MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

2.6  1515-002.M02

TO:          LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes Foundation
             (Mr. Dan Mendoza)

FROM:        Sapphos Environmental, Inc.
             (Ms. Leslie Heumann and Ms. Natasha Tabares)

SUBJECT:     Archaeological Resources and Human Remains Impacts Assessment

ATTACHMENTS:  Attachment 1: Local Vicinity Map
               Attachment 2: Alternative A.1.2 Site Plan: Approved Project
               Attachment 3: Refined Project Conceptual Site Plan
               Attachment 4: Overlay Analysis of Approved Project and Refined Project Site Plans

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Memorandum for the Record (MFR) documents the results of the archaeological resources and human remains impacts assessment of the LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes project (refined project). As a result of this assessment, it was determined that a key element of the refined project—the dimensional reduction of the Campo Santo Memorial Garden (Campo Santo)—will not result in new significant impacts or substantially more adverse impacts to archaeological resources and human remains than those identified in the certified Plaza de Cultura y Arte Environmental Impact Report (EIR).\(^1\) This determination is based on a comparison of the refined project with the approved project to identify any impacts that had previously been identified and mitigated. The dimensions of the Campo Santo originally documented in the approved project have been reduced in the refined project to accommodate a new structure that will include a multipurpose room and lobby within the area originally planned as the easternmost portion of the Campo Santo. The Campo Santo element of the approved project is partially located on what possibly used to be a cemetery, which operated since as early as 1820. Evidence for these conclusions is provided by a recently updated literature review and record search for the cemetery area.

conducted at the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) at California State University, Fullerton; ongoing monitoring of ground-disturbing activities in the Shell and Core portion of the approved project; and monitoring of geotechnical testing for a nearby walkway.  

**PURPOSE OF THE MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

The purpose of this MFR is to provide the LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes Foundation (Foundation) with the substantial evidence required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) that demonstrates that the refined project will not cause new or substantially more significant impacts to archaeological resources or human remains. It is the goal of the Foundation to ensure that the proposed refinements comply with the certified EIR.

**PROJECT LOCATION**

The refined project is located in the City of Los Angeles (City) and County of Los Angeles (County), California (Attachment 1, Local Vicinity Map). Regional access to the site is provided by State Highway 110 (Harbor Freeway) to the north and west, U.S. Interstate 5 (Golden State Freeway) to the east, and U.S. Highway 101 (Ventura Freeway) to the south. The City and County Civic Center is approximately 0.25 mile south and southwest of the refined project site. The refined project site is located within two blocks of Olvera Street and two blocks west of Union Station. Chinatown is located one block to the north. The refined project site consists of an approximately 4-acre area composed of a portion of the Antique Block (500 block of North Main Street), County Parking Lot 25, and City Parking Lot 1, and is located within the El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic District (Historic District), which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The refined project location is composed of two land areas separated by New High Street. The larger area is bounded by La Iglesia de Nuestra Señora Reina de Los Angeles (The Church of Our Lady Queen of the Angels, known locally and herein as the Plaza Church) and rectory to the north, North Main Street to the east, Republic Street to the south, and Spring Street to the west.

**PROJECT HISTORY**

The Plaza de Cultura y Arte EIR was certified in September 2004, with Alternative A.1.2 as the approved Plaza de Cultura y Arte project (Attachment 2, Alternative A.1.2 Site Plan: Approved Project). Since the establishment of the Foundation, the project name has been changed to LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes. The purpose of the approved project is to provide the regional and local community with a pedestrian-oriented Mexican American cultural heritage center that serves as a venue for community needs such as local performances, temporary exhibitions, corporate meetings, cultural activities, and other public and private events. This cultural heritage center would allow visitors to understand and appreciate the diverse contributions of early Mexican American settlers to the history of Los Angeles through programming that integrates art, culture, and education.

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Alternative A.1.2 retained, rehabilitated, and adaptively reused two contributing elements to the Historic District, the Plaza House, and the Vickrey-Brunswig Building. A new building, four stories in height and an exterior footprint of approximately 17,509 square feet, replaced the Brunswig Annex. The Campo Santo and outdoor classroom space were located south of the Plaza Church. Alternative A.1.2 also was designed to incorporate a 500-seat Theater Performing Arts Center with an exterior footprint of approximately 27,500 square feet, to be located southwest of the Vickrey-Brunswig Building on the south side of Republic Street in County Parking Lot 25.

The certified EIR determined that the project would have the potential to result in significant impacts to archaeological resources due to the sensitivity of the site to contain previously unrecorded archaeological resources. Potential impacts were reduced to below the level of significance by the implementation of mitigation measure Cultural-1:

**Mitigation Measure Cultural-1** ensures that impacts to cultural resources as a result of the potential for earthmoving activity to uncover previously unrecorded archeological resources is below the level of significance through monitoring by a qualified archaeologist of all subsurface operations, including but not limited to grading, excavation, trenching, and recording of any previously unrecorded archeological resources encountered during construction. The archaeologist shall be on site during any activity when soil is to be moved or exported. The archaeologist shall be authorized to halt the project in the area of a finding, and mark, collect, and evaluate any archaeological materials discovered during construction. In addition, an exploratory archaeological excavation shall be made (i.e., a sample test pit) to assess the presence of cultural resources.

The certified EIR also determined that the proposed project would have the potential to result in significant impacts to human remains due to the possibility of unanticipated disturbance of burials, both in association with the former cemetery on site and interments outside of formal cemeteries. Potential impacts are reduced to below the level of significance by the implementation of mitigation measure Cultural-4:

**Mitigation Measure Cultural-4** ensures that impacts to cultural resources related to the unanticipated discovery of human remains be reduced to below the level of significance by ensuring that, in the event human remains are encountered, construction in the area of finding shall cease and the remains shall stay in-situ pending definition of an appropriate plan. The County of Los Angeles Coroner shall be contacted to determine whether investigation of the cause of death is required. In the event that the remains are of Native American origin, the Native American Heritage Commission shall be contacted to determine necessary procedures for protection and preservation of remains, including reburial, as provided in the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064.5(e), “CEQA and Archaeological Resources,” CEQA Technical Advisory Series.

In April and May 2007, the Brunswig Annex was demolished in accordance with the certified EIR and the Shell and Core project was begun to rehabilitate and seismically strengthen the Plaza

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House and the Vickrey-Brunswig Building. Archaeological monitoring of excavations related to the Shell and Core project have yielded no significant archaeological materials. A separate project consisting of the geotechnical testing conducted on June 6, 2008, associated with the planned construction of a pedestrian walkway within and adjacent to the proposed Campo Santo was also monitored and no significant cultural materials were recovered.

In December 2007, the Foundation proposed programming and physical refinements to the approved project presented in the 2004 certified EIR, including relocation and resizing of certain project elements (Attachment 3, Refined Project Conceptual Site Plan). The refinements are intended in part to support the designation of LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes as a Smithsonian Affiliate. One proposed element of the refined project affects the area previously proposed for the creation of the Campo Santo, planned to honor the first settlers of the City and the City’s first cemetery. In the approved project, the Campo Santo would comprise approximately 4,400 square feet of park-like setting to be located to the south of the west half of the Plaza Church, and separated from it by a walkway. The hardscape would include paseos and pedestrian walkways to enhance the pedestrian connections between Spring Street and North Main Street and to provide pedestrian paths and public open space adjacent to Arcadia Street. The proposed refinement would encroach on the southeast corner of the Campo Santo and reduce its size by approximately 638 square feet (approximately 15 percent) (Attachment 4: Overlay Analysis of Approved Project and Refined Project Site Plans).

DISCUSSION

In order to characterize the cultural resources at the approved project site, Sapphos Environmental, Inc. conducted a literature review and record search at SCCIC in support of the 2004 EIR. This search included a review of all recorded prehistoric and historic archaeological sites and isolates within a 0.25-mile radius of the project location, as well as surveys, excavation, and monitoring reports. To assess the potential for the refined project to result in new significant impacts or substantially more adverse impacts to cultural resources, Sapphos Environmental, Inc. updated the record search and supplemented the research regarding the Plaza Church and the area previously occupied by the cemetery. Additional information was obtained from the results of the cultural resources monitoring of the Shell and Core project and the geotechnical testing on and adjacent to the proposed Campo Santo.

Prehistoric Context and Contact Period

At the time of contact, the Native American group ethnographically known as the Gabrielino tribe occupied nearly the entire basin comprising Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Named after the Mission San Gabriel, the Gabrielino are thought to have been one of the two— the other being

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Chumash—wealthiest and largest ethnic groups in aboriginal Southern California. The affluence of the Gabrielino was largely due to the wealth of natural resources within the land base they controlled, which included the rich coastal areas between Topanga Canyon and Aliso Creek and the offshore islands of San Clemente, San Nicolas, and Santa Catalina. Inland Gabrielino territory included the watersheds of the Los Angeles, San Gabriel, and Santa Ana Rivers, and the territory was bounded on the north by the San Gabriel Mountains, on the south by the Santa Ana Mountains, and on the east by the present-day City of San Bernardino.

Early Spanish accounts indicate that the Gabrielino lived in permanent villages with a population ranging from 50 to 200 individuals, and that in 1770, the total Gabrielino population exceeded 5,000 people. Several types of structures characterized the Gabrielino villages; single family homes took the form of domed circular structures averaging 12 to 35 feet in diameter and covered with tule, fern, or carrizo, while communal structures measured over 60 feet in diameter and could house three or four families. Sweathouses, menstrual huts, and a ceremonial enclosure were also common features of many villages. Records indicate that a large Gabrielino Village known as Yaanga was located in the Los Angeles area. The exact location of the village has never been established due to the lack of appropriate documentation, but an approximate location has been determined to be in the area where the present City Civic Center is located, southwest of the project area. The community of Yaanga remained until 1930 or 1936, when public pressure forced the village to be relocated near modern Commercial and Alameda Streets.

Plaza District: History and Development

Spanish and Mexican Era

The area of Los Angeles now known as the Plaza district was selected in 1825 as the third of three sites chosen by the Spanish for the new pueblo, or town, of Los Angeles, originally named El Pueblo de la Reina de Los Angeles. The site of the original settlement was selected in 1781 when the Spanish governor of California, Felipe de Neve, led a procession of soldiers, laypeople, and priests from nearby Mission San Gabriel and founded the pueblo near the Río de Porciúncula (Porciúncula River, now the Los Angeles River). The settlement, whose objective was to

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18 The first site selected in 1781 by Governor Felipe de Neve on which to found the city suffered from severe flooding in 1792; after the second site was also flooded in 1815, the Plaza was relocated farther from the river, to the northwest. Poole, Jean Bruce. 2002. El Pueblo: The Historic Heart of Los Angeles. Los Angeles, CA: Getty Publications.
supplement the agricultural goods produced at the Mission San Gabriel, was designed according
to the Laws of the Indies, the town planning guidelines codified by the Spanish in the mid-16th
century for all colonial towns. The houses and buildings were constructed facing a central square
oriented to the cardinal points. By 1818, the population of the pueblo had grown to nearly 600
people, and the town’s character was rural and driven by small farming enterprises.

After Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821, the subsequent secularization of the
mission system and distribution of its holdings dramatically shifted the character of land ownership
in Los Angeles and California. While this shift marked the beginning of the rancho system that
would “dominate California life for nearly half a century,” the rural character of the pueblo of Los
Angeles and its surroundings remained intact. Ranchos were largely self-sufficient enterprises
producing goods to maintain their households and operations.

Many ranchers maintained second homes in the Plaza area, which in 1825 was relocated a third
and final time to its present location. Construction of the Plaza Church was completed in 1822 (see
below). The Plaza continued to serve as a gathering place for trading and buying goods, as well as
social activities, fiestas, and mass in the Plaza Church. By the 1830s, the population of the
settlement had grown from the original 44 to approximately 1,000, making Los Angeles the most
populous of the original three pueblo settlements, as well as the center of economic and political
life, in Alta California.

American Era

Between 1830 and 1860 various social, political, and economic changes took place including the
signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, with which the U.S.–Mexican War formally
ended. California was annexed to the United States and subsequently gained statehood in 1850.
Throughout these years, the Plaza area continued to serve as the center of social and religious life
in Los Angeles. With the 1849 advent of the Gold Rush in Northern California, as well as the
growing influx of European Americans to Southern California as a result of westward expansion,
Los Angeles’s population expanded rapidly in the American period. From 1850 to 1860, the
population grew from approximately 1,600 to 4,300. The Plaza district remained a commercial
and social center but it also developed into a marginalized area. The first Los Angeles Gas Works
was established in 1867 in the Plaza district, at the place where the Brunswig Annex building was

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to be located, at the corner of Hayes Alley (now Republic Street) and New High Street. In 1869/1870, former California governor Pío de Jesús Pico, the last governor under Mexican rule, commissioned the construction of the Pico House, a hotel across Main Street from the site of the later Vickrey-Brunswig Building and Brunswig Annex, in an attempt to revive the Plaza neighborhood. In 1870, the Merced Theatre, the first building constructed in Los Angeles specifically for theater, was built next door to the Pico House. For a decade, the Pico House and Merced Theatre were the most elegant such institutions in the city. Other attempts in the 1870s at beautifying the Plaza included the landscaping and reshaping of the central square to a large circle, as well as the addition of a fountain, trees, and flowerbeds.

Between 1870 and 1880, the population of Los Angeles nearly doubled from 5,728 to 11,183. By 1898, the neighborhood surrounding the Plaza district, stretching southwest to Second and Spring Streets, had become the City’s first central business district. By 1920, the business district was home to approximately 75 percent of Los Angeles’s commercial and professional activity. While downtown thrived, the Plaza declined; thus, the centrality of the Plaza district changed with the City’s outward expansion and southward shift of the commercial and civic core, which by 1930 was centered at Seventh and Hill Streets. The construction of the Santa Ana Freeway (Interstate 5) in 1949/1950 immediately south of the Plaza district further isolated the area.

In 1928, a scheme by Mrs. Christine Sterling, an emigrant to Los Angeles, sought to preserve the few remnants of the Plaza’s historic past and revive the area as a Latin American center and a Mexican marketplace. Spurred by the City’s condemnation of the Avila Adobe, the lone survivor of the original settlement, Mrs. Sterling contacted descendants of the original residents of the area, lobbied the City Council and City leaders such as Los Angeles Times publisher Harry Chandler, and raised enough capital to incorporate the Plaza de Los Angeles, Inc. The group sought “to preserve the Plaza as a monument to the founding of Los Angeles.” This movement was officially recognized in 1953, when El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park was created by the City and County and the State of California.

In 1972, the Plaza district was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a district under the name El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park. In a boundary expansion approved by the National Register in 1981, the Plaza House, Vickrey-Brunswig Building, and Brunswig Annex were subsequently added as contributors to the district.

**The Plaza Church and the Old Cemetery**

Three years after the founding of El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora La Reina de Los Angeles de Porciúncula (the town that became the City of Los Angeles) on September 4, 1781, the construction of a small adobe church began. The little church was located where Sunset Boulevard and North Broadway are currently located. As the pueblo’s population continued to increase, the

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A small church proved to be insufficient for the needs of the inhabitants of Los Angeles. In 1810, permission was granted for the building of a new church; however, the work was slow, and in 1815, de Río de Porciúncula flooded the area and what little had been built of the church. Finally, in 1818, under Governor Pablo Vicente de Solá, a new site located on higher ground was selected for the construction of the new church, which is the present location of the church. The construction of the Plaza Church was finished in 1822. An area adjacent to the Plaza Church was designated as a cemetery, and although the cemetery was consecrated in 1822, the first records documenting information in the “Book of Baptisms and Deaths” did not appear until 1826. Records at the Mission San Gabriel indicate that at least three people were buried at the Plaza Church between 1820 and 1822.

Throughout the years, the Plaza Church used various parts of its surroundings as a cemetery, including the areas adjacent to the north and south and possibly in front of the main entrance on the east side. The northern portion of the cemetery occupied an area smaller than the southern portion, and it is not clear whether the area designated as a cemetery on the south part was the result of the northern area exceeding its capacity or if the northern portion was used because of lack of space in the southern portion. However, some records indicate that the northern portion was the original cemetery, which could be accessed through a doorway located in the northern side of the church. This doorway is a common feature present in Spanish churches, and it is considered significant because “it was from this door that the deceased left the church for the last time.” Burial records from the Plaza Church showed that there were approximately 660 burials between 1826 and 1844, primarily on the south side of the church. The location of the southern portion of the cemetery partially corresponds to that of the Campo Santo as disclosed in the certified EIR. Documentation also exists that indicates the possible presence of an additional burial plot located at the front and to the east of the main portal of the Plaza Church. This area, enclosed by a picket fence, was considered not to be consecrated ground, and therefore was set aside for those who were not at peace with the church. In addition to those buried in the areas outside of the church, some people were buried within the church building. The Death Registers of

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the church show records of at least seven individuals who are said to be buried within the church itself.\textsuperscript{43}

In 1839, a petition was passed by the citizens of Los Angeles to relocate the cemetery and remove all the remains, as these were putting at risk the health of the community due to overcrowding. Finally, in 1844, a new Catholic cemetery opened on North Broadway and the remains from the cemetery, depicted as the “Old Cemetery” in the 1872 map,\textsuperscript{44} associated with the church were transferred to the new location.\textsuperscript{45} It should be noted, however, that existing documentation does not account for all the individuals that were buried at this cemetery.

After the cemetery closed, the northern portion was used as a garden for many years and was later occupied by commercial buildings. Today, the area is occupied by shops, landscaping, and a shrine. The exact extension of the southern portion of the cemetery is unknown. Existing documentation describes its location but there is no mention of the dimensions of the plot. The southern portion of the former cemetery was originally used as an orchard, then as a garden. A series of commercial buildings were set in place in the following years and later a parking lot was constructed. Today, the area previously occupied by the cemetery and portions of the surrounding areas is a fenced area with planted grass.\textsuperscript{46}

The earliest map documenting the southern portion of the cemetery is a map from the 1856 Survey of Los Angeles Plaza Church Property, which marks the area as the churchyard but does not provide for the west and south areas.\textsuperscript{47} The 1872 Map of First Los Angeles Gas Works shows an actual boundary, and an area marked as the “Old Cemetery” is clearly defined; however, the map lacks a scale and was drawn nearly 30 years after the cemetery was closed.\textsuperscript{48} The 1873 map of the Old Portion of the City Surrounding the Plaza has an area marked as the “Old Cemetery,” but there is no indication of a boundary on the west side.\textsuperscript{49} Subsequent maps depicted the area of the Old Cemetery indicating the different uses that the area experienced throughout the years. The 1910\textsuperscript{50} and 1921\textsuperscript{51} Baist Atlas of Los Angeles City Surveys show the southern portion of the formal cemetery occupied by a series of buildings, and Sanborn Maps from 1923–1948 and 1953–1960 show the area occupied by a parking lot.\textsuperscript{52} Additional maps showing El Pueblo de Los Angeles in

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{44} Keller, M. 1872. Map of First Los Angeles Gas Works (HS 169).
\bibitem{47} Waldemar, A. 1856. Map of the Survey of Los Angeles Plaza Church Property (HS 180).
\bibitem{48} Keller, M. 1872. Map of First Los Angeles Gas Works (HS 169).
\bibitem{49} Ruxton, A. G. 1873. Map of the Old Portion of the City Surrounding the Plaza (HS 170).
\bibitem{52} Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps. Available at: California State University, Northridge, Geography Map Library, Department of Geography.
\end{thebibliography}
1830, 1855, and 1870 depict the Plaza Church but do not show anything that provides an indication of the location of the cemetery.\textsuperscript{33}

**CONCLUSION**

The updated record search and research reaffirmed the finding of the certified EIR that the approved project site has the potential to yield previously undiscovered archaeological resources and human remains, due to its location within a historically significant area of Los Angeles and the presence of the former cemetery.\textsuperscript{54} No information was discovered that would indicate that the 638 square feet of the previously approved Campo Santo that would be utilized for construction of a part of the proposed lecture hall would be more sensitive for archaeological resources and human remains than any other portion of the site. The refined project elements and associated earthmoving activities are comparable to those addressed in the certified EIR.\textsuperscript{55} The mitigation measures, specifically Cultural-1 and Cultural-4, adopted under the certified EIR to reduce potential impacts to archaeological resources and human remains to a less than significant level, are adequate and appropriate for the refined project.\textsuperscript{56} Therefore, implementation of the refined project would not be expected to result in new significant impacts or substantially more adverse significant impacts to archaeological resources and human remains than those specified in the certified EIR with the implementation of the specified mitigation measures.\textsuperscript{57}

Should there be any questions regarding the information contained in this MFR, please contact Ms. Natasha Tabares at (626) 683-3547.


Local Vicinity Map

Legend:
- Refined Project Site

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ATTACHMENT 3
Refined Project Conceptual Site Plan
ATTACHMENT 4
OVERLAY ANALYSIS OF APPROVED PROJECT
AND REFINED PROJECT SITE PLANS
Attachment 4

Overlay Analysis of Approved Project and Refined Project Site Plans