

2018

West Los Angeles VA National Register Historic District Landscape



**VA GREATER LOS ANGELES HEALTHCARE SYSTEM-
WEST LOS ANGELES CAMPUS**

Row 10 Historic Preservation Solutions, LLC
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Executive Summary

The West Los Angeles Campus of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System is in the process of analyzing impacts of the redevelopment of the WLA Campus on the human environment through a programmatic Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report as required by the National Environmental Policy Act and the California Environmental Quality Act. The redevelopment is a federal undertaking subject to the requirements of VA Directive 7545 and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended; the project has the potential to affect historic properties and cultural resources on the grounds of the WLA Campus.

The Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places listed the West Los Angeles VA National Register Historic District in the National Register in 2014. The nomination district includes several landscape elements, including plantings and roadways. Analysis of the landscape elements on the grounds of the West Los Angeles Campus identified several elements requiring clarification. Amendment of the National Register nomination is recommended. A review of the project alternatives determined that the identified alternatives have the potential to affect specific historic landscape elements, including the WLA Campus roadway system, and the overall pastoral feel of the historic district.

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Chapter 1- History of the West Los Angeles Campus Landscape

Like the buildings, the landscape of the West Los Angeles Campus (WLA Campus) of the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System (GLAHS) has undergone several changes since the selection of the site in 1887. Elaborate gardens and vibrant plants existed concurrently with the Victorian architecture in the earliest years of the WLA Campus. The Campus staff installed the more restrained landscape extant today after the demolition of nearly all Victorian-style architecture and the erection of the stucco and brick buildings. The less ornate campus landscape design is consistent with the Period of Significance of the West Los Angeles VA National Register Historic District (1923-1952) (WLA VA NRHD).

The Pacific Branch (1887-1930)

The original acreage comprising the GLA Campus was carved from two large Spanish land grants- Rancho San Vicente y Santa Monica and Rancho San Jose de Buenos Ayres- in 1887. The new campus was located approximately five miles from the coastal town of Santa Monica, and fourteen from the growing community of Los Angeles. The Board of Managers of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers received a donation of more than 500 acres of open land free of buildings, with a spring for the provision of water, and a promised cash enhancement of \$150,000 reserved for development of the land. Later financial realities made that promise impossible to fulfill, and the Board of Managers accepted 30 additional acres and a financial donation totaling over \$100,000.¹ As described by one local reporter:

The grounds are now devoid of trees. The location is sightly... and fresh seabreezes sweep the spot. The land is undulating, and when it is all planted with trees, and the artificial lakes are made, as contemplated, it will make a delightful park... This park will be eventually well shaded and watered, and intersected with roads winding around green knolls and beds of flowers.²



Figure 1- Pacific Branch Barracks, ca. 1892. Note the lack of landscaping that later would define the Campus. Photo courtesy of the WLA Campus.

¹ National Register of Historic Places, West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Historic District, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California, National Register #14000926, Section 8, 41-42; Jan Loomis, *Brentwood*, book in the series *Images of America*, (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing), 2008, 7.

² "The Soldier's Home," *The Los Angeles Times*, May 12, 1888, 2.

Construction of the necessary buildings began in earnest in January 1888. Workers first erected a home for the governor (the title of the Branch administrator), by December also had erected barracks, a mess hall, and a small hospital. Early resident, Elsbeth Andrae, then only a child, recalled the landscape near her family's quarters (no longer extant) on the present-day South Campus in the late 1880s as, "...like ours, surrounded by a circular grove of eucalyptus trees, the two groves touching elbows. The spacious new house lent dignity to the vista from the West Gate."³ Postcards and photos of these early years at the Pacific Branch, the formal designation of the Los Angeles location of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, show regimented plantings of trees, flowers, and shrubs in ornate designs. Trees lined Bonsall Avenue, then the north-south artery of the campus. Flower beds at the base of the barracks bloomed with colorful flowers and leafy trees. The exact species of plants cannot be determined from these postcards and photos; it is important to note that West Los Angeles historian Jan Loomis reported gifts of all manner of exotic vegetation given to Veterans of the Pacific Branch by sailors into the port of Santa Monica.⁴

An account of the Campus in 1908 noted,

The buildings are all surrounded by carefully kept grounds, which are adorned with trees and flowers. This is one of the most beautifully arranged and kept parks in the country, and the climate gives perpetual bloom and greenness, making it a perennial garden of beauty. The many trees which have been set out on the Home grounds have now attained a fine growth and some of the long avenues through the reservation are delightful and enticing drives and walks.⁵

Figure 2- Postcard image of the Pacific Branch North Campus, ca. 1900. Image looking north up Bonsall Avenue. Wadsworth Chapel visible at center of the image. Image courtesy of the WLA Campus.



By 1910, the most elaborate gardens of the Campus were located between the bandstand (no longer extant) on the north side of present-day Wilshire Boulevard and the Campus Assembly Hall (no longer extant) near the intersection of Bonsall and Pepper (now Constitution) avenues. The line of sight between the buildings included the campus flag pole. The gardens were laid in a near oval shape reminiscent of an eye. Formal walkways intersected the oval and connected

³ Elspeth Andrae, *The Dear Old Boys in Blue: Memories of the Early Days of the Veterans Administration Center, Los Angeles*, (San Francisco: Reynard Press, 1948), 15.

⁴ Loomis, *Brentwood*, 17.

⁵ Luther A. Ingersoll, *Ingersoll's Century History, Santa Monica Bay Cities: Prefaced with a Brief History of the State of California, a Condensed History of Los Angeles County, 1542 to 1908 : Supplemented with an Encyclopedia of Local Biography and Embellished with Views of Historic Landmarks and Portraits of Representative People*, (Los Angeles, 1908), 340.

the gardens around some Campus domiciliaries and the Wadsworth Chapel. The Campus also included a lake in the area of the present-day Brentwood School, and a 20-acre Castle Gardens near the present-day intersection of Ohio and Federal avenues.⁶

Between 1913 and 1921, the Pacific Branch planted a garden in the lawns between Wilshire Boulevard and the senior staff quarters on the south portion of the Campus.⁷ This initiative followed the widening of Wilshire Boulevard and its connection to Nevada Avenue in Santa Monica. The gardens included regimented lines of palms trees, likely the Canary Island date palms extant on the campus today, emanating from the residences along paths to Wilshire, as well as less formal groupings of coniferous trees opposite the staff quarters on the north side of Wilshire Boulevard. Canary Island date palms (*Phoenix canariensis*) were incredibly popular in Los Angeles from about the mid-1870s until the 1920s, especially after the formerly popular pepper trees were found to harbor citrus-eating insects known as "black scale."⁸

Residents and staff of the Pacific Branch maintained active orchards and vegetable gardens. The harvests supplemented the food purchased by the NHDVS for the Home.⁹ The Pacific Branch also tended a large apiary, numbering 230 colonies in 1921. Quartermaster M.S. Murray deliberately cultivated the colonies to promote the health of the Campus gardens and orchards, as well as supply residents with a year-round supply of honey.¹⁰



Figure 3- Photo of the Pacific Branch of the NHDVS, 1921. Residential quarters landscape elements, including the parallel lines of palms located near the center of the image. Photo courtesy of the WLA Campus.

An influx of Veterans of World War I began in 1919, leading to overcrowding of the barracks, and straining the capacity of the Campus hospital. The Pacific Branch received funding in the early 1920s for the construction of tuberculosis dormitories. Many doctors believed the climate of southern California

would cure the disease given sufficient time. Buildings #156, #157, and #158 were constructed specifically to serve these patients. The campus also demolished the old wooden hospital in 1924 and erected the "fireproof" Wadsworth Hospital (now demolished) in 1927.¹¹ This new hospital building was a reaction to a series of fires in the late 1920s, necessitating the construction of new, "fireproof" buildings to enhance safety at the Pacific Branch. On March 24, 1927, fires consumed the campus kitchen and mess hall despite

⁶ "Map of the Pacific Branch of the N.H. for D.V.S., Los Angeles, California, 1910," 1910. From the Santa Monica Land & Water Board Company records collection, Poway, California.

⁷ Ibid; Loomis, *Brentwood*, 20; Aerial photography, Flight C-30, Frame A-1, Los Angeles County, February 28, 1927, available in the Aerial Photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara.

⁸ Jared Farmer, *Trees in Paradise: A California History*, (W.W. Norton & Company: New York, 2013), 371-372.

⁹ NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 8, 45.

¹⁰ "Soldiers' Home has Thriving Apiary," *The Los Angeles Times*, December 4, 1921, Farm & Tractor Section, 7.

¹¹ NRHP, West Los Angeles, Section 8, 46-47.

the efforts of four fire stations. The blazes very nearly took several of the wood-clad barracks as well.¹² Less than a month later, *The Los Angeles Times* reported a ninth fire at the Home less than a month later.¹³ The cumulation of these demolitions and the need for new construction changed the appearance of the Pacific Branch and necessitated the reduction and, in some cases, removal of many elements of the Campus gardens.

The Veterans Administration, (1930-1988)

In 1930, Congress authorized consolidation of the three extant agencies into the Veterans Administration and ended the NHDVS era. The Veterans Administration continued the policy of demolishing the smaller, wooden barracks in favor of concrete, brick, and stucco construction. Rather than facing Bonsall Avenue and Wilshire Boulevard, as previous buildings had, the new construction were oriented along new campus roadways such as Pershing, Arnold, and Dewey avenues. By 1937, the elaborate gardens between the bandstand the Assembly Hall had been removed, though the allée of trees remained.¹⁴ The spaces between buildings were sparse and cleared, rather than brimming with plants.

In the late 1930s, VA began to subdivide the WLA Campus into three distinct care centers: the Brentwood Hospital for neuropsychiatric care on the North Campus, the Wadsworth Hospital for general medical/surgical care on the South Campus, and the North Campus domiciliaries. Building #218 served as an administration building for the domiciliaries. The residential segment of the WLA Campus also included Buildings #13, #212, #213, #214, #215, #216, #217, #220, and #226. Administration of the Brentwood Hospital worked in Building #258. Other buildings related to the Brentwood hospital included #205, #206, #207, #208, #209, #256, and #257.¹⁵ The three distinct areas of the WLA Campus shared an engineering staff and utilities throughout the term of the internal division. The distinct Campus areas was abolished in the 1990s as medical care shifted to an outpatient, rather than long-term in-patient, model. Visual reminders of this period include the flag poles in front of Buildings #218 and #258.



Figure 4 - 1946 aerial of the WLA Campus. Photo courtesy UCSB.

Many people wished to thank the men and women who had served in World War II upon their return home. These signs of gratitude included donations towards the Veterans homes, including the WLA Campus. In

¹² "Soldiers' Home Blaze Battled," *The Los Angeles Times*, March 25, 1927, Part II, 1.

¹³ "Ninth Blaze at Soldiers' Home," *The Los Angeles Times*, April 20, 1927, Part II, 1.

¹⁴ Aerial photography, Flight AJX, Frame 26-17, Los Angeles County, December 31, 1927, available in the Aerial Photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara.

¹⁵ VA, "Plot Plan, Veterans Adm. Center, Los Angeles, Ca." 1965, available in the records of the WLA Campus.

1946, the Hillcrest Country Club donated a golf course on the northern portion of the Campus.¹⁶ A women's club paid for a memorial to female Veterans the following year.¹⁷ These acts of gratitude for the service of World War II Veterans continued into the 1960s with the installation of the Japanese Garden west of the Campus golf course.¹⁸ Because of these donations dedicated open spaces for Veteran recreation on the Campus was created in the wake of the overall Campus reduction of gardens.



Figure 5- 1956 aerial of the WLA Campus. Photo courtesy of UCSB.

Car usage increased in popularity throughout the NHDVS era, but production waned in the 1940s as the materials were needed for the war effort; car ownership would soar in the post-war years. As shows in Figure 4, by 1946 the WLA Campus had a developed roadway system with multiple points of ingress and egress, but few parking lots (see Chapter 3 for an expanded discussion of the roadway system). The lot adjacent to the Wadsworth Hospital appears to hold fewer than 60 cars. By 1956, lots capable of holding 50 or more vehicles had been constructed on all sides of Wadsworth and additional lots lined San Vicente Avenue on the North Campus (see Figure 5). The lot in front of Building #218 (now Parking Lot No. 7) held more than 75 vehicles, as did the parking lot between Buildings #13 and #297 (no longer extant).¹⁹ These lots served the burgeoning patient population of the WLA Campus: in 1962, the WLA Campus was the largest VA facility in the country and cared for more than 6,000 patients annually.²⁰

¹⁶ "Veterans' Course at Sawtelle Contributed," *The Los Angeles Times*, June 23, 1946, Part II, 6.

¹⁷ Walter Cochrane, "Gardens That Bring Peace," *The Los Angeles Times Home Magazine*, May 25, 1947, 21, 26.

¹⁸ "Japanese Garden to be Dedicated Today," *The Los Angeles Times*, September 19, 1965, K-12.

¹⁹ Aerial photography, Flight GS-EM, Frame 1-171, Los Angeles County, December 31, 1946, available in the aerial photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara; Aerial photography, Flight C-22555, Frame 14-19, Los Angeles County, June 30, 1956, available in the Aerial Photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara.

²⁰ NRHP, West Los Angeles, Section 8, 56.

In the mid-1950s, the State of California and the federal government-initiated plans to construct a bypass interstate north-south through Los Angeles. Interstate 405 closely follows the path of Sepulveda Boulevard near the WLA Campus. Construction of the 405 cut the visual link between the WLA Campus and the LANC. Construction necessitated the removal of the Trolley Stop/Streetcar Depot (Building #66) from the intersection of Wilshire and Sepulveda Boulevards to its current location.²¹

Despite the large patient load, shifts in VA practices and the preference for stacked, rather than decentralized, patient buildings permitted VA to shed excess acreage. In 1955, the federal and state governments initiated construction of Interstate 405. In the 1960s, VA disposed of the South Campus acreage on the east side of Interstate 405. The General Services Administration later constructed an office building on the site. VA also transferred 14 acres on the northwest corner of the South Campus to the Department of Defense; this space now is in use by the U.S. Army.²² In the mid-1970s, VA provided acreage from the North Campus for construction of a U.S. Post Office.²³

A seismic event in early 1971 changed the WLA Campus landscape, building plan, and long-term care strategies. A major earthquake rocked southern California on the morning of February 9, 1971, killing more than 60 people, including dozens at the VA Hospital in Sylmar.²⁴ The quake also damaged portions of the WLA Campus, notably the Wadsworth Hospital. In response, the WLA Campus moved out many of its long-term care patients to other facilities, and embarked upon a complete reconfiguration of the South Campus in order to build an "earthquake-proof" primary hospital.²⁵ Construction necessitated demolition of several Campus buildings and the interruption of Bonsall Avenue.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (1989-present)

In the 1990s, VA leased land to the adjacent Brentwood School for construction of the school's athletic facilities. The California State Veterans Home (CalVets) was the most recent major construction initiative on the WLA Campus to affect the historic roadway system. In the mid-2000s, the California Department of Veterans Affairs accepted 14 acres of the WLA Campus for construction of a new state Veterans home. Construction of the state Veterans home resulted in the demolition of parking lots and greenspaces between Nimitz and Pershing avenues. Other than CalVets, many WLA Campus improvements since 2000 have been concentrated on the South Campus, reducing the amount of available greenspace.

²¹ Historic American Building Survey, HABS CA-336-A: National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, Pacific Branch, Streetcar Depot, June 30, 2014, 2.

²² NRHP, West Los Angeles, Section 8, 57.

²³ Aerial photography, Flight tg-2755, Frame 18-13, Los Angeles County, February 28, 1971, available in the aerial photography collection of the University of California, Santa Barbara; Aerial photography, Flight ami-la-77, Frame 8746, Los Angeles County, July 26 1977, available in the aerial photography collection of the University of California, Santa Barbara.

²⁴ Dana Bartholomew, "Sylmar-San Fernando Earthquake: 45 years ago Tuesday, 64 killed," *The Los Angeles Daily News*, February 8, 2016, updated August 28, 2017, <https://www.dailynews.com/2016/02/08/sylmar-san-fernando-earthquake-45-years-ago-tuesday-64-killed/>.

²⁵ Dorothy Townsend, "Model of Quake-Proof Hospital Shown," *The Los Angeles Times*, October 21, 1975, Part II, 2.



Figure 6- ca. 2014 aerial of the WLA Campus. Photo courtesy of HOK.

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Chapter 2- Evaluation Framework

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA), is our nation's premiere federal regulation regarding the protection of historic properties. In this law, Congress declared that "the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people."²⁶ Historic properties include buildings, archeological sites, structures, and objects that (1) are fifty years of age or older, with limited exceptions, (2) are significant to the understanding of our nation's history,²⁷ and (3) retain sufficient integrity, i.e. physical features, to convey the importance of the property. Collections of related historic properties, such as a neighborhood or a college campus, may qualify as historic districts. Properties are eligible for listing under the following Criteria:

- (A) Association with an event or events that have contributed to the broad patterns of American society;
- (B) Association with persons significant to our past;
- (C) The embodiment of a distinctive architectural type or style, or is the work of a master; or,
- (D) Contain significant research potential (usually applied to archeological sites).

WLA Campus Historic Properties

VA has identified four historic properties on the grounds of the WLA Campus:

1. The West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs National Register Historic District (WLA VA NRHD),
2. Wadsworth Chapel (Building #20),
3. Streetcar Depot/Trolley Stop (Building #66),
4. Two archaeological sites related to the history of the WLA Campus as a Veterans medical center.

Landscape elements are described as a character-defining feature of the WLA VA NRHD, but not the other known historic properties.

The WLA VA NRHD measures approximately 400 acres of the WLA Campus and the adjacent Los Angeles National Cemetery (LANC). The LANC is included in the historic district as a contributing element. The district was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2014 (NRHP No. 14000926) for its architecture (Criterion C), as a place of significant health and medical treatment (Criterion A), and as a representation of the government's care for Veterans following World War I (Criterion A). The district Period of Significance is 1923 to 1952. The WLA VA NRHD includes 66 contributing elements, or character-defining features, including buildings, structures, and landscape elements. The specific landscape elements are identified in Chapter 3.

VA Directive 7545

VA Directive 7545 defines cultural resources as "all aspects of the human environment that have historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural significance, including, but not limited to, historic properties, archaeological resources and data, Native American ancestral remains and cultural items, religious places and practices, historical objects and artifacts, historical documents, and community identity."²⁸ These

²⁶ National Historic Preservation Act, Public Law 89-665; 54 U.S.C. 300101 et seq. (1996, amended through 2006).

²⁷ Properties must be important to the history of the American people. Properties of local and regional significance also can qualify as historic resources.

²⁸ VA Directive 7545, 5.

contributing elements therefore qualify as cultural resources as defined by VA Directive 7545: *Cultural Resource Management*²⁹ and the associated handbook, *Cultural Resource Management Procedures*³⁰ and are eligible for consideration under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4331 et seq.)³¹ (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) *Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA* (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508)³², and VA's *NEPA Implementing Guidance* (38 CFR Part 26).³³ Effects to cultural resources that result from the implementation of the draft Master Plan will be identified and analyzed in the programmatic Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR). The EIS/EIR also will look at the impacts of the undertaking on biological resources, including both historic and non-historic landscape features.

Draft Historic Preservation Plan

In January of 2016, VA announced plans to reconfigure the WLA Campus according to a draft Master Plan in an effort to execute the most effective use of the campus for Veterans, particularly for homeless Veterans, including underserved populations such as female Veterans, aging Veterans, and those who are severely physically or mentally disabled. Prior to this announcement, VA commissioned a draft historic preservation plan for the WLA Campus. This draft plan identifies treatment guidelines to avoid and/or minimize effects to historic properties as a result of large undertakings, small projects, and routine campus maintenance.³⁴ A change in circumstances and the proposed alterations of the WLA Campus population halted the preservation plan as a draft, and it was not reviewed by the California SHPO. The draft preservation plan is being utilized as part of the Draft Master Plan evaluation process. A revised campus historic resource management plan that addresses the potential actions of the Draft Master Plan that may affect historic properties will be developed as part of the programmatic EIS/EIR.

National Register Brief 36

Cultural landscapes are a unique type of historic property that contains both human-made and naturally-occurring features and is significant to local, regional, or national history. National Register Brief 36 defines a cultural landscape as "a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values."³⁵ The bulletin identifies four types of cultural landscapes; however, it is important to note that places may qualify as more than one type:

- Historic Designed Landscape- a planned and created landscape, such as a formal garden,
- Historic Vernacular Landscape- a natural landscape that has evolved through human use, such as a farm,
- Historic Site- a landscape significant for association with an important event or person, such as a battlefield,

²⁹ Department of Veterans Affairs, VA Directive 7545: *Cultural Resource Management*, 2011, https://www.va.gov/vapubs/search_action.cfm?dType=1.

³⁰ Department of Veterans Affairs, VA Handbook 7545: *Cultural Resource Management Procedures*, 2011, https://www.va.gov/vapubs/search_action.cfm?dType=1.

³¹ National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4331 et seq.), <https://energy.gov/nepa/downloads/national-environmental-policy-act-1969>.

³² Council on Environmental Quality, *Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA* (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508, https://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500_1508.pdf).

³³ Department of Veterans Affairs, *NEPA Implementing Guidance* (38 CFR Part 26), <https://www.cfm.va.gov/til/etc/NEPAGuidance.pdf>.

³⁴ Leo A. Daly Company and Chattel, Inc., *Draft- West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Medical Center Campus, Historic Preservation Plan, Design Guidelines and Treatment Approaches*, January 2016.

³⁵ Charles Birnbaum, ASLA, *National Register Brief 36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes*, September 1994, 1.

- Ethnographic Landscape- a natural or human-created area significant to a community's heritage or culture, such as a mountain that defines a Native American creation story.

The WLA VA NRHD is listed in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. The landscape of the WLA Campus, for the most part, is not naturally occurring, but instead the work of countless hours of labor by VA staff, patients, and volunteers for more than 100 years. Only small portions of the WLA Campus, such as the parallel rows of palm trees along Bonsall Avenue or the garden behind Building #220, represent designed landscapes. The Building #220 garden, however, does not meet the 50-year age threshold for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. A list of landscape elements that qualify as Historic Designed Landscapes are listed in Chapter 3.

Since the 1950s, VA hospital campuses have designed landscapes primarily for aesthetic, rather than functional, purposes. The WLA Campus landscape fits this description and therefore lacks Historic Vernacular Landscape features. The gully, a naturally-occurring feature on the western border of the campus, has not been used by VA or its predecessors to advance the campus mission of caring for Veterans and therefore does not meet the definition of a Historic Vernacular Landscape. See Chapter 3 for further information.

The WLA Campus is a historic district, but the landscape is not central to its qualifications under Criterion A; the campus does not meet the definition of a Historic Site. VA recently concluded a Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs) study, which included an evaluation of ethnographic landscapes, and concluded the WLA Campus did not contain any areas that met the standards established by VA Directive 7545 nor National Register Bulletin 38 ([*Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*](#)).³⁶

None of the landscape elements of the WLA VA NRHD qualify for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This study also examined landscapes of the WLA Campus outside the boundaries of the WLA VA NRHD and determined that none met the necessary significance thresholds for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

This study incorporates information about the historical treatment of the WLA Campus landscape features and the state of the WLA VA NRHD today. Specifically, this study addresses landscape features utilized, developed, and demolished within the Period of Significance of the WLA VA NRHD (1923-1952), and their current conditions. Background data reviewed for this study included aerial photography; primary and secondary sources; online data archives; newspaper collections; historic property data on file with the NPS and the CA SHPO; family collections; and VA holdings.

Collections reviewed for the Landscape Study included:

- Aerial Photography, University of California- Santa Barbara Library, Santa Barbara (UCSB);
- California Historic Resources Information System, California State Historic Preservation Office, Sacramento;
- Engineering Department, WLA Campus of the VA GLAHS, Los Angeles;
- Executive Leadership Files, WLA Campus of the VA GLAHS, Los Angeles;
- Federal Preservation Office, Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington, DC;
- Local History Collection, Santa Monica Public Library, Santa Monica;
- Private Collection of Jan Loomis, RJL Consulting, Poway;
- National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service;
- U.S. Geological Survey, Department of the Interior;

³⁶ Row 10 Historic Preservation Solutions, LLC, *Traditional Cultural Properties Study*, submitted to VA on December 15, 2017.

- Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Library of Congress; and
- Archives of *The Los Angeles Times*, Los Angeles.

In 2017 and early 2018, biologists with Booz Allen Hamilton conducted field inspections to document and identify trees on the WLA Campus. The survey also noted tree condition and placement that may affect built resources. The resulting data was compared against WLA Campus aerials, maps, building plans, and photos to determine historic significance.

Architectural historians who exceed the *Professional Qualification Standards* established for the field by the Secretary of the Interior (36 CFR 61) conducted fieldwork on the WLA Campus from September 11 to September 15, 2017. Fieldwork also included recordation of campus buildings, objects, and structures. Personnel recorded the landscape features using a digital, GIS-based database and high-resolution digital photos.

Los Angeles County Oak Tree Ordinance

In 1982, Los Angeles County established a County Tree Preservation Policy to protect and preserve oak trees in the unincorporated areas. The Oak Tree Ordinance applies to oaks trees with a diameter exceeding eight inches at breast height, or twelve inches for combined trunks.³⁷ As a federal agency, VA is not required to follow local ordinances, however, VA may want to establish protections for the more than 100 oak trees in accordance with the guidelines.

³⁷ County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation, "Tree Maintenance Guidelines, 3.10 County Tree Preservation Policy," Urban Forestry Program Manual, June 2011, 15, http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/dpr/184720_UFPMANUAL080211.pdf.



Chapter 3- Current Conditions

The WLA Campus is located in West Los Angeles County between the neighborhoods of Brentwood and Sawtelle; it is located just west of the main campus of UCLA. Wilshire Boulevard bisects the WLA Campus (east-west). Interstate 405 runs along the eastern border of the campus, cutting the visual link between the campus and the LANC. The pastoral greenscapes of the WLA Campus contrast with the densely urban character of the surrounding areas. Multi-story buildings in excess of 7 stories are common along Wilshire and San Vicente boulevards near the entrances to the WLA Campus.

The WLA Campus contains more than 4,000 trees, representing approximately 130 species, including Canary Island palms, eucalyptus, fig, olive, and carrotwood. The Blue Gum Eucalyptus represents approximately one-third of all trees on the Campus. Nearly all the WLA Campus trees are mature.³⁸ There are many shrubs and bushes at the base of buildings on the North Campus, although few are completely lined with beds. Some areas of the North Campus, notably the quad between Bonsall, Grant, Dewey, and Eisenhower avenues, contain formalized plantings and beds.

Notable landscape elements of the WLA VA NRHD on the grounds of the WLA Campus identified in the National Register of Historic Places nomination include: The grid of palm trees between Building #23 and Wilshire Boulevard,³⁹

- The stone fence located northeast of Building #23,⁴⁰
- The open lawn in the residential quarters area,⁴¹
- The brick-lined roadway from Wilshire Boulevard to Building #23,⁴²
- Bonsall Avenue from the Ohio Avenue entrance to the split at Dowlen Drive,⁴³
- The palm trees lining Bonsall Avenue,⁴⁴
- The triangular roadway system bound by Bonsall, Dewey, Eisenhower avenues,⁴⁵
- The lawns of Buildings #212, #213, #214, #215, #217 and #218 and the walking paths through each,⁴⁶
- The line of sight between Building #13 and the Wadsworth Theater (Building #226), and the paths connecting these buildings,⁴⁷
- The allée of trees behind Building #220,⁴⁸
- The greenscape recently named the Los Angeles National Veterans Park,⁴⁹

³⁸ Booz Allen Hamilton, *Tree Survey Report*, draft submitted January 2018.

³⁹ NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 7.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 8.

⁴⁴ NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 12.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

- The fig trees at the facades of Building #113 and #114,⁵⁰
- The gully on the North Campus;⁵¹
- The eucalyptus trees north of Constitution Avenue,⁵²
- The lawns around the buildings of the former Brentwood Hospital,⁵³
- The quad formed by Building #205, #208, and #209,⁵⁴
- The golf course,⁵⁵ and
- The walking path between Buildings #256 and #300.⁵⁶

The National Register of Historic Places nomination does not include a map of contributing landscape elements, however, one was included in the draft Historic Preservation Plan (see Figure 7).⁵⁷

⁵⁰ NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 15.

⁵¹ NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 19.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 20.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 24.

⁵⁶ NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 20.

⁵⁷ Leo A. Daly Company and Chattel, Inc., *Draft- West Los Angeles*, Figure 2, page 3.

West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Medical Center Campus
Historic Preservation Plan, Design Guidelines and Treatment Approaches

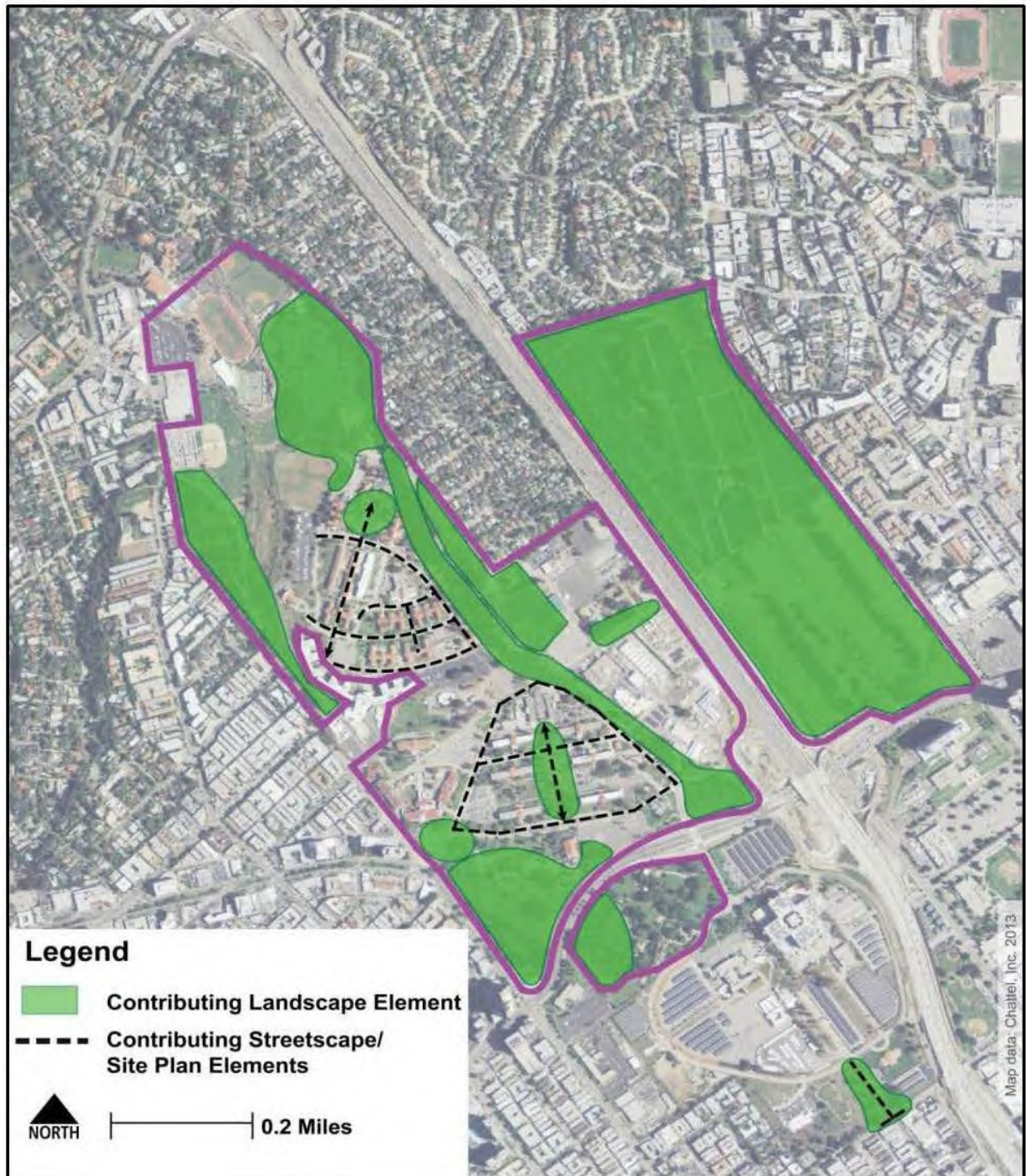




Figure 7- Map of Contributing Elements included in Draft Historic Preservation Plan.

Palm Tree Grid	
	NRHD status: Contributing ⁵⁸
	Location: South Campus- located between Building #23 and Wilshire Boulevard
	Character-Defining Features Identified in the WLA VA NRHD nomination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Palm trees • Designed grid pattern

Stone Fence	
	NRHD status: Contributing ⁵⁹
	Location: South Campus- located northeast of Building #23
	Character-Defining Features Identified in the WLA VA NRHD nomination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stone piers • Wood rails <p><i>Note- The rails are made of pipe.</i></p>

⁵⁸ NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 7.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

South Campus Lawn



NRHD status: Contributing⁶⁰

Location: South Campus- open lawn between Bonsall Avenue and the residential quarters

Character-Defining Features Identified in the WLA VA NRHD nomination:

- Open, pastoral greenspace
- Mature trees

Path from Wilshire Boulevard to Building #23



NRHD status: Contributing⁶¹


Location: South Campus


Character-Defining Features Identified in the WLA VA NRHD nomination:

- Curvilinear path from Wilshire Boulevard to Building #23
- Brick sidewalk at Wilshire Boulevard

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Bonsall Avenue from Ohio Avenue to Dowlen Drive	
	NRHD status: Contributing ⁶²
	Location: South Campus- Bonsall Avenue from the Ohio Avenue entrance to the split at Dowlen Drive
	Character-Defining Features Identified in the WLA VA NRHD nomination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gates • Lined by palm trees

Bonsall Avenue Palm Trees	
	NRHD status: Contributing ⁶³
	Location: North Campus- palm trees lining Bonsall Avenue
	Character-Defining Features Identified in the WLA VA NRHD nomination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parallel lines of palms

⁶² NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 8.

⁶³ NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 12.

**Roadway System- Bonsall, Dewey, Eisenhower Avenues
Roadway System- Arnold, Vandergrift, Nimitz, and Patton Avenues**



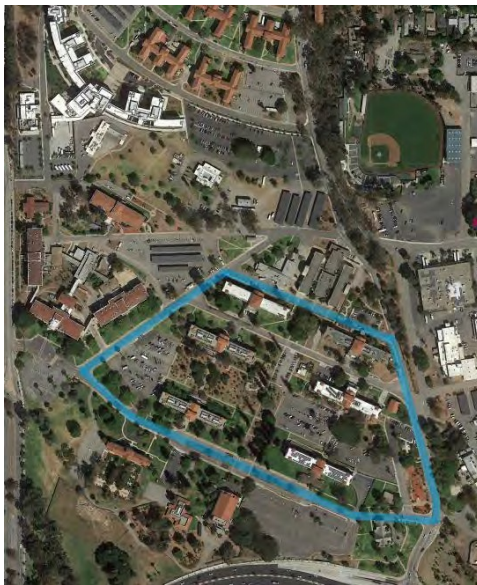
NRHD status: Contributing⁶⁴

Location: North Campus

Character-Defining Features Identified in the WLA VA NRHD nomination:

- Triangular shapes

Lawns of Buildings #212, #213, #214, #215, #217 and #218



NRHD status: Contributing⁶⁵

Location: North Campus

Character-Defining Features Identified in the WLA VA NRHD nomination:

- Arrangement of the buildings perpendicular to the street grid
- Walkways parallel to the road system
- Green lawns

⁶⁴ NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 12.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

View Between Buildings #13 and #226	
	NRHD status: Contributing ⁶⁶
	Location: North Campus- between Building #13 and Building #226
	Character-Defining Features Identified in the WLA VA NRHD nomination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line of sight between Building #13 and the Wadsworth Theater (Building #226) • Paths connecting these buildings

Allée of Trees	
	NRHD status: Contributing ⁶⁷
	Location: North Campus behind Building #220
	Character-Defining Features Identified in the WLA VA NRHD nomination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allée (parallel lines) of trees

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.





Los Angeles National Veterans Park	
	NRHD status: Contributing ⁶⁸
	Location: North Campus- greenspace at the intersection of San Vicente and Wilshire Boulevards
	Character-Defining Features Identified in the WLA VA NRHD nomination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenscape

Fig Trees at the Entrances to Buildings #113 and #114	
	NRHD status: Contributing ⁶⁹
	Location: North Campus- facades of Buildings #113 and #114
	Character-Defining Features Identified in the WLA VA NRHD nomination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fig trees

⁶⁸ Ibid.


⁶⁹ NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 15.


East & West Arroyo (Drainage Gully)	
	NRHD status: Contributing ⁷⁰
	Location: North Campus- West of Building #211
	Character-Defining Features Identified in the WLA VA NRHD nomination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural drainage gully

Eucalyptus Tree Break	
	NRHD status: Contributing ⁷¹
	Location: North Campus- north of Constitution Avenue
	Character-Defining Features Identified in the WLA VA NRHD nomination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eucalyptus trees

⁷⁰ NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 19.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Lawns of Former Brentwood Hospital Buildings	
	NRHD status: Contributing ⁷²
	Location: North Campus- buildings of the former Brentwood Hospital (Buildings #205, #206, #207, #208, #209, #256, and #257)
	Character-Defining Features Identified in the WLA VA NRHD nomination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lawns associated with buildings

Quad- Buildings #205, #208, and #209	
	NRHD status: Contributing ⁷³
	Location: North Campus
	Character-Defining Features Identified in the WLA VA NRHD nomination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open quadrangle area surrounded by buildings

⁷² NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 20.

⁷³ Ibid.

Walking Path between Buildings #256 and #300



NRHD status: Contributing⁷⁴

Location: North Campus- between Buildings #256 and #300

Character-Defining Features Identified in the WLA VA NRHD nomination:

- Walking path

⁷⁴ Ibid.



Chapter 4- Recommendations

The WLA VA NRHD National Register of Historic Places nomination includes the landscape as a single element, although it notes seventeen individual elements that contribute to the historic character of the WLA VA NRHD. The following recommendations concern inclusions, retractions, and expansions of the WLA VA NRHD contributing landscape.

Palm Trees

Grid

Campus maps from 1910 and aerial photographs show that the palm tree grid between Building #23 and Wilshire Boulevard was constructed ca. 1915, not "around 1930" as noted in the WLA VA NRHD National Register nomination.⁷⁵ This planting is outside the established district Period of Significance (1923-1952); however, the nomination provides opportunity for earlier dates of construction if the feature was in use during the time when the WLA Campus achieved significance. An amendment to the National Register nomination is recommended to correct the date and clarify the contributing status of the trees.

South Campus- Palm Trees Lining Bonsall Avenue

The National Register of Historic Places nomination identifies the palm trees lining Bonsall Avenue on the North Campus as a contributing element. The nomination also calls out the palms along Bonsall Avenue between Ohio Avenue and Dowlen Drive on the South Campus. Prior to the construction of Building #500 in the 1970s, Bonsall Avenue ran from Ohio Avenue to the North Campus framed by parallel rows of palm trees.⁷⁶ The soldier rows were broken, and coverage of the palms was imprecise, but the rows of palms were visible in campus photos ca. 1900 (see Figure 2).⁷⁷

The expansion of Wilshire Boulevard in the mid-twentieth century, the destruction of Bonsall Avenue in favor of the curvilinear Dowlen Drive on the South Campus, and the opening of Building #500 in 1977 interrupted campus vehicular patterns. The primary campus entrance now involves the short drive from Wilshire Boulevard to the parking lot on Dowlen Drive in front of Building #500. For this reason, the palms lining Bonsall Avenue between Dowlen Drive and Wilshire Boulevard are a well-known feature of the WLA Campus. Though each palm in this area may not be historic, the rows are important to the image of the WLA Campus and should be treated as a heritage asset.

⁷⁵ NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 7; "Map of the Pacific Branch of the N.H. for D.V.S., Los Angeles, California, 1910," 1910. From the Santa Monica Land & Water Board Company records collection, Poway, California; Loomis, *Brentwood*, 20; Aerial photography, Flight C-30, Frame A-1, Los Angeles County, February 28, 1927, available in the Aerial Photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara.

⁷⁶ Aerial photography, Flight tg-2755, Frame 18-13, Los Angeles County, February 28, 1971, available in the Aerial Photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara.

⁷⁷ "General View of the Soldier's Home near Santa Monica," ca. 1900, available online through the GLAHS, <https://www.losangeles.va.gov/chapel/photos.asp>.



Figure 8- Wadsworth Hospital, ca. 1930. Note the small palm trees lining Bonsall Avenue. Photo courtesy of the WLA Campus.

Campus Palms

A 2017 study of a small number of trees on the South Lawn found that the Canary Island Date Palms are in varying states of health.⁷⁸ The palm trees along Bonsall Avenue and those forming the grid in front of Building #23 are approximately 100 years old. As noted above, these trees are historically significant to the WLA VA NRHD, as well as aesthetically important to the WLA Campus; however, the Canary Island Date Palm is not native to California, and now is classified as an Invasive Species by the California Invasive Plant Council.⁷⁹ The palms are not as well suited to the modern climate of Los Angeles as other tree species. Additionally, the trees provide little shade and are not as efficient as most other trees at cleaning pollution from the air. The City of Los Angeles currently does not replace palm trees in almost any area of the City, instead installing trees with broader shade that are better suited to the Los Angeles climate when palms die or are demolished.⁸⁰

Given their current heights, the safety of patients, staff, and visitors, as well as the potential for damage to WLA Campus buildings, historic and not historic, must be taken into consideration as these trees reach the end of their life cycles. Waiting for the trees to topple poses a significant safety risk.

It is recommended that VA form an advisory committee to determine the replacement for the WLA Campus Canary Island Date Palms as they near the end of their natural life cycles. The committee will have to address the environmental, historical, financial, and aesthetic considerations associated with the removal of the dead trees from the WLA Campus. It is recommended that the committee include representatives of GLA Leadership, WLA Campus grounds staff, the California Office of Historic Preservation (the California State Historic Preservation Office), Vets Advocacy and other WLA Campus Veterans' groups, and the Los

⁷⁸ Arborgate Consulting, Inc., *Westside Purple Line Extension Tree Inventory*, May 1, 2017, prepared for Parsons Brinckerhoff.

⁷⁹ California Invasive Plant Council, Phoenix canariensis profile, 2017, http://www.cal-ipc.org/plants/profile/phoenix_canariensis-profile/.

⁸⁰ Lauren Tousignant, "LA's palm trees are dying and they won't be replaced," *The New York Post*, October 2, 2017, <https://nypost.com/2017/10/02/las-palm-trees-are-dying-and-they-wont-be-replaced/>.

Angeles County Department of Public Works. Other potential partners include the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and the City of Los Angeles Bureau of Street Services Urban Forestry Division.

The suggestions below are ideas based on the environmental, historical, financial, and aesthetic considerations. This list is not exhaustive and takes into account present field conditions. Changes to conditions brought about by natural events such as fires, seismic activity, pests, fungi, and drought must be addressed as the plan is developed.

1. *Replace all dying/damaged palms in-kind.* The replacement of all dying/damaged Canary Island Date Palms in-kind is the historically preferred alternative. Replacement may include newer, smaller trees or larger, more mature trees. The more mature trees will be more expensive than newer plants. There are considerable environmental impacts associated with the Canary Island Date Palms, including the lack of shade provided, and the potential for pests/fungi, as well as damage due to drought conditions, and water use to ensure the trees thrive.
2. *Remove all dying/damaged palms, no replacement.* The removal of the trees without replacement produces adverse effects to the WLA VA NRHD, the WLA Campus aesthetic, and the area environmental conditions due to the lack of provided shade. This alternative is likely to be the least expensive.
3. *Replace all dying/damaged palms with California Fan Palms.* The California Fan Palm (*Washington filifera*) is the only palm native to the state of California. Replacement of the Canary Island Date Palms with this species presents a limited adverse effect to WLA Campus aesthetic and the WLA VA NRHD. Environmental benefits of the California Fan Palm over the Canary Island Date Palm are small, however, the species is native to the area. Financial considerations will vary based on the size and maturity of the replacement plants, and ongoing costs of watering and maintenance.
4. *Replace all dying/damaged palms with shade trees.* The City of Los Angeles has been actively planting shade trees to reduce heat and provide shade to residents. The City may be able to offer recommendations of trees that would work in the soil conditions of the WLA Campus. It is likely that such trees will require different root space than the existing Campus planting schedule provides, so the historic tree grid is likely to be interrupted or completely removed. This alternative has the potential to have the largest environmental benefits. The WLA Campus aesthetic will be permanently altered. Financial considerations will vary based on the size and maturity of the replacement plants. These considerations also should take into account potential effects to the WLA Campus sidewalks as root systems mature and spread.
5. *Replace all dying/damaged trees with flowers, possibly rose bushes.* Bushes or shrubbery are easier to maintain without the use of specialized machinery. Rather than replace trees with trees, the WLA Campus could elect to plant smaller species in the holes left by removal of the Canary Island Date Palms. Such replacement would maintain the historic grid and Bonsall Avenue spacings. Environmentally, smaller shrubs offer limited shade opportunities. The financial considerations will vary based on the selected replacement.

Roses are the national flower of the United States and therefore are suggested for this government campus, but the final planting should be the decision of GLA Leadership. Rose varieties such as the Peace Rose (*Rosa 'Madame A. Meilland'*), the Memorial Rose (*Rosa wichuraiana*), the General Pershing Rose, the General MacArthur Rose, or the American Beauty Rose reflect the patriotism of the WLA Campus and its patients. Alternately, GLA Leadership may choose the Marilyn Monroe variety for local significance.

The final decision about replacement should be made by GLA Leadership with advice from committee members and take into account the environmental, historical, financial, and aesthetic issues.

Building #23 Fence and Fireplace

A stone fence runs north of Building #23. It is listed as part of the contributing landscape of the WLA VA NRHD, but no construction date is given in the National Register of Historic Places nomination. A large, outdoor, stone fireplace is located behind Building #23 that matches the fence materials, and appears to be from the same period, likely a WPA Campus enhancement project. This fireplace is not noted in the WLA VA NRHD National Register nomination.



Figure 9- Fence north of Building #23. July 2017.

Given the similarity of the stones used in the fireplace to those used to construct the fence, it is likely the two were built at the same time. A construction date cannot be determined using aerial photography because both features are located beneath year-round tree canopies. The fence and fireplace are not indicated on WLA Campus maps. A fuel storage building and some retaining walls at the LANC are the only other extant examples of stone construction at West Los Angeles VA properties. The fuel storage building was constructed ca. 1940; this date is consistent with the design of the fence and fireplace. Assuming this date of construction is correct, the fence should remain part of the contributing landscape of the WLA VA NRHD and the fireplace should be added to the National Register nomination. There are no plans for altering the fireplace under the Draft Master Plan.



Figure 10- Building #23 outdoor fireplace. July 2017.

East & West Arroyos (Drainage Gully)

The gully is located on the North Campus along the west campus boundary behind Building #211. The National Register of Historic Places nomination describes the space as a "wild, natural drainage gully."⁸¹ The nomination later states that the gully is the likely site of at least one "institutional dump."⁸² The map included on page 3 of the draft Historic Preservation Plan (Figure 7 of this report) appears to

⁸¹ NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 19.

⁸² NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 8, page 36.

indicate the West Arroyo and small portions of the East Arroyo of the WLA Campus.⁸³

An arroyo is a dry gully or path cut by water in an arid environment, which only fills with water during and after rain events. Steep sides are a characteristic of an arroyo, and intermittent water distinguishes the arroyo from a river- or streambed, which generally has lower-grade slopes and are filled with water year-round. The North Campus contains two arroyos, which intersect near the rear elevation of Building #211. The East Arroyo generally proceeds northward from this intersection to approximately the north boundary of McArthur Field. This arroyo is filled with scrub plants. The West Arroyo is significantly larger, extending along the western boundary of the WLA Campus from the CalVet State Home to Veterans Barrington Park. This arroyo contains clusters of green trees.

No development is noted in the East and West arroyos on the 1921, 1925, 1934, 1950, or 1966 USGS Quadrangle maps.⁸⁴ Similarly, historic aerials of the campus show only undeveloped land, although the area does appear more wooded in modern photos than in aerial photos taken prior to 1950.⁸⁵ From the 1950s to approximately 1968, the WLA Campus used the arroyos as a repository for waste. Studies in 2007 and 2010 concluded that there are no potential health risks to the public as a result of the waste deposits.⁸⁶

The East and West Arroyos were undeveloped drainage areas throughout the Period of Significance (1923-1952) of the WLA VA NRHD. As such, their contribution to the significance of the Campus was aesthetic and part of the feeling of being within a peaceful respite in the burgeoning urbanization of West Los Angeles. The introduction of dumping waste negates the aesthetic value of the arroyos and indicates that VA did not value the space as a significant feature of the campus. Although the waste is not visible, the change in integrity of feeling and association from the deposition mars the ability of the arroyos to contribute to the WLA VA NRHD. It is recommended that the West Arroyo, also known as the "gully," be removed as a contributing element to the WLA VA NRHD in the National Register of Historic Places nomination. It would be more fitting to note the setback of the hospital buildings from the adjacent neighborhood as a feature of the NRHD.

Veterans Barrington Park

Veterans Barrington Park is located on the North Campus near the U.S. Post Office on South Barrington Avenue. The Park is operated by the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks and includes a dog park and baseball fields. VA has leased the land to the City of Los Angeles for several decades, but not during the WLA VA NRHD Period of Significance.

Aerial photographs of the site indicate VA and its predecessors had not developed the site of the present-day park. The site is not significant to the understanding of the WLA VA NRHD or the Veteran population. It is recommended for inclusion in the WLA VA NRHD as a non-contributing element.

⁸³ Leo A. Daly Company and Chattel, Inc., *Draft- West Los Angeles*, 3.

⁸⁴ Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Sawtelle Quadrangle, Los Angeles County, California, 1925; USGS, Sawtelle Quadrangle, Los Angeles County, California, 1934; USGS, Beverly Hills Quadrangle, Los Angeles County, California, 1950; USGS, Beverly Hills Quadrangle, Los Angeles County, California, 1966; USGS Beverly Hills Quadrangle, Los Angeles County, 2012.

⁸⁵ Aerial photography, Flight AJAX, Frame 26-17, Los Angeles County, December 31, 1927, available in the Aerial Photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara; Aerial photography, Flight GS-EM, Frame 1-171, Los Angeles County, December 31, 1946, available in the aerial photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara.

⁸⁶ Allwest Geoscience, *Initial VOC & Radiological Subsurface Investigation Report*, December 2010, 1, submitted to the US Department of Veterans Affairs; US Department of Veterans Affairs, *Department of Veterans Affairs Greater Los Angeles Campus Draft Master Plan*, January 2016, IV-32.

Eucalyptus Trees

The National Register of Historic Places nomination states that the eucalyptus trees are located between Sub-areas 4 and 5, specifically along the east border of Sub-area 4.⁸⁷ The draft Historic Preservation Plan calls the feature "a buffer of historically planted eucalyptus trees."⁸⁸ Eucalyptus trees were introduced to California in the 1850s and planted in earnest throughout the 1860s after advertised as a species combining the most beneficial elements of redwoods and oak trees.⁸⁹ Interest in eucalyptus flared again in the 1870s when it was hailed as a cure for miasmas (unclean air thought to cause disease).⁹⁰ In the mid-1880s, just a few years prior to the opening of the Pacific Branch, the State of California opened a Board of Forestry station in Santa Monica dedicated to the production of eucalyptus trees.⁹¹ The popularity of the trees again ballooned in the early 1900s as a farmed hardwood suitable for lumber.⁹²

The Pacific Branch developed from a tree-less property into a Home with lush gardens and stately trees during the years when Californians most embraced the eucalyptus. The initial planting of eucalyptus trees occurred in 1888, the first year the Pacific Branch accepted residents and staff. Prior to 1887, the grounds were described as "devoid of trees."⁹³ Elsbeth Andrae, daughter of the first Pacific Branch surgeon, describes eucalyptus trees in the residential staff quarters area in the late 1880s.⁹⁴ A newspaper account of the plan for the Soldiers Home published in 1888 noted the intention to plant eucalyptus "in the far background," i.e. toward the northern boundary of the property, the following year.⁹⁵

The eucalyptus wind breaks of the WLA Campus, notably the eastern boundary above Constitution Avenue, and in the National Veterans Park, are historic features of the WLA Campus. These plantings were intentional and designed to improve the grounds of the Pacific Branch. Their inclusion as part of the WLA VA NRHD is recommended, despite their plantings outside the Period of Significance (1923-1952).

Andrae's account of early life at the Pacific Branch and aerial photos taken in the first half of the twentieth century depict circular windbreaks of large trees surrounding the early staff quarters. Her memories imply that the Pacific Branch may have installed grown trees, rather than saplings.⁹⁶ The remainders of these groves, notably those surrounding Building #23, are recommended for inclusion in the WLA VA NRHD, despite planting outside the Period of Significance. Both the residential staff eucalyptus trees and the breaks on the North Campus were in use throughout the WLA VA NRHD Period of Significance.

The proximity of the California Board of Forestry station in Santa Monica to the Pacific Branch and the age of the trees implies that the eucalyptus trees planted in the early years of the Pacific Branch may have been related to Board of Forestry Chair Abbot Kinney's statewide promotion of the eucalyptus from 1886 to 1888. No evidence of a direct connection from the Santa Monica station to the Pacific Branch was identified through research.

⁸⁷ NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 19.

⁸⁸ Leo A. Daly Company and Chattel, Inc., *Draft- West Los Angeles*, 35.

⁸⁹ Farmer, *Trees*, 115, 119.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 125.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 130-131.

⁹² *Ibid*, 138.

⁹³ "The Soldier's Home," *The Los Angeles Times*, May 12, 1888, 2.

⁹⁴ Elspeth Andrae, *The Dear Old Boys in Blue: Memories of the Early Days of the Veterans Administration Center, Los Angeles*, (San Francisco: Reynard Press, 1948), 15.

⁹⁵ "The Soldiers Home," *The Los Angeles Daily Herald*, November 28, 1888, 1.

⁹⁶ Andrae, *Dear Old Boys*, 15.

Due to the history of the eucalypti as part of the WLA VA NRHD, the eucalyptus trees of the WLA Campus are not recommended for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Quad at Buildings #205, #208, and #209

The arrangement of Buildings #205, #208, and #209 of the WLA Campus forms a small courtyard or quad with Bonsall Avenue. The courtyard is elevated and accessed by three steps from Bonsall Avenue. As seen from above, the buildings are linked by broad, square-shaped greenspaces framed by sidewalks. The paths intersect to create a cruciform shape. Semicircular corridors connect the buildings to one another. The corners of the space are bricked, and bricks also are set into rectangular grids in front of Buildings #205 and #209.⁹⁷

Aerial photos of the campus taken in 1956, shortly after the close of the WLA VA NRHD Period of Significance (1923-1952) show a grassy courtyard interrupted by the paths set in the cruciform shape. A small shed is set within the square formed by the intersection of the pathways.⁹⁸

Figure 11- Aerial image of Buildings #205, #208, and #209 with associated courtyard in 1956. Photo courtesy of the University of California- Santa Barbara.

In 1964, the VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) Committee, under the direction of Mabel Patton, voted to sponsor redevelopment of the courtyard into a "patio" for Brentwood Hospital patients. Work started January 21, 1965. At the time, the courtyard was surrounded by a chainlink and barbed wire fence.⁹⁹ By November of that year, the VAVS Committee had installed picnic tables, trees, sod, and brick grids into the extant cruciform pathways.¹⁰⁰



⁹⁷ NRHP, WLA VA NRHP, Section 7, page 20.

⁹⁸ Aerial photography, Flight c-22555, Frame 14-19, Los Angeles County, June 30, 1956, available in the aerial photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara.

⁹⁹ Note- This fence may have been present decades earlier but is too small to be seen in aerial photographs.

¹⁰⁰ Aerial photography, Flight c-25019, Frame 486, November 26, 1965, Los Angeles County, available in the aerial photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara; Mabel Patton, VAVS Scrapbook, available in the collection of the WLA Campus.

The VAVS Committee altered integrity of materials, design, and feeling of the quad between Buildings



Figure 12- Mabel Patton and others planting a tree in the courtyard, January 1965. Photo courtesy of the WLA Campus.

#205, #208, and #209 after the Period of Significance (1923-1952). It is recommended that the WLA VA NRHD National Register of Historic Places nomination be updated to note the importance of the space between the buildings as bound by the connecting corridors and the cruciform pattern formed by the sidewalks, but not the brickwork and trees that date to 1965, outside the WLA VA NRHD Period of Significance.

Courtyard between Buildings #156, #157, and #158

Buildings #156, #157, and #158 were constructed in the early 1920s as a tuberculosis (TB) hospital. At that time, the buildings were more than a quarter mile from any other WLA Campus building to provide increased protection against contagion. All three were constructed in Mission Revival style architecture, although the true elements of high style were reserved for Building #157, the main hospital.

In 1925, a committee of Branch employees and a local philanthropist approached Charles P. Day, a landscape engineer in Pasadena, about creating a landscape plan for the new TB complex. Day donated his design to the Pacific

Branch for implementation by the patients and staff. Although the full details of the Day plan are unknown, the design included a winding drive lined with sycamore, elm, cypress, and cedar trees.¹⁰¹

The TB hospital footprint included a curvilinear road that wound from a circular drop-off space at the front of Building #157, around Building #158, and terminated at the rear of Building #156. Open greenspaces were included for the patients in the southwest courtyards between the buildings, while the northeast courtyards included walking paths. Little evidence of vegetation is visible in these courtyards in aerials taken of the campus in 1927.¹⁰² By 1937, trees lined the curvilinear drive around the TB hospital and the northeast courtyard between Buildings #157 and #158 bore some grass.¹⁰³ The construction of Building #258 directly connected to Building #157 destroyed the original curvilinear roadway and tree pattern.¹⁰⁴

In 1956, following the end of the Period of Significance, most of the greenspace between the buildings of the former TB hospital had been removed. Ca. 1970, the greenspaces in the southwest courtyards was restored, but a parking lot was constructed in the northeast courtyard between Buildings #157 and #158.¹⁰⁵ Between 1994 and 2002, VA planted carrotwood, olive, and Brazilian Pepper trees in the southwest courtyard between Buildings #156 and #157.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ "Elaborate Gardens Will Soon Beautify Soldiers' Buildings at Sawtelle," *The Los Angeles Sunday Times*, February 8, 1925, Part II, 1.

¹⁰² Aerial photography, Flight c-30, Frame a-2, Los Angeles County, February 28, 1927, available in the Aerial Photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara.

¹⁰³ Aerial photography, Flight axj-1938, Frame 26-17, Los Angeles County, December 31, 1937, available in the Aerial Photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara.

¹⁰⁴ NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 16.

¹⁰⁵ Aerial photography, Flight tg-2755, Frame 18-13, Los Angeles County, February 28, 1971, available in the Aerial Photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara.

¹⁰⁶ Google Earth, 11301 Wilshire Boulevard, May 1994 and March 2002, www.google.com/earth.

The courtyards and grounds surrounding Buildings #156, #157, and #158 have been significantly modified since their construction in the 1920s, and since the end of the Period of Significance in 1952. Even if trees planted during the Period of Significance remain around the buildings, the features have lost their historic context and pattern. The lawns and other landscape features surrounding these buildings lack integrity of materials, design, and feeling necessary for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing element to the WLA VA NRHD. It is recommended that the WLA VA NRHD National Register of Historic Places nomination be updated to include this area as a non-contributing landscape element.



Figure 13- Courtyard between Buildings #156 (left) and #157 (right). September 2017.

Building #220 Rose Garden

The Veterans Administration constructed Building #220 in 1939 specifically for the care of female Veterans. The building is a more ornate example of the Mission Revival style evident on many of the buildings of the North Campus. The Federation of Women's Clubs donated a lavish garden to the residents of Building #220 on December 25, 1940. Designed by local homebuilder Harold Meakin, the garden featured parallel rows of Cajeput and Sycamore trees, twenty individual plots for Veterans to tend, and included seven varieties of roses. By 1947, the garden had expanded to include pathways, a brick patio, memorial arbor, and fountains.¹⁰⁷

The shift of the WLA Campus away from long-term patient care left the garden in ruins and the Meakin Plan nearly eradicated. In December 2011, the non-profit Veterans Park Conservancy completed a renovation of the garden. Veterans Park Conservancy retained the trees, the 1947 fountain, and the memorial arbor, but removed the roses and plot lines.¹⁰⁸ The memorial arbor and the parallel lines of trees are contributing elements to the WLA VA NRHD. The changes to the Building #220 Rose Garden made in 2011 render the space a non-contributing element to the WLA VA NRHD.

¹⁰⁷ Walter Cochrane, "Gardens That Bring Peace," *The Los Angeles Times Home Magazine*, May 25, 1947, 21, 26.

¹⁰⁸ Martha Grovers, "Finding Peace in the Garden," *The Los Angeles Times*, December 12, 2011, AA3.

View between Buildings #13 and #226

The National Register of Historic Places nomination identifies the space between Buildings #13 and #226 as a contributing element to the WLA VA NRHD stating, "The relationship between Building 13 and Wadsworth Theater (Building 226) is significant. The two buildings are on axis with each other and form the apex and base of the triangle formed by the street grid; they are physically connected by parallel walking paths."¹⁰⁹ In contrast, the draft Historic Preservation Plan notes that this area is "...not appropriately landscaped, which negatively impacts the historic view corridors, and takes away from the historic relationship between these buildings."¹¹⁰

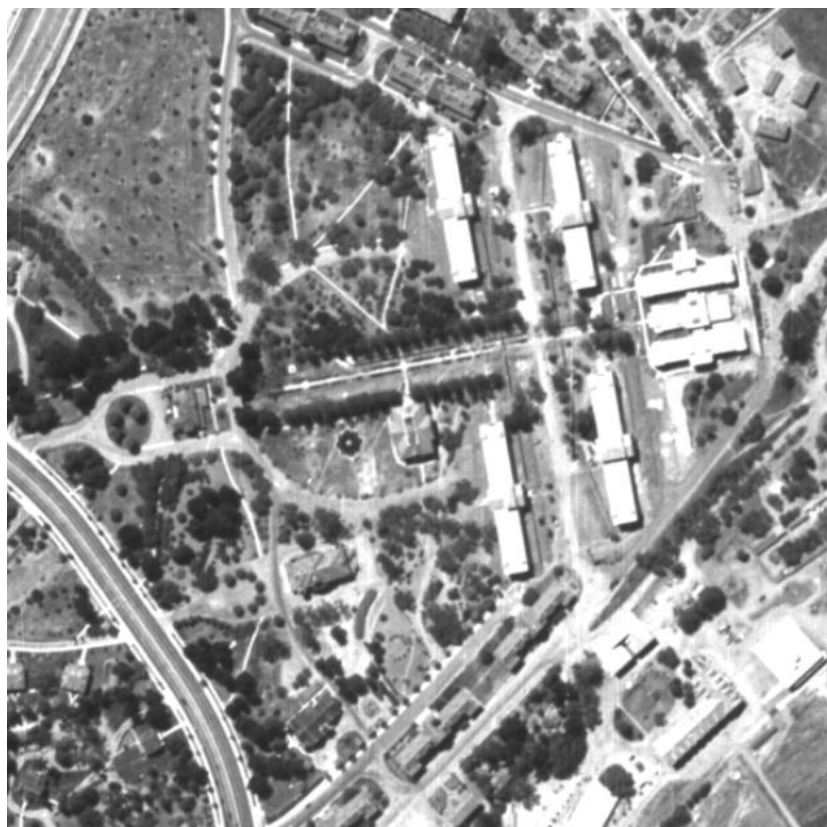


Figure 14- Landscaping between Buildings #13 and #226 in 1937. Photo courtesy of the UCSB.

Aerial photography taken of the campus in 1937 shows a tree-lined walkway connecting present-day Eisenhower Avenue near Building #226 to Grant Avenue near Buildings #13.¹¹¹ The trees appear to be deciduous and is interrupted by the bounding streets prior to reaching the buildings. Buildings #212, #213, #214, #215, #217, and #218 frame the path. By 1956, a cluster of trees had been planted between Building #226 and present-day Eisenhower Avenue and another between Building #13 and Grant Avenue, thereby blocking the previous visual relationship between the two buildings.¹¹² The parallel lines of deciduous trees were removed ca. 1980.¹¹³ Today, coniferous trees are planted between the pathways.

¹⁰⁹ NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 12.

¹¹⁰ Leo A. Daly Company and Chattel, Inc., *Draft- West Los Angeles*, 58.

¹¹¹ Aerial photography, Flight axj-1938, Frame 26-17, Los Angeles County, December 31, 1937, available in the Aerial Photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara.

¹¹² Aerial photography, Flight c-22555, Frame 14-19, Los Angeles County, June 30, 1956, available in the aerial photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara.

¹¹³ Aerial photography, Flight ami-1a, Frame 77_8746, Los Angeles County, July 26, 1977, available in the aerial photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara; Aerial photography, Flight ami-1a, Frame 82-



Figure 15- Landscaping between Buildings #13 and #226 in 1956. Photo courtesy of the UCSB.

The visual relationship between Buildings #13 and #226 was interrupted during the Period of Significance and further disrupted by later WLA Campus landscaping efforts. The parallel pathways between Grant and Eisenhower avenues, however, was installed during the Period of Significance and remains extant. These pathways are related to the paths between Buildings #212, #213, #214, #215, #217, and #218. These lawns and associated pathways are included as a contributing element to the WLA VNRHD.

11432, Los Angeles County, January 30, 1982, available in the aerial photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara.



Figure 16- Landscape between Buildings #13 and #226. Photo courtesy of HOK.

USS Maine Tablet

A plaque honoring the memory of the *USS Maine*, which was sunk in Havana harbor prior to the Spanish-American War, is situated in front of Building #226 (Wadsworth Theater). The bronze plaque is mounted to a concrete dais supported by marble tablets, likely former headstones from the LANC. It is one of a limited run cast of scrap metal from the vessel created by artist Charles Kech in 1913. More than one thousand were cast and sold to municipalities to commemorate the *Maine*.¹¹⁴

No information regarding donation or installation of the USS Maine plaque was located in the files of the WLA Campus. The plaque was not mentioned at the October 1940 dedication of the theater, though photos of the Wadsworth Theater taken in 1972 clearly show the dais in its present location.¹¹⁵ Without additional information, it cannot be confirmed that the plaque was installed within the WLA VA NRHD during the Period of Significance (1923-1952). It is recommended that the *USS Maine* plaque be treated as a heritage asset, but not a contributing element of the WLA VA NRHD.

Japanese Garden

The 52 Association, a now-defunct Los Angeles-based charitable group that worked for the benefit of servicemembers of World War II, donated funds in the early 1960s to construct a two-acre Japanese garden on the North Campus. The Garden was dedicated in 1965, although it is incorrectly dated as ca. 1970s in the WLA VA NRHD. It was designed by landscape architect Shinichi Maesaki and installed by WLA VA hospital patients.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ "Gets Maine Memorial," *The Los Angeles Times*, October 19, 1919, Part II, 10.

¹¹⁵ "Theater Opens on Wednesday," *The Los Angeles Times*, October 13, 1940, Part II, 2; Medical Illustration Services, [photo of Wadsworth Theater], March 10, 1972, available in the files of the WLA Campus, Building #258.

¹¹⁶ "Japanese Garden to be Dedicated Today," *The Los Angeles Times*, September 19, 1965, K-12.



Figure 17- Japanese Garden, September 2017.

Japanese gardens rose in popularity following World War II in part because the clean lines of the landscapes reflected the stark planes and minimalist appearance of Mid-Century Modern architecture. Shinichi Maesaki was a Los Angeles-area landscape architect noted for his specialization in Japanese garden design. He was active in southern California from approximately 1958 to 1973. Maesaki and his wife also were active members of Ikebana International, an organization dedicated to the practice of flower arranging, during this time. A contemporary of Koichi Kawana and Nagao Sakurai, Maesaki's more publicized works largely focused on small, residential gardens, rather than public spaces.¹¹⁷

The WLA VA NRHD National Register of Historic Places nomination lists the Japanese Garden on the North Campus as a non-contributing element to the WLA VA NRHD because it was constructed outside the district's Period of Significance (1923-1952).¹¹⁸ Maesaki has not been recognized as a master craftsman of Japanese landscape design by the National Register of Historic Places, the American Society of Landscape Architects, or the Los Angeles Conservancy, as of this writing.¹¹⁹ The Japanese Gardens are not recommended for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places at this time. Broader study of Maesaki's works and the applicability of those tenets to the design of the WLA Campus gardens are outside the scope of this report but may influence a decision to seek individual listing in the future.

¹¹⁷ "Gardening Exhibits Cater to All Tastes," *The Los Angeles Times*, August 9, 1959, Part IX, 16; "Japanese America Society Sets Party," *The Los Angeles Times*, March 12, 1961, Section 1, 3; C. Fred Shoop, "Garden Tour Always Pleasure," *The Pasadena Independent*, August 24, 1961, A-7; [Aratani garden], *The Los Angeles Times*, November 12, 1963, 63; "Schedule Flower Exhibit," *The Van Nuys News*, September 25, 1973, 25-A.

¹¹⁸ NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 26.

¹¹⁹ American Society of Landscape Architects Council of Fellows, Database, <https://www.asla.org/fellowsdatabase.aspx>; Los Angeles Conservancy, Architect Biographies, <https://www.laconservancy.org/architects>.

A 2017 study of the WLA Campus buildings determined that an expansion of the Period of Significance (1923-1952) of the WLA Campus was not warranted by the extant building stock.¹²⁰ The Japanese Garden is the only large or otherwise important landscape feature to be constructed after the Period of Significance, but before the advised 50-year age threshold recommended for consideration by the National Parks Service for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Japanese Garden does not reflect the Mission Revival style of architecture for which the WLA VA NRHD was listed in the National Register, nor does the Garden serve as a unique or representative example of the care provided to Veterans under the Second Generation of Veterans Hospitals. Instead, the garden reflects the practices associated with the Third Generation of Veterans Hospitals historic context. As the WLA VA NRHD is not eligible under the Third Generation, expansion of the Period of Significance to include the Japanese Garden is not recommended. Amendment of the WLA VA NRHD nomination to reflect the correct date of construction and the work of Shinichi Maesaki is recommended to aid future researchers.

Golf Course

The Hillcrest Country Club of Cheviot Hills, then a country club exclusive to persons of Jewish descent, donated the design and construction of a 9-hole golf course on the North Campus of the WLA Campus in 1946. Comedian and longtime Hillcrest member Harpo Marx assisted in the dedication ceremonies on June 23 of that year.¹²¹ Prominent golf course architect Billy Bell designed the course with assistance from an associate. Both donated their time as a recognition of the service of Veterans. No evidence suggests that the course has been significantly changed from Bell's original design.



Figure 18- Golf Course, September 2017.

William "Billy" Park Bell moved to southern California in his twenties and started his career in golf as a caddiemaster at a country club in Pasadena. While working as groundskeeper of another Pasadena club, Bell served as construction manager for a course redesign. Bell soon left his position to collaborate with a local course architect before setting up a private practice in the 1930s. Bell designed several important golf courses in southern California, including the La Jolla and San

Diego country clubs. Bell's son, William F. Bell, joined the practice after World War II. The two collaborated on several courses prior to the senior Bell's death in 1953. The younger Bell later implemented

¹²⁰ Row 10 Historic Preservation Solutions, LLC, *WLA VA NRHD Building Survey*, draft submitted to VA January 2, 2018.

¹²¹ "Veterans' Course at Sawtelle Contributed," *The Los Angeles Times*, June 23, 1946, Part II, 6.

his father's design of the famed Torrey Pines Golf Course.¹²² Recent publications have dubbed the Bells the "California's First Family of Golf Course Design."¹²³

Billy Bell, Sr., was a master of golf course design in California and Arizona from the 1930s to his death in the early 1950s. The WLA Campus golf course, however, is not one of Bell's signature courses, and, at only 9 holes, not one of his full-sized designs. It does not appear to possess the necessary significance for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The golf course is listed as a contributing element to the WLA VA NRHD. It is recommended that VA amend the existing National Register of Historic Places nomination to note Bell's involvement in the course.

UCLA Baseball Field- Jackie Robinson Stadium

Prior to 1910, the campus baseball field was roughly located under the footprints of modern Buildings 113, 114, 115, and 117.¹²⁴ A description of the campus in 1925 listed the "baseball park" alongside the campus post office, theater, and churches as "institutions for convenience, recreation, and comfort."¹²⁵ Branch management elected to demolish the field to prepare for the new buildings in 1927.¹²⁶ The Branch constructed a new baseball field, known as Sawtelle Field, on the eastern side of the campus near Sepulveda Boulevard. In early 1933, UCLA struck a deal with Branch management to play all UCLA home baseball games at Sawtelle Field, opening the season in March under the leadership of Coach Tom Lieb.¹²⁷ UCLA used the fields until 1939 when the school opened a new stadium.¹²⁸



Figure 19- Jackie Robinson Stadium, March 2017.

UCLA baseball again returned to the VA Campus in 1964 when construction of a new Bruins basketball arena necessitated demolition of the UCLA fields. Following complaints of poor field and locker room conditions, Sawtelle Field was renovated in the late 1970s/early 1980s, officially opening February 7, 1981. UCLA alum Hoyt Pardee paid for the new stadium and requested the field be named for friend, baseball

¹²² City of San Diego, "The Bells: California's First Family of Golf Course Design," "Parks & Recreation," available online through the City of San Diego, California, <https://www.sandiego.gov/park-and-recreation/golf/torreypines/about/bells>; "William Park Bell (Golf Course Designer)," Pacific Coast Architecture Database Entry No. 3640, available online, <http://pcad.lib.washington.edu/person/3640/>.

¹²³ City of San Diego, "The Bells."

¹²⁴ "Map of the Pacific Branch of the N.H. for D.V.S., Los Angeles, California, 1910," 1910. From the Santa Monica Land & Water Board Company records collection, Poway, California.

¹²⁵ "Disabled Heroes Offered Refuge," *The Los Angeles Sunday Times*, February 8, 1925, Part II, 1.

¹²⁶ Aerial photography, Flight C-30, Frame A-1, Los Angeles County, February 28, 1927, available in the Aerial Photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara.

¹²⁷ "Bruins Swing Into Baseball," *The Los Angeles Times*, March, 11, 1933, 6.

¹²⁸ *Los Angeles Times* Staff, "Jackie Robinson Stadium Controversy," "1939: Bruins return to campus," November 2, 2013.

pioneer and fellow Bruin Jackie Robinson. Rachel Robinson, widow of the baseball great, threw out the opening pitch.¹²⁹ Since 1981, the stadium has been improved many times to include amenities such as a press box and concession stands.

Although the presence of a baseball stadium on the eastern border of the campus dates to the WLA VA NRHD Period of Significance, the construction of Jackie Robinson Field in 1981 prevents listing the stadium as a contributing element to the historic district. At present, the NRHP nomination includes information about the buildings surrounding the field, but the stadium is not included as a non-contributing element. Amendment of the NRHP nomination to include information about Jackie Robinson Stadium is recommended.

Los Angeles National Veterans Park

Los Angeles National Veterans Park occupies a large triangle-shaped lot at the intersection of Wilshire and San Vicente Boulevards on the North Campus. Eucalyptus trees interrupt the open greenspace to provide a pastoral setting. Aerial photos indicate the eucalyptus trees were planted along this Campus boundary in the mid-1920s; the trees appear as little more than shrubs in 1927.¹³⁰ Nearly all the trees appear dead in a photo of the Campus taken in April 1960, likely as a result of the drought that plagued the state in 1959 and 1960.¹³¹ The park is bisected by an empty line indicating the historic route of the Los Angeles Pacific Rail Road. A small copse of trees is located on the northeast side of the former track line. These trees are remnants of elaborate gardens that once framed a large staff residence on the north side of Wilshire Boulevard opposite Building #23. The residence was demolished in the early 1970s.



Figure 20- Entrance Plaza to National Veterans Park, September 2017.

VA agreed to designate these 16 acres as a park in 2007. The park was listed as a contributing element to the WLA VA NRHD, described as an "open area... punctuated by a eucalyptus wind break."¹³² The two sets of trees, the wind break and the copse, should be noted separately because they result from different installations

and historically served different uses. It is recommended that the National Register nomination be updated accordingly. The associated gateway plaza completed in 2007 falls outside the WLA VA NRHD Period of Significance (1923-1952) and is recommended for inclusion in the WLA VA NRHD as a non-contributing element.

¹²⁹ Bob Cuomo, "Dodgers Do Own dedicating, 12-1," *The Los Angeles Times*, February 8, 1981, Part III, 11.

¹³⁰ Aerial photography, Flight c-30, Frame a-2, Los Angeles County, February 28, 1927, available in the Aerial Photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara.

¹³¹ Aerial photography, Flight c-23870, Frame 1592, Los Angeles County, April 30, 1960, available in the Aerial Photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara; Michael Bastasch, "California's 'unending' statewide drought has ended for now," *Business Insider*, February 10, 2017, <http://www.businessinsider.com/california-drought-has-ended-for-now-2017-2>.

¹³² NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 7, page 12.

MacArthur Field

MacArthur Field is located on the North Campus between the East Arroyo and Building #205 just south of the Japanese Garden. Presently, MacArthur Field is the site of several soccer fields used by Veterans and area clubs. Historically, the space served as recreation area and baseball diamond open to patients of Brentwood Hospital, a neuropsychiatric hospital comprised of Buildings #205, #206, #207, #208, #209, #256, and #257.¹³³ The field was not addressed in the WLA VA NRHD nomination.

On April 6, 1935, Veterans Administration director Frank T. Hines announced plans to convert tuberculosis buildings at the WLA Campus to neuropsychiatric use. Hines also had secured funding to construct additional buildings for the treatment of neuropsychiatric conditions.¹³⁴ The Veterans Administration constructed nine additional buildings on the North Campus between 1937 and 1946 dedicated to the care of neuropsychiatric patients, including a theater (Building #211) and a large administration building (Building #258). By 1947, the neuropsychiatric facilities were being called "Brentwood Hospital" after the surrounding West Los Angeles neighborhood.



Figure 21- MacArthur Field, March 2017.

Recreational and occupational therapies were important components of the Second Generation approach to helping cure neuropsychiatric conditions.¹³⁵ At Brentwood, patients had access to gardening, carpentry, sculpting, writing, and painting workshops, as well as opportunities to study for high school diplomas, as needed. The nearby diamond, now known as MacArthur Field, was available for softball games.¹³⁶ The

¹³³ VA, "Plot Plan, Veterans Adm. Center, Los Angeles, Ca." 1965, available in the records of the WLA Campus.

¹³⁴ "Funds Approved for Veterans' Hospital Here." *The Los Angeles Times*, April 7, 1935, Part I, 26.

¹³⁵ Trent Spurlock, Craig A. Potts, and Karen E. Hudson, *United States Second Generation Veterans Hospitals*, 2010, Section E, page 18.

¹³⁶ "Hospital Work," *The Los Angeles Times*, April 14, 1968, 14.

field also was the site of the annual Brentwood Hospital Carnival, an event sponsored by Voluntary Services that featured game booths, food, and clowns.¹³⁷

Aerial imagery of the site taken in 1946 shows an empty, undeveloped site where MacArthur Field now stands.¹³⁸ By 1960, the site had clearly been graded, with a large portion of the field cleared of grass.¹³⁹ No built features such as stands were constructed on MacArthur Field, although small sheds were added in recent years to serve small concessions and hold equipment.

MacArthur is recommended for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing element to the WLA VA NRHD under Criterion A as a symbol of the care provided to Veterans. The small sheds extant on the field and the chainlink fence surrounding the site do not contribute to the understanding of the field, nor do they meet the necessary age threshold established by the WLA VA NRHD Period of Significance.

Brentwood School Athletic Fields

Brentwood School is a secular private school in the Brentwood neighborhood of West Los Angeles. Portions of the Brentwood School are located within the WLA Campus, including a baseball diamond; grass playing field with track, scoreboard, bleachers (stadium fields); swimming pool and associated facilities (aquatics center); six tennis courts; and an open, grassy area north of MacArthur Field. Each of these facilities was constructed in the past twenty years. The WLA VA NRHD National Register nomination does not include a determination of eligibility for the Brentwood School facilities.



Figure 22- Brentwood School Athletic Facilities, 2017.

¹³⁷ "Carnival at Brentwood ends," *The Los Angeles Times*, May 8, 1975, 8; "Veterans Await Carnival at Hospital in Brentwood," *The Los Angeles Times*, April 30, 1967, 12.

¹³⁸ Aerial photography, Flight GS-EM, Frame 1-171, Los Angeles County, December 31, 1946, available in the aerial photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara

¹³⁹ Aerial photography, Flight c-23870, Frame 1592, Los Angeles County, April 30, 1960, available in the Aerial Photography collection of the University of California- Santa Barbara.

Given the dates of construction, all buildings, objects, and structures are recommended for inclusion in the WLA VA NRHD as non-contributing elements. This recommendation includes all associated greenspace under the Brentwood School lease.

Landscape Furniture

Landscape furniture includes benches; light posts; waste or recycling receptacles; public tables and chairs; bike racks; planters; and other objects intended for public use. Government facilities such as the WLA Campus also generally include flag poles and signage. The availability of landscape furniture on the WLA Campus varies by use of the parcel, i.e., there is more landscape furniture in areas intended for the public, such as the space around Building #500, than in more private areas of the Campus, such as Building #23 and the other staff residences. Landscape furniture is not addressed as a whole in the WLA VA NRHD National Register nomination, but select elements, such as the stone fence near Building #23, are noted.



Figure 23- Electric poles lining Bonsall Avenue ca. 1902. Photo courtesy of the WLA Campus.

Electrical poles are the most visible piece of landscape furniture in photos of the WLA Campus when it served as the Pacific Branch. VA has since buried utilities and these objects are no longer extant. The light poles, way-faring signs, and benches dotting the WLA Campus landscape today were not constructed during the WLA VA NRHD Period of Significance (1923-1952). They are non-contributing elements to the WLA VA NRHD.

There are at least three large poles bearing the American flag on the WLA Campus: one in front of Building #218, one in front of Building #258, and a third in front of Building #500. The Building #500 flag pole is outside the WLA VA NRHD. The remaining poles are remnants of the internal division of the WLA Campus into three VA hospitals in the mid-twentieth century: Wadsworth Hospital (on the South Campus, no longer extant), Brentwood Hospital, and the VA domiciliaries. The placement of these poles in front of Buildings #218 and #258, the former administration buildings of the domiciliaries and Brentwood Hospital respectively, are more significant than the pole materials. The pole sites are recommended for inclusion in the WLA VA NRHD as contributing landscape elements.

The fence surrounding the WLA Campus is discontinuous and made of several differing materials, including chainlink and faux wrought iron. These materials do not meet the age threshold established by the WLA VA NRHD Period of Significance (1923-1952). The WLA Campus fence is recommended for inclusion in the WLA VA NRHD as a non-contributing element. This recommendation includes the gateway fence at the entrance to the National Veterans Park.

Roadways

The WLA VA NRHD notes that the roadway system of the campus is a contributing element but calls out only one section of roadway individually. Most of the WLA Campus roads were developed prior to 1962, the end of the established WLA VA NRHD Period of Significance, though some have been altered through the construction of parking lots and new buildings. The roadway system as a whole is curvilinear. Few of the roads connect outside the WLA Campus.

Bonsall Avenue- Bonsall Avenue is the most historically significant road of the WLA Campus. It served as the original organizing tenet of the buildings of the Pacific Branch when the WLA Campus was under the administration of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. Bonsall Avenue was interrupted in the 1970s to allow for construction of Dowlen Drive and Building #500. The WLA VA NRHD nomination lists the portion of Bonsall Avenue south of Dowlen as a part of the contributing road system. It is recommended that the nomination be amended to specifically note the whole of Bonsall Avenue on the North Campus as a contributing element of the WLA VA NRHD. Character-defining features of Bonsall Avenue include the curvilinear design and its service as the link between the North and South Campuses.

Wilshire Boulevard- Wilshire Boulevard, historically known as "Brown Boulevard" within the Pacific Branch and "Nevada Avenue" in Santa Monica, is owned by the California Department of Transportation. It is excluded from the geographic boundaries of the WLA VA NRHD.

Constitution Avenue- Constitution Avenue is one of the few straight roads on the grounds of the WLA Campus and one of the few to connect with the established City of Los Angeles streetgrid. Historically known as Pepper Avenue, the road extends from Bonsall Avenue, under Interstate 405, across South Sepulveda Boulevard, and into the main entrance of the LANC. The road is significant as the historic path from the WLA Campus to the LANC.

Dowlen Drive- As noted previously, Dowlen Drive was constructed contemporaneously with Building #500. Its construction was outside the established WLA VA NRHD Period of Significance and the street is outside the geographic boundaries of the historic district.

Eisenhower, Dewey, Grant, and Pershing Avenues- These streets were constructed during the Period of Significance to accommodate the new domiciliaries (built 1938-1941). The triangular configuration of these roadways and the resulting arrangement of the buildings contained therein are character-defining features and unique to WLA among Second Generation campuses. It is recommended that the WLA VA NRHD nomination be updated to include this roadway system as a contributing element.

Arnold, Vandergrift, Nimitz, and Patton Avenues- These streets also were constructed in the unique triangular shape during the Period of Significance. It is recommended that the WLA VA NRHD nomination be updated to include the roadway system and the building configurations as contributing elements of the WLA VA NRHD.

Hadley Lane- The path of Hadley Lane was interrupted by the demolition of the large staff quarters formerly within the open lawn. Hadley Lane is not recommended as a contributing element to the WLA VA NRHD.

Wadsworth Place- Wadsworth Place is a curvilinear road located to the rear of Building #23. This street formerly extended from Hadley Lane around and provided an exit from the WLA Campus staff residence area to Wilshire Boulevard. This exit was closed after the end of the Period of Significance. Wadsworth Place no longer maintains its historic route and is not recommended as a contributing element to the WLA VA NRHD.

Streets of the Utility/Engineering Area- The streets of the utility and engineering area (east and northeast of Bonsall Avenue between Wilshire Boulevard and Constitution Avenue) have been altered to accommodate numerous building demolitions and constructions since the close of the WLA VA NRHD Period of Significance. Also, utility functions have necessitated the closure or segmenting of some roadways in the area to support WLA Campus operations. These streets are not important to the understanding of the WLA VA NRHD and are not contributing elements of the WLA VA NRHD.

Circular Drive in front of Building #211- Building #211 was constructed in 1946 with the circular drop-off/pick-up drive. The drive is recommended for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing element to the WLA VA NRHD.



Figure 24- Circular Drive in Front of Building #211, September 2017.

Area of Parking Lot 29, including Davis Avenue- The roadways between Davis Avenue and the eastern Campus border have largely been closed. These streets were not necessary after most of buildings in that area were demolished in the 1980s. This area does not contain any historic buildings nor contributing elements to the WLA VA NRHD.



Chapter 5- Potential Effects of the Undertaking

In September 2016, Congress passed the West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016 (Public Law 114-226) to permit VA to utilize Enhanced-Use Leases with private sector developers to provide permanent supportive housing on the WLA Campus. The goals of this redevelopment are the provisions of permanent supportive housing for Veterans, specifically the chronically homeless, severely disabled, aging, and female Veteran populations, and of related services for these groups and all Veterans in the greater Los Angeles area through implementation of the revised *Department of Veterans Affairs Greater Los Angeles Draft Master Plan* released in January 2016 and the completion of several campus improvement projects (the Federal Action/Undertaking). As part of the overall redevelopment, VA also is considering the impacts related to renovation of five historic campus buildings (Buildings #20, #66, #199, #33, and #23) by the 1887 Fund, a local non-profit, and allowance for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority to extend the Purple Line subway system onto the WLA Campus.

The Undertaking includes multiple redevelopment options, each of which contains the potential for multiple discrete projects. The impacts of these options will be analyzed and addressed as alternatives in the programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The Undertaking includes the potential for direct effects to the physical plant of the WLA campus and the LANC, but does not include any plans for demolition, construction, or use of buildings and/or spaces outside these VA properties. It also contains a possibility of new construction, but this new construction will not exceed the existing scale and massing of campus buildings and is not planned for construction near the campus border. The new construction therefore is not anticipated to affect the viewshed of any nearby buildings or districts. VA has determined the area of potential effect (APE) will be limited to the boundaries of the WLA campus and the LANC.

Section 106 of the NHPA obligates federal agencies to consider the effects of their actions on historic properties and provide the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) an opportunity to comment. Section 106 and its implementing regulations codified in 36 CFR §800 require federal agencies to consult with groups such as the ACHP, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), federally-recognized Native American Tribes with a geographic and/or cultural affiliation to the project area, local elected officials, and groups with specific expertise in the historic properties unique to that project area about the effects of the federal undertaking on historic properties. The agencies consult with these groups on measures to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate effects to those properties. Given the high level of public interest in the project and the extent of historic resources throughout the WLA Campus, VA has chosen to complete its Section 106 consultation by including it as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a process known as substitution.

Effects of Alternative A

Under Alternative A, VA will renovate existing buildings to enhance existing services in that space or for a new function and service provider. New functions or services may require new parking lots or reconfigured roadway systems. Additionally, renovations may require the addition of space that may affect some contributing landscapes.

Renovations to existing buildings are unlikely to significantly impact any of the specific landscape elements identified in the WLA VA NRHD National Register nomination or recommended for consideration in Chapter 4 of this report. Minor changes may include the creation of small beds near renovated buildings or the construction of building entries that may mar extant greenspaces. Any change in function may require reconfiguration of the extant roadway system through the addition of parking lots. The triangular-shaped systems created by Bonsall, Pershing, Grant, and Eisenhower Avenues, as well as that created by Bonsall, Nimitz, Vandregift, Arnold, and Patton Avenues are character-defining features of the WLA VA NRHD and unique to the WLA Campus. Any shift of parking lots away from these systems and into other nearby areas is recommended.

Effects of Alternative B

Under Alternative B, VA would demolish one or more buildings of the WLA Campus. The removal of a single building near historic landscapes and roadway systems may necessitate alterations such as the construction of new parking lots, the reconfiguration of a road, or the installation of a new garden or greenspace. While the effects of one such demolition may be minor or moderate, the cumulative effects of several demolitions may require a re-evaluation of the WLA VA NRHD. The removal of several buildings likely would require reconfiguration of the WLA Campus roadway system. Demolition of several contributing elements, including landscape features, has the potential to affect the property's ability to convey historic significance; de-listing the WLA VA NRHD from the National Register of Historic Places would be necessary. Large-scale effects such as those described would require significant mitigation.

Effects of Alternative C

Under Alternative C, VA would demolish extant greenspaces, landscape features, and/or buildings to construct a completely new building or buildings. The demolition of the buildings and subsequent new construction has the potential to interrupt the existing Campus roadway system. Additionally, demolition of select Campus buildings has the potential to affect specific WLA VA NRHD landscape elements identified in the National Register nomination or in the recommendations contained in Chapter 4 of this report. Specific landscape features under consideration include but are not limited to MacArthur Field, the golf course, the Los Angeles National Veterans Park, Veterans Barrington Park, a parcel south of Brentwood School athletic fields and operated by Brentwood School, and at the corner of Bonsall and Nimitz Avenues. The golf course is listed as a contributing element to the WLA VA NRHD- any construction on this space is likely to result in removal of this element from the historic district. Such removal is not significant enough to warrant de-listing of the WLA VA NRHD from the National Register of Historic Places, but it would be an adverse effect to the district. MacArthur Field has been recommended for listing in the National Register as a contributing element to the WLA VA NRHD. Again, construction would negate this recommendation, but such changes will not affect the overall historic designation of the WLA VA NRHD. Neither Veterans Barrington Park nor the Brentwood School Athletic Fields are recommended for listing as contributing elements to the WLA VA NRHD. Construction on these sites will affect the overall pastoral feeling of the WLA Campus but are unlikely to affect the landscape of the WLA VA NRHD.

Construction at the corner of Bonsall and Nimitz Avenues has the potential to affect the unique and significant roadway configuration created by Bonsall, Patton, Nimitz, Vandergrift, and Arnold Avenues. It is recommended that new construction conform to the existing roadway pattern and building configuration, to the greatest extent possible. If the roadway pattern is affected, it could be an adverse effect to the WLA VA NRHD.

New construction may affect the viewsheds of surrounding historic landscape features and buildings. This potential effect is of particular concern in elements such as the area between Eisenhower, Dewey, and

Bonsall avenues and that between Bonsall, Patton, and Nimitz avenues. The setting of these spaces is significant; interruption of the current patterns with new construction could effect to the WLA VA NRHD even if new construction was sympathetic in materials and massing.

Effects of Alternative D

Under Alternative D, VA would utilize a combination of Alternatives A - C, depending on the building/space and its future use. The impacts of this Alternative would encompass all effects previously noted.

Effects of Alternative E

Alternative E is the "No Action" or "No Project" alternative. There are no known impacts to the WLA VA NRHD historic landscape because of maintaining current WLA Campus operations within the extant physical plant.

Cumulative Effects

It is unlikely that VA will be able to meet all the goals of the draft Master Plan through selection of only one alternative, but rather will have to apply multiple alternatives to different spaces throughout the WLA Campus. The cumulative impacts of implementation, including effects to historic landscape elements, will be addressed in the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS)/Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) currently under development.

The pastoral feel of the WLA Campus is critical to the understanding of the WLA VA NRHD. As stated in the National Register nomination, "Integrating landscapes, open spaces, and streetscapes to create a pastoral environment, the historic district conveys a strong sense of time and places from its period of significance."¹⁴⁰ The greenspaces and the distance between buildings places the WLA Campus in stark contrast to the dense, urban streetscape of West Los Angeles, especially the blocks surrounding the WLA Campus and the LANC. Retention of this openness is critical to the historic character of the WLA VA NRHD.

In 2012, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) released the *Westside Subway Extension Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report* (FEIS). The FEIS identified impacts to the landscape of the WLA Campus. Since spring 2017, VA has been reviewing impacts of the revised path of the subway expansion. LACMTA proposes to remove and possibly restore some of the mature trees of the South Lawn and palms lining Bonsall Avenue on the South Campus. It is unclear at this time whether the trees will survive replanting due to their condition.

¹⁴⁰ NRHP, WLA VA NRHD, Section 8, page 35.

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Appendix A- WLA VA NRHD National Register of Historic Places nomination

