

4.0 Context Statement

SECTION 4.1 HISTORY OF ANGELINO HEIGHTS

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Angelino Heights HPOZ was created in 1981 as the first Historic District in the City of Los Angeles. As one of the first suburbs of Los Angeles, Angelino Heights contains a wealth of domestic architecture dating back to the 1890's.

From the time of the Pueblo's founding, the site now contained in the HPOZ was a hilly grassland on the outskirts of "El Pueblo De Nuestra Senora Reina De Los Angeles." The flora native to the terrain was at its best in springtime and in those early years the season's bounty then flourished within the city boundaries. Spring's beauty was evident in the farmland and open fields of the hilly landscape of the area. The area was acquired by William Wallace Stilson and Everett E. Hall from Victor Beaudry and his associates. Bedecked with a rye grass mantle and adorned with an assortment of wild flower blossoms, the hill was most alluring. Mustard, lupine, and poppy abounded. Blossoms of yellow, blue, and gold filled the landscape. Here and there clusters of native anise hyssop added texture to the pastoral scene.

With the Southern Pacific Railroad's completion of the first link to Southern California in 1875, the introduction of another competing overland service in 1885, and the subsequent connection that same year from San Pedro to Los Angeles, the move to this new city was on and a "boom" in bloom. Population would grow from 11,090 in 1880 to 97,382 by 1896. Those of vision anticipated this happening.

The history of Los Angeles would not be complete without its list of visionaries. Angelino Heights, though but a small neighborhood in a large metropolis, has also had its share of visionaries, primarily in the promotion of real estate and the growth of the city. Very much a part of the city's history and topping the list of visionaries for Angelino Heights would be the Beaudry brothers, Prudent and Victor, who actively pursued plans for city expansion and promotion of land development.

Prudent, first as councilman and later as the thirteenth mayor of the city, helped make that expansion feasible by developing the water system that would include twelve miles of iron pipes and also hilltop reservoirs to supply envisioned hillside residential neighborhoods. As organizer of the Temple Street cable line, he paved the way for development along that corridor. With transportation service established to New Cincinnati Street (E.

Edgware Road at Temple), a very special hillside residential community would be in the making.

With extensive land holdings in the locale, Victor was a major influence in the ultimate development of Angelino Heights. In 1886 his promotional efforts led to the sale of his properties to William Stilson and Everett Hall who in turn assumed a plan for subdivision and development.

As dreamers with foresight and business sense, theirs was a commitment entailing investment, risk and daring. They would promote a suburban or country atmosphere along with residential city luxury and convenience. Unfortunately, William Stilson would not live long enough to enjoy the benefit of seeing the project through to full realization. That would be left to others who later joined Everett Hall and the widowed Mary Stilson in the promotion and further residential development of the hill.

Among those who followed to pursue their own realty interests and promotions on the hill were Daniel Innes, James Luckenbach, Horace Russell, Moses Wicks, and Ferdinand Heim.

William W. Stilson and Everett E. Hall, partners and co-developers, on March 19, 1886, filed for the subdivision of the original Angelino Tract. In naming the new streets - Carroll, Marion, Allison, Helen, Wallace, and Everett—they were honoring family members. In naming others, Edgware and Crescent, they had considered the topography as factors. And in renaming streets already in place such as Cummings to Ionia, they were holding on to their Mid-western ties, as Ionia was the hometown of the Hall family for one. Calumet and Kellam, and later the renamed street of Crescent to Kensington, as surnames and locations, gave testimony to their own early American stock and heritage and that of a great number of their fellow Midwesterners then arriving in Los Angeles.

Fittingly, the name Angeleno then in use became Angelino, and “Heights” quickly caught the imagination and interest of the first wave of former Midwesterners who read about the development. Basic to the layout of the tract was the topography of two crescent heights or hills, initially the Edgware loop road and subsequently the Kensington Road “Crescent,” as that street was first called. Prime sites had been selected by the developers for their residences. In 1887, William and Mary Stilson had chosen the first level of the Edgware Road incline at the northwest corner of Carroll Avenue for their graceful and beautiful mansion, and Everett Hall and his wife, Nellie, first took residency also on Edgware Road, just a few hundred feet from the Stilsons, but soon after relocated to the Kellam summit at 917 Waters where they built their new home, more to their needs and

taste on the expansive property which incorporated the northwest corner of Kellam at Waters and extending north on Waters to Edgeware Road at the rim of the loop.

In 1887, one could ride the railroad from the Missouri River for \$1.00. The completion of the railroads linking east with west and the ensuing competition created an influx of people and a subsequent land boom of unparalleled proportion. The temperate climate, pictures of palm trees silhouetted against azure skies, and most of all the promise of California as the “land of opportunity” lured thousands. There was a flood of hysterical buyers pushing prices up four to five hundred percent in one year. New subdivisions were announced by bands and parades, which often included elephants and circus animals. Amid a festival-like atmosphere people were induced to come out to new subdivisions and buy. In deciding on one’s choice of residency, location was of primary importance. Proximity to work, commerce and recreation, along with the popularity or exclusivity of an area, were valid influences considered most effectively by those with the flexibility and means for choice. In the early days, living close to the center of things was an overriding criterion. After, the desire “to get away from it all” dominated selection; whether miles away, as later experienced in this sprawling metropolis, or just atop the next hill, as it was in the beginning.

Bunker Hill first qualified as the best of locations. Soon after, with the explosive growth of the burgeoning city, more of its residents looked outbound to other “heights” for their favored residency. Angelino Heights with its neighboring tracts - appropriately named Ocean View and Crown Hill – represented the first expansion west; Hollywood districts completed the residential ring surrounding the new “downtown.” Beyond that, the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys and the emerging coastal cities awaited the expansion that was to follow with the new electric trolley system of the Pacific Electric Company, acceptance of the automobile on a widespread basis, and the World Wars that brought additional commerce and people.

In 1887, the best location was the next hill just beyond the last, fittingly in Angelino Heights on Carroll or Kellam Avenues. By 1896 even that was destined to be topped by the Kensington Road loop.

Because of the general banking recession of 1888 most construction on the hill ceased, leaving the unique island of Victoriana that remains today. When prosperity returned in the late 1890’s other areas had become more prominent. The second wave of development on the Heights came around 1900-1915 bringing Craftsman and California Bungalow Style homes.

Many of these gracious homes were built and may be seen today on the Kensington crescent. This was an exciting time for the area - - with the Mack Sennett studios on nearby Glendale Boulevard, then named Allesandro, where many chase scenes of the Keystone Cops could be seen being filmed on the hills of Angelino Heights. Photoplayers from the studios lived or owned property in the area at this time, including Mary Pickford and Gloria Swanson.

In the period from 1887-1920 much happened to change the lives of the developers and their hill development. Everett Hall, of Ionia, Michigan, an attorney and speculator, as well as president and manager of the Los Angeles & Pacific Railway, was the promoter. William W. Stilson of Topeka, Kansas, with fortune already made, was the financier, looking for better climate for his own health and a real estate market to increase his holdings. But fate, changing times, and personal disaster intervened to change the course of events for both men and their families. Death for William Stilson at age 41 precipitated a change in partnerships and subsequent sales and purchases from one to another. The economic bust did not help matters. It would be the widowed Mrs. Stilson and her eldest son, Fielding who would carry on with the expansion and further development of the tract, primarily on the Kensington Road loop.

Angelino Heights today gives evidence to its unique development if one takes time to look and observe. Angelino Heights is a glimpse into the past, a contrast to the explosive development of the city from pueblo to metropolis. It is a collection of many yesterdays and a hope for a better tomorrow for the central city and as a cultural resource for the community, city and visitors from other places. There, within the confines of an area bordered by Echo Park to the west, the Hollywood Freeway to the south, and Sunset Boulevard on the north, it lies in seclusion.

William Fletcher, a noted photographer of his day and resident of Angelino Heights, in his 1897 photograph of the neighborhood captured the beauty, prestige, and self-sufficiency of the community—a very special and picturesque place to live. It remained so through the early 1920's when it was caught up in a series of transitions reflecting the city's growth and change in subsequent waves of migration from the eastern seaboard and of other ethnic stocks. Angelino Heights then took on a different character with the influx of middle class merchants and entrepreneurs of old world, European, and Near Eastern heritage. One could hop on the electric trolley and ride down to the foot of the hill to purchase the best of pastries and other delicacies along Temple Street, a vibrant city artery.

Over the years that followed, because of its relatively small size, hill side

location, city growth to distant suburbs, the emerging dominance of neighboring districts and new traffic arteries (primarily the Hollywood Freeway), the area sank into obscurity, unrecognized by the great majority of Angelenos. Not so, of course, for long time residents who weathered the trials of time and persisted in their residency, nor those who on their own discovered the area in search of large homes, sturdy and graceful even though showing signs of age, or those who preferred living close to the center of cities as in other areas of the world, regardless of their economic means or social status.

As early as the 1930's and 40's a few newcomers sought out the hill to make it the site of their residency; this was the beginning of a preservation effort at a time when the old – especially Victoriana—was out of fashion and rejected for the modern or latest **in design and neighborhood development.**

But it was not until after WWII and the redevelopment that followed, climaxed by the demolition of Bunker Hill, that a citywide interest evolved to recognize the beauty and the architectural, historical, and cultural significance of structures from Los Angeles' past. At that point preservationists emerged to support city endeavors in the protection of structures from demolition and systematic eradication of our physical ties to the past. Some persistent persons bought properties on Carroll Avenue and began the new wave of preservation and restoration now evidenced by the activity and publicity surrounding this now well-known street. In 1981, Angelino Heights became the city's first Historic Preservation Overlay Zone, protecting it from future demolition and steering it toward restoration. In summary, Angelino Heights, with its rich ethnic and architectural diversity, reflects the growth of the city. These beautiful older homes stand as historic citadels reflecting our cultural heritage. They tell us where we come from; by preserving them, we give meaning to the city's dynamic growth and its future.

SECTION 4.2 ANGELINO HEIGHTS PERIODS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Angelino Heights has three periods of significance, which correspond with the three building booms mentioned in the history above. They are 19th Century - High Victorian, Turn of the Century, and Eclectic Revival Styles.

19th Century Styles - High Victorian (circa 1886-1890)

- Queen Anne Style
- Eastlake Stick
- Italiante/Folk Victorian

Turn of the Century (circa 1900-1910)

- Victorian Cottage Style
- Craftsman Style
- California Bungalow Style
- Spanish Colonial Revival

Eclectic Revival Styles (circa 1920-1925)

- Classical Box/Foresquare
- Dutch Colonial Revival
- Mission Revival
- Tudor