

REPORT

PHASE I CULTURAL RESOURCE INVESTIGATION FOR 10 ACRES WEST OF THE INTERSECTION OF DIVISION STREET AND WEST AVENUE G-6 LANCASTER, LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Prepared For:

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Prepared By:

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Job. No. 638

November 2020

Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 3137-007-020

Performed under: Private contract

USGS Quadrangle: Lancaster West, Calif. 7.5'

Area covered: 10 acres

Location: Township 7 North, Range 12 West, Section 3

Keywords: Antelope Valley, Lancaster

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- Native American Heritage Commission response
- 2. Photos

SUMMARY

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended, and the requirements of the City of Lancaster, a phase I cultural resource investigation was completed for 10 acres recorded with the Los Angeles County Tax Assessor as Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 3137-007-020. The property is located west of Division Street at about what would be West Avenue G-6.

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

As a result of the investigation, no Native American prehistoric period sites or artifacts were found on the property. No historic period sites were identified. Since no cultural resources are present, no impacts to cultural resources are anticipated due to property development. No further cultural resource work is recommended.

I. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended, and the requirements of the City of Lancaster, a phase I cultural resource investigation was completed for 10 acres recorded with the Los Angeles County Tax Assessor as Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 3137-007-020. The property is located west of Division Street at about what would be West Avenue G-6. The property is within the northeast 1/4 of the southwest 1/4 of the northeast 1/4 of Section 3, Township 7 North, Range 12 West (Figures 1, 2).

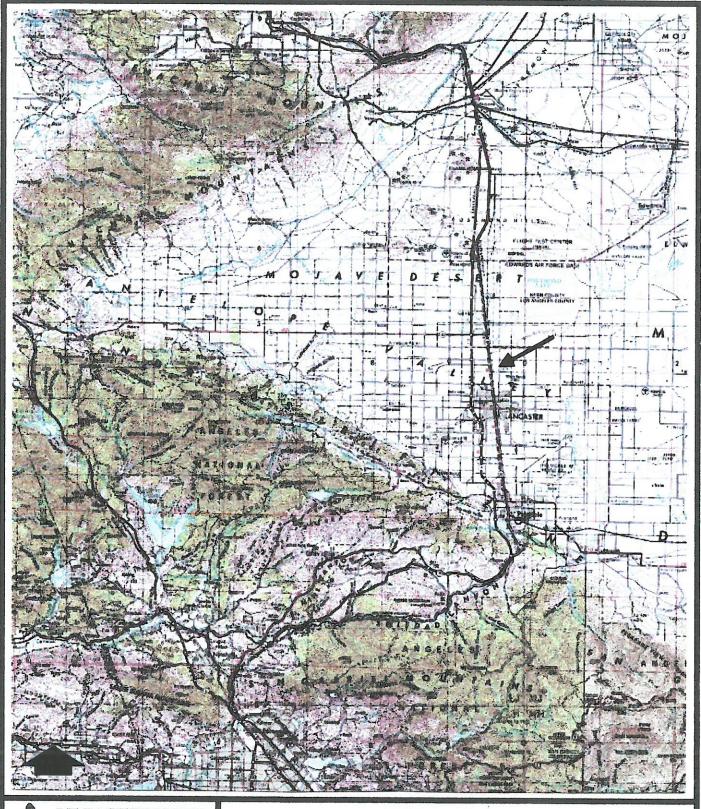
CEQA defines cultural resources as including archaeological sites, historic buildings, structures or objects, and properties of unique ethnic cultural value or religious/sacred uses. The City of Lancaster required this investigation, under CEQA, because use, grading or construction on the property has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

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

II. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The property consists of undeveloped land in the Amargosa Creek drainage basin. The property lies northeast of the Avenue H overpass at Sierra Highway. The property has not been previously leveled or farmed and has native vegetation, predominantly low-growing atriplex. An area of bunch grasses was observed along with common invasive grasses. Most vegetation was dormant. A few Joshua trees and a juniper tree were noted. There are no existing structures on the property. There is undeveloped land to the immediate south and west and north. An equipment yard lies to the east.

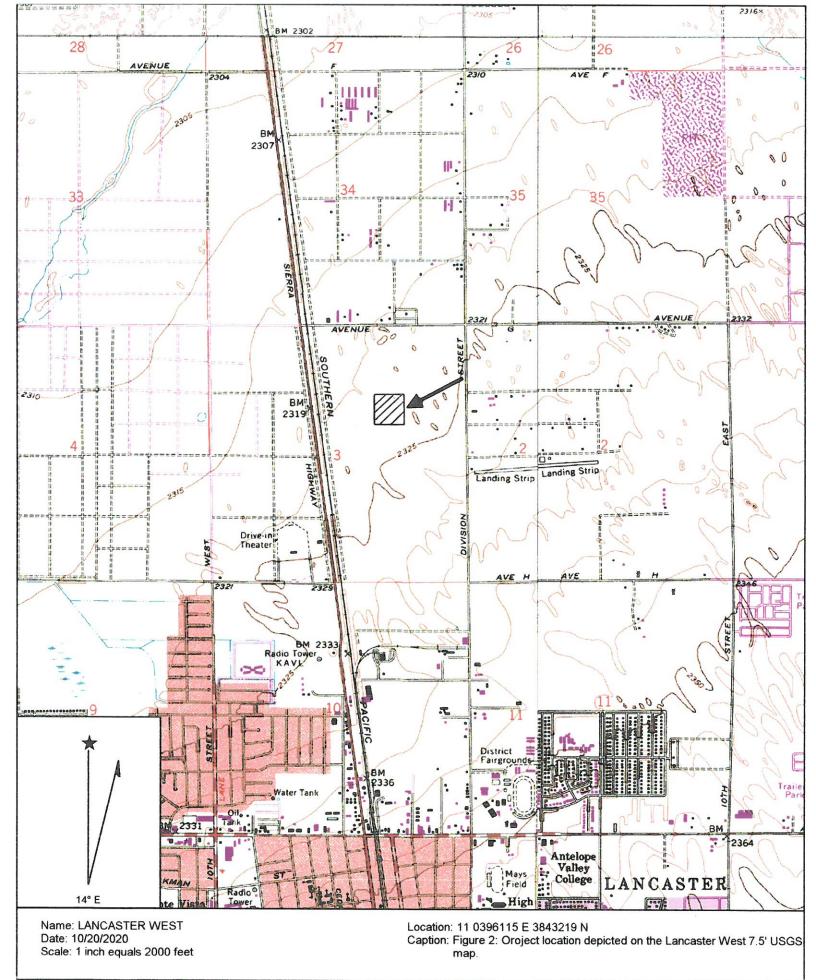
The property is situated on the Antelope Valley floor. The Antelope Valley is a broad, flat V-shaped basin in the Western Mojave Desert. The Valley is bounded on the north by the Tehachapi Mountains and on the south by the San Gabriel Mountains and extends eastward to the Mojave River Valley. Low points in the Antelope Valley are Rogers and Rosamond Dry Lakes with elevations of approximately 2275 feet above mean sea level. The subject property lies south of Rosamond Dry Lake and its elevation is approximately 2323 feet above mean sea level. Soil on the property is quaternary in age and is a sandy silt overlying lakebed clay. Topography consists of a pan-and-stable dune setting with intermittent, small, barren clay pans among vegetated hummocky stable dunes. There are no notable physiographic features, rock outcrops, springs, or other permanent natural sources of water on the property or immediate area.



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Cultural Resources

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

1" = about 7.5 miles



III. CULTURAL SETTING

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

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

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

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

By the late 1800s the fortunes of the Valley were greatly altered by natural causes. In 1894, a 10-year drought began that devastated many settlers who had little practical knowledge or appreciation of the desert environment. These people lost crop after crop and eventually their homes and land. At the turn-of-the-century, much of the Valley was considered worthless and the ownership of many parcels reverted to the state. A reduced population of die-hards remained, some of whom were favored by high water tables and favorable and valuable agricultural soil. The history of the earlier periods of occupation are, as would be expected, less clear than later periods, because there was an exodus of people and records. There is still much to learn about the dynamics of local development prior to 1920-1925.

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

In 1914, electricity was introduced to the Valley and by 1917 the introduction of electric water pumps and improved dry farming techniques resulted in the substantial growth and success of agriculture. Increased prices for agricultural produce during World War I stimulated additional growth and agricultural expansion. Other economic endeavors, such as poultry ranching and, after 1919, moonshining, became important economic boosters. By the mid-1920s, Palmdale and Lancaster had achieved the basic elements and social institutions and structure of a small American rural town.

IV. RECORD, MAP, and SACED LANDS FILE SEARCH RESULTS

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

Record Search: There have been a number of previous cultural resource investigations within a mile of the subject property (Norwood 1992a, b, c, 1994a, b, 1996, 2000, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2015, Tang, Bai et. al., 2006). Some of these investigations resulted in finding historic period homesite locations, early 20th century refuse deposits and isolated prehistoric artifacts. To the west a 1930s-era refuse deposit was identified and evaluated within a 6.45 acre parcel. The site was determined "not significant" (Norwood 2005). To the northwest, survey of 60 acres resulted in the recording of a historic period refuse deposit dating between 1910-1925 and two prehistoric period isolated artifacts including a Lake Mojave type projectile point (Norwood 2000). To the southwest, several projects associated with the Avenue H overpass area resulted in the recording of a historic period homesite location and refuse deposits dating to the 1910s-1930s (Norwood 1992a, b, c, 1994a, b). To the north, an investigation of a 1920s refuse deposit was completed. To the southeast a 1916-1920s refuse deposit was recorded, investigated, and determined not significant (Norwood 2008). Other historic period sites occur in the general area that relate to the early history of Lancaster. No sites have been previously recorded on the subject property. A record search has been requested from the South Central Coastal Information Center but was not received by the time of report preparation. Results will be forwarded when available

Map Search: Local historic period maps and records were examined to identify any potential historic sites or features on or near the property. Findings are discussed below:

- GLO Records: The Bureau of Land Management General Land Office Records were examined. The section was not open to homesteading and was deeded to the Southern Pacific Railroad Company on 11/21/1903. It was later sold to private parties.
- 1911: The earliest regional map of Lancaster is Johnson's (1911) Water Supply map showing well locations throughout Lancaster and the surrounding area. Data for this map is based on a 1909 field survey. Johnson's map depicts no wells anywhere within Section 3. The Southern Pacific railroad is shown, which roughly bisects the section, located west of the subject property.
- 1915: The 1915 Lake Elizabeth 15' USGS quad map shows one structures within the section. The structure was located in Section 3 at the corner of Avenue H and Sierra Highway but has since been removed (Norwood 1992b). Two structures are depicted to the east, in Section 2, within 1/4 mile of the subject property.
- 1922: Carpenter and Cosby's Soil Survey map (1926), based on a 1922 field survey, shows no structures on the subject property or anywhere nearby.
- 1933: The 1933 Oban, Calif. 7.5' USGS map shows no buildings on or near the subject property, or anywhere within the section.
- 1938: Walsh's real property map shows ownership, but not structures. No ownership is shown for the subject property or any other areas within Section 3.
- 1958: The USGS map shows no structures within the eastern portion of Section 3 east of the railroad. An aircraft landing strip is shown nearby, in Section 2, east of the subject property.

V. SURVEY METHODS AND CONDITIONS

Field survey for the property was completed on October 27, 2020 by Melinda Walton representing RTFactfinders. Fieldwork required 4 person-hours. The property was examined by walking a series of linear transects across the property in a north/south direction. Spacing between transects did not exceed 10-meter intervals. Transects were begun at the northeast property corner.

Soil surface visibility was excellent due to dry conditions and dormant vegetation. Light conditions were excellent, with bright sun and clear skies. In accordance with State Historic Preservation Office Guidelines, any sites or artifacts greater than 50 years of age, if present, were to be noted and considered as potential cultural resources. There were no inhibiting factors that would have prevented the discovery and identification of surface evidence of prehistoric or historic period artifacts or features. Photos were taken to document property conditions (Attachment 2).

VI. SURVEY FINDINGS

As a result of the survey no prehistoric sites were discovered within the subject property. No historic period sites were identified. Two pieces of rusted metal were noted that are probably can fragments. The property is free of any scattered trash or debris.

VII. MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) has provisions that mandate any cultural resources identified on a property during the environmental review process are to be evaluated for significance, because unique or important resources require mitigation. Since no Native American prehistoric archaeological or historic resources were identified on the property, no impacts to cultural resources are anticipated when development occurs. No further cultural resource measures are recommended.

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

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

VIII. REFERENCES CITED

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Richard H. Norwood

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Richard H. Norwood

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NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

October 22, 2020

Richard Norwood RTFactFinders

Via Email to: artefct@gmail.com

Re: 638 Storage Yard Project, Los Angeles County

Dear Mr. Norwood:

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

Attached is a list of Native American tribes who may also have knowledge of cultural resources in the project area. This list should provide a starting place in locating areas of potential adverse impact within the proposed project area. I suggest you contact all of those indicated; if they cannot supply information, they might recommend others with specific knowledge. By contacting all those listed, your organization will be better able to respond to claims of failure to consult with the appropriate tribe. If a response has not been received within two weeks of notification, the Commission requests that you follow-up with a telephone call or email to ensure that the project information has been received.

If you receive notification of change of addresses and phone numbers from tribes, please notify me. With your assistance, we can assure that our lists contain current information.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at my email address: steven.quinn@nahc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Steven Quinn

Cultural Resources Analyst

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Attachment

CHAIRPERSON

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Merri Lopez-Keifer

Luiseño

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COMMISSIONER

Marshall McKay

Wintun

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Apache

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Native American Heritage Commission **Native American Contact List** Los Angeles County 10/22/2020

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

This list is only applicable for contacting local Native Americans with regard to cultural resources assessment for the proposed 638 Storage Yard Project, Los Angeles County.





PHOTO 1: View northwest from the southeast property corner.

