



RT FACTFINDERS
Cultural Resources

REPORT

**UPDATED
PHASE I CULTURAL RESOURCE INVESTIGATION
FOR 15TH STREET WEST AND AVENUE L
COMMERCIAL PROJECT
9.5 ACRES
SOUTHEAST OF THE INTERSECTION OF
15TH STREET WEST AND WEST AVENUE L
LANCASTER, LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

Prepared For:

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Prepared By:

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**Job. No. 639
January 2021**

Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 3109-026-032, -040 -042 and -044

**Performed under: Private contract
USGS Quadrangle: Lancaster West, Calif. 7.5'
Area covered: 9.5 acres
Location: Township 7 North, Range 12 West, Section 33
Keywords: Antelope Valley, Lancaster, Historic Period Site**

Table of Contents

Summary.....	1
I Introduction.....	2
II Environmental Setting.....	2
III Cultural Setting.....	3
IV Record and Map Search Results.....	4
V Survey Methods and Conditions.....	5
VI Survey Findings.....	6
VII Management Concerns.....	7
VIII References Cited.....	8

Attachments

1. Native American Heritage Commission response
2. Photographs

SUMMARY

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended, and the requirements of the City of Lancaster, an updated phase I cultural resource investigation was completed for an approximately 9.5-acre property in Lancaster known as the “15th West and Ave. L Commercial Project”. The property is situated southeast of the intersection of 15th Street West and West Avenue L. The subject property is recorded with the Los Angeles County Tax Assessor as APN 3109-026-032, -040, -042 and -044. The property lies within the northwest 1/4 of the northeast 1/4 of Section 33, Township 7 North, Range 12 West, San Bernardino meridian. The original survey of the property was performed in 2014 (Norwood 2014). The report was updated in 2018 and again in 2021.

The purpose of the study was to identify and record cultural resources within the subject property and recommend mitigation measures, if warranted, and verify original survey findings. As a result of the investigation, no Native American sites or artifacts were identified on the property. A demolished mid-20th century historic period residence with three foundations and other features was discovered and recorded. It is not considered a significant cultural resource. Since no significant cultural resources are present, no impacts to significant cultural resources are anticipated due to any future use and development of the property. No further cultural resource work is recommended.

I. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended, and the requirements of the City of Lancaster, an updated phase I cultural resource investigation was completed for an approximately 9.5-acre property in Lancaster known as the "15th West and Ave. L Commercial Project." The property was surveyed previously in 2014 (Norwood 2014). The report was updated in 2018 and again in 2021.

The property is situated southeast of the intersection of 15th Street West and West Avenue L. The subject property is recorded with the Los Angeles County Tax Assessor as APN 3109-026-032, -040, -042 and -044. The property lies within the northwest 1/4 of the northeast 1/4 of Section 33, Township 7 North, Range 12 West, San Bernardino meridian (Figures 1, 2).

CEQA defines cultural resources as including archaeological sites, historic buildings, structures or objects, and properties of unique ethnic cultural value or religious/sacred uses. The City of Lancaster required this study because use or construction on the property has the potential to cause a "substantial adverse change" to any cultural resources that might be present. This study was done as an update to verify earlier findings.

The purpose of the study was to identify cultural resources within the subject property and recommend mitigation measures, if warranted. The scope of the investigation included an on-foot inspection of the property; a review of records, maps and literature; preparation and filing of any necessary record forms as specified by the Office of Historic Preservation Guidelines; and preparation of a phase I report.

II. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The property lies within a developed area. A south-bound on-ramp to Interstate I-14 defines the northeast and east margins of the property boundary. Scattered single family residences are located to the south. About half of the subject property has native vegetation (Joshua Tree woodland) and approximately half of the natural contours are disturbed. The primary plants seen in the project area include rabbitbrush, a few Joshua trees, peach thorn, introduced pine trees and introduced grasses and weeds. There is a dirt road along the southern property margin. A portion of the property once had at least three structures, and shows evidence of grading, farming and landscaping.

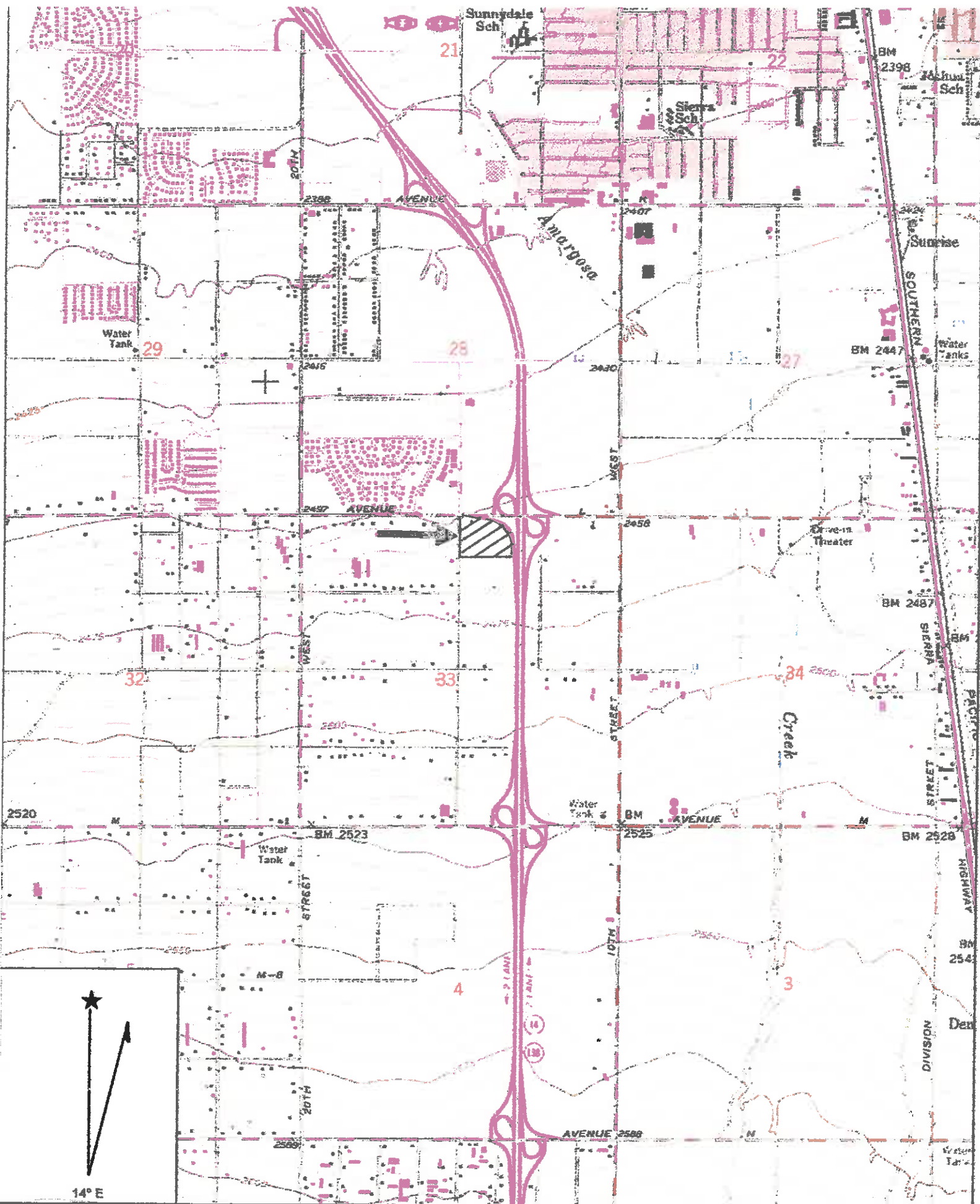
The property is situated on the Antelope Valley floor. The Antelope Valley is a broad, flat V-shaped basin in the Western Mojave Desert. The Valley is bounded on the north by the Tehachapi Mountains and on the south by the San Gabriel Mountains and extends eastward to the Mojave River Valley. Low points in the Antelope Valley are Rogers and Rosamond Dry Lakes with elevations of approximately 2275 feet above mean sea level. The subject property lies south of Rosamond Dry Lake and its elevation is approximately 2450-2460 feet above mean sea level. Soil on the property is quaternary in age and is a gravelly sand. There are no notable physiographic features, rock outcrops, springs, or other permanent sources of water on or



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Figure 1: Project location depicted on Palmdale, California
USGS map of 01 July 1975 via Microsoft Terra Server

1" = about 7.5 miles



immediately near the property.

III. CULTURAL SETTING

The Antelope Valley has a cultural history extending back over 10,000 years and this history is represented by thousands of archaeological and historic period sites. Most of the prehistoric periods are known only in general outline. As would be expected the later periods are the best known. General temporal and cultural sequences have been developed by a number of researchers for other areas of the Mojave Desert including Wallace (1962), Bettinger and Taylor (1974), Stickle and Weinman-Roberts (1980), Warren and Crabtree (1986), and Earle, et. al., (1997).

Local prehistoric cultural history can be classified into four periods: Early, Middle, Late and Post-Contact (Norwood 1987). These periods were created to recognize change in environmental variables, technological and stylistic change, and/or settlement pattern changes. The ethnography of the Antelope Valley floor is poorly known. Various Indian groups, including the Kitanemuk, Kawaiisu and Serrano/Vanyume, may have been present in the area. These people were hunters and gatherers with an intimate knowledge of local floral and faunal resources and were able to obtain and prepare them for food and other products. The ethnography of the Valley is discussed by Kroeber (1925), Bean and Smith (1978), Blackburn and Bean (1978), Sutton (1980), Zigmond (1986), and Earle (1996).

The historical context of the region is discussed in several publications including those by Starr (1988), Morris (1977), Earle, et. al. (1997, 1998), and Earle (1998). A series of publications by the Kern-Antelope Historical Society and the West Antelope Valley Historical Society contain historical essays and interviews that are valuable for understanding the development of local historical context.

Prior to the last part of the 19th century, the history of the Antelope Valley is characterized primarily by people's efforts to pass through the Valley. Activity within the Valley was largely limited to cattle grazing, minor prospecting and hunting expeditions. Historic development of the Valley really began after the 1876 establishment of the Southern Pacific Railroad linking Los Angeles with the San Joaquin Valley. The mid-1880s brought the first actual land boom. This period saw the establishment of a number of settlements in the Valley and many settlers began successful orchards and small farms. There was a great deal of speculation and a variety of questionable schemes were used to entice people into the Valley.

Following this period the fortunes of the Valley were greatly altered by natural causes. In 1894, a 10-year drought began that devastated many settlers who had little practical knowledge or appreciation of the desert environment. These people lost crop after crop and eventually their homes and land. At the turn-of-the-century, much of the Valley was considered worthless and the ownership of many parcels reverted to the state. A reduced population of die-hards remained, some of whom were blessed with land having a high water table and favorable agricultural soil. The history of the earlier periods of occupation are, as would be expected, less clear than later

periods, because there was an exodus of people and their associated records. There is still much to learn about the dynamics of local development prior to the 1920-1925 period.

Worldwide during the same period many technological innovations were being introduced. In 1904, a gasoline engine was first used in the Valley to pump well water. By 1908-1914 there was an influx of people into the Valley due to the construction of the Los Angeles aqueduct. By 1904 improved conditions after the drought, improved irrigation techniques and increasing subsistence diversity enhanced the potential for economic success. Construction of an aqueduct for the Los Angeles basin between 1908-1914 brought people back into the Valley. The World War I period brought another influx of people as homesteading reached a peak of popularity and agricultural prices were relatively high.

By 1914, electricity was introduced to the Valley and by 1917 the introduction of electric water pumps and improved dry farming techniques resulted in the substantial growth and success of agriculture. Increased prices for agricultural produce during World War I stimulated additional growth and agricultural expansion. Other economic endeavors, such as poultry ranching and, after 1919, moonshining, became important economic endeavors. By the mid-1920s Palmdale and Lancaster had assumed the characteristics and social institutions of small American rural towns of the period. World War II brought growth and radical change with the establishment of Edwards Air Force Base and the aerospace industry.

IV. RECORD, MAP AND SACRED LANDS SEARCH RESULTS

Record Search: Background research was performed by reviewing previous studies in the area, historic period maps and early land records. A record search conducted by the South Central Coastal Information Center (Attachment 1) indicated no previous on-foot survey of the subject property and no previously recorded resources. The search indicated that 18 survey projects have occurred within a half-mile radius of the property, mostly with negative results. Recently, an additional nearby survey was completed to the east, near Costco (Norwood 2018), and was also negative for cultural resources. Previous work has resulted in finding no evidence of Native American use or occupation on or immediately near the property. Three historic period resources (homesites, refuse deposits) have been identified in the search area, but not immediately near the subject property.

Historic map search: Historic period maps were reviewed to identify any potential historic sites or features on the property. Findings are discussed below:

GLO Records: The Bureau of Land Management General Land Office Records (GLO) were reviewed for historic period transactions. Odd numbered sections were typically granted to the railroad. The Southern Pacific Railroad was granted all of Section 33 on February 10, 1915. The railroad sold parcels to individual owners after that.

1911: The earliest regional map of Lancaster is Johnson's (1911) Water Supply map showing structures and well locations throughout the Antelope Valley. Data for this map is based on a

1909 field survey. Johnson's map shows no structures or wells anywhere within Section 33 or nearby in adjoining sections.

1915: The 1915 Lake Elizabeth 15' USGS quadrangle map shows no development within Section 33.

1926: By 1920-1925 Lancaster had matured into a typical American small rural town characteristic of the period. Carpenter and Cosby's Soil Survey map (1926), based on a 1922 field survey, reflects a lack of development in Section 33. There is a north/south trending road and one structure along the western section boundary. Elsewhere in the Antelope Valley there was a surge of growth and homesteading during this time period.

1933: The 1933 7.5' USGS quadrangle map shows no development within the section. The structure depicted on the section boundary by Carpenter and Cosby in 1922 is gone by this time.

1938: Walsh's 1938 real property map does not show the location or number of structures present, but it does show ownership. No ownership is shown for any of the parcels in section 33.

1958: The 1958 USGS 7.5' quadrangle map shows a contrast with earlier maps. By this time there had been substantial development throughout the general area. One structure is shown as being located on the subject property.

Native American period resources have not been discovered during previous work within a half mile of the subject property. Historic period development of the section did not occur until the mid-20th century, therefore, no extensive early historic period resources were anticipated on the subject property.

Sacred lands file search: A record search by The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) failed to indicate the presence of Native American resources on the property or in the immediate project area (Attachment 2). The NAHC provided a list of three Native American individuals/organizations who may have knowledge of cultural resources in the project area.

V. SURVEY METHODS AND CONDITIONS

The first field survey was originally completed on October 4, 2014, by Cole Parker (MA, Anthropology) representing RTFactfinders. Fieldwork required 3 person hours. The property was examined by walking a series of east/west trending parallel transects, beginning at the northwest property corner. Transect spacing was at 15 meter intervals. Points of interest were recorded using a Magellan GPS unit and an iPhone 5 digital camera.

An updated on-foot survey was completed by Melinda Walters representing RTFactfinders on September 26, 2018. This resurvey was done in 5-to-10 meter transect intervals. The resurvey required 3 person hours and verified the 2014 descriptions and findings.

During both surveys soil surface visibility was excellent due to dry conditions and minimal vegetation cover. Light conditions were excellent, with bright sun and minimal wind. There were no inhibiting conditions that would have impaired the ability to identify potentially significant cultural resources, if manifested on the ground surface. In accordance with State Historic Preservation Office Guidelines, any sites or artifacts greater than 50 years of age were to be recorded and considered as potential cultural resources.

VI. SURVEY FINDINGS

Results: As a result of both surveys, no Native American sites or artifacts were identified on the property during either on-foot survey. One late period historic period site was identified and is described below.

Site 579-1: The site is a historic period residential site characterized by three major features; two concrete slab foundations and a rectangular wood lined gravel and cobble filled feature. There are also two north south running alignments of pine tree landscaping, the remains of a two-strand barbed wire fence, one major concentration of historic period and modern trash and building debris, and a general scatter of artifacts and modern trash throughout the property.

Feature 1 is a rectangular concrete slab foundation measuring 59 feet east/west by 39'4" north/south. An associated small rectangular concrete pad, which was probably support for a step, is located in the southeast corner of the feature. A 24-inch wide concrete strip runs the length of the west edge of the foundation. There are four small 4 to 12-inch diameter pipe holes in the slab along with square hole in the southwest corner. The slab was painted an aqua blue color and there are remnants of asbestos tile floor covering in various portions of it. The aqua color was popular in the 1960s.

Feature 2 is an irregularly shaped foundation measuring 39-feet, 4-inches north/south by 78-feet, 8 inches east/west. Like Feature 1, the slab floor was painted an aqua-blue color and there are remnants of floor tile on various small portions of the floor. Within the southeast corner of the feature there are 4 drainage pipes measuring 2 to 4, possibly 8 inches in diameter and a small square depression. The foundation apparently divided into two separate rooms. This is evident by the presence of the remnants a north/south running cinder block wall located approximately 19-feet, 8-inches from the west edge of the slab. On the north edge of the feature there is gas well head with the lettering SCE GAS stamped on the top lid, an apparent recent addition.

Feature 3 is a rectangular wood frame enclosure containing cobbles and gravel. The feature measures approximately 22-feet, 11-inches north/south by 13-feet, 1-inch east/west. The feature is constructed using six upright 8-by-8 inch railroad ties along both the east and west walls, and 6 pieces of rebar and redwood boards of various lengths. Within the feature there are the remains of wooden telephone or electrical poles that have been partially burned. In the southern end of the feature there is a depression suggesting that this is a filled in pit, possibly representing the remains of a water well.

In addition to the three features the site also has remnants of a two or three strand barbed wire fence running north/ south, on the western boundaries along two north/south running lines of pine trees. There is also a 4-by-4 inch, 67-inch-high post located in the eastern portion of the site property. The post has rubber with copper fittings on the north face. It may represent the remains of an electrified fence that may have surrounded the property.

While a scatter of debris is found throughout the property, one major concentration was noted. The concentration measures 10-by-12 meters and contains red brick fragments, window pane glass, pieces of carpet, milled wood, cinder blocks, tarpaper, sanitary seam cans of various sizes, aerosol cans, matchstick fill cans, shoe fragments, and glass fragments including green wine bottle glass, and a condiment jar.

The rest of the assemblage deposited through the area is a mixture of both historic period artifacts and modern debris including cinder block wall fragments and chunks of concrete. The scatter includes match stick filler (milk) cans, sanitary seam cans, aerosol cans, can lids, a coiled spring, a machine bolt, milled lumber of various sizes, brown beer bottle glass, green and clear glass fragments, barbed wire, common wire, white earthenware ceramic fragments, tarpaper, asbestos tile fragments, crown caps, a fragment of a tractor tire, and furniture pieces. No specifically datable artifacts were found during the survey. Based on the artifact types and relative diagnostic marker styles present, such as pieces of glass and ceramics, the assemblage dates to the mid-20th century.

The original structures at this site have been demolished and the remains scattered, primarily to the south of the three foundation features. Post-demolition, the site has been disturbed by recent trash dumping and pedestrian traffic. There are no structures shown on maps prior to 1958 so the features probably date to periods after 1933.

VII. MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) has provisions to ensure that any cultural resources identified during the environmental review process need to be evaluated for significance, because unique or important resources require mitigation.

This resource is reconsidered under the criteria (A, B, C, D), for attaining eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places. Eligible (Significant) sites are those:

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. That are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past.
- C. That 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.

D. That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

This report concurs with the original 2014 and 2018 reports that site 579-1 is not significant. The site has no meaningful association with broad patterns of our history. This site represents the remains of mid to late-20th century occupation circa 1950-2013. Such sites are quite common throughout the Antelope Valley and only indirectly and non-specifically reflect the broad patterns of our history. The site cannot be associated with any past historically significant persons. The deposits do not meet any characteristic stated in criterion C, which is typically applied to intact buildings and structures. The site is of a common type and is in poor condition. The site is not likely to yield information important in history because it is of a redundant type, disturbed, and date to relatively well-known periods in Lancaster's history. Therefore, the site is considered not eligible to the National Register, hence, for the purposes of CEQA, is considered not significant.

Since no Native American prehistoric or significant historic period resources were identified on the subject property, no impacts to cultural resources are anticipated when development occurs. No further measures are recommended.

While unlikely and not expected, potentially significant buried material could exist on the property. Under CEQA "inadvertent finds" (unexpected buried sites found after completion of a phase I or II study as a result of construction exposure) are subject to evaluation and, if significant, appropriate impact mitigation. In the event unanticipated cultural materials (arrowheads, grinding stones, etc.) or features (old foundations, cellars, privy pits, etc.) are encountered, work must stop at the discovery site. A professional cultural resource consultant will need to evaluate the new find.

In the event any bones of possible human origin are uncovered during construction the Los Angeles County Coroner must be notified and permitted to investigate the find prior to any further disturbance at the location of discovery.

VIII. REFERENCES CITED

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Norwood, Richard H.

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Richard H. Norwood

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ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT 1

An updated letter requested from the Native American Heritage Commission has not yet been received. The 2018 updated letter is included here and the 2021 version will be forwarded to the City upon receipt.

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

Environmental and Cultural Department
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September 20, 2018

Richard Norwood

RTFactfinders

Sent by Email: artefct@gmail.com

Re: Westlanc Partners 620 Update, Los Angeles County

Dear Mr. Norwood,

A record search of the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) Sacred Lands File (SLF) was completed for the information you have submitted for the above referenced project. The results were negative. However, the absence of specific site information in the SLF does not preclude the presence of cultural resources in any project area. Other sources for cultural resources should also be contacted for information regarding known and/or recorded sites.

Enclosed is a list of Native Americans tribes who may have knowledge of cultural resources in the project area. I suggest you contact all of those indicated, if they cannot supply information, they might recommend others with specific knowledge. By contacting all those listed, your organization will be better able to respond to claims of failure to consult with the appropriate tribe. If a response has not been received within two weeks of notification, the Commission requests that you follow-up with a telephone call to ensure that the project information has been received.

If you receive notification of change of addresses and phone numbers from any of these tribes, please notify me. With your assistance we are able to assure that our lists contain current information. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at 916-573-1033 or frank.lienert@nahc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Frank Lienert", written over a horizontal line.

Frank Lienert
Associate Governmental Program Analyst

**Native American Heritage Commission
Native American Contacts
September 20, 2018**

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This list is current only as of the date of this document and is based on the information available to the Commission on the date it was produced.

Distribution of this list does not relieve any person of statutory responsibility as defined in Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code, Section 5097.94 of the Public Resource Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code.

This list is only applicable for contacting local Native American Tribes with regard to cultural resources assessments for the proposed Westlanc Partners 620 Update, Los Angeles County

ATTACHMENT 2



PHOTO 1: View southeast from the northwest property corner.



PHOTO 2: View northeast showing concrete slab.