SurveyLA
Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey

Supplemental Historic Resources Survey Report
Industrial Zone Properties in the Palms–Mar Vista–Del Rey Community Plan Area



Prepared for:

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Department of City Planning
Office of Historic Resources

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Project Overview

This supplemental historic resources survey report ("Supplemental Survey Report") summarizes additional field work conducted for SurveyLA in the industrially-zoned areas of the Palms-Mar Vista-Del Rey Community Plan Area (CPA).[1] This survey report is to be used in conjunction with the main survey report and associated appendices for this CPA, published in July 2012.[2] All survey work was conducted according to SurveyLA methodology as discussed in the Palms-Mar Vista-Del Rey main survey report.

Project Team

Additional survey work in the Palms-Mar Vista-Del Rey CPA was conducted by Historic Resources Group. Personnel included Kari Michele Fowler, Senior Preservation Planner; Christine Lazzaretto, Principal; Heather Goers, Architectural Historian; and Robby Aranguren, Planning Associate. Additional assistance was provided by intern Scott Watson. Kari Fowler served as the project manager.

Survey Area

Description of Industrial Zone Areas

The survey area ("Survey Area") includes approximate 512 industrially-zoned parcels in the Palms-Mar Vista-Del Rey CPA. Of these, approximately 407 parcels were surveyed by SurveyLA. SurveyLA generally does not include properties constructed after 1980, or resources that have been designated under Federal, state, or local programs. The map below illustrates the boundaries of the CPA and the location of industrially-zoned parcels.

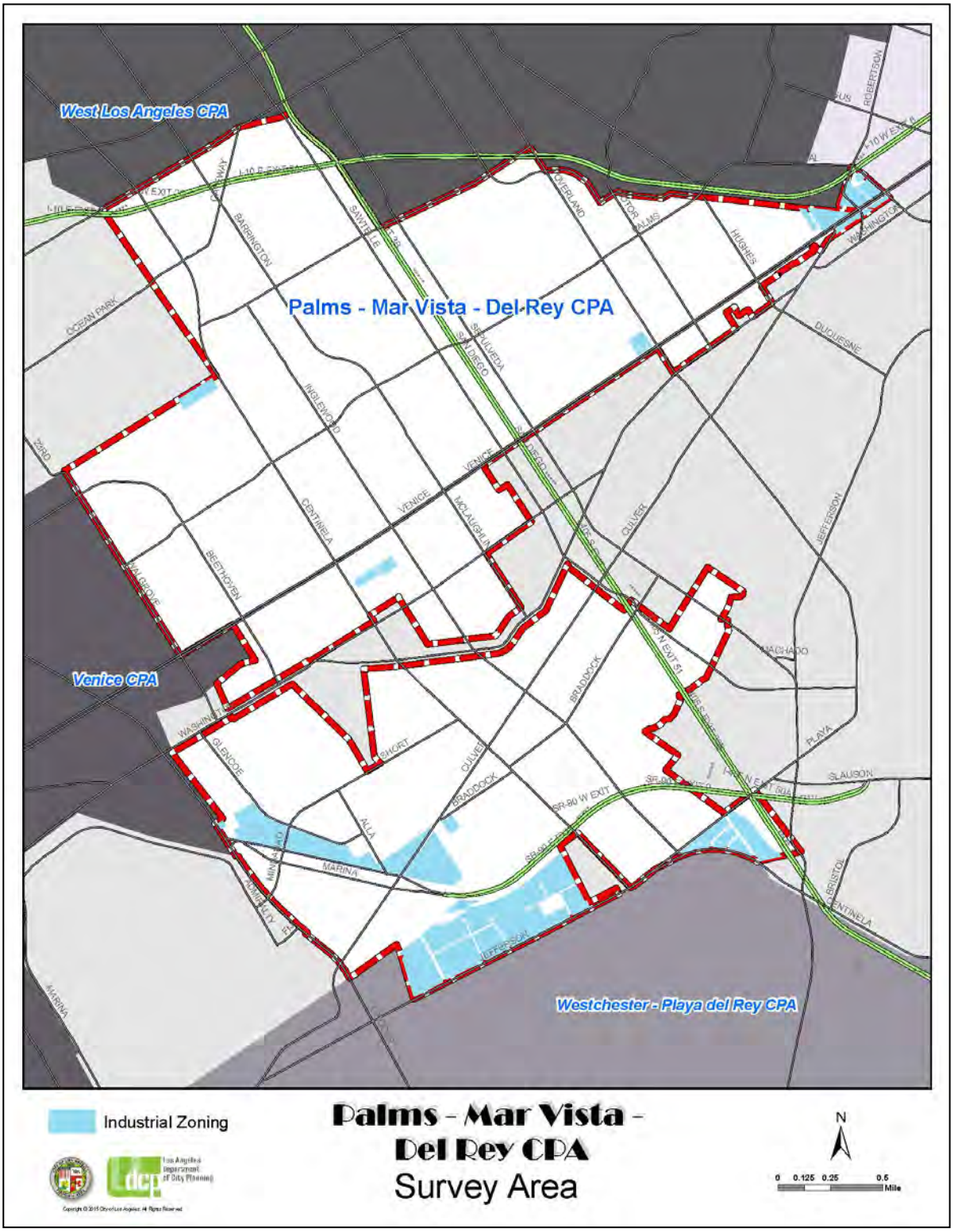
The Survey Area includes parcels within the CPA that were zoned industrial at the time of the survey. It includes industrial property types, but also may include other uses and associated property types such as residential, commercial, and institutional.

Industrial properties are concentrated primarily in the southwest corner of the CPA, with smaller concentrations and individual properties found in the northwest and

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

[2] The main survey report and all appendices for the Palms-Mar Vista-Del Rey CPA can be found at http://preservation.lacity.org/surveyla-findings-and-reports.

Survey Area Map with Industrially-Zoned Parcels.



northeast. With the exception of several small concentrations of properties occurring adjacent to or near railway lines, most industrial properties in the CPA are located along major commercial corridors and freeways such as Jefferson Boulevard, Culver Boulevard, the Marina (90) Freeway, and the San Diego (405) Freeway.

Industrial Zone Areas Development History

Industrial development within the Palms-Mar Vista-Del Rey CPA was largely driven by regional shifts in the economy in the first decades of the 20th century. Aviation was a growing industry in Los Angeles as early as the 1910s, as agricultural lands on the city's Westside gave way first to landing strips and small airports, and later to municipal airports and aircraft production plants. By 1929, Los Angeles County had 55 airports and landing fields, 27 accredited aviation schools, and several major airplane factories, many of which were concentrated on the Westside.[3] Most notable among these were Clover Field and Mines Field. Clover Field was the home of the Douglas Aircraft Company from the early 1920s through the 1950s, and would later become the Santa Monica Airport.[4] In 1930, Mines Field opened as the City of Los Angeles' municipal airport, which would later become Los Angeles International Airport (LAX).[5]

By the 1930s, the aviation industry was well-established in the area, which in turn spurred the development of various aviation-related industrial support services. While most of these early ventures were short-lived and did not operate past the 1930s, Los Angeles had established itself and the center of West Coast aviation manufacturing and travel.

Other industries also expanded into the area during the 1920s and 1930s. With the discovery of oil in nearby Baldwin Hills in 1924, then in Playa Del Rey and Venice in 1932, the petroleum industry became instrumental in the development of the CPA. Over time, additional manufacturing plants which processed raw materials such as sheet metal, lumber, and plastics opened in the area to serve the needs of the aviation, petroleum, and other industries.

The synergistic relationship between the manufacturing facilities and the nearby airports – the Los Angeles International Airport in particular – allowed the aviation industry to flourish throughout the 1940s and 1950s. The proliferation of production plants located so close to a central distribution hub like LAX allowed Los Angeles to become the nexus of the nation's wartime aircraft manufacturing as well as research and development. In 1940, Howard Hughes established his airport and aircraft plant in the Ballona wetlands of present-day Playa Del Rey. In 1945, the U.S. Army Air Forces contracted with Douglas Aircraft Company to create Project RAND, combining military planning with technology research and development. RAND was soon incorporated as a

[3] Kevin Starr, *Embattled Dreams* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 133.
[4] The Santa Monica Airport is located north of the CPA.
[5] The Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) is located south, and outside of, the CPA. LAX is its own Community Plan Area and not being surveyed for SurveyLA.

separate nonprofit but would remain headquartered in Santa Monica, eventually growing to become an established presence in the area.

One particular example of development which emerged during this period is the Quonset hut, of which there are several extant examples in the industrial areas of the Mar Vista and Del Rey. The origins of the Quonset hut can be traced across the Atlantic and back to World War I, when the British Army began to experiment with manufacturing prefabricated structures for use during wartime campaigns. In 1916, Major Peter Norman Nissen of the Corps of Royal Engineers developed plans for a semi-cylindrical hut constructed of corrugated steel sheets placed atop arched steel framing. The design for the hut proved particularly appealing due to its portability, ease and expediency of assembly, and economy of building materials.

In 1941, as the United States contemplated its entry into World War II, military officials recognized that the Navy might soon face the problem of transporting and housing large numbers of troops, as well as storing large quantities of materials and resources. Thus, the Navy engaged the architectural firm of George A. Fuller & Company to design a hut for American military use. Military officials were already familiar with Fuller & Company, as they had been contracted to construct a new Navy base at Quonset Point, Rhode Island, from which the new structure would get its name. The Navy provided only two specifications for the project: "the new huts should be arch shaped, for strength and deflection of shell fragments, and able to be quickly and simply assembled."[6]

Over the course of World War II, three primary versions of the hut were produced: the T-Rib Quonset, the Quonset Redesign, and the Stran-Steel Quonset. The hut was conceived as a standard building unit – inexpensive, easy to ship, easy to erect, and versatile in accommodation – ideal for use at remote new installations where building materials and skilled workers were not available and shipping was difficult.[7] The hut was designed to serve 86 official uses,[8] but in practice was adapted to virtually every type of military program. Following the war, the huts were sold off by the U.S. Government and adapted for a wide variety of peacetime uses, serving as churches, supermarkets, barns, retail spaces, restaurants, garages, and industrial factories.[9] Many huts were purchased, either by municipal authorities or by returning GIs themselves, for use as housing for returning servicemen and their families. Concurrently, a number of private contractors recognized that the market for Quonset hut-type construction could extend beyond military utility, and they began to develop their own versions of

[6] "Chapter 1: How the Hut Came to Be," Quonset: Metal Living for a Modern Age, http://quonsethuts.org/book/chapter1.htm (accessed March 2015).
[7] "Camp Endicott, Davisville Construction Battalion Center," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, available at http://www.preservation.ri.gov/pdfs_zips_downloads/national_pdfs/north_kingstown/noki_camp-endicott-hd.pdf (accessed March 2015).
[8] "The Huts," Quonset: Metal Living for a Modern Age, http://quonsethuts.org/huts/index.htm (accessed March 2015).
[9] Ibid.

the Quonset hut to market to "the Army or anyone else who would buy them."[10] Today, Quonset huts of various types and sizes can be found through Los Angeles, most often in industrial areas. Typical uses include light manufacturing, repair facilities, and storage.

By the 1950s, industrial operations in the CPA had expanded to include a broad and disparate range of uses, from furniture manufacturing and machine shops, to tourism, photography studios, a candy factory, a lumber company, a lime warehouse, and a foundry. However, many of these use are no longer present today. Significant post-World War II expansion of the aircraft manufacturing industry for both commercial travel and the development of aircraft and weaponry for Cold War-era intercontinental warfare fueled economic growth and industrial expansion. One such example is a concentration of industrial properties along Panama Street in Del Rey. Constructed between 1955 and 1960, these buildings have been occupied by various industrial tenants over time, some of which have been associated with the aerospace and defense industries. Uses have included aircraft lighting, aerospace micro-electronics, electronic equipment assembly, electronics manufacturing, and various other factory and warehouse uses. One long-time tenant is Teledyne Systems Corporation, an aerospace information and communication technology company, which first located on this site in 1965.

The evolution of development along Panama Street reflects the changing character of industrial resources in the CPA. Many of the earliest airports dating from the 1920s were demolished prior to World War II to make way for residential development. Over time, many industrial parcels have been demolished or converted to other uses, including residential, commercial, and manufacturing functions. Only a few pockets of parcels zoned for industrial use remain today.

[10] Ibid.

Summary of Findings

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

Summary of Property Types

The Palms-Mar Vista-Del Rey CPA contains a limited number of extant industrial property types. Only a handful of these were documented and evaluated as historically, culturally, or architecturally significant, including two 1930s industrial buildings in Palms, one late-1950s office and light industrial park in Del Rey, as well as a number of World War II-era Quonset huts. Additionally, a small number of residential properties situated on an industrially-zoned parcel were also evaluated.

Summary of Contexts and Themes

Due to the limited number of industrially-zoned parcels in the survey area, only two of the themes developed for the Industrial Context of the SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement are represented in the Palms-Mar Vista-Del Rey CPA. Additionally, a Residential Development theme and an Engineering theme are also represented.

For a list of all resources identified in the Survey Area, see the *Palms-Mar Vista-Del Rey Community Plan Area Industrial Zone Properties Supplemental Appendices* at http://preservation.lacity.org/surveyla-findings-and-reports.

Context: Industrial Development, 1850-1980
Theme: Early Industrial Development, 1880-1945

This theme was used to evaluate two examples of early industrial development in Palms; few examples remain from this period. The property at 9200 Exposition Boulevard is a rare remaining example of a brick industrial building from the early 1930s. The property at 3380 S. Robertson Boulevard, from the late 1930s, was originally constructed as an ironworks building, now occupied by a bakery. Both examples display influences of the Streamline Moderne style.

Address: 9200 Exposition Boulevard
Date: 1932

Address: 9200 Exposition Boulevard
Date: 1932

Address: 3380 S. Robertson Boulevard
Date: 1938

Address: 3380 S. Robertson Boulevard
Date: 1938

Context: Industrial Development, 1850-1980
Theme: Industrial Design & Engineering, 1887-1965

This theme was used to evaluate a rare example of a late-1950s office and light industrial park in Del Rey. The Panama Street Industrial Historic District comprises a single triangular-shaped industrial site. The site contains seven one-story light industrial buildings, constructed between 1955 and 1960, and several surface parking areas. The buildings have been occupied by various tenants over time, some of which have been associated with the aerospace and defense industries. Uses have included aircraft lighting, aerospace micro-electronics, electronic equipment assembly, electronics manufacturing, and various other factory and warehouse uses. One long-time tenant is Teledyne Systems Corporation, an aerospace information and communication technology company, which first located on this site in 1965. Today, Teledyne occupies at least two of the buildings on the block; three buildings appear to be vacant.

Address: 12820 Panama Street
Date: 1955

Address: 12820 Panama Street
Date: 1955

Address: 12870 Panama Street
Date: 1955

Address: 12870 Panama Street
Date: 1955

Address: 12910 Panama Street
Date: 1957

Address: 12910 Panama Street
Date: 1957

Address: 12930 Panama Street
Date: 1956

Address: 12930 Panama Street
Date: 1956

Address: 12964 Panama Street
Date: 1957

Address: 12964 Panama Street
Date: 1957

Context: Architecture and Engineering, 1850-1980
Sub-context, Engineering, 1900-1980
Theme: Technological Developments in Construction, 1900-1980
Sub-Context: The Quonset Hut, 1941-1965

This theme was used to evaluate intact examples of Quonset huts. Quonset huts are significant as representative of an important building type and method of construction developed during World War II. The Quonset hut is notable for its simple construction, distinctive shape, use of prefabricated materials, and flexible interior plan. Intact examples represent the design and development of a low-cost and highly-versatile structure by the U.S. Navy for military use during World War II, and its adaptive reuse for housing and other uses during the postwar years. Significant examples retain the essential physical features from the type, including its semi-cylindrical shape and corrugated metal cladding. An important symbol of mid-century utilitarian design and construction, the Quonset hut is a rapidly disappearing building type.

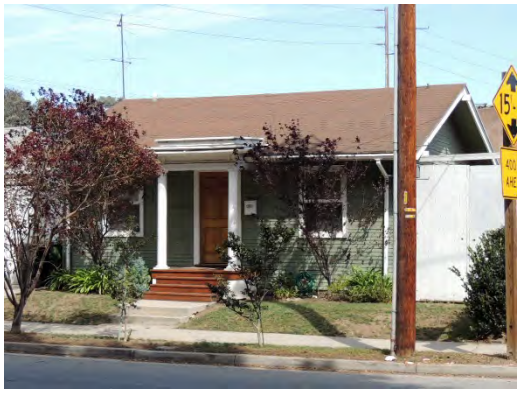
Address: 11844 S. Jefferson Boulevard
Date: 1946 (est.)

Address: 3906 S. Grand View Boulevard
Date: (Unknown)

Context: Residential Development and Suburbanization, 1850-1980
Theme: Early Residential Development, 1880-1930
Sub-Theme: Early Single-Family Residential Development, 1880-1930

This theme was used to evaluate rare remaining examples of early residential development in industrial areas in Palms and Mar Vista. Identified examples are single-family residences dating from the late teens and early 1920s.

Address: 3900 S. Grand View Bl.
Date: 1922



Address: 3340 S. Robertson Bl.
Date: 1919

For Further Reading

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