

# IV. Environmental Impact Analysis

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## C. Cultural Resources

### 1. Introduction

This section evaluates potential impacts to cultural resources, including historical and archaeological resources, as well as the disruption of human remains, that could result from implementation of the Project. Historical resources include all properties (historical, archaeological, landscapes, traditional, etc.) eligible or potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, as well as those that may be significant pursuant to state and local laws and programs. Archaeological resources include artifacts, structural remains, and human remains belonging to an era of history or prehistory. This section is based on information provided in **Appendix D** of this Draft EIR, which includes the *Hilton Universal City Project, Cultural Resources Assessment Report*, dated May 2023 (*Cultural Resources Assessment Report*).

### 2. Environmental Setting

#### a) Regulatory Framework

Cultural resources fall within the jurisdiction of several levels of government. The framework for the identification and, in certain instances, protection of cultural resources is established at the federal level, while the identification, documentation, and protection of such resources are often undertaken by state and local governments. As described below, the principal federal, State, and local laws governing and influencing the preservation of cultural resources of national, State, regional, and local significance include:

- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
- Archaeological Resources Protection Act
- Archaeological Data Preservation Act
- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
- California Register of Historical Resources
- California Health and Safety Code
- California Public Resources Code

- City of Los Angeles General Plan
- Sherman Oaks-Studio City-Toluca Lake-Cahuenga Community Plan
- City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Ordinance (Los Angeles Administrative Code, Section 22.171)
- City of Los Angeles Historic Preservation Overlay Zone Ordinance (Los Angeles Municipal Code [LAMC], Section 12.20.3)
- City of Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey

## (1) Federal

### (a) *National Historic Preservation Act and National Register of Historic Places*

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 established the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) as “an authoritative guide to be used by federal, state, and local governments, private groups and citizens to identify the Nation’s historic resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment”.<sup>1</sup> The National Register recognizes a broad range of cultural resources that are significant at the national, state, and local levels and can include districts, buildings, structures, objects, prehistoric archaeological sites, historic-period archaeological sites, traditional cultural properties, and cultural landscapes. Within the National Register, approximately 2,500 (3 percent) of the more than 90,000 districts, buildings, structures, objects, and sites are recognized as National Historic Landmarks or National Historic Landmark Districts as possessing exceptional national significance in American history and culture.<sup>2</sup>

Whereas individual historic properties derive their significance from one or more of the criteria discussed in the subsequent section, a historic district “derives its importance from being a unified entity, even though it is often composed of a variety of resources. With a historic district, the historic resource is the district itself. The identity of a district results from the interrelationship of its resources, which can be an arrangement of historically or functionally related properties.”<sup>3</sup>

A district is defined as a geographic area of land containing a significant concentration of buildings, sites, structures, or objects united by historic events, architecture, aesthetic,

<sup>1</sup> 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 60.

<sup>2</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Historic Landmarks Frequently Asked Question, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Register Bulletin #15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, 1997, page 5.

character, and/or physical development. A district's significance and historic integrity determine its boundaries. Other factors include:

- Visual barriers that mark a change in the historic character of the area or that break the continuity of the district, such as new construction, highways, or development of a different character;
- Visual changes in the character of the area due to different architectural styles, types, or periods, or to a decline in the concentration of contributing resources;
- Boundaries at a specific time in history, such as the original city limits or the legally recorded boundaries of a housing subdivision, estate, or ranch; and
- Clearly differentiated patterns of historical development, such as commercial versus residential or industrial.<sup>4</sup>

Within historic districts, properties are identified as contributing and non-contributing. A contributing building, site, structure, or object adds to the historic associations, historic architectural qualities, or archaeological values for which a district is significant because:

- It was present during the period of significance, relates to the significance of the district, and retains its physical integrity; or
- It independently meets the criterion for listing in the National Register.

A resource that is listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register is considered "historic property" under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

*(i) Criteria*

To be eligible for listing in the National Register, a resource must be at least 50 years of age, unless it is of exceptional importance as defined in Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 60, Section 60.4(g). In addition, a resource must be significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. The following four criteria for evaluation have been established to determine the significance of a resource:

- A. Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- B. Are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past (City, state, or national history);
- C. Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

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<sup>4</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Register Bulletin #21: Defining Boundaries for National Register Properties Form, 1997, page 12.

- D. Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.<sup>5</sup>

*(ii) Context*

To be eligible for listing in the National Register, a property must be significant within a historic context. National Register Bulletin #15 states that the significance of a historic property can be judged only when it is evaluated within its historic context. Historic contexts are “those patterns, themes, or trends in history by which a specific...property or site is understood and its meaning... is made clear.”<sup>6</sup> A property must represent an important aspect of the area’s history or prehistory and possess the requisite integrity to qualify for the National Register.

*(iii) Integrity*

In addition to meeting one or more of the criteria of significance, a property must have integrity, which is defined as “the ability of a property to convey its significance.”<sup>7</sup> The National Register recognizes seven qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity. The seven factors that define integrity are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. To retain historic integrity a property must possess several, and usually most, of these seven aspects. Thus, the retention of the specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance. In general, the National Register has a higher integrity threshold than State or local registers.

In the case of districts, integrity means the physical integrity of the buildings, structures, or features that make up the district as well as the historic, spatial, and visual relationships of the components. Some buildings or features may be more altered over time than others. In order to possess integrity, a district must, on balance, still communicate its historic identity in the form of its character defining features.

*(iv) Criteria Considerations*

Certain types of properties, including religious properties, moved properties, birthplaces or graves, cemeteries, reconstructed properties, commemorative properties, and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years are not considered eligible for the National Register unless they meet one of the seven categories of Criteria Considerations A through G, in addition to meeting at least one of the four significance criteria discussed above, and possess integrity as defined above.<sup>8</sup> Criteria Consideration

<sup>5</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Register Bulletin #15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, 1997, page 8.

<sup>6</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Register Bulletin #15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, 1997, pages 7 and 8.

<sup>7</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Register Bulletin #15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, 1997, page 44.

<sup>8</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Register Bulletin #15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, 1997, page 25.

G is intended to prevent the listing of properties for which insufficient time may have passed to allow the proper evaluation of their historical importance.<sup>9</sup> The full list of Criteria Considerations is provided below:

- A. A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or
- B. A building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or
- C. A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance, if there is no other appropriate site or building directly associated with his or her productive life; or
- D. A cemetery which derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events; or
- E. A reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived; or
- F. A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own historical significance; or
- G. A property achieving significance within the past 50 years, if it is of exceptional importance.

*(b) Secretary of the Interior's Standards*

The National Park Service issued the Secretary's Standards with accompanying guidelines for four types of treatments for historic resources: Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction. The most applicable guidelines should be used when evaluating a project for compliance with the Secretary's Standards. Although none of the four treatments, as a whole, apply specifically to new construction in the vicinity of historic resources, Standards #9 and #10 of the Secretary's Standards provides relevant guidance for such projects. The Standards for Rehabilitation are as follows:

- 1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
- 2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
- 3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding

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<sup>9</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Register Bulletin #15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, 1997, page 41.

conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

4. Changes to a property that have acquired significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.<sup>10</sup>

It is important to note that the Secretary's Standards are not intended to be prescriptive but, instead, provide general guidance. They are intended to be flexible and adaptable to specific project conditions to balance continuity and change, while retaining materials and features to the maximum extent feasible. Their interpretation requires exercising professional judgment and balancing the various opportunities and constraints of any given project. Not every Standard necessarily applies to every aspect of a project, and it is not necessary for a project to comply with every Standard to achieve compliance.

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<sup>10</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings, 2017.

*(c) Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act*

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) requires federal agencies to return Native American cultural items to the appropriate Federally recognized Indian tribes or Native Hawaiian groups with which they are associated.<sup>11</sup>

*(d) Archaeological Resources Protection Act*

The Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) of 1979 governs the excavation, removal, and disposition of archaeological sites and collections on federal and Native American lands. This act was most recently amended in 1988. The ARPA defines archaeological resources as any material remains of human life or activities that are at least 100 years of age, and which are of archeological interest. The ARPA makes it illegal for anyone to excavate, remove, sell, purchase, exchange, or transport an archaeological resource from federal or Native American lands without a proper permit.<sup>12</sup>

*(e) Archaeological Data Preservation Act*

The Archaeological Data Preservation Act (ADPA) requires agencies to report any perceived project impacts on archaeological, historical, and scientific data and requires them to recover such data or assist the Secretary of the Interior in recovering the data.

**(2) State***(a) California Environmental Quality Act*

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is the principal statute governing environmental review of projects occurring in the state and is codified in Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21000 et seq. CEQA requires lead agencies to determine if a proposed project would have a significant effect on the environment, including significant effects on historical or unique archaeological resources. Under CEQA Section 21084.1, a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 recognizes that historical resources include: (1) resources listed in, or determined to be eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission, for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources; (2) resources included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in PRC Section 5020.1(k) or identified as significant in a historical resource survey meeting the requirements of PRC Section 5024.1(g); and (3) any objects, buildings, structures, sites, areas, places, records, or manuscripts which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social,

<sup>11</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Native American Graves Protection And Repatriation Act, 1990.

<sup>12</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Technical Brief # 20: Archeological Damage Assessment: Legal Basis and Methods, 2007.

political, military, or cultural annals of California by the lead agency, provided the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record.

If a lead agency determines that an archaeological site is a historical resource, the provisions of PRC Section 21084.1 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 apply. If an archaeological site does not meet the criteria for a historical resource contained in the CEQA Guidelines, then the site may be treated in accordance with the provisions of PRC Section 21083, if it meets the criteria of a unique archaeological resource. As defined in PRC Section 21083.2, a unique archaeological resource is an archaeological artifact, object, or site, about which it can be clearly demonstrated that without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria:

- Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and there is a demonstrable public interest in that information;
- Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type; or
- Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

If an archaeological site meets the criteria for a unique archaeological resource as defined in PRC Section 21083.2, then the site is to be treated in accordance with the provisions of PRC Section 21083.2, which state that if the lead agency determines that a project would have a significant effect on unique archaeological resources, the lead agency may require reasonable efforts be made to permit any or all of these resources to be preserved in place.<sup>13</sup> If preservation in place is not feasible, mitigation measures shall be required. The CEQA Guidelines note that if an archaeological resource is neither a unique archaeological nor a historical resource, the effects of the project on those resources shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment.<sup>14</sup>

A significant effect under CEQA would occur if a project results in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a). Substantial adverse change is defined as "physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of a historical resource would be materially impaired".<sup>15</sup> According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b)(2), the significance of a historical resource is materially impaired when a project demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics that:

- A. Convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for, inclusion in the California Register; or

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<sup>13</sup> California Public Resources Code Section 21083.1(a).

<sup>14</sup> State CEQA Statute and Guidelines, Section 15064.5(c)(4).

<sup>15</sup> State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064.5(b)(1).



- B. Account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources pursuant to PRC Section 5020.1(k) or its identification in a historical resources survey meeting the requirements of PRC Section 5024.1(g) Code, unless the public agency reviewing the effects of the project establishes by a preponderance of evidence that the resource is not historically or culturally significant; or
- C. Convey its historical significance and that justify its eligibility for inclusion in the California Register as determined by a Lead Agency for purposes of CEQA.

In general, a project that complies with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings is considered to have impacts that are less than significant.<sup>16</sup>

*(b) California Register of Historical Resources*

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is “an authoritative listing and guide to be used by State and local agencies, private groups, and citizens in identifying the existing historical resources of the State and to indicate which resources deserve to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse change.”<sup>17</sup> The California Register was enacted in 1992, and its regulations became official on January 1, 1998. The California Register is administered by the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). The criteria for eligibility for the California Register are based upon National Register criteria.<sup>18</sup> Certain resources are determined to be automatically included in the California Register, including California properties formally determined eligible for, or listed in, the National Register. To be eligible for the California Register, a prehistoric or historic-period property must be significant at the local, State, and/or federal level under one or more of the following four criteria:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
2. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

A resource eligible for the California Register must meet one of the criteria of significance described above, and retain enough of its historic character or appearance (integrity) to be recognizable as a historical resource and to convey the reason for its significance. It is

<sup>16</sup> State CEQA Guidelines, 15064.5(b)(3).

<sup>17</sup> California Public Resources Code, Section 5024.1[a].

<sup>18</sup> California Public Resources Code, Section 5024.1[b].

possible that a historic resource may not retain sufficient integrity to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register, but it may still be eligible for listing in the California Register.

Additionally, the California Register consists of resources that are listed automatically and those that must be nominated through an application and public hearing process. The California Register automatically includes the following:

- California properties listed on the National Register and those formally determined eligible for the National Register;
- California Registered Historical Landmarks from No. 770 onward; and,
- Those California Points of Historical Interest that have been evaluated by the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) and have been recommended to the State Historical Resources Commission for inclusion on the California Register.

Other resources that may be nominated to the California Register include:

- Historical resources with a significance rating of Category 3 through 5 (those properties identified as eligible for listing in the National Register, the California Register, and/or a local jurisdiction register);
- Individual historical resources;
- Historic districts; and,
- Historical resources designated or listed as local landmarks, or designated under any local ordinance, such as an historic preservation overlay zone.

*(c) California Health and Safety Code*

California Health and Safety Code Sections 7050.5, 7051, and 7054 address the illegality of interference with human burial remains (except as allowed under applicable PRC Sections), and the disposition of Native American burials in archaeological sites. These regulations protect such remains from disturbance, vandalism, or inadvertent destruction, and establish procedures to be implemented if Native American skeletal remains are discovered during construction of a project, including treatment of the remains prior to, during, and after evaluation, and reburial procedures.

*(d) California Public Resources Code*

California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5097.98, as amended by Assembly Bill 2641, provides procedures in the event human remains of Native American origin are discovered during project implementation. PRC Section 5097.98 requires that no further disturbances occur in the immediate vicinity of the discovery, that the discovery is adequately protected according to generally accepted cultural and archaeological standards, and that further activities take into account the possibility of multiple burials. PRC Section 5097.98 further requires the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), upon notification by a County Coroner, designate and notify a Most Likely Descendant (MLD) regarding the discovery of Native American human remains. Once the

MLD has been granted access to the site by the landowner and inspected the discovery, the MLD then has 48 hours to provide recommendations to the landowner for the treatment of the human remains and any associated grave goods. In the event that no descendant is identified, or the descendant fails to make a recommendation for disposition, or if the land owner rejects the recommendation of the descendant, the landowner may, with appropriate dignity, reinter the remains and burial items on the property in a location that will not be subject to further disturbance.

### (3) Local

#### (a) *City of Los Angeles General Plan*

##### (i) *Conservation Element*

The City of Los Angeles General Plan includes a Conservation Element. Section 3 of the Conservation Element, adopted in September 2001, includes policies for the protection of archaeological resources. As stated therein, it is the City's policy that archaeological resources be protected for research and/or educational purposes. Section 5 of the Conservation Element recognizes the City's responsibility for identifying and protecting its cultural and historical heritage. The Conservation Element establishes the policy to continue to protect historic and cultural sites and/or resources potentially affected by proposed land development, demolition, or property modification activities, with the related objective to protect important cultural and historical sites and resources for historical, cultural, research, and community educational purposes.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to the National Register and the California Register, two additional types of historic designations may apply at a local level:

1. Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM)
2. Classification by the City Council as a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)

##### (ii) *Sherman Oaks-Studio City-Toluca Lake-Cahuenga Community Plan*

The Land Use Element of the City's General Plan includes 35 community plans. Community plans are intended to provide an official guide for future development and propose approximate locations and dimensions for land use. The community plans establish standards and criteria for the development of housing, commercial uses, and industrial uses, as well as circulation and service systems. The community plans implement the City's General Plan Framework Element at the local level and consist of both text and an accompanying generalized land use map. The community plans' texts express goals, objectives, policies, and programs to address growth in the community, including those that relate to utilities and service systems required to support such growth.

<sup>19</sup> City of Los Angeles, Conservation Element of the General Plan, pages II-3 to II-5.

The community plans' maps depict the desired arrangement of land uses as well as street classifications and the locations and characteristics of public service facilities.

The City's Sherman Oaks-Studio City-Toluca Lake-Cahuenga Pass Community Plan (Community Plan), which was adopted in 1988 and covers the four community subareas in the southeast San Fernando Valley area, is the land use element of the General Plan applicable to the Project Site. The Community Plan includes land use designations, density limits, building heights, and other provisions that support the City's policies and development vision for the future. Among other planning and land use goals, objectives and policies identified in the Community Plan, regarding historic resources, pursuant to Goal 16, Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Resources, Neighborhoods, and Landmarks which have Historical and/or Cultural Significance, the following objective and policy are applicable to the Project:

**Objective 16-2:** To encourage private owner of historic properties/resources to conserve the integrity of such resources.

**Policy 16-2.1:** Assist private owners of existing and future historic resources to maintain and/or enhance their properties in a manner that will preserve the integrity of such resources in the best possible condition.

*(b) City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Ordinance*

The Los Angeles City Council adopted the Cultural Heritage Ordinance in 1962 and most recently amended it in 2018 (Sections 22.171 et seq. of the Administrative Code). The Ordinance created a Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) and criteria for designating an HCM. The CHC is comprised of five citizens, appointed by the Mayor, who have exhibited knowledge of Los Angeles history, culture, and architecture. The City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Ordinance states that a HCM designation is reserved for those resources that have a special aesthetic, architectural, or engineering interest or value of a historic nature and meet one of the following criteria. A historical or cultural monument is any site, building, or structure of particular historical or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles. The criteria for HCM designation are stated below:

- The proposed HCM is identified with important events of national, state, or local history or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, state, city, or community is reflected or exemplified; or
- The proposed HCM is associated with the lives of with historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history; or
- The proposed HCM embodies the distinct characteristics of style, type, period, or method of construction, or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles Administrative Code, Section 22.171.7.

A proposed resource may be eligible for designation if it meets at least one of the criteria above. When determining historic significance and evaluating a resource against the Cultural Heritage Ordinance criteria above, the CHC and OHR staff often ask the following questions:

- Is the site or structure an outstanding example of past architectural styles or craftsmanship?
- Was the site or structure created by a “master” architect, builder, or designer?
- Did the architect, engineer, or owner have historical associations that either influenced architecture in the City or had a role in the development or history of Los Angeles?
- Has the building retained “integrity”? Does it still convey its historic significance through the retention of its original design and materials?
- Is the site or structure associated with important historic events or historic personages that shaped the growth, development, or evolution of Los Angeles or its communities?
- Is the site or structure associated with important movements or trends that shaped the social and cultural history of Los Angeles or its communities?

Unlike the National and California Registers, the Cultural Heritage Ordinance makes no mention of concepts such as physical integrity or period of significance. However, in practice, the seven aspects of integrity from the National Register and California Register are applied similarly and the threshold of integrity for individual eligibility is similar. It is common for the CHC to consider alterations to nominated properties in making its recommendations on designations. Moreover, properties do not have to reach a minimum age requirement, such as 50 years, to be designated as HCMs. In addition, the LAMC Section 91.106.4.5 states that the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety “shall not issue a permit to demolish, alter or remove a building or structure of historical, archaeological or architectural consequence if such building or structure has been officially designated, or has been determined by state or federal action to be eligible for designation, on the National Register of Historic Places, or has been included on the City of Los Angeles list of HCMs, without the department having first determined whether the demolition, alteration or removal may result in the loss of or serious damage to a significant historical or cultural asset. If the department determines that such loss or damage may occur, the applicant shall file an application and pay all fees for the CEQA Initial Study and Checklist, as specified in Section 19.05 of the LAMC. If the Initial Study and Checklist identifies the historical or cultural asset as significant, the permit shall not be issued without the department first finding that specific economic, social or other considerations make infeasible the preservation of the building or structure.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles Municipal Code, Section 91.106.4.5.1.

(c) *City of Los Angeles Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) Ordinance*

The Los Angeles City Council adopted the ordinance enabling the creation of Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZs) in 1979; most recently, this ordinance was amended in 2017. Angelino Heights became Los Angeles' first HPOZ in 1983. The City currently contains 35 HPOZs. An HPOZ is a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.<sup>22</sup> Each HPOZ is established with a Historic Resources Survey, a historic context statement, and a preservation plan. The Historic Resources Survey identifies all Contributing and Non-Contributing features and lots. The context statement identifies the historic context, themes, and subthemes of the HPOZ as well as the period of significance. The preservation plan contains guidelines that inform appropriate methods of maintenance, rehabilitation, restoration, and new construction. Contributing Elements are defined as any building, structure, Landscaping, or Natural Feature identified in the Historic Resources Survey as contributing to the Historic significance of the HPOZ, including a building or structure which has been altered, where the nature and extent of the Alterations are determined reversible by the Historic Resources Survey.<sup>23</sup> For CEQA purposes, Contributing Elements are treated as contributing features to a historic district, which is the historical resource. Non-Contributing Elements are any building, structure, Landscaping, Natural Feature identified in the Historic Resources Survey as being built outside of the identified period of significance or not containing a sufficient level of integrity. For CEQA purposes, Non-Contributing Elements are not treated as contributing features to a historical resource.

(d) *City of Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey*

The City of Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey (SurveyLA) is a Citywide survey that identifies and documents potentially significant historical resources representing important themes in the City's history. The survey and resource evaluations were completed by consultant teams under contract to the City and under the supervision of the Department of City Planning's OHR. The program was managed by OHR, which maintains a website for SurveyLA. The field surveys cumulatively covered broad periods of significance, from approximately 1850 to 1980 depending on the location, and included individual resources such as buildings, structures, objects, natural features and cultural landscapes as well as areas and districts (archaeological resources are planned to be included in future survey phases). The survey identified a wide variety of potentially significant resources that reflect important themes in the City's growth and development in various areas including architecture, city planning, social history, ethnic heritage, politics, industry, transportation, commerce, entertainment, and others. Field surveys, conducted from 2010-2017, were completed in three phases by Community Plan area. However, SurveyLA did not survey areas already designated as HPOZs or areas already surveyed by the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles. All tools,

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<sup>22</sup> City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles Municipal Code, Section 12.20.3.

<sup>23</sup> City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles Municipal Code, Section 12.20.3.

methods, and criteria developed for SurveyLA were created to meet State and federal professional standards for survey work.

Los Angeles' Citywide Historic Context Statement (HCS) was designed for use by SurveyLA field surveyors and by all agencies, organizations, and professionals completing historical resources surveys in the City of Los Angeles. The context statement was organized using the Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) format developed by the National Park Service for use in nominating properties to the National Register. This format provided a consistent framework for evaluating historical resources. It was adapted for local use to evaluate the eligibility of properties for city, state, and federal designation programs. The HCS used Eligibility Standards to identify the character defining, associative features and integrity aspects a property must retain to be a significant example of a type within a defined theme. Eligibility Standards also indicated the general geographic location, area of significance, applicable criteria, and period of significance associated with that type. These Eligibility Standards are guidelines based on knowledge of known significant examples of property types; properties do not need to meet all of the Eligibility Standards in order to be eligible. Moreover, there are many variables to consider in assessing integrity depending on why a resource is significant under the National Register, California Register or City of Los Angeles HCM eligibility criteria. SurveyLA findings are subject to change over time as properties age, additional information is uncovered, and more detailed analyses are completed. Resources identified through SurveyLA are not designated resources. Designation by the City of Los Angeles and nominations to the California or National Registers are separate processes that include property owner notification and public hearings.

## **b) Existing Conditions**

The following Existing Conditions are summarized from the *Cultural Resources Assessment Report* prepared by ESA and dated April 2023, which contains additional existing conditions detail (See Appendix D of this Draft EIR).

### **(1) Historical Resources**

#### **(a) Property History**

The Project Site was first developed in 1983 when the Sheraton Premiere Hotel (now known as Hilton Universal City Hotel) was constructed. The Sheraton Premiere Hotel comprised a 24-floor building (i.e., the Existing Hotel Building), an ancillary building containing a ballroom with a much lower massing (i.e., the Existing Ancillary Hotel Building), and an outdoor pool area (i.e., the Existing Outdoor Pool Area). The Sheraton Premiere Hotel was designed to provide a sense of connection to an already existing hotel on the adjacent site to the west—the Sheraton-Universal Hotel—which was owned by the same company and remains extant today. The Sheraton-Universal Hotel had been built a decade and a half earlier in 1968, as designed by prominent hotel architect William B. Tabler. As part of the new Sheraton Premier Hotel, access between the buildings was provided via a walkway that led from a driveway in close proximity to the new hotel's

entrance to two “dual glass elevators.” These elevators would then deposit visitors in the parking lot in front of the entrance to the older hotel building by loosely linking the two hotel buildings; in this way, the Sheraton Company could use both buildings at once to accommodate large conventions.<sup>24</sup>

The construction of the Sheraton Premiere Hotel was undertaken as a joint venture of the Sheraton Company and MCA, and its planning was part of the larger 1981 Master Plan for Universal City, as also developed by William L. Pereira Associates. Plans for the new hotel were first publicly announced on March 19, 1981. Despite the initial projections that the hotel would be completed well in advance of the 1984 Olympics, which promised to bring a flood of tourists and other visitors to the Los Angeles, the new Sheraton Premiere Hotel would not open its doors until May 23, 1984.<sup>25</sup> Two years after the building’s construction, in July 1986, negotiations were underway between MCA, Sheraton and Cigna to sell the hotel building, as it was “plagued by low occupancy.” For unknown reasons, the negotiations between the companies did not result in a successful sale of the subject property. However, by 1990, Sheraton and MCA had found a buyer. In 1990, the Project Site and its improvements were sold to the Hilton company, which then rebranded the hotel complex as its own.

(i) *Existing Hotel Building*

The Existing Hotel Building is a 24-story building that sits to the southern portion of the Project Site. The building is mostly comprised of guestrooms, and includes other amenities typical of a hotel, such as a lounge, a check-in desk area, conference rooms, a restaurant, and back-of-house spaces such as offices, maintenance rooms, and housekeeping services. The building is clad in mirrored glass and smoked spandrel glass panes. The building is square in plan with canted corners. The elevations are uniform and symmetrical in their composition. Each elevation is comprised of two anchoring bays that define each side of the elevation and that run the entirety of its height. A second set of bays is located to the interior of these two bays, and these step inward toward the center of the elevation. These two bays define a central bay that is more recessed than all of the other bays that flank it to each side. This reverse type of ziggurat configuration is reflective of an abstracted Art Deco style motif. This reference of an earlier 20th century architectural style is characteristic of the Postmodern style lexicon. The fenestration at each floor is uniform; however, the articulation at each bay varies with different rectangular and square configurations of the mirrored glass windows and smoked glass spandrel panes.

The uppermost floor is stepped back and includes multiple atriums on each side. These atriums are comprised of protruding black metal frames, which are rounded at the top and support mirrored glass panes. The detailing of these atriums is reflective of those found

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<sup>24</sup> David M. Kinchen, “Sheraton, MCA Open Hotel in Universal City,” *The Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, CA), April 1, 1984.

<sup>25</sup> David M. Kinchen, “Sheraton, MCA Open Hotel in Universal City,” *The Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, CA), April 1, 1984.



upon the adjacent Existing Ancillary Hotel Building. The protrusion of the flanking bays at each elevation combined with the articulation at the top of the building—which terminates in the stepped back and rounded atrium—summons associations with an abstracted flower, a motif typically found in the artwork and architecture of the Art Deco style. A helicopter pad sits at the top of the flat roof. Two large signs reading “Hilton” sit toward the top of the building at the southeast and northwest elevations.

(ii) *Existing Ancillary Hotel Building*

The Existing Ancillary Hotel Building is connected to the Existing Hotel Building at the building’s northwest elevation and the Existing Ancillary Hotel Building’s southeast elevation. Irregular in plan, the Existing Ancillary Hotel Building includes a banquet hall, conference rooms, restaurants, lobbies, and bars.

The Existing Ancillary Hotel Building includes the articulated ground floor main entrance, which leads directly off of the roundabout driveway, located at the southwest elevation. The main hotel entrance is under a glass and metal canopy, which is abstractedly reminiscent of Art Nouveau in style and reinforced by concrete and metal supports. The entrance includes automatic sliding doors surrounded by large stone cladding, with “Hilton Universal City” signage atop. The entrance is flanked by scored stucco and contemporary awnings. Beyond the entrance are three 2-story glass atrium structures, which surround the courtyard. Two of these atriums flank the main entrance. The atrium structures are each square in plan with canted corners, mirroring that of the Existing Hotel Building. The elevations of atrium structures are comprised of protruding black metal frames, which are rounded at the top and support mirrored glass panes, allowing for each side of the atriums to be comprised of mirrored glass.

The remainder of the Existing Ancillary Hotel Building extends from the articulated entrance described above, and steps back to two and three stories and is finished with smooth scored stucco. The ground floor includes large, fixed casement windows and auxiliary entrances comprised of double doors with side-lite assemblies. The upper floors of the Existing Ancillary Hotel Building are largely windowless. The roof is flat with the exception of glass atriums toward the main entrance.

Located on the north elevation of the Existing Ancillary Hotel Building is an entrance to a ballroom space, the Sierra Ballroom. Identical in style to the main entrance located at the southwestern elevation, the north elevation includes a glass and metal canopy supported by concrete and metal supports. Flanking either side of the recessed entrance are two large window assemblies that resemble the style of the glass atriums located at the main entrance. These window assemblies include black metal framing that is curved at the top and supports mirrored windowpanes of glass.

As further described in the *Cultural Resources Assessment*, Appendix D of this Draft EIR, over 50 building permits have been issued and a number of changes have occurred to the Existing Hotel Building and Existing Ancillary Hotel Building since their construction.

*(b) Historical Resources in the Vicinity of the Project Site**(i) Lankershim/101 Freeway Bridge and Tunnel  
101 Freeway crossing over Lankershim Boulevard*

The Lankershim/101 Freeway Bridge and Tunnel 101 Freeway Crossing over Lankershim Boulevard is a bridge and tunnel structure constructed in 1940. Based upon the results of the City's previous Citywide survey evaluation (SurveyLA), the Lankershim/101 Freeway Bridge and Tunnel 101 Freeway Crossing appears to be eligible as an historical resource under both Criterion A and criterion C for its association with events in history or patterns of development as well as its architecture. Its period of significance is the year in which it was built, 1940. It is located approximately 0.22 miles to the southwest of the Project Site.

*(ii) 3787 N Cahuenga Boulevard (The Baked Potato Jazz Club)*

3787 N Cahuenga Boulevard is a one-story vernacular style building, constructed in 1924. Based upon the results of SurveyLA, 3787 N Cahuenga Boulevard appears to be eligible as an historical resource under Criterion A for its association with events in history or patterns of development, and its period of significance is 1970. It is located southwest of the Hollywood Freeway, approximately 0.25 miles from the Project Site.

*(iii) 3655 N Cahuenga Boulevard. (Miceli's Italian Restaurant)*

3655 N Cahuenga Boulevard (Miceli's Italian Restaurant) is a one-story building constructed in 1955 in a vernacular style. Based upon the results of SurveyLA, 3655 N Cahuenga Boulevard appears to be eligible as an historical resource under Criterion C for its architecture, and its period of significance is 1955. It is located southwest of the Hollywood Freeway, approximately 0.25 miles from the Project Site.

*(iv) 3729 N Cahuenga Boulevard. (KPFK Radio)*

3729 N Cahuenga Boulevard (KPFK Radio) is a one-story building constructed in 1970 in the Late- Moderne Style. Based upon the results of SurveyLA, 3729 N Cahuenga Boulevard appears to be eligible as an historical resource under both Criterion A and Criterion B for its association with events in history or patterns of development and its association with at least one significant person, and its period of significance is 1970. It is located southwest of the Hollywood Freeway, approximately 0.25 miles from the Project Site.

*(v) Potentially Eligible Universal Studios Historic District*

The Universal Studios Historic District is a potentially eligible historic district with 40 contributing buildings, 20 non-contributing buildings, and one site of historic, cultural, and architectural significance. Based upon the results of a previous survey evaluation,<sup>26</sup> the

<sup>26</sup> Historic Resources Group, LLC. Universal Studios Historic District, Historic Preservation Plan for 19-190825. Prepared for Universal City Studios, LLLP, L.P., 2009.

Universal Studios Historic District appears to be eligible as an historical resource under Criterion A for its association with events in history or patterns of development. This potential historic district's period of significance is 1912 to 1958. This potential district is located approximately 250 feet to the east and northeast of the Project Site.

(vi) *100 Universal City Plaza (Universal City & Studios)*

100 Universal City Plaza (Universal City & Studios) consists of several buildings, sound stages, offices, warehouses, a 21-story hotel and a fifteen-story steel and glass administration building. Based upon the results of a previous survey evaluation,<sup>27</sup> 100 Universal City Plaza appears to be eligible as an historical resource under 3S for eligible as an individual property; however, there is no data available about the criteria under which it is eligible, the date that the buildings in the complex were built, or the complex's period of significance. It is located approximately 340 feet to the northeast of the Project Site.

(c) *Historic Resources Significance Evaluation – Hilton Universal City Hotel*

The Hilton Universal City Hotel was evaluated under the following historical and architectural themes, which are identified in SurveyLA's Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement: Post-modernism (1965-1980); and Post-war Hotels (1945-1980). Additionally, a historic context was developed for William L. Pereira Associates. The preliminary period of significance assigned to the Hilton Universal City Hotel is 1983, the original construction date of the building's construction.

The Hilton Universal City was built in 1983 as the "Sheraton Premiere" and incorporated into MCA's Universal Master Plan (1981), as designed by Arthur Golding, who was the project architect for the William L. Pereira Associates firm. The Hilton Universal City Hotel was evaluated for significance under the four federal, State, and local criteria for designation of historical resources as described in the "Regulatory Framework" section of this Draft EIR; the criteria are as follows: Criterion A/1/1(Events), Criterion B/2/2 (Significant Persons), Criterion C/3/3 (Design/Construction), and Criterion D/4 (Data Potential). However, the subject building was constructed in 1983, which makes it 39 years old at the time of the evaluation. The building is, therefore, less than 50 years old and should be reviewed under National Register Criteria Consideration G for properties that have achieved significance within the last fifty years. The threshold for properties that are less than 50 years old requires that such properties are eligible for exceptional importance under the applicable criteria. The City has concluded, as a result of the investigations for the Project as discussed below, that the Hilton Universal City Hotel is ineligible for listing at the federal, State, and local levels under all applicable criteria, as summarized below.

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<sup>27</sup> Sitton, Tom. Department of Parks and Recreation, Historic Resources Inventory form for P-19-187794/Universal City and Studios. On file at the South Central Coastal Information Center, 1976.

(i) *Criterion A/1/1: Events*

The Hilton Universal City Hotel was built in 1983 and designed by architectural firm William L. Pereira Associates for the Sheraton Company and MCA, the former owners of Universal Studios. The construction of the Hilton Universal City Hotel was prompted by the growing demand for lodging in Universal City, which, due to the creation in 1964 of the nearby Universal Studios Hollywood theme park, drew large numbers of tourists to the area. The Hilton Universal City Hotel, as a building that is designed to cater to the automobile-borne travelling public, is located on a Project Site that is automobile accessible with a parking structure. By 1983, when the Hilton Universal City Hotel was built, this orientation toward the automobile was a long-established precedent more than 25 years in the making, and the design of the building is not noteworthy for creating new patterns of development oriented around the automobile.

Similarly, the Hilton Universal City Hotel is not important in terms of understanding the larger development of Universal City in which the building is encompassed. As explained in detail on page 31 of the *Cultural Resources Assessment Report*, provided in Appendix D of this Draft EIR, the Hilton Universal City Hotel was not conceptualized as part of the 1981 Master Plan for Universal City but, instead, was an already-approved project; therefore, it was simply incorporated into the 1981 Master Plan. However, as the Hilton Universal City Hotel was never included within the first 1961 Master Plan for Universal City, it was not part of the early development of this area; instead, its construction in 1983 only reflects the continuing development of Universal City more than twenty years after the initial establishment of the pattern of development. Therefore, the Hilton Universal City Hotel does not significantly contribute to understanding an important pattern of development.

Finally, the Hilton Universal City Hotel does not appear to be associated with any important events in history, despite the fact that Lew Wasserman, the manager, entertainment mogul, chairman and chief executive officer of MCA, originally hoped to make the building an important center of the Los Angeles entertainment world by enticing organizers to host the Academy Awards event at the hotel. However, such a bid never materialized, and the Academy Awards were never hosted at the hotel.

When plans for the new hotel project were first publicly announced on March 19, 1981, it was anticipated that construction would be complete in the Fall of 1983, well in advance of the 1984 Olympics. However, although the construction schedule of the hotel was arranged in anticipation of the Olympic games, there are no indications that the hotel had a particularly strong relationship to them.

The hotel, which was considered very glitzy at the time of its construction, does appear to have been the site of large events, some featuring well-known celebrities and political figures. However, despite the hotel serving as the setting for large events that sometimes attracted celebrities and other figures important on the national stage, there is no single event that has occurred at the hotel that would qualify it for listing on the federal, State, or local levels.

Based upon the research and analysis of the Hilton Universal City Hotel's eligibility under this criterion, there does not appear to be any evidence to suggest that the building is either associated with a singular event important in history or that it reflects broad trends or patterns of development. **Therefore, the Hilton Universal City Hotel is not eligible for the National Register under Criteria Consideration G or Criterion A, or the California Register under Criterion 1, or for local listing under Criterion 1.**

*(ii) Criterion B/2/2: Significant Persons*

The Hilton Universal City Hotel was built as part of a 1981 Master Plan; both the building and the master plan were designed by William L. Pereira Associates for the manager, entertainment mogul, chairman, and chief executive officer of MCA, Lew Wasserman. During the time in which the building was constructed, the early 1980s, MCA was an independent company headed by Wasserman, its founder. MCA's point person on the project to commission and construct the Hilton Universal City Hotel was Larry Spungin who reported to Al Dorskind, who, in turn, reported to Wasserman. William L. Pereira would, on occasion, host Wasserman for a project review in the firm's office.

Lew Wasserman was arguably the most powerful and influential Hollywood titan in the Post War period of filmmaking. He made significant and far-reaching changes to the industry, such as ending long-term contracts for actors, forcing Hollywood to accept the rise of television as a medium, and mentoring rising stars in filmmaking, such as Steven Spielberg. Wasserman also had originally hoped that the Hilton Universal City Hotel would be used to host the Academy Awards, but this never came to pass. However, despite Wasserman's involvement in the construction of the Hilton Universal City Hotel, the building does not have a strong association with him. While Wasserman had the final say on the project, ultimately it was Larry Spungin who had the most control over the Hilton Universal City Hotel's construction. Furthermore, there is no evidence that any of Wasserman's productive work as the head of MCA occurred at the Hilton Universal City Hotel. Instead, it is the nearby Universal Studios that better represents the work and influence that Wasserman had over Hollywood. There are no other known important figures associated with the City's or regions' past with whom the Hilton Universal City Hotel is potentially associated. **Therefore, the Hilton Universal City Hotel is not eligible for the National Register under Criteria Consideration G or Criterion B, or the California Register Criterion 2, or for local listing under Criterion 2.**

*(iii) Criterion C/3/3: Design/Construction*

As stated above, the Hilton Universal City Hotel was constructed in 1983 and designed by the architectural firm William L. Pereira Associates (WPA). While William L. Pereira is considered a master architect. The Hilton Universal City Hotel is not mentioned among his notable projects and is not considered one of his master works. Moreover, in 1997, WPA's successor firm—Johnson Fain—compiled a list of the top 12 "milestone projects" to come out of the WPA offices and the Hilton Universal City Hotel was also not included on this list of significant projects. Therefore, while the Hilton Universal City Hotel was designed by the master architectural firm of WPA, it does not represent a notable work in

the firm's large portfolio of over 300 projects, nor is it particularly significant as one of the last built works of the firm. The Hilton Universal City Hotel is not eligible for listing under Criterion C/3/3 for its association with master architect William Pereira or the architectural firm that bears his name.

While the Hilton Universal City Hotel falls just outside of the period of significance for Post-World War II Hotels in Los Angeles (1945-1980), it does retain several features as a property that was oriented toward the automobile in that the Project Site maintains a separation between the parking and the Existing Hotel Building itself, and includes a means of housing the car for guests. The Hilton Universal City Hotel deviated from the trends set forth by the earlier hotels, in that the building is not a single compact structure but is instead comprised of two elements: the Existing Hotel Building and a lower ancillary structure (the Existing Ancillary Hotel Building). Yet this change in form alone would not allow the building type to be considered an exceptionally important hotel building type under National Register Criteria Consideration G. Criteria Consideration G is an exception to the general requirement that properties must have attained at least 50 years of age in order to be eligible to the National Register under Criterion A-D, and the criteria consideration is designed to recognize that there are some buildings that are clearly recognizable as historic resources prior to reaching this threshold. Criterion G states that "a property achieving significance within the last 50 years is eligible if it is of exceptional importance."<sup>28</sup> The Hilton Universal City Hotel also is not eligible for listing under Criterion C/3/3 for its association as a Post-World War II Hotel because it was constructed outside of the Post-World War II period of significance and is not considered exceptionally important.

The Hilton Universal City Hotel is reflective of the Postmodern architectural style and includes several character defining features of this style, which is still being studied today as an architectural style of the recent past. Notable character-defining features present at the subject property include the eclectic and starkly contrasting forms of the Existing Hotel Building and the Existing Ancillary Hotel Building and their variation in articulation, materiality, and composition. The few elements of abstracted ornamentation in the Existing Hotel Building do reflect Postmodernist trends of the early 1980s era, the building is modest in its expression of the Postmodernist style. The Hilton Universal City Hotel is not an especially notable or excellent example of the style, and, as a building that is being evaluated for "exceptional importance" and evidence of demonstrable historic importance due to its relatively recent construction date of 1983, it does not rise to the high threshold required for federal, State, or local listing.

Furthermore, a search on the Avery Architectural Index to Architectural Periodicals, did not result in any journal articles pertaining to the Hilton Universal City Hotel at any point in time since its planning or construction. The Hilton Universal City Hotel was not mentioned or discussed in association with the any of the abovementioned firms the AIA's directory listing files. For a property to be eligible for exceptional importance under

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<sup>28</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, *National Register Bulletin #15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 1997, p. 41.

National Register Criteria Consideration G, the Hilton Universal City Hotel must already have been the object of scholarly study and/or evaluation. To date, the Hilton Universal City Hotel has not been the subject of scholarly evaluation for either for its association with WPA or for its association with the Postmodern architectural style. **Therefore, the Hilton Universal City Hotel is not eligible for the National Register under Criteria Consideration G or Criterion C, or the California Register under Criterion 3, or for local listing under Criterion 3.**

(iv) *Criterion D/44: Data Potential*

While most often applied to archaeological districts and sites, Criterion 4 can also apply to buildings, structures, and objects that contain important information. In order for these types of properties to be eligible under Criterion 4, they themselves must be, or must have been, the principal source of the important information. As described above for Criterion C/3/3 above, the Hilton Universal City Hotel is not an especially notable or excellent example of the architectural style or construction. Furthermore, as described above for Criterion A/1/1, there are no events of significant or unique operational characteristics associated with the Hilton Universal City Hotel. Therefore, the Hilton Universal City Hotel does not yield significant information that would expand our current knowledge or theories of design, methods of construction, operation, or other information that is not already known. **Therefore, the Hilton Universal City Hotel has not yielded or is not likely to yield information important to prehistory or history and is not eligible for the National Register under Criteria Consideration G or Criterion D, or the California Register under Criterion 4.**

(v) *Integrity*

The National Register and California Register recognize a property's integrity through seven aspects or qualities: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Eligible properties should retain several, if not most, of these aspects. Both registers require that a resource retain sufficient integrity to convey its significance, and the property must retain the essential physical features that enable it to convey its historical identity. Integrity is based on significance and understanding why a property is important. National Register Bulletin 15 states that “only after significance is fully established can you proceed to the issue of integrity.” Since the Hilton Universal City Hotel was not identified as significant under any of the applicable federal or State criteria, an integrity analysis was not conducted in the *Cultural Resources Assessment Report*, provided in Appendix D of this Draft EIR.

## (2) Archaeological Resources

### (a) *Prehistoric Setting*

The chronology of Southern California is typically divided into three general time periods: the Early Holocene (9,600 cal B.C. to 5,600 cal B.C.), the Middle Holocene (5,600 cal B.C. to 1,650 cal B.C.), and the Late Holocene (1,650 cal B.C. to cal A.D. 1769). This chronology is manifested in the archaeological record by particular artifacts and burial

practices that indicate specific technologies, economic systems, trade networks, and other aspects of culture.

While it is not certain when humans first came to California, their presence in Southern California by about 9,600 cal B.C. has been well documented. At Daisy Cave, on San Miguel Island, cultural remains have been radiocarbon dated to between 9,150 and 9,000 cal B.C. During the Early Holocene (9,600 cal B.C. to 5,600 cal B.C.), the climate of Southern California became warmer and more arid and the human populations, who were represented by small hunter gathers until this point and resided mainly in coastal or inland desert areas, began exploiting a wider range of plant and animal resources.<sup>29</sup>

During the Late Holocene (1,650 cal B.C. to cal A.D. 1769), many aspects of Millingstone culture persisted, but a number of socioeconomic changes occurred.<sup>30,31,32</sup> The native populations of Southern California were becoming less mobile and populations began to gather in small sedentary villages with satellite resource-gathering camps. Increasing population size necessitated the intensified use of existing terrestrial and marine resources.<sup>33</sup> Evidence indicates that the overexploitation of larger, high-ranked food resources may have led to a shift in subsistence, towards a focus on acquiring greater amounts of smaller resources, such as shellfish and small-seeded plants.<sup>34</sup>

Between about A.D. 800 and A.D. 1350, there was an episode of sustained drought, known as the Medieval Climatic Anomaly (MCA).<sup>35</sup> While this climatic event did not appear to reduce the human population, it did lead to a change in subsistence strategies in order to deal with the substantial stress on resources.

Given the increasing sedentism and growing populations during the Late Holocene, territorial conscription and competition became acute. Primary settlements or village sites were typically established in areas with available freshwater, and where two or more ecological zones intersected. This strategic placement of living space provided a degree

<sup>29</sup> Byrd, Brian F., and L. Mark Raab. Prehistory of the Southern Bight: Models for a New Millennium, in *California Prehistory: Colonization, Culture, and Complexity*, edited by Terry L. Jones and Kathryn A. Klar, pp 215-227, 2007.

<sup>30</sup> Erlandson, Jon M., *Early Hunter-Gatherers of the California Coast*, Plenum Press, New York, 1994.

<sup>31</sup> Wallace, E.J.A Suggested Chronology for Southern California Coastal Archaeology. *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 11(3):214-230, 1955.

<sup>32</sup> Warren, C.N. Cultural Traditions and Ecological Adaptation on the Southern California Coast. *Archaic Prehistory in the Western United States*, edited by Cynthia Irwin-Williams. Eastern New Mexico University Contributions in Anthropology 1(3):1-14, 1968.

<sup>33</sup> Erlandson, Jon M., *Early Hunter-Gatherers of the California Coast*, Plenum Press, New York, 1994.

<sup>34</sup> Byrd, Brian F., and L. Mark Raab. Prehistory of the Southern Bight: Models for a New Millennium, in *California Prehistory: Colonization, Culture, and Complexity*, edited by Terry L. Jones and Kathryn A. Klar, pp 215-227, 2007.

<sup>35</sup> Jones, Terry L., Gary M. Brown, L. Mark Raab, Janet L. McVickar, W. Geoffrey Spaulding, Douglas J. Kennett, Andrew York, and Phillip L. Walker, Environmental Imperatives Reconsidered: Demographic Crises in Western North America during the Medieval Climactic Anomaly, *Current Anthropology*, 40(2): 137-70, 1999.



of security in that when subsistence resources associated with one ecological zone failed, the resources of another could be exploited. Villages typically claimed and carefully defended fixed territories that may have averaged 30-square miles in size encompassing a variety of ecological zones that could be exploited for subsistence resources.<sup>36</sup>

The Late Holocene marks a period in which specialization in labor emerged, trading networks became an increasingly important means by which both utilitarian and non-utilitarian materials were acquired, and travel routes were extended. Trade during this period reached its zenith as asphaltum (tar), seashells, and steatite were traded from Catalina Island (Pimu, or Pimugna) and coastal Southern California to the Great Basin. Major technological changes appeared as well, particularly with the advent of the bow and arrow sometime after cal A.D. 500, which largely replaced the use of the dart and atlatl.<sup>37</sup>

#### (b) *Ethnographic Setting*

The Project Site is located within the fringes of territories that have been traditionally assigned to the Gabrielino and the Tataviam. Each of these groups and the ethnographic history of the Project Site is described in Section IV.L, *Tribal Cultural Resources*, of this Draft EIR.

### (3) Archival Research

#### (a) *SCCIC Records Search*

Records searches for the Project were conducted on March 14, 2018, and October 10, 2022, at the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) housed at California State University at Fullerton. The search included a 0.5-mile radius for historic architectural and archaeological resources. The 0.5-mile radius is appropriate in developed urban areas in order to provide a context with which to conduct sensitivity analysis.

#### (b) *Previous Cultural Resources Investigations*

The records search results indicate that 37 cultural resources studies have been conducted and are presently on-file with the SCCIC within a 0.5-mile radius of the Project Site. Approximately 60 percent of the 0.5-mile records search radius has been included in previous cultural resources assessments. Of the 37 previous studies, 4 studies (LA-3426, LA-3427, LA-4902, and LA-12615) have encompassed portions or the entirety of the Project Site. These studies consisted of a historic property survey report and cultural resources assessments (including archaeological and historic architectural resources) and these yielded negative results that is, these studies did not identify any

<sup>36</sup> McCawley, William. *The First Angelinos: The Gabrielino Indians of Los Angeles*. Malki Museum Press, Banning, California, 1996.

<sup>37</sup> Byrd, Brian F., and L. Mark Raab. Prehistory of the Southern Bight: Models for a New Millennium, in *California Prehistory: Colonization, Culture, and Complexity*, edited by Terry L. Jones and Kathryn A. Klar, pp 215-227, 2007.

cultural resources associated with the Project Site. These studies were conducted in 1996, 2000, and 2012 after the Project Site had been fully developed.

(c) *Previously Recorded Cultural Resources*

The records search results indicate that a total of eight cultural resources have been previously recorded within the 0.5-mile radius of the Project Site. Resources that have previously been recorded in the State are assigned identification numbers by the California State Office of Historic Preservation, which maintains CHRIS—a database of all historical resources in the state that have been subject to some form of evaluation, whether through survey or designation. This information may be accessed to qualified researchers at the CHRIS Information centers housed at different universities throughout the State. Therefore, the eight cultural resources that have previously been recorded are referred to here by their assigned identification numbers. Of the eight cultural resources, one is a multicomponent resource (CA-LAN-1945H); five are historic-period archaeological sites (CA-LAN-2394H, P-19-002804, -003303, -003304, and -003305); and two are historic architectural resources (P-19-187794 and -190825). The two historic architectural resources are located close to the Project Site and include Universal City & Studios, approximately 250 feet north of the Project Site, and a potential Universal Studios Historic District situated approximately 500 feet north of the Project Site. No archaeological resources have been previously recorded within the Project Site itself. The National Register-listed (72001602) site of Campo de Cahuenga Adobe (CA-LAN-1945H) is located approximately 1,300 feet northwest of the Project Site. The Campo de Cahuenga site is composed of a historic-period archaeological site (including the adobe's stone foundations, tile floors, and Chinese porcelain) and a prehistoric archaeological site (comprised of Native American pottery, stone pestles, kaolin pipe bowls, and a pipe stem).

(d) *Sacred Lands File Search*

The NAHC maintains a confidential Sacred Lands File (SLF) which contains sites of traditional, cultural, or religious value to the Native American community, which may also be considered historic and/or archaeological resources under CEQA. The NAHC was contacted on March 23, 2018, to request a search of the SLF. The NAHC responded to the request in a letter dated March 26, 2018, indicating that the SLF search conducted for the Project Site yielded negative results, that is, the search did not identify any tribal cultural resources associated with the Project Site. On September 15, 2022, an updated SLF request was submitted to the NAHC. On November 1, 2022, the NAHC indicated that the SLF results were positive, that is, the updated search identified the potential for the Project Site to contain tribal cultural resources. The letter did not provide details on the resources identified within the Project Site, but suggested contacting the Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians. The City conducted consultation with appropriate tribes per CEQA requirements as modified by AB 52. The results of this consultation are summarized in Section IV.L, *Tribal Cultural Resources*, of this Draft EIR.

(e) *Historic Maps and Aerial Photographs*

Historic maps and aerial photographs were examined to provide historical information about historic land uses of the Project Site and to contribute to an assessment of the Project Site's archaeological sensitivity. Available topographic maps include the 1896 Santa Monica, 1900 Los Angeles, and 1902 Santa Monica 30-minute quadrangles; and the 1926, 1948 1953, and 1976 Burbank 7.5-minute quadrangles. Historical aerial photographs were available for the years 1927, 1928, 1944, 1954, 1964, 1971, 1982, 1983, 1986,<sup>38</sup> 1989, 1994, 2002, 2019,<sup>39</sup> and 2020.<sup>40</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance maps were unavailable for the Project Site. The topographic maps and aerial photographs show that prior to 1964, the Project Site was undeveloped. By 1964, the Project Site is shown as graded. By 1971, a surface parking lot and road are depicted as constructed within the southern portion of the Project Site. The 1982 aerial photograph depicts the early construction of the hotel. The 1983 aerial photograph shows that the existing hotel and additional parking lots had been built within the Project Site. The 1986, 1989, and 1994 aerial photographs show that a pool was constructed in the southern portion of the Project site. The 2020 aerial photograph continues depicting the Project Site as it was shown in the 2002 aerial photograph. A detailed discussion of the map review is provided in the *Cultural Resources Assessment Report* in Appendix D of this Draft EIR.

(f) *Geotechnical Report Review*

ESA reviewed the *Updated Geotechnical Engineering Investigation* (Geotechnical Report) prepared for the Project, provided in **Appendix E** of this Draft EIR, which describes the soils within the Project Site by area. Cross sections were provided at the northern end of the Project Site, with an associated description of soils from west of the Project Site boundary to the existing entrance driveway (Northern Area), at the southern end of the site with a description of soils from west of the Project Site boundary to the Existing Hotel Building (Southern Area), and along the slope to the east of the Project Site (Eastern Area). The soils in the western portion of the Project Site are captured by the discussions of the Northern and Southern Areas. A brief summary is provided below.

The northern portion of the Project Site is composed of fill from 1 to 4 feet in thickness overlying bedrock from the Upper Topanga Formation, which consists of interbedded sandstone and siltstone. The fill is deepest along the north side of the existing structure.

The southern portion of the Project Site is located on a partial slope. Fill is encountered at the ground surface and ranges in thickness from 1 foot to 30 feet and predominantly overlies the bedrock from the Upper Topanga Formation throughout the Project Site. In the vicinity of the Existing Outdoor Pool Area, fill ranges from 3 to 5 feet in depth. The

<sup>38</sup> Frame Finder. 2018. Historic aerial photographs for the years 1927, 1928, 1944, 1954, 1964, 1971, 1982, 1983, and 1986. [http://mil.library.ucsb.edu/ap\\_indexes/FrameFinder/](http://mil.library.ucsb.edu/ap_indexes/FrameFinder/), accessed March 2018.

<sup>39</sup> Google Earth. 2019. Aerial photographs for the years 1989, 1994, 2002, and 2019.

<sup>40</sup> Google Maps. 2020. Aerial photograph for the year 2020. <https://www.google.com/maps>, accessed April 2020.

westerly-descending slope has fill ranging from 6 to 7.5 feet in depth and the toe of the western slope has fill between 15 feet (Boring B3) and 22.5 feet (Boring B5) in depth. Fill underneath the proposed chiller/boiler room ranges in depth from 15 to 30 feet.

However, there is a small amount of alluvium that is approximately 17.5 feet in thickness that underlies 12 feet of fill in the southwestern portion of the Project Site that was encountered in Boring B5 (Boring B5 is located 20 feet outside the area proposed for excavation) but this same layer of alluvium was not identified in Boring B3.<sup>41</sup> Since Boring B3 is located within the area proposed for excavation and 40 feet east of Boring B5, this suggests that the layer of alluvium pinches out somewhere between Boring B5 and Boring B3, and, therefore, only a marginal amount of alluvium is actually located within the area proposed for excavation. Bedrock from the Upper Topanga Formation underlies the alluvium in Boring B5 and the fill in Boring B3.

Lastly, the eastern portion of the Project Site consists of fill generally ranging in thickness from 1 foot to greater than 25 feet, followed by bedrock from the Upper Topanga Formation.

*(g) Archaeological Sensitivity Assessment*

No surface manifestations of archaeological resources were identified during the pedestrian survey, and the archival research (through the SCCIC) yielded negative results. Review of the Geotechnical Report for the Project also indicates that the majority of the Project Site contains fill that is underlain by bedrock of the Upper Topanga Formation. There is a marginal amount of alluvium located on a slope in the southwestern portion of the Project Site. Although alluvium sediments typically would have the potential to preserve archaeological materials, there is only a marginal amount of these sediments on the Project Site, and they are also located on a slope, which would have been an unlikely location for prehistoric and historic period habitation. Additionally, the Upper Topanga Formation dates back to the middle Miocene epoch (approximately 20 to 16 million years ago) and, as a result, the sediments within the majority of the Project Site are too old to preserve prehistoric archaeological materials. Lastly, the Project Site has been mostly disturbed by the construction of the Hilton Universal City Hotel, which has likely displaced any resources on the surface, and it is not known to have been subject to historic-period land uses (per review of aerial photographs). However, the area in the southwestern portion of the Project Site (where a marginal amount of alluvium exists along the slope) has the potential, although low, to contain archaeological material given the existence of the nearby Campo de Cahuenga Adobe, which is located approximately 0.25 miles northwest of the Project Site. Based on these results, the Project Site is considered to have a low sensitivity for buried archaeological resources.

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<sup>41</sup> Geotechnologies, Inc., 2022. *Updated Geotechnical Engineering Investigation*, Proposed Hilton Universal City Expansion Project, 555 Universal Hollywood Drive, Los Angeles, California.

#### (4) Archaeological Survey Methods and Results

A cultural resources survey of the Project Site was conducted on March 23, 2018, by ESA, including archaeologists and an architectural historian, the results of which are provided in Appendix D of this Draft EIR. The survey was aimed at identifying historic architectural resources within or immediately adjacent to the Project Site and archaeological resources within the Project Site. Existing on-site buildings and structures, as well as the immediate surroundings, were photographed. In addition, a windshield survey of the surrounding vicinity was conducted in order to assess the potential for a historic district and to assist in the assessment of indirect impacts. The entire Project Site was subject to a pedestrian survey to identify any areas of visible ground surface for archaeological resources.

The pedestrian survey revealed that the Project Site is located on top of a hill and along descending slopes. The ground surface within the western portion of the Project Site is covered with grass, paved areas, a pool and associated facilities, and landscaping. The easternmost portion of the Project Site is located within a heavily vegetated slope area that was previously altered by a sprinkler system and a concrete path. Ground surface visibility was poor (approximately 5 to 20 percent). However, there were some small pockets of land, which yielded 100 percent visibility, and, therefore, those areas were carefully inspected. Sandstone sediments of the Upper Topanga Formation were observed along landscaped areas. No surface evidence of archaeological resources was observed during the pedestrian survey.

### 3. Project Impacts

#### a) Thresholds of Significance

In accordance with Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a Project would have a significant impact related to cultural resources if it would:

- a) ***Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5;***
- b) ***Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5; or***
- c) ***Disturb any human remains including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.***

Under CEQA, and as relates to Threshold (a) above, a proposed development must be evaluated to determine how it may impact the potential eligibility of a structure(s) or a site for designation as a historical resource. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (Standards) were developed as a means to evaluate and approve work for federal grants for historic buildings and then for the federal rehabilitation tax credit (see 36 Code of Federal

Regulations (CFR) Section 67.7). Similarly, CEQA recognizes the value of the Standards by using them to demonstrate that a project may be approved without an EIR. In effect, CEQA has a “safe harbor” by providing either a categorical exemption or a negative declaration for a project which meets the Standards (see CEQA Guidelines Sections 15331 and 15064.5(b)(3)).

For this analysis, the Appendix G Thresholds are relied upon. This analysis uses factors and considerations identified in the City’s 2006 L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide, as appropriate, to assist in answering the Appendix G Threshold questions. The factors to evaluate cultural resources impacts are listed below:

### (1) Built Environment

- A project would normally have a significant impact on a significant resource if it would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 when one or more of the following occurs:
  - Demolition of a significant resource.
  - Relocation that does not maintain the integrity and significance of a significant resource.
  - Conversion, rehabilitation, or alteration of a significant resource which does not conform to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (Standards).
  - Construction that reduces the integrity or significance of important resources on the site or in the vicinity.

### (2) Archaeological Resources

- Is associated with an event or person of recognized importance in California or American prehistory or of recognized scientific importance in prehistory.
- Can provide information which is both of demonstrable public interest and useful in addressing scientifically consequential and reasonable archaeological research questions.
- Has a special or particular quality, such as the oldest, best, largest, or last surviving example of its kind.
- Is at least 100 years old and possesses substantial stratigraphic integrity.
- Involves important research questions that historical research has shown can be answered only with archaeological methods.

## b) Methodology

A project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. In general, a significant effect under CEQA would occur if a project results in a substantial

adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a). Substantial adverse change is defined as “physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of a historical resource would be materially impaired” (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b)(1)). In addition, while assessing a project’s impacts under CEQA, it is important to consider the ability of the historical resources to retain their integrity. A project that diminishes the integrity of a resource such that the significance of a historical resource is materially impaired is a project that would result in a significant impact on the environment.

### (1) Historical Architectural Resources

The analysis of historical resources in this section of the Draft EIR is based on the evaluation of historical resources presented in the *Cultural Resources Assessment*, provided in Appendix D of this Draft EIR. The analysis in Appendix D was prepared by qualified personnel who meet and exceed the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards in history and architectural history. As described within the *Cultural Resources Assessment*, the key steps taken in completing the analysis included research of the Project Site’s development including a review of historic building permits for improvements to the Project Site, Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, historic photographs, aerial photos, and local histories. The California State Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) for Los Angeles County, Department of Parks and Recreation Historic Resources Inventory Forms, and SurveyLA Eligibility findings were consulted to identify any previous evaluations of Project Site and potential historic resources within a 0.25-mile radius of the Project Site. A 0.25-mile radius is the typical study area for a dense, urban environment, as it allows for an analysis of potential visual impacts that could occur in such a built-up area; for a less-dense environment, a study area of 0.5 mile would typically be selected. In addition, field examinations were conducted.

The analysis of direct impacts is focused on the potential for the Project to result in demolition, material alteration, relocation or conversion of a historical resource and/or important character-defining features. The impact analysis also considers potential for the Project to cause indirect impacts due to alteration of the surroundings of an historical resource that could remove part or all of its associated setting, remove historic features or spaces surrounding the resource, or substantially impair or obscure the ability of the resource to convey its historical significance. The analysis of the potential for indirect impacts also involves ascertaining whether there is the potential for damage to proximate historic resources due to Project excavation and construction activities, including potential impacts related to vibration, settlement, or other effects.

### (2) Archaeological Resources

The analysis of impacts to archaeological resources is also based on the *Cultural Resources Assessment Report*, provided in Appendix D to this Draft EIR, which includes (1) a cultural resource records search conducted at the SCCIC to review recorded archaeological resources within a 0.5-mile radius of Project Site and a review of cultural

resource reports, a review of the California Points of Historical Interest (CPHI), the California Historical Landmarks (CHLs), the California Register, the National Register, and the California State HRI listings, (2) an SLF search commissioned through the NAHC, (3) a review of historic maps and aerial photographs, (4) review of geotechnical study, (5) a pedestrian survey of the Project Site, and (6) an archaeological sensitivity assessment. The potential for the Project Site to contain buried archaeological resources is assessed based on the findings of the cultural resource records search (i.e., presence and proximity of known resources), the SLF search, land use history research, subsurface geological conditions, and the proposed excavation parameters for the Project.

### c) Project Design Features

No specific Project Design Features are proposed with regard to cultural resources.

### d) Analysis of Project Impacts

**Threshold a) *Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5?***

#### (1) Impact Analysis

##### (a) Direct Impacts

##### (i) Historical Resources

Although the Hilton Universal City Hotel is only 37 years of age, which means it does not currently meet the typical 50-year threshold for eligibility to the National Register, given the building's notable architect, the firm of William L. Pereira Associates, the building was evaluated to determine potential eligibility to the National Register if it were to meet what is known as "Criteria Consideration G," which allows for a building not yet meeting the 50-year threshold to be eligible if it possesses "exceptional importance." At the State level, there is no age threshold for eligibility to the California Register; however, the California Register does note that sufficient time must have passed in order to understand a potential historical resource's historical importance if it is less than 50 years of age. Therefore, this requirement also informed the evaluation. At the local level, there also are no age thresholds for eligibility as a Los Angeles HCM. Given these considerations, the Hilton Universal City Hotel was evaluated for its potential eligibility to the National Register, California Register, and for local listing as an HCM under all applicable criteria.

Based on the historical resources evaluation provided in the *Cultural Resources Assessment Report*, provided in Appendix D of this Draft EIR, and as summarized above under the subsection, Evaluation of Potential Historic Resources, the subject property does not meet the exceptional importance threshold, and, therefore, the Hilton Universal City Hotel is ineligible for federal, State, and local listing under all applicable criteria. **Therefore,**



**because the Hilton Universal City Hotel does not qualify as a historical resource under CEQA, the Project would have no direct impact to historical resources.**

*(b) Indirect Impacts*

In addition to assessing the potential for direct impacts, indirect impacts to historical resources within 0.25 miles were also evaluated. A 0.25-mile radius is the typical study area for a dense, urban environment, as it allows for an analysis of potential visual impacts that could occur in such a built-up area; for a less-dense environment, a study area of 0.5 miles would typically be selected. As further analyzed in the *Cultural Resources Assessment Report*, provided in Appendix D of this Draft EIR, six known historical resources were evaluated to determine whether construction of the Project and associated changes in views and/or effects on the setting, feeling, and association of these historical resources would result in a substantial material change to their integrity and significance such that their eligibility would be materially impaired.

Given the distance of three of the historical resources (3787 N Cahuenga Boulevard [The Baked Potato Jazz Club], 3729 N Cahuenga Boulevard [KPFK Radio], and 3655 N Cahuenga Boulevard [Miceli's Italian Restaurant]) all located southwest of the Hollywood freeway, approximately 0.25 miles from the Project Site, their views of the Project would be limited and their historic settings would not be affected; therefore, their potential eligibility as historical resources would not be materially impaired, and indirect impacts would be less than significant. While the Campo de Cahuenga is located within 0.25 miles of the Project Site and is considered an archaeological site, the adobe building is no longer present, and therefore, the Campo de Cahuenga is discussed in threshold (b) below for archeological sites, as is typical of below-ground resources listed on the National Register.

The other three remaining resources include the Lankershim/101 Freeway Bridge and Tunnel, the potential Universal Historic District, and Universal City & Studios.

The Lankershim/101 Freeway Bridge and Tunnel is located 0.22 miles southwest of the Project Site and has no direct view of the Project Site. Therefore, the Lankershim/101 Freeway Bridge and Tunnel is a potentially eligible historical resource which would not be indirectly impacted by the Project due to physical distance from the property setback.

Universal City & Studios (P-19-187794) was recorded in 1977 and given a "3S" CHRIS code, which indicates that it appears eligible for listing on the National Register as an individual resource. The DPR form states that P-19-187794 consists of several buildings, sound stages, offices, warehouses, a twenty-one-story hotel, and a fifteen-story steel and glass administration building, yet it is unclear as to what exactly is considered the individually eligible resource. The potential Universal Historic District is located 0.23 miles to the northeast and has an indirect view of the Project Site.

Universal City & Studios was reevaluated in 2010 as a potentially eligible historic district, the Universal Studios Historic District, with 40 contributing buildings, 20 non-contributing

buildings, and one site of historical, cultural, and architectural significance. The potential district's period of significance is 1912 to 1958 (Historic Resources Group, LLC, 2010).<sup>42</sup> This potential district is located approximately 250 feet to the east and northeast of the Project Site. The potential historic district's setting, which is one of the seven aspects of integrity that could contribute to its eligibility as a historical resource, could potentially be impacted by the Project. However, this potential historical resource does not possess strong integrity with regard to its setting. The potential district's period of significance ended in 1958, and, since then, the Universal City area has experienced exponential growth and change in setting due to infill development by Universal Studios in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. As such, the setting of the potential historic district, including the changes to the Project Site that occurred when the Hilton Universal City Hotel was constructed in 1983, has already been substantially altered; therefore, the Project would have no impact to the setting of the potential historic district. The Project would not affect any of the other six aspects of integrity (location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association) of the potential Universal Historic District since there is no proposed work that will take place in the district and, therefore, no potential for material impairment to it. For the reasons stated above, the Project would not result in an indirect impact to historical resources.

**Therefore, based on the above, the Project would not cause an adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines; no direct impacts would occur, and indirect impacts would be less than significant.**

## (2) Mitigation Measures

No direct impacts on historical resources would occur and indirect impacts on historical resources were determined to be less than significant. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

## (3) Level of Significance After Mitigation

Impacts on historical resources were determined to be less than significant without mitigation. Therefore, no mitigation measures were required or included, and the impact level remains less than significant.

***Threshold b) Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?***

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<sup>42</sup> Historic Resources Group, LLC. *Historic Resources Technical Report NBC Universal Evolution Plan*. Prepared for Universal City Studios, LLLP, L.P., March 2010. NBC Universal Evolution Plan - Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) (lacity.org), accessed December 2022.

## (1) Impact Analysis

As discussed in subsections IV.C.2.b) (3) Archival Research, and IV.C.2.b) (4) Archaeological Survey Methods and Results above, no archaeological resources have been previously recorded within or within close proximity to the Project Site and the pedestrian survey yielded negative results. Review of the *Geotechnical Report* for the Project indicates that the majority of the Project Site contains fill that is underlain by bedrock of the Upper Topanga Formation (which is too old to preserve prehistoric archaeological materials). Alluvium sediments are located in the southwestern portion of the Project Site. Although alluvium sediments typically have the potential to preserve archaeological materials, there is only a marginal amount of these sediments on the Project Site, and they are also located on a slope which would have been an unlikely location for prehistoric and historic period habitation. Lastly, the Project Site has been mostly disturbed by the construction of the Hilton Universal City Hotel, which has likely displaced any resources on the surface, and it is not known to have been subject to historic-period land uses (per review of aerial photographs), which could result in the identification of historic-period archaeological resources. However, the area in the southwestern portion of the Project Site (where a marginal amount of alluvium exists along the slope) has the potential, although low, to contain archaeological material given the existence of the nearby Campo de Cahuenga Adobe, which is located approximately 0.25 miles northwest of the Project Site.

Although there is some limited potential to encounter archaeological resources on the Project Site, the City has established a standard condition of approval to address inadvertent discovery of archaeological resources. Should such archaeological resources be inadvertently encountered, this condition of approval provides for temporary halting of construction activities near the discovery of archaeological resources so the find can be evaluated. An archaeologist shall then assess the discovered material(s) and prepare a survey, study or report evaluating the resources. The Applicant shall then comply with the recommendations of the evaluating archaeologist, and a copy of the archaeological survey report shall be submitted to the Department of City Planning. Ground-disturbing activities may resume once the archaeologist's recommendations have been implemented to the satisfaction of the archaeologist. In accordance with the condition of approval, all Project construction activities would be conducted in accordance with regulatory requirements.

**Therefore, while development of the Project Site has some potential to encounter buried archaeological resources, with implementation of the City's standard condition of approval to address inadvertent discovery of archaeological resources, there would not be a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines, and impacts would be less than significant.**

## (2) Mitigation Measure

Impacts regarding archaeological resources were determined to be less than significant without mitigation. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

## (3) Level of Significance After Mitigation

Impacts regarding archaeological resources were determined to be less than significant without mitigation. Therefore, no mitigation measures were required or included, and the impact level remains less than significant.

### ***Threshold c) Would the Project disturb any human remains including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?***

As discussed in Section VI.6, *Impacts Found Not to Be Significant*, of this Draft EIR and in the Initial Study (**Appendix A**) of this Draft EIR, no human remains are known to exist within the Project Site, and the Project would comply with applicable regulatory requirements in the event human remains are discovered. The results of the records searches and pedestrian survey conducted for the Project and provided in Appendix D further confirm that human remains are not known to exist on the Project Site. Furthermore, not all soils have the potential to preserve archaeological materials, and the soils within the Project Site (from the Upper Topanga Formation) are too old to preserve prehistoric archaeological resources, including human remains. Therefore, a less than significant impact would occur with respect to Threshold (c). No further analysis is required.

## **e) Cumulative Impacts**

### (1) Impact Analysis

The City has identified 15 related projects located in the Project area that are currently proposed, have not yet been built, or that are currently under construction (See Chapter III, *General Description of Environmental Setting*, subsection III.2, Related Projects, of this Draft EIR for additional details). One development project is situated within 1,000 feet of the Project Site: NBC Universal Evolution Plan (Related Project No.1). Related Project No. 1 consists of a plan for the future development of the Universal City area. The southwestern portion of Related Project No. 1 is within 500 feet of both the Project Site and the Sheraton Hotel property. The portion of Related Project No. 1 located north of the Sheraton Hotel property and north of Universal Hollywood Drive is designated as Business District. A 1-acre landscaped slope adjacent to both the Sheraton Hotel property and the Project Site, the area adjacent to Project Site to the east, and the property to the east of Universal Hollywood Drive are designated for hotel uses.<sup>43</sup> As stated above, the purpose of Related Project No. 1 is to guide future development of the Universal City

<sup>43</sup> County of Los Angeles. Universal Studios Specific Plan. Ordinance No. 2013-0010. April 2013. [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://planning.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Universal-Studios\\_specific-plan-approved-final\\_Ordinance.pdf](chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://planning.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Universal-Studios_specific-plan-approved-final_Ordinance.pdf). Accessed July 5, 2023.

area. There are no near-term plans for development proposed within 500 feet of the Project Site and the Sheraton Hotel because areas adjacent to the Project Site are designated for hotel and Business District-related uses.

(a) *Historical Resources*

A significant cumulative impact associated with the Project and related projects would occur if the impact would render a historical resource or district no longer eligible for listing, and the Project's contribution to the impact would be cumulatively considerable. Although impacts to historic resources tend to be site-specific, cumulative impacts would occur if the Project, related projects, and other future development within the Community Plan area would result in impacts to a designated or potentially eligible historic resource, to other structures or defining characteristics within a historic district, or to resources that are significant within the same context as the Project. As described in the Project-level analysis in subsection IV.C.d)(1) above, the Project would have no direct impacts on historical resources, and indirect impacts on proximate historical resources would be less than significant due to their distance from the Project Site and changes that have occurred to their historical setting. Related Project No.1 guide future development of the Universal City area and consideration of Universal City and Studios as a potential historic district would be considered within that proposed plan. Of the remaining 14 related projects, 12 are located to the south/southwest of the Hollywood Freeway. The final two projects are located approximately 1.1 miles north across the Los Angeles River. Due to the distance of the related projects and different historical context of their settings, the related projects would not result in impacts to the historic resources identified in vicinity of the Project Site. **Therefore, the Project would not have a cumulatively considerable contribution to cumulative impacts, and cumulative impacts on historical resources would be less than significant.**

(b) *Archaeological Resources and Human Remains*

Impacts related to archaeological resources qualifying as historical resources or unique archaeological resources under CEQA are in most cases site-specific because they occur on a project level as a result of a project's ground disturbance activities during construction and, as such, are assessed on a project-by-project basis. Many of the related projects within the study area would require excavation that could potentially expose or damage archaeological resources. However, the related projects are also located in highly developed urban areas with sites that have been previously disturbed that are on separate sites not adjacent to the Project Site. Therefore, the potential of such related projects to encounter and cause, in conjunction with the Project, a significant cumulative impact on archaeological resources is limited. Further, in association with CEQA review, and depending on the depth of excavation and sensitivity of respective sites, if resources are encountered for the related projects, as with the Project, the City's standard condition of approval would be implemented to address inadvertent discovery of archaeological resources, or where known archaeological sites could be encountered, mitigation measures, including avoidance and preservation in place or other treatment, may be required. **With implementation of the City's standard condition of approval, or**

**mitigation measures, if required for related projects, cumulative impacts on archaeological resources associated with related projects and the Project would be less-than-significant.**

(2) Mitigation Measures

Cumulative impacts to historical resources and archaeological resources were determined to be less than significant. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

(3) Level of Significance After Mitigation

Cumulative impacts to historic and archaeological resources were determined to be less than significant without mitigation. Therefore, no mitigation measures were required or included, and the impact level remains less than significant.