaining example of an early ranch in the west Van Nuys area of the San Fernando Valley. The ranch is also significant for its association with Jue Joe, a successful Chinese immigrant farmer who prospered at a time when Chinese-born Americans were not legally allowed to own land. In 1918, a white friend assisted Jue by buying 100 acres of land; Jue established his home ranch there and grew potatoes and then asparagus. By 1934, he was referred to as the “Asparagus King,” owning over 700 acres of farmland in Van Nuys and other parts of Southern California. He sold asparagus for $1.50 per pound, an enormous amount of money at the time. The remnants of Jue’s once-much larger property survive as a reminder of the Valley’s historic agricultural industry.

Address: 16600-16602 Vanowen St.
Name: Jue Joe Ranch
Period of Significance: 1919-1947

Address: 16600-16602 Vanowen St.
Name: Jue Joe Ranch outbuildings
Date: 1947
Industrial Development, 1850-1980
Sub-Context: Manufacturing for the Masses, 1883-1989
Theme: Food Processing, 1883-1965

The Survey Area contains a number of industrial properties adjacent to the Van Nuys Airport and a railroad line. Among the largest and most significant is the Anheuser-Busch Brewery, established in Van Nuys in 1954 and in operation here ever since. The property of the brewery and bottling plant expanded over the years, and even contained an amusement park called Busch Gardens between 1966 and 1977 (no longer extant). Anheuser-Busch is significant as an excellent example of a brewery and bottling plant illustrating the industrial development of Van Nuys during the post-World War II period.

Address: 15800 Roscoe Blvd.
Name: Anheuser-Busch Brewery industrial facilities
Period of Significance: 1954-1982

Address: 15800 Roscoe Blvd.
Name: Anheuser-Busch Brewery visitor center
Date: 1954
Architecture and Engineering, 1850-1980
Theme: Post-War Modernism, 1946-1976
Sub-Theme: Mid-Century Modernism, 1945-1970
Sub-Theme: New Formalism, 1955-1976

This Context/Theme was used to evaluate a number of commercial and institutional resources in the Survey Area; these properties reflect the popularity of the Mid-Century Modern style during the post-World War II development boom. Mid-Century Modern churches like St. Catherine of Siena are common, though most are more modest in scale. Commercial resources like the Marquardt Aircraft Company and the Reseda Medical Circle exhibit clean lines and occasional Googie influences, while the two New Formalist buildings of the 7100-7120 Hayvenhurst Avenue office complex exude a grander, more institutional feel.

Address: 18115 W. Sherman Way
Name: St. Catherine of Siena Church
Date: 1950
Architect: George J. Adams

Address: 7100 N. Hayvenhurst Ave.
Name: Airport Center Building
Date: 1972
Architect: David G. Clark

Address: 16625 W. Saticoy St.
Name: Marquardt Aircraft Company
Date: 1959

Address: 7601 N. Canby Ave.
Name: Reseda Medical Circle
Date: 1963
Cultural Landscapes, 1875-1980
Sub-Context: Designed Landscapes, 1875-1980
Theme: Monumental Civic Improvements, 1916-1940

The Survey Area contains two intact segments of historic street trees (Mexican fan palms and deodar cedars) along Sherman Way, planted in 1911 as part of a campaign to publicize the new Valley communities of Owensmouth (Canoga Park), Marian (Reseda), and Van Nuys. Sherman Way held a Pacific Electric Red Car line, a paved street for motorists, and a lane for horses and wagons; it was the main corridor from central Los Angeles to Van Nuys and Reseda. The Sherman Way Street Trees continue west into the Canoga Park CPA and east into the Van Nuys-North Sherman Oaks CPA.

Name: Sherman Way Street Trees
Location: Between Corbin Ave. and Vanalden Ave.
Date: 1911

Name: Sherman Way Street Trees
Location: Between Caldus Ave. and Rubio Ave.
Date: 1911
Other Context, 1850-1980
Theme: Event or Series of Events, 1850-1980

This Context/Theme was used to evaluate a number of properties, including two major institutional districts: the Van Nuys Airport and the former site of Birmingham General Hospital. The airport is significant as the longtime location of aviation facilities in the San Fernando Valley, in continuous operation since 1928 and highly influential in the development of aviation in California. The former site of Birmingham General Hospital is significant as a World War II-era military hospital complex that operated between 1944 and 1950 and continued military uses for another decade beyond that; it now contains multiple LAUSD schools. The hospital was the U.S. military’s largest and most advanced center for the treatment of quadriplegic and paraplegic veterans.

**District:** Van Nuys Airport  
**Period of Significance:** 1928-present

**District:** Birmingham General Hospital  
**Description:** Barracks converted to classrooms  
**Period of Significance:** 1944-1950

**Name:** Lockheed Aircraft hangar (Van Nuys Airport)  
**Address:** 7646 N. Hayvenhurst Ave.  
**Date:** 1943

**District:** Birmingham General Hospital  
**Description:** Gymnasium  
**Period of Significance:** 1944-1950


Selected Bibliography

**Books and other published material:**


**Online repositories of maps, photographs, periodicals, and other materials:**


