

Archaeological Resource Assessment  
Knoll Hill and the American Presidents Line Area  
Port of Los Angeles  
Los Angeles County, California

Prepared for:

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## Management Summary

Petra Resources, Inc. (Petra) completed an archaeological resource assessment for two areas: 1) Knoll Hill (KH) and 2) the American Presidents Line Headquarters area (APL), Port of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California. On January 30, 1996, Beth Padon, assisted by Fran Govean, conducted a archaeological resource survey of both areas.

This technical assessment also includes an archival records check and review of pertinent archaeological literature for the area. Petra surveyed the two areas to determine the presence and potential of historic and prehistoric archaeological remains. Archaeological mitigation measures are recommended to reduce impacts to the potential for buried archaeological resources.

## Introduction

This report presents the results of an archaeological archival search, literature review, and field survey of the Knoll Hill and the American Presidents Line area, Port of Los Angeles, California (Figure 1). Specifically, the Knoll Hill project area is located on the USGS *Torrance* Quadrangle, 1964, 7.5' Series, photorevised 1981, with a small part of its southern boundary lying on the San Pedro Quadrangle, 1964, 7.5' Series, photorevised 1981 (Figure 2). The APL area is situated on the USGS *Torrance* Quadrangle (Figure 2).

Petra was retained by Fugro West, Inc. to undertake this archaeological assessment as part of their Environmental Impact Analysis process for the Port of Los Angeles. This report follows guidelines established by the California State Historic Preservation Office, the Society for California Archaeology (King, Moratto, and Leonard 1973) and the Society for American Archaeology (McGimsey and Davis 1977). The report complies with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) cultural resources guidelines.

## Project Personnel

Beth Padon served as project archaeologist for the project. Ms. Padon received her M.S. in Anthropology from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, in 1977. Ms. Padon is accredited by Society Of Professional Archeologists and has participated in several projects in the projects' vicinity including recent work at Fort MacArthur in San Pedro. Resumes are available upon request.

## Project Area Description

The project consists of two areas: 1) Knoll Hill located south of Front Street and north of the Vincent Thomas Bridge ramps, and 2) the bluff between John Gibson Boulevard and the Harbor Freeway northeast of the American Presidents Line headquarters.

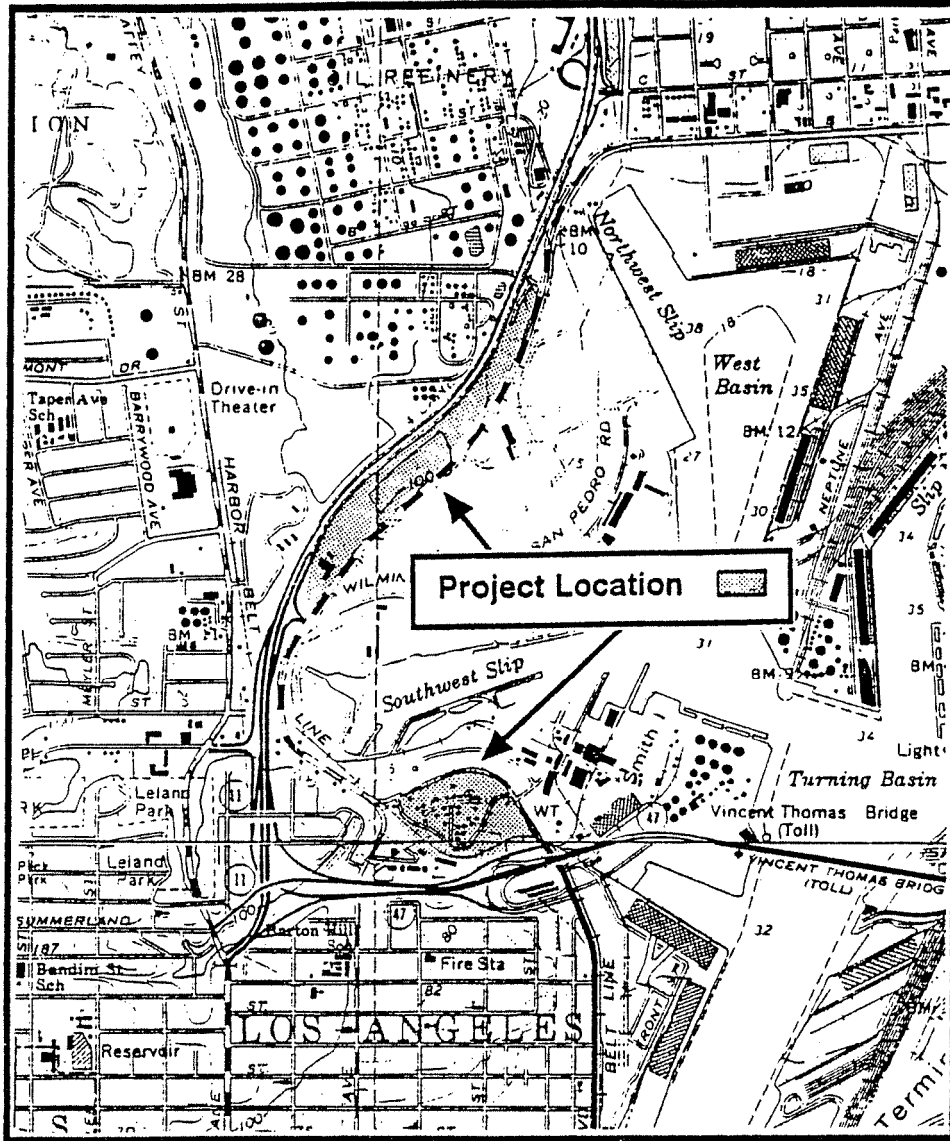
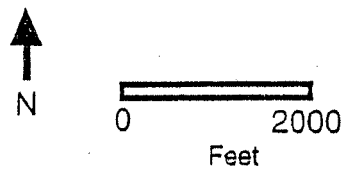


Figure 2  
LA Port Extension



Torrance USGS 7.5' Quad.  
(1964 photorevised 1981)  
and  
San Pedro USGS 7.5' Quad.  
(1964 photorevised 1981)

Horizon 1 Early Man	Late Pleistocene - 5550 B.C.
Horizon 2 Milling Stone	5500 -1000 B.C.
Horizon 3 Intermediate	1000 B.C. - A.D. 1000
Horizon 4 Late Prehistoric	A.D. 1000 - A.D. 1800

The Early Man Horizon covers the period from man's arrival in southern California until the establishment of post glacial environments. Los Angeles County's early Man Horizon is documented by a female skeleton, "La Brea Woman," which apparently dates to this time period. No artifacts were associated with the find from the La Brea tar pits. Cultural materials from several San Diego County sites give more information about the Early Man Horizon. Carter excavated the Texas Street Site and Rogers, the Harris Site. Both produced large projectile points, scrapers, hammerstones and crescentics; with few groundstone tools. Thus, the artifacts have been interpreted as representing a hunting culture.

After 5500 B.C., Wallace notes that many archaeological sites yield numerous ground stone artifacts such as metates, manos, discoidals, soapstone objects, and cogged stones. These groundstone implements indicate the Milling Stone Horizon and suggest that these people were hunter-gatherers who captured small game but also spent much time collecting and processing wild grass seeds. By the late Milling Stone Horizon, people lived at regional bays and estuaries. Their economic strategies included intensively hunting small mammals, large mammals, sea mammals, and birds as well as fishing from rocky and sandy beaches and collecting shellfish.

Around 3000 B.C., coastal people begin showing greater reliance on marine resources. Near shore and deep sea fish remains appear more often in site refuse. Inland, acorn processing technology developed with the use of the mortar and stone pestle. People learned to leach tannic acid from acorns and to prepare acorn flour. The dry flour stored easily, permitting a more stable diet to develop. This technological change signals Wallace's Intermediate Horizon. The mortar and pestle serves as the "type artifact" that defines this horizon. Smaller size projectile points also appear during this time period and suggest technological changes in the hunting of game.

The Late Prehistoric Horizon begins between A.D. 700 and A.D. 1000. Both artifact changes and new cultural practices identify this horizon. Soapstone bowls, small projectile points (arrowheads), steatite effigies, and cremation all appear. These artifacts and practices have been linked to the immigration of Shoshonean (Takic) people into the Los Angeles Basin. By A.D. 1000, smoking pipes and Tizon Brownware pottery from the Colorado Desert also occur. Such artifacts are found infrequently; therefore, dating sites to this horizon also depends upon finding an increased amount of imported Salton Sea (Obsidian Buttes) obsidian and Grimes Canyon (Ventura County) fused shale (Demcak 1981) artifacts, as well as radiocarbon dates from sites.

The Late Prehistoric Horizon ends abruptly when Franciscan friars and Spanish soldiers began establishing missions along the California coast. Native Americans became laborers first at the missions and later at the ranchos. Ranching, farming, and town living replaced the centuries old semi-sedentary village hunting and gathering lifestyle represented by the regional archaeological remains.

## Archival Research

On January 24, 1996, Beth Padon conducted the archaeological records review at the State designated Regional Archaeological Information Center for Los Angeles County, located at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). The Center contains the archaeological survey and site records for the County of Los Angeles. The records for the project area and its immediate vicinity as well as the older editions of the USGS topographic maps were examined. These older maps include *Redondo 30'* USGS 1896 edition, *San Pedro 30'* USGS 1896 edition, and *Downey 30'* USGS 1896 edition. The Information Center archives contain any previously known prehistoric and historical information for the project and indicate whether or not the area has been previously reviewed for archaeological remains. The National Register of *Historic Places*, *California Inventory of Historic Resources*, *Points of Historical Interest*, and *California Historic Landmarks* were also reviewed.

## Results

As mentioned by Steven Schwartz (1983), several studies have been conducted in the Los Angeles Port area. These reports (Stickel 1976, Weinman and Stickel 1978, Zahniser, Roberts, and Munoz 1981) and more recent reports (Dillon 1981 and 1982) provide information concerning the Port's prehistoric resources and the potential for buried prehistoric and historic sites.

The Information Center records indicate at least five sites lie nearby the APL and Knoll Hill study areas. These sites, designated by their trinomials, include CA-LAN -116, -149, -150, -283, and -285. As early as 1912 and 1939, F. H. Racer and N.C. Nelson recorded several of these sites and noted few artifacts and shellfish remains. N. C. Nelson recorded sites, CA-LAN-149 and LAN-150 along the bluffs overlooking the Wilmington Lagoon, San Pedro Bay and what later became the Southwest Slip of the Port area. Recent field reviews of these site localities have found modern development such as roads and houses has greatly changed the landscape and most likely destroyed several sites (Dillon 1981). The following list briefly describes these sites:

CA-LAN-116: Hal Eberhart recorded this site based upon information from D.L.True's review in the 1940s. No artifacts are listed for this site; yet, many shellfish species noted and midden-lie soil. Since the site's recording, this site lies west of the Harbor Freeway.

CA-LAN-149: N. C. Nelson recorded this resource in 1912 as a camp site located on top of a low bluff overlooking Wilmington Bay. In 1981 Brian Dillon resurveyed this site area and found no evidence of prehistoric use. The area had been heavily graded and little of the original topography remains (Dillon 1981:6-7).

CA-LAN-150: N. C. Nelson recorded this resource in 1912 as a camp site located on top of a low bluff overlooking Wilmington Bay. In 1981 Brian Dillon resurveyed this site area and found no evidence of prehistoric use. The area had been heavily graded and little of the original topography remains. (Dillon 1981:6-7).

pipelines. Road cuts, recent erosional gullies, and slumping areas were carefully examined for exposed features and buried trash deposits. Petra personnel took notes and photographs to record the present field conditions.

### *Results*

#### *Knoll Hill*

Petra personnel observed plastic pieces, pottery (flower pot) fragments, glass fragments, and fossil invertebrate shell material over the top of the hill in open areas, where structures had been razed, and in slopewash in cuts along Knoll Drive. Vacant lots appear scraped where structures have been razed. The vacant lot across from 742 Center Street had the most debris; however all items appear modern, less than 50 years old. We carefully checked for buried historic or prehistoric remains over the knoll top and around the slopes. We found no indications of prehistoric or historic use for the area. However, much of the area has been previously disturbed.

#### *American Presidents Line Bluff*

We observed bricks, plastic bucket, paper cardboard pieces, bottles, metal fragments, railroad ties, flagging tape, broken asphalt, concrete chunks, nails, wire, and large numbers of fossil shellfish in specific locations as well as the scattered remains of fossil shells over much of the project site that was exposed to view. We carefully checked for any evidence of prehistoric use of the area such as stone tools, midden-like soil, or hearth features. Yet, we found no buried midden deposits or prehistoric or historic artifacts within the American Presidents Line property.

### **Archaeological Sensitivity**

Archaeological sensitivity is the potential for finding scientifically important historic or prehistoric remains. This potential or sensitivity is determined by the past history of the area, by the number and type of archaeological sites recorded in the area, and often by the topography of the area. A high sensitivity indicates that archaeological remains are currently observed or are recorded within the study area. A moderate sensitivity indicates archaeological resources have been recovered from the area and there is a likelihood that artifacts will be exposed by earth moving activities. A low potential indicates significant artifacts or deposits are not likely to be found because of previous disturbances to the project area or steep topography precludes the use of the area by prehistoric or later historic populations.

### **Impacts**

The threshold for determining if significant impacts on cultural resources would occur is based on Appendix G of the CEQA guidelines. The likelihood of significant cultural resources impacts to occur is evaluated on the potential for the proposed project to:

Disrupt or adversely affect a prehistoric or historic archaeological site or property of historic or cultural significance to a community or ethnic or social group....

4. Any recovered prehistoric and historic artifacts shall be offered, on a first right-of-refusal basis, to a repository with a retrievable collection system and an educational and/or research interest in the materials. Copies of the report shall be submitted to the Archaeological Information Center at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and to the Port of Los Angeles.

5. A final monitoring report, including an itemized inventory and pertinent field data, shall be prepared upon completion of the grading operations. A copy of the report shall be submitted to the Information Center at UCLA. An additional copy shall accompany any recovered artifacts to the repository.

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