

Wilshire Boulevard is lined with commercial and office buildings. Two office towers ranging from 13-to 20-stories dominate the Wilshire Boulevard/Bundy Drive intersection: the Security Pacific Building and U.S. Bank Building. A large corporate plaza occupies a wide front setback on the southwest corner of this intersection. The two-story Ralph's grocery store is at the northeast corner of this intersection. Aside from the office towers, most buildings along this section of Wilshire Boulevard are smaller one- and two-story buildings. South of Wilshire Boulevard, a massive water tank sits in an undeveloped lot, buffered from the street by landscaping and a fence (Figure 4-20).



Figure 4-20. View looking east on Wilshire Boulevard

Signage and building entrances tend to be auto-oriented. Bundy Drive is a north/south corridor that connects the northern Brentwood neighborhoods to I-10. The street has four lanes to the south that narrow to two lanes going north as it enters the more residential neighborhood. Utility lines run north/south along Bundy Drive. Front yards and a planted parkway add green space to Bundy Drive. Tall, thin palm trees are planted along Bundy Drive north of Wilshire Boulevard; shade trees are planted south of Wilshire Boulevard. Large billboards along the eastside of Wilshire Boulevard are defining visual features.

Distant views to the east are of the VA Hospital campus and the office towers on Wilshire Boulevard. Views to the west include sporadic office towers along Wilshire Boulevard and distinct palm trees. Figure 4-21 is a view looking north across Wilshire Boulevard at Bundy Drive. Overhead utility lines and street lights, billboards, and palm trees are prominent visual features in the area. The Wilshire/Bundy Station area's existing visual quality is moderate due to its general pleasant appearance, but lack of strong consistent architectural and urban design features.



Figure 4-21. View looking north across Wilshire Boulevard at Bundy Drive

4.2.10 Wilshire/26th Street Station Area

The Wilshire/26th Street Station area is near the border of Santa Monica and West LA. The area is an eclectic mix of architectural styles of varying heights, shapes, and sizes. Mid-Century courtyard, L-shaped, and I-shaped apartment complexes buffer commercial buildings from single-family residences on both sides of Wilshire Boulevard. The residential neighborhoods include small houses built on narrow lots. Figure 4-22 shows a view looking east along Wilshire Boulevard where sidewalks are lined with palm trees and buildings are of varying size and density.

The most prominent building in the area is a three-story mustard-shade commercial/office building with a turret on the southwest corner of the Wilshire/26th Street intersection. North of Wilshire Boulevard, one-story shops and cafes line the street (Figure 4-23). A two-story business with a plaza and notable mural on the façade occupies the southeast corner of the intersection. Several parking lots are tucked behind commercial buildings; otherwise, undeveloped land is scarce. East along Wilshire Boulevard, several office towers are visible between retail shops.

At the northwest corner of Wilshire Boulevard and 25th Street, Douglas Park encompasses an entire block and contributes an open more natural character to this urban area. Sidewalks on Wilshire Boulevard are wide, and the street has brightly painted striped crosswalks. Distant views to the north include the Santa Monica Mountains. Views to the east are dominated by office towers on Wilshire Boulevard. The palm trees that line Wilshire Boulevard are distinct visual features, as is an intermittent median landscaped with plants, flowers, and occasional trees.

South of Wilshire Boulevard lie mostly one- and two-story buildings with eclectic architectural styles (California bungalows, Mid-Century courtyard apartments, and stucco box). Residential neighborhoods to the north generally have larger front yards with mature trees. The Wilshire/26th Street Station area's existing visual quality is moderate due to its general pleasant appearance, but lack of strong consistent architectural and urban design features.



Figure 4-22. View looking east on Wilshire Boulevard



Figure 4-23. View looking west on Wilshire Boulevard at the intersection of Wilshire Boulevard and 26th Street

4.2.11 Wilshire/16th Street Station

The Wilshire/16th Street Station area has an eclectic urban fabric with a variety of building heights, setbacks, and lot sizes. The UCLA Medical Center is a distinctive building at the Wilshire Boulevard/16th Street intersection. Figure 4-24 shows a view of this building from Wilshire Boulevard. A new medical building is currently under construction between the existing medical center and Wilshire Boulevard. The other buildings along Wilshire Boulevard vary in age and theme and generally range from one to three stories in height. The thick-trunk palm trees that line Wilshire Boulevard are dominant visual features.



Figure 4-24. View of UCLA Medical Center looking west on Wilshire Boulevard near 15th Street

South of Wilshire Boulevard, low-rise commercial buildings and Mid-Century residences mix with commercial and other medical center buildings with few street entrances and large black walls along the street sides. The residential neighborhoods north of Wilshire Boulevard include a mix of architectural styles, including California Bungalow, Spanish Revival, and Mid-Century courtyard apartments.

Views to the west include the 100 Wilshire Tower at Ocean Avenue and, on a clear day, the Pacific Ocean. Views to the east include office towers and billboards on Wilshire Boulevard with the Santa Monica Mountains in the background. Distant views to the north include the Santa Monica Mountains. Overhead street lights and commercial signage are common visual features in this area. The Wilshire/16th Street Station area's existing visual quality is high due to its strong and consistent architectural and urban design features.



4.2.12 Wilshire/4th Street Station Area

The Wilshire Boulevard/4th Street Station area is the core of Downtown Santa Monica, just east of the Third Street Promenade. The promenade is one of the busiest shopping districts in the Los Angeles region and is a few blocks away from the Santa Monica beach. The area is a densely developed mix of office buildings, apartments, shops, and restaurants. The architectural style of the area is eclectic, with a mix of Modern, Post-Modern, Art Deco, and Streamline Moderne buildings. The surrounding neighborhoods include a variety of bungalows, as well as new and Mid-Century apartment buildings. Building heights range from two-story retail shops and four-story commercial buildings, to taller six-story apartments and a few ten-story office towers. The First Federal Bank building is a prominent visual resource on the northeast corner of Wilshire Boulevard and 4th Street. The California Bank & Trust building at Wilshire Boulevard and Ocean Avenue is the tallest building in Santa Monica and is shown in Figure 4-25. It is considered to be an orienting landmark in the area, marking the end of Wilshire Boulevard at the Pacific Ocean. It can be seen from miles away when looking west down Wilshire Boulevard from the east.

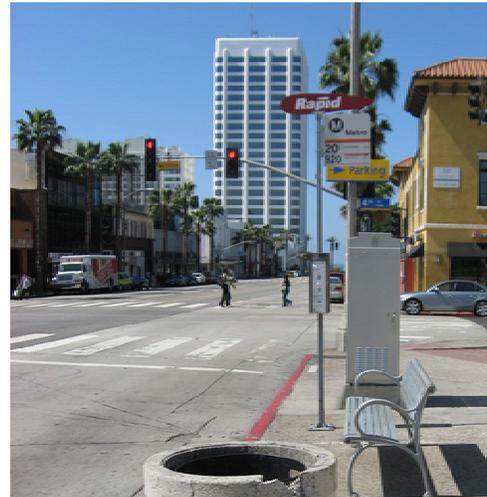


Figure 4-25. View of tallest building in Santa Monica looking west down Wilshire Boulevard

Building awnings, street furniture, and bus shelters along Wilshire Boulevard contribute to a pedestrian-friendly public environment. Entrances to parking lots and garages are generally located on alleys and side streets, rather than along Wilshire Boulevard. The residential neighborhoods north of Wilshire Boulevard include a range of single-family residences and apartment buildings of various architectural styles, building age, and height (two to five stories).

Wilshire Boulevard is lined with two rows of tall, thin palm trees. Figure 4-26 shows buildings of various heights and the prominent palm trees along Wilshire Boulevard.



Figure 4-26. View looking northwest on Wilshire Boulevard



Third Street contains a variety of pedestrian amenities including flowering trees, shade trees, pedestrian lighting, flower boxes, and street furniture. Figure 4-27 shows a view looking south on the Third Street Promenade. Overhead street lights and commercial signage are common visual features in this area. The Wilshire/4th Street Station area’s existing visual quality is high due to its strong and consistent architectural and urban design features.



Figure 4-27. View looking south from Wilshire Boulevard down the Third Street Promenade

4.2.13 Hollywood/Highland Station Area

The Hollywood/Highland Station area is a busy intersection in the heart of historic Hollywood. The station area is a major entertainment/tourist center with theaters, museums, restaurants, hotels, and shopping. The eclectic mix of building shapes and sizes, as well as frequent parking lots, contribute to a diverse visual character.

Prominent visual resources include the 13-story 1920s First National Bank Building, the Chinese Theater and Highland mega-mall complex (with the integrated existing Metro Redline station entrance), the two-story Ripley’s “Believe it or Not” Museum topped with a T-Rex dinosaur statue climbing the roof on the southeast corner, and a simple two-story shop front on the southwest corner. Hollywood Boulevard has a consistent street front with buildings that are built up to the sidewalk edge. Most buildings are oriented to the pedestrian with ground-floor entrances, windows, and awnings. At night, many storefronts have metal security “roll downs” and gates.

The Hollywood High School playfield is south of the station area at Orange Drive and Hawthorn Avenue. Other nearby open space is limited to courtyards of buildings. Parking lots are abundant throughout the area.

Palm trees are planted consistently along Hollywood Boulevard, matching the iconic Hollywood stars on the wide sidewalks of Hollywood Boulevard’s “Walk of Fame.” Billboards and tall walls (billboards that occupy an entire building façade or wall) are also prominent visual features. Figure 4-28 shows a view looking west on Hollywood Boulevard at the historic El Capitan Theater with the Hollywood and Highland Development to the right.



Figure 4-28. View looking west on Hollywood Boulevard at the Historic El Capitan Theater, with Hollywood and Highland Development to the right