

5.0 Context Statement

The Context Statement is part of the Lincoln Heights Historic Resources Survey, certified by the Cultural Heritage Commission January 7, 2004. The text below has been excerpted from the Context Statement in the Historic Resources Survey.

5.1 HISTORY OF THE LINCOLN HEIGHTS HPOZ AREA

Because of its diverse development history, the Lincoln Heights HPOZ Survey Area is notable for its representation of several phases of the architectural evolution of Los Angeles. The majority of buildings are the original structures from the development of this part of Los Angeles, which largely occurred between 1875 and 1929. The *Contributing* buildings retain their historic design and features depicting the array of Victorian, Transitional Arts & Crafts, Craftsman, and period revival styles common during these years. What makes Lincoln Heights an exceptional neighborhood in the City of Los Angeles is its relative age. It was subdivided in 1873, and was really Los Angeles' first residential suburb. Boyle Heights is perhaps the only other neighborhood in Los Angeles that still contains such a density of pre-1886 boom housing.

History of Development of the Planning Area

The Lincoln Heights area, known as East Los Angeles until the construction of Lincoln High School in 1913, was first subdivided in 1873 by Hancock M. Johnston, his uncle Dr. John Strolher Griffin, and former state governor John Gates Downey. Well developed by the end of the 1880's, it was the first "bedroom of the Pueblo." The Lincoln Heights neighborhood is commonly considered the city's first suburban community. Part of the original 1781 four-square leagues granted to the Pueblo de Los Angeles, Lincoln Heights was subdivided originally with the name of "East Los Angeles." Prompted in part by the construction of the Southern Pacific Railroad during the early and mid 1870s, development of Lincoln Heights predated the thousands of new subdivisions and the dramatic surge in population triggered by the well-known real estate boom of the 1880s period. Lincoln Height's first subdivision, Griffin's Reserved 30-Acre Tract, was surveyed and subdivided in December 1873. It was co-joined as part of the later East Los Angeles Tract (M.R. 3-199-195), which gave the community its first name. These subdivisions were established at the request of Dr. John S. Griffin, John G. Downey, and Hancock M. Johnson (nee Johnston) on a 2,000-acre property purchased by Griffin from the city in 1863 at 50 cents per acre. To insure its success in spite of the remote location, Griffin, William H. Workman, and Downey bore the substantial cost of installing water

pipes to provide water for the community. In 1876, Griffin and Downey also established one of the city's first streetcar lines to connect the East Los Angeles subdivision with downtown Los Angeles, constructing a road linking North Broadway (Downey Avenue originally) to the Southern Pacific Railroad Depot. After an intensive and sustained real estate advertising effort the community's first Euro-American settlers arrived during the mid-1870s.

The intention seems to have been to create a residential community of comfortable working class and middle-income persons—an intention revealed in the house lot sizes shown on the original subdivision plat maps as well as a sampling of the occupations of some of the early residents. The community that Griffin and Johnston, upper middle-class members of the Los Angeles social elite, chose to reside in was Lincoln Heights, a fact that probably enhanced the appeal for the Los Angeles elite, as the community, at first, was settled by middle and upper middle class people. They settled toward the geographical center of present-day Lincoln Heights along Pasadena Avenue, and Workman, Sichel, Griffin and Johnson Avenues, straddling N. Broadway (Downey Avenue originally).

The early development was described by Leslie Heumann in "Lincoln Heights: Honoring the Past to Ensure a Better Future," as follows:

Griffin, a physician, real estate speculator, rancher, and civic activist, had purchased 2,000 acres of land on the east side of the river from the city in 1863 at 50 cents per acre. After securing a water supply for the land, both Griffin and Johnston built homes on their property, which was largely given over to agricultural uses. In 1874, the trio offered 35 acres of 65-by-100 foot lots at costs ranging from \$100 to \$150, advertising "Splendid Homesteads for All!" The new subdivision, considered to be "out in the country" by residents on the west side of the river, was linked to the older community via a wooden bridge which was wont to wash away during winter floods. A horse-drawn streetcar enabled residents to commute to employment across the river; later replaced by a line of the interurban electric railway.

Initially settled by the middle and upper middle classes, Lincoln Heights soon became attractive to immigrants and blue-collar workers, who were able to find housing close to the industries which were established in the area. In 1878 a public hospital was founded on Griffin's land, opening its doors to 47 patients and evolving over the past 120 years into

today's Los Angeles County/USC Medical Center. The Southern Pacific Railroad, already the single largest employer in the city by 1900, built its shops in the southeast section of Lincoln Heights in 1902. Other industries which took advantage of the proximity to the railroad and the relatively inexpensive cost of land included wineries, breweries, bakeries, a fireworks company, a rock and gravel plant, and a fertilizer manufacturer. In 1914, Lincoln Heights became a site of early filmmaking when the Selig Polyscope Company was established in the area.¹

Street Name Origins and Changes

Many of the street names in Lincoln Heights were derived from the names of the original three developers of the tract named East Los Angeles in 1873. Hancock Street and Johnston Street were derived from the name of Hancock M. Johnston; Griffin Avenue from Dr. John Strolher Griffin, Gates Street and Downey Avenue [North Broadway after 1913] from former state governor John Gates Downey. Many of the original names of the streets in Lincoln Heights have changed. To complicate matters further, house numbers on the north-south streets were originally referenced by Downey Avenue (North Broadway) instead of the Avenues as they are now. For example, the original address of what is *now 2442 Eastlake Avenue* was *142 North Eastlake Avenue*. The east-west "Avenue" series nomenclature began in 1897, which post-dates the construction of many homes in Lincoln Heights.

Identification of Historical Themes and Associative Property Types

To assist in the identification and evaluation of significant historic resources, the above synopsis must be complimented by a discussion of economic residential, and cultural patterns and their associative property types.

Economic Development

The economic development of Northeast Los Angeles from the earliest days of the pueblo to 1950 was heavily dependent on evolving transportation and water distribution systems, as well as on the predominant industries and local commercial properties within each individual community. The first major roads connected the pueblo to

the two outlying missions: one at San Gabriel to the east and one at San Fernando to the northwest. Mission Road (portions of which are known as Valley Boulevard) ran east between Lincoln Heights and Boyle Heights to San Gabriel. San Fernando Road ran north along the Los Angeles River to San Fernando. These roads were later chosen as the routes of the major railroads: the Southern Pacific (1876) along San Fernando Road, and the Santa Fe (1885-7) along Valley Boulevard. As the outlying communities developed, roads connected them to downtown Los Angeles and to surrounding cities, such as the major artery of Pasadena Avenue/Figueroa Street, which was the primary route between Los Angeles and Pasadena until the Arroyo Seco Parkway was constructed in 1940.

Transportation

In Northeast Los Angeles, major roads and road improvements not only connected individual communities, but they spurred residential and commercial development, contributing to the entire area's economic development local streetcars spurred residential development throughout Northeast Los Angeles. Until the introduction of the Los Angeles Railway and Pacific Electric system, horse drawn streetcars connected the center city with the Boyle Heights and Lincoln Heights areas. Individual businessmen owned the street-railway franchises and it was they who eventually upgraded their horse car lines to cable roads. For example, I.W. Hellman, a prominent Jewish businessman in the city, built the Main Street line between 1877 and 1883. In 1885 he extended his line to the Lincoln Heights area (despite the opposition of the Southern Pacific Company which already served that area) and upgraded the line from horse car to a double track cable road in 1887. Hellman and his partners eventually joined with railroad magnate H.E. Huntington to establish the Pacific Electric Railway Company in 1891. The Los Angeles Railway and the Pacific Electric systems eventually spread to every corner of the Planning Area, dramatically increasing property values as they decreased travel time, making it feasible for downtown workers to commute from outlying communities and subdivisions to the center city. The Los Angeles Railway (the "yellow cars") owned by railroad magnate H.E. Huntington and associates, came to include lines that ran northeast on Broadway and Main Street in Lincoln Heights.

Water Distribution

Water was first supplied to the City of Los Angeles from the Los Angeles River through a series of "zanjas," or ditches, which were extended to Lincoln Heights and Boyle Heights after 1876 largely

through the efforts of William H. Workman. At the same time, a tunnel was built to tap the water from springs in the Elysian hills. The Zanja Madre, or main artery of this system, was first dammed near what is now Elysian Park. During the same period, reservoirs were established in Lincoln Heights, Echo Park, and Silver Lake. Park lakes, including those in Echo Park, Lincoln Park, and Hollenbeck Park, were created when the surrounding streets were laid out and served to contain runoff in times of heavy rainfall. These lakes and the reservoirs which remain in use (Silver Lake, Ivanhoe Reservoir, Elysian Reservoir, and the Highland or Garvanza Reservoir in Highland Park) are the primary resource type of the Northeast Los Angeles' water distribution system. Important visual features of the communities they serve, the reservoirs were typically constructed of concrete. The park lakes became integral to the social and recreational life of the communities that surrounded them, and were frequently enhanced by bridges, boathouses, and other structures.

Other resources related to water distribution included artesian wells at the site of the Sparkletts Company and pumping stations such as the small Mission Revival style box that still stands at the base of Mount Washington. Diminutive yet stylistically sophisticated, the station is a significant precursor of the later Art Deco extravagances built by the Department of Water and Power throughout Northeast Los Angeles. The 1937 Department of Water and Power building in Lincoln Heights by S. Charles Lee is a remarkable example, with its slightly convex glass front and semi-circular marquee.

Industries

Distilleries, breweries, and wineries were located in Lincoln Heights. The San Antonio winery is still in operation today, just north of downtown, in Lincoln Heights. The Brewery Art Colony is also located in Lincoln Heights and sits on 18 acres of land. Twenty-one former warehouses — with an old Edison power plant chimney dating to 1903 — house work studios, living lofts, and galleries. One of the largest live-and-work artists' colony on the West Coast, there are hundreds of studios and residents living there. Large warehouses of wood, brick, or metal were located near the freight railroad lines and rail spurs ran behind each block. One such brick industrial building is the 1904 Edison Electric Steam Power Plant designed by John Parkinson that still stands on Avenue 21 in Lincoln Heights. In Lincoln Heights, there was also a fireworks company, a rock and gravel plant, and a fertilizer manufacturer. Quarrying activities were allowed in Lincoln Heights, but not in Highland Park. The Batchelder-Wilson

tile manufacturing company on Artesian Street near Avenue 26 produced some of Southern California's finest architectural tiles in a series of wood workrooms and a brick office and kiln. The Jenny Lind Bakery was one of many early bakeries in Lincoln Heights, and the area became known as the "bread basket of Los Angeles."

Retail and Commercial Facilities

A business district grew up on Downey Avenue, (now North Broadway) within walking distance of nearby residential streets. Most of the enterprises were oriented to local residents, but at least one would contain the seeds of a far-reaching commercial empire: the grocery shop of Sontag and Sam Selig on Downey Avenue was the grandparent of the Safeway stores. Development along Downey, initially characterized by wood-framed buildings, was gradually replaced during the years before and after the turn of the twentieth century by more imposing brick edifices. The domed Federal Bank Building, located at the corner of Avenue 22 and constructed in 1919, represents a high point of this transformation. In 1913, Downey Avenue was officially renamed North Broadway on the occasion of the opening of the new cement Buena Vista Bridge.²

Residential Development

Single-Family Homes

Single-family homes built prior to the turn of the century, from the farmhouses of Eagle Rock to the suburban homes of city businessmen in Angelino Heights, Lincoln Heights, and Boyle Heights, were derived from Victorian styles. They were wood frame structures, vertical in massing, and typically had steep gable roofs, dormers, and wide ornamented porches. Turrets, balconies, and complex roof systems were present in the homes of wealthy citizens, while the decoration of one story homes occupied by families of more modest means were less detailed. The great variety of Victorian houses, their profusion of architectural detail, their age, and their influence on the residential and aesthetic development of Los Angeles, all contribute to the significance of surviving examples.

Craftsman style houses began to appear in Northeast Los Angeles after the turn of the century. Derived from the Arts and Crafts movement in California, architects and contractor-builders of the Craftsman style produced bungalows and mid-size middle class homes. Typically wood frame, sheathed in clapboard or shingles,

these homes made extensive use of local Arroyo stone or brick for garden walls, foundations, chimneys, and porch supports. Low pitched gable roofs, projecting rafters, and numerous porches defined the style.

Other architectural styles that predominated in the twentieth century single family residential subdivisions included the Classical or Colonial Revival style bungalows, and the Mediterranean or Spanish Colonial Revival style homes which still stand in many neighborhoods throughout Northeast Los Angeles. Set back from the street, low in scale, the Classical or Colonial Revival style houses were detailed with classical columns and pediments. The Spanish Colonial Revival houses were ornamented with tile roofs and shutters. These small structures, in either style, expressed the desire for home ownership and growth of community through residential development.

The vast majority of residences were not architect-designed. Instead, they were vernacular buildings constructed by a builder/contractor or the homeowner. Typically one story, wood frame, either clapboard or (later) stucco sheathed, with hipped or gable roofs, front porches and rear additions, these small houses were the most common structures on maps from 1887 through 1921. Still possessing some individuality, these houses were the homes of generations of working and middle class citizens. Single surviving examples that have not been significantly altered are rare and the industrial zones of Lincoln Heights and Boyle Heights contain some of the best examples. Intact clusters of structures that reveal the character of early working class neighborhoods may also survive.

Multi-Family Residential Structures

Residential development in Northeast Los Angeles included not only single-family homes, but also multi-family resource types such as duplexes, four-flats, apartment buildings, and bungalow courts. Executed in the same styles and materials as single-family houses, these structures in most cases served the working class population of each community, including new immigrants and transient workers. The Craftsman style apartment buildings which face Lincoln Park on Mission Road in Lincoln Heights are examples of this type, and exhibit the same stylistic characteristics and materials of single family residential structures, including the low pitched roofs and wood clapboards reminiscent of much of the community's housing stock. Certain multi-family housing types such as bungalow courts were also remarkable for their climatic adaptation and their perpetuation of the cultural value represented by single, individual structures.

These housing types are significant because they fulfilled the housing needs of countless working class families and recent immigrants to Los Angeles. The construction of public housing projects in Boyle Heights and Lincoln Heights immediately prior to and following World War II resulted in a Modernist style of multi-family housing type. Examples such as Aliso Village of 1941-53 in Boyle Heights were often well landscaped but poorly integrated into the surrounding community.

Development of Civic, Religious, Cultural, and Social Institutions

Civic Institutions and Public Facilities

Civic institutions were often originally housed in buildings not specifically designed for their use. Post offices were opened in Garvanza in 1886 and Highland Park in 1892. Like those in many other communities, the 1912 Eagle Rock post office was first housed in the local drug store. In 1916, the Eagle Rock's first city hall was housed in a wood frame commercial building on Eagle Rock Boulevard (then called Central Avenue). When each community was able to erect the permanent facilities designed for civic institutions, most were small, classically styled buildings that often included several departments. The Eagle Rock City Hall, for example, originally included the fire and police departments. Ironically constructed in 1911 just prior to Eagle Rock's annexation to the City of Los Angeles, it was Spanish Colonial Revival in style, with classical columns flanking the center doorway. The Northeast Police Station in Highland Park was built in a Classical Revival style with a brick facade and lent an imposing presence to the section of York Boulevard that it occupied. The Boyle Heights police station appears on a 1921 map as a two story brick building on East First Street, located in the commercial center of the area.

The Lincoln Heights Fire Station No. 1, located at 2230 Pasadena Ave. was built in 1940, and is a sterling example of Streamline Moderne architecture. The Lincoln Heights jail is located at 401-449 N. Avenue 19. The Art Deco portion of the jail was built in 1931 by the Los Angeles City Construction department. The Bauhaus Modern addition was built in 1949, designed by Kaufman and Stanton. These were equally powerful civic symbols, designed in the important architectural styles of their ages.

The Lincoln Heights Library, located at 2530 Workman Street, was constructed in 1916 and designed by Hibbard & Cody, it is a two-

story Italian Renaissance building of brick and stucco. It is said to be one of the City's most visually interesting neighborhood public buildings and one of the few remaining Carnegie libraries in the area.

Founded in 1878, Los Angeles County + USC Medical Center is the primary teaching facility of the Keck School of Medicine, which has been affiliated with the Medical Center since 1885.

School Buildings

School buildings also conveyed the importance of education to the communities of Northeast Los Angeles and evolved in much the same way as other civic buildings. The first schoolhouses were simple wood frame structures like the Farmdale Schoolhouse that survives from a once rural school district in the El Sereno area. Opened prior to 1889, the building was later moved one block to the grounds of the junior high school. The local school was often the center of community activity. Lincoln High School was built in 1913, and gave its name to the community around it. The school continued to expand in the next decades. The landscaped campus of classically derived three story masonry buildings formed an acropolis, visible from much of the surrounding community.

Religious Institutions

Religious institutions in Northeast Los Angeles were an integral part of each community's early social functions, beginning, like early civic and governmental institutions, in buildings they shared with other uses. Most residential neighborhoods included at least one church building and sometimes several. Carpenter Gothic, Spanish Colonial Revival and Mission Revival were the predominant styles of church buildings in the area, though Colonial Revival and Craftsman institutions were also constructed. The preference for revival styles associated with California's history was nowhere more apparent than in church architecture. This preference derived from the popular romanticizing of the colonial period and the mission system. Most easily transferred from the missions to the religious institutions that followed them because of similarities in architectural form and function, the idioms of Mission and Spanish Colonial architecture were used throughout Northeast Los Angeles.

The extraordinary number of religious buildings in each community, particularly in the Highland Park and Lincoln Heights areas, was a result of the religious and cultural diversity of its residents. Christian denominations represented included Catholics, Methodists,

Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Lutherans, and various evangelical sects. Today, cultural diversity is expanding with the influx of new residents from Asian and Southeast Asian countries who are building new religious institutions such as Buddhist Temples.

Social and Cultural Institutions

If schools, libraries, and religious institutions were the first buildings that served as social centers in the communities of Northeast Los Angeles, they were quickly followed by clubs and fraternal organizations. Fraternal organizations such as the Masons were among the first such groups; they were subsequently joined by a variety of others. Bold and eclectically or eccentrically styled, most club buildings provided recognizable symbols of community service and cooperation.

The Los Angeles Boys & Girls Club was founded by a group of Lincoln Heights community activists in 1944 and was originally named the Los Angeles Times Boys Club. In 1950, The Times Charities, under the direction of Philip Chandler, dedicated the 33,000 square-foot facility.

Libraries

Local libraries were primarily established as branches of the Los Angeles library, although some were independent institutions for a short period. The Lincoln Heights branch library is an extraordinary surviving example of this type of classically influenced civic architecture: magnificently sited towards a corner, it is semi-circular in plan and Italian Renaissance Revival in style, and conveys both the dignity and importance of education and literacy to the community. The Lincoln Heights library was an important cultural center for ethnic populations and housed collections that included many different languages. "Library service in the Lincoln Heights community began at the turn of the century. In 1900, a delivery station at Daly Street and Pasadena Avenue was established by the Los Angeles Public Library, following a successful petition by residents who wanted a facility. The small book station was so successful that three years later another branch was opened at 2609 East Main Street. As library use continued to grow, the two facilities merged and combined with another smaller branch to become the North East Branch Library. In 1916, a new Italian renaissance style building was built at the corner of Workman Street and Avenue 26 for the North East Branch Library. This was one of the Carnegie Libraries, developed with funds provided by the philanthropic East Coast millionaire. Modeled after the Villa Papa Guilia in Rome, the distinctive structure featured an expansive main floor and a

basement auditorium. The library quickly became integral to the life of the community. By November 1919, the surrounding district had assumed the name of Lincoln Heights and the library therefore became the Lincoln Heights Branch. In 1975, a community vote renamed the facility "Biblioteca del Pueblo de Lincoln Heights."³

Ethnic Diversity

The communities of Northeast Los Angeles were some of the first points of entry for the many immigrant groups that came to Southern California. Boyle Heights and Lincoln Heights in particular, were home to wave after wave of immigrants arriving in either the country or the region for the first time. In 1880 Boyle Heights was a fashionable residential district for downtown businessmen, but as early as 1908 "it began to be taken over by immigrant groups." Irish, Russian, Mexican, German, and Japanese residents coexisted. By the early 1930's the majority of Los Angeles' 70,000 Jews lived in Boyle Heights. Middle class Mexican-Americans settled there slightly later, and in the years immediately following World War II, when the entire region experienced phenomenal growth, the influx of minority groups intensified.

In addition to this increasing presence of ethnic and national groups in residential neighborhoods of Northeast Los Angeles, much of the area's physical development was the direct achievement of a labor force consisting of racial and ethnic minorities. Chinese laborers were responsible for the construction of railroads and worked on the Gates Strawberry Ranch in Eagle Rock. Some Chinese trained to become officers in the Chinese Revolutionary Army of 1910 while they resided in the area. As early as 1887, when the town of Garvanza included no more than thirty buildings, maps indicated a Chinese laundry and dwelling units on the outskirts of town. Chinese immigrants also operated small truck farms along the Arroyo Seco in Highland Park. There were twenty-nine Japanese laborers in Eagle Rock as early as 1906, and Japanese "tenements," or apartments were identified on maps of the 1920's. The numbers of Mexican-American laborers continued to grow from the earliest period of settlement when a large majority of Mexican immigrants settled near Chinatown, just across the river from Lincoln Heights in the adjacent community plan area. Resource types associated with the immigration patterns and the ethnic and minority groups of Northeast Los Angeles are difficult to define simply because most conventional research materials relate to home ownership rather than tenancy. Some housing stock used by these groups may survive; examples can be traced through early maps and directories and will be significant to an understanding of the ethnic groups that shared the neighborhoods and communities of Northeast

Los Angeles. Religious, social service, and recreational institutions that remain may have significance to segments of the population no longer represented within the surrounding communities. In Boyle Heights, Breed Street Schul and the original wood frame synagogue building behind it, for example, were the focuses of a thriving Jewish community for decades. Buildings like the Inglesia Cristiana church, which was once a synagogue, and the First Street Hotel and Bath House served the same community. Lincoln Hospital began with the Deutscher Hospital Verein (German Hospital Society), which provided medical care to German immigrants in Boyle Heights. The Japanese Sisters Home for Children was located on South Boyle Avenue near Fourth Street; the Hebrew Home for the Old was also on South Boyle, near First Street; the Swedish Pacific Home for the Aged was in Glassell Park. All are examples of social service institutions with ties to specific ethnic or religious groups.

In-depth analysis of some of the resource types already discussed may also reveal special ties to immigrant, ethnic, and minority groups. There was a Chinese section at the east end of Evergreen Cemetery, for example. The lawns and picnic facilities of Arroyo Seco Park hosted Japanese groups as large as 5,000 within the first ten years of its birth. Other examples may be discovered as specific historic, architectural, and cultural, resources are identified, as their histories are researched, and as their contributions to the multi-faceted development of Northeast Los Angeles communities are understood.

Footnotes

¹ This excerpt is from a 1999 publication by the Los Angeles Conservancy entitled "Lincoln Heights: Honoring the Past to Ensure a Better Future," which was prepared by the Lincoln Heights Neighborhood and Preservation Association and written by Leslie Heumann.

² This excerpt is from a 1999 publication by the Los Angeles Conservancy entitled "Lincoln Heights: Honoring the Past to Ensure a Better Future," which was prepared by the Lincoln Heights Neighborhood and Preservation Association and written by Leslie Heumann.

³ "A Brief History of the Lincoln Heights Branch Library.", Los Angeles Public Library website, http://www.lapl.org/branches/02_hist.html.

5.2 LINCOLN HEIGHTS PERIODS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Because of its diverse development history, the Lincoln Heights HPOZ Survey Area is notable for its representation of several phases of the architectural evolution of Los Angeles. The majority of buildings are the original structures from the development of this part of Los Angeles, which largely occurred between 1875 and 1929. Lincoln Heights has four periods of significance. They are the 19th Century Styles, Turn of the Century Styles, Eclectic Revival Styles, and Early Modern Styles.

19TH Century Styles (1860 – 1910)

Folk Victorian
Queen Anne

Turn of the Century Styles (1890 – 1920)

American Colonial Revival
American Foursquare
Craftsman Bungalow
Hipped and Pitched Roof Cottages
Mission Revival

Eclectic Revival Styles (1920- 1940)

Dutch Colonial Revival
English and Tudor Revival
French Eclectic
Monterey Revival
Mediterranean Revival
Spanish Colonial Revival

Early Modern Styles (1900- 1945)

Art Deco / Moderne