

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

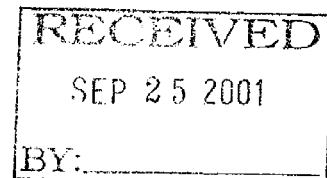
OF THE PROPOSED HAZARDOUS MATERIALS STORAGE BUILDING AT THE  
CENTRAL MAINTENANCE FACILITY, LOS ANGELES

Prepared for:  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
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September 2001

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### Abstract

At the request of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Greenwood and Associates has conducted an extended archaeological inventory for the proposed Hazardous Materials Storage Building at the Central Maintenance Facility in Los Angeles. The project location was subjected to pedestrian examination but no cultural resources were observed within the Area of Potential Effects (APE) because of existing pavement. However, geotechnical efforts conducted in the 1980s had found cultural materials within 5 feet of the surface suggesting the presence of archaeological deposits.

In consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office, it was decided to excavate two perpendicular trenches within the project area to determine if any cultural resources were present.

No cultural materials were observed, and no further constraints are recommended relative to cultural resource concerns.



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## Introduction

At the request of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), Greenwood and Associates has conducted an archaeological investigation at the site of a proposed Hazardous Materials Storage Building (HMSB) in their Central Maintenance Facility (CMF), located in the City of Los Angeles, California (Figure 1). These efforts were prompted by the proximity of several historical archaeological sites in the vicinity of Union Station, e.g., CA-LAN-1575H (Greenwood et al. 1992). An historical archival study was conducted in 2000, which resulted in identifying the presence of an early meat packing plant in the immediate area (Foster 2000) as well as several known archaeological sites in the vicinity. The presence of these sites indicated that the sensitivity of this area was high. The present study is prepared as a Technical Report in support of Section 106 compliance.

Urban archaeology requires a broad-based approach, since the ground surface in developed areas is typically not visible. Prediction and estimates of sensitivity must often be based upon research into historical maps and documents that reveal structures, topography, and land uses which may no longer be apparent. Once the historical landscape is defined, the second step is a review of the development, grading, or construction which may have obliterated evidence of past occupation and endeavors, and identification of those areas where a potential for recovery of archaeological resources still exists. It was decided, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), that a trenching program be conducted to determine if buried cultural resources are present within the project area. If any were encountered, a testing program would be developed in consultation with the SHPO, an evaluation of significance would be made, and data recovery implemented if warranted. Otherwise, the project would be allowed to proceed without further constraints.

## Project Setting

The proposed project location is within property owned by the MTA, bounded by Cesar Chavez on the south, Vignes Street on the west, Bauchet Street on the northwest, and rail right of way on the east and north. The street address is 470 Bauchet Street. The project is mapped in an unsectioned portion of Township 7S, Range 8W, as depicted on the USGS 7.5' Los Angeles Quadrangle (1966, revised 1981). The Area of Potential Effects (Figure 2) is the footprint of the proposed structure plus two feet for overexcavation.

The site is located on the flood plain of the Los Angeles River, on gently south-sloping land (Figure 2). Soils in this area consist of silt and silty sand underlain by sand and gravel with deeper layers of silt and silty sand. Varying amounts of gravel and cobbles are intermixed with the soils (LeRoy Crandall and Associates 1983:9). Native plant communities are no longer extant and vegetation is limited to introduced plantings and weedy species.



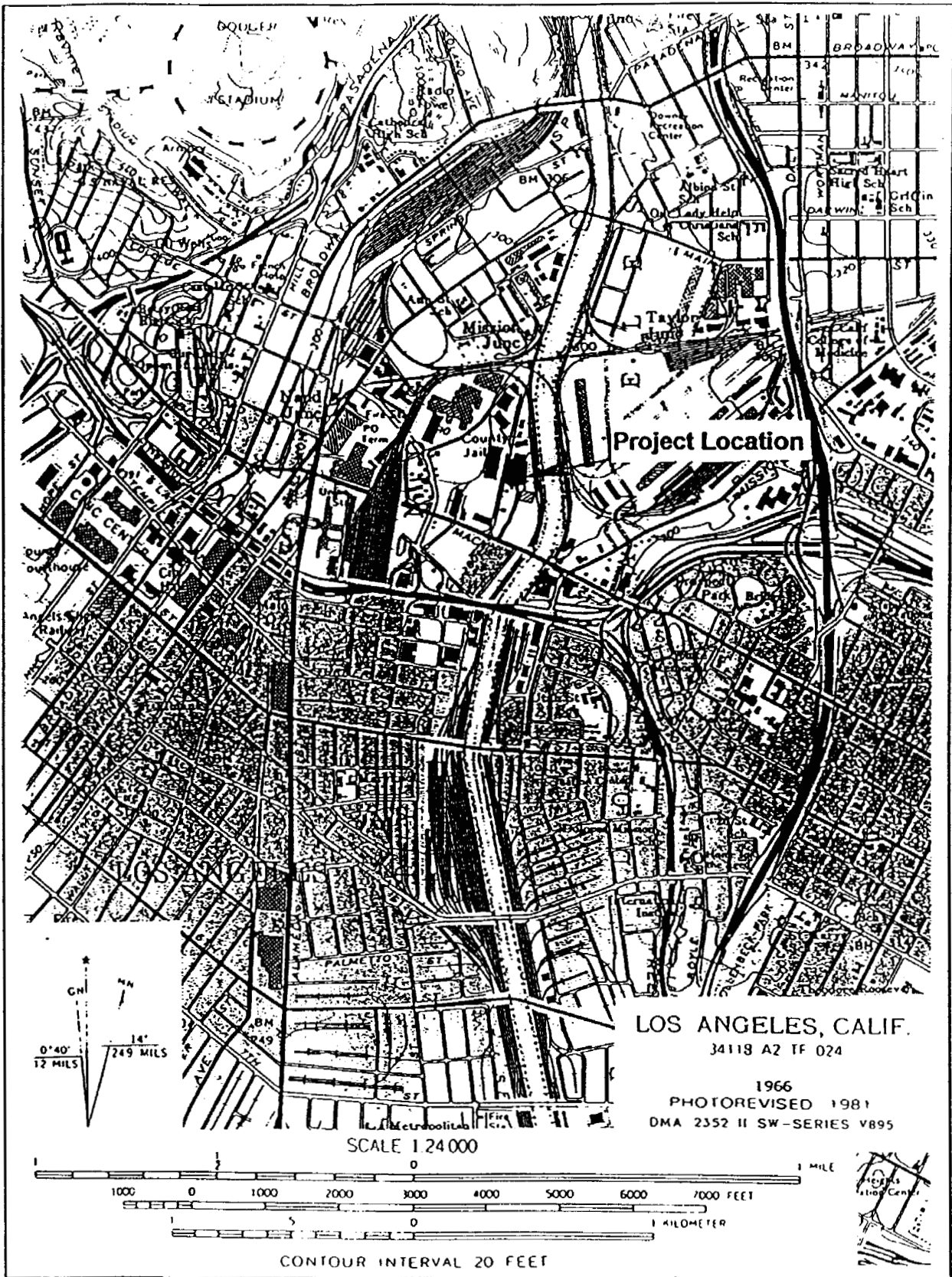


Figure 1. Project Vicinity Map

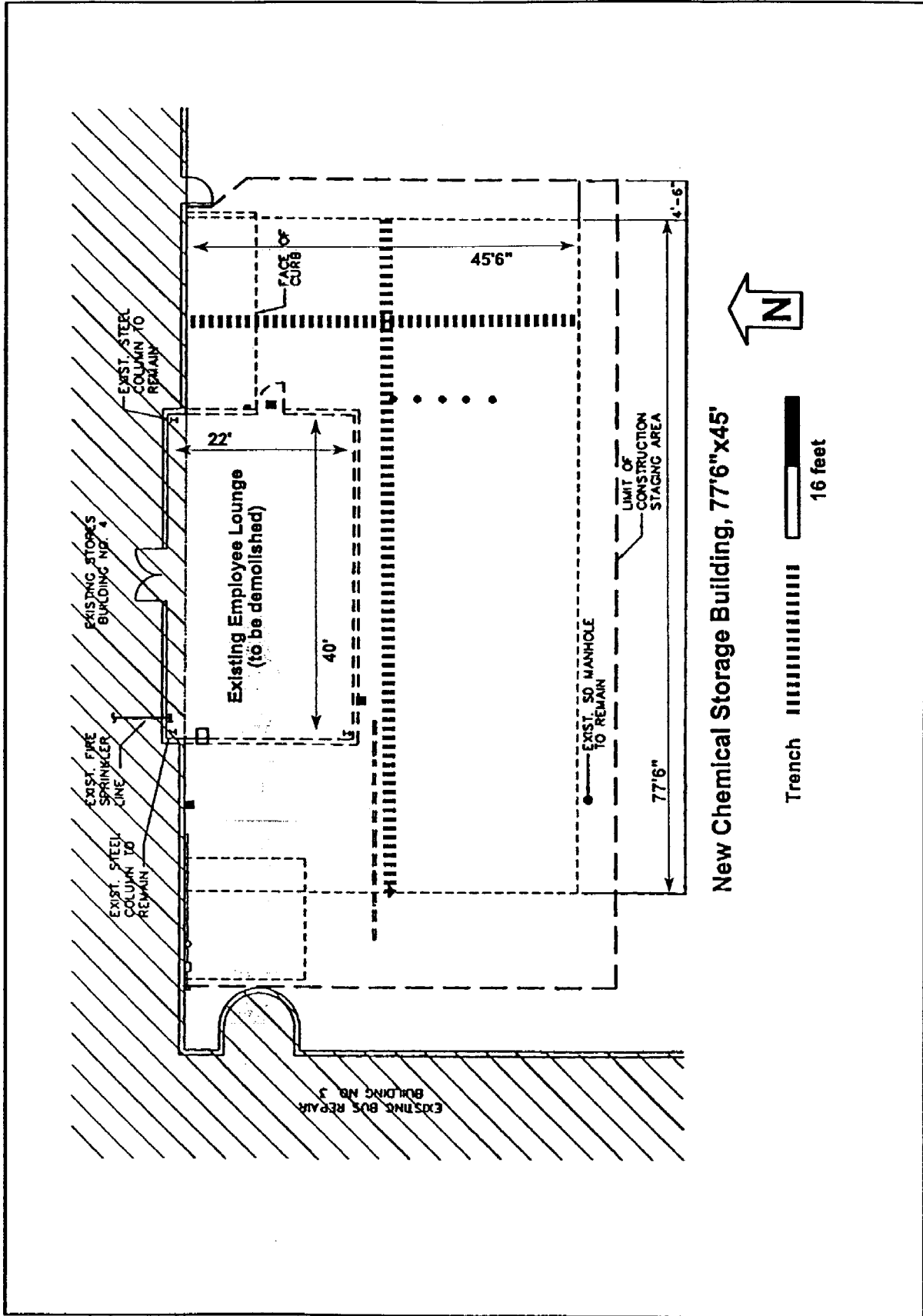


Figure 2. Project Area Map

## Historical Background

The project area, including all of the CMF, is part of the earliest industrial complex in Los Angeles. The combination of the railroad, large parcels, and essentially undesirable land next to the river resulted in the creation of Los Angeles' first major industrial zone. Unlike key industries in other major cities, there was no single focus or tendency. The orientation was for local consumption rather than export. All of the industries in the project area were consumer oriented, e.g., the packing plants, gas and electric company, and the oil refineries. The lack of large scale industries in early Los Angeles was in part due to the Euroamerican people who came to live in the area. They possessed funds and skills, and preferred to engage in trade and the professions (Fogelson 1993:121). Predominance of professions over factories reflected the course of Los Angeles' population growth and urban expansion.

In essence the project area and the immediate vicinity had been oriented to an industrial base and other than a brief period as vineyards, an early agricultural industry, the orientation of the area has not changed until recent times. Even today the jail and MTA facility might be considered consumer focused enterprises.

The Cudahy Packing Company (Figure 3) was in business since the early 1880s and was finally abandoned in recent times, after almost a hundred years as a meat packing plant. The uninterrupted time span and single focus of the property is unusual in a city core. From a national perspective, the early industrial base in Los Angeles was considered almost unique in that it was not export oriented (Foster 2000).

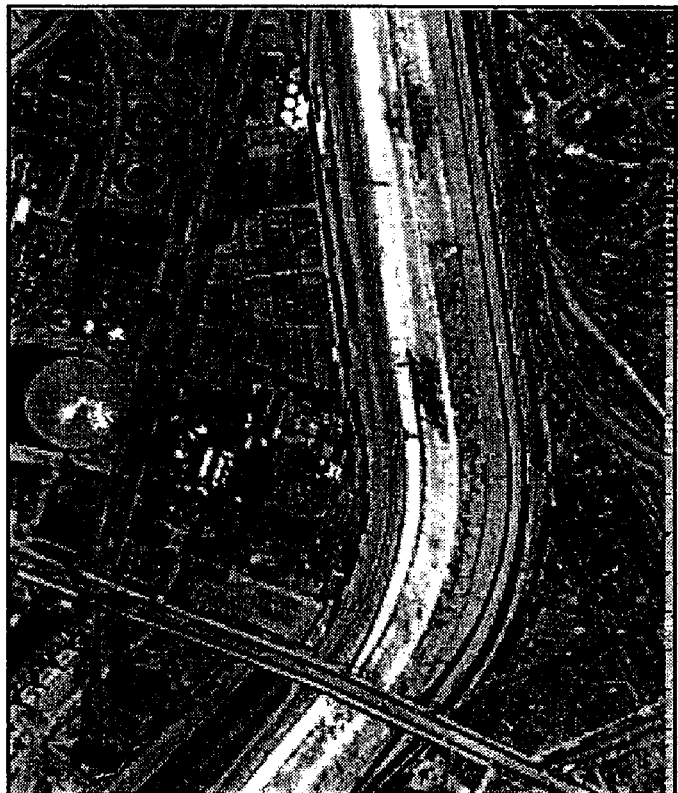


Figure 3. Cudahy Packing Company, 1948 (Now What Software 1996).

## Geotechnical Investigation

Prior to the construction of the Central Maintenance Facility, a geotechnical investigation was conducted to determine if there were any geologic or seismic hazards present with the project area (LeRoy Crandall and Associates 1983). Part of this investigation entailed the boring of auger holes into various areas of the project in order to assess subsurface conditions. The auger boring logs were reviewed and three of them, 1, 8, and 17, were in the vicinity of the proposed HMSB. Boring 8, the closest of the three, is located within a few feet of HMSB. The top three feet consists of silty sand, with chunks of concrete, pieces of asphalt, and brick.

The geotechnical report stated that there were numerous buried structural remains throughout the CMF area and that artifacts were also recovered in their borings. Based on these considerations, it was considered likely that structural and artifactual deposits and features might be present below the current surface.

### **Sanborn Maps Review**

The four Sanborn fire insurance maps indicate that the Cudahy Plant was present from at least 1888 to 1950 and that the location of HMSB was in a corral and was never developed until after the Cudahy Plant was abandoned and then removed. In the 1980s, Metropolitan Transportation Authority built the Central Maintenance Facility which now covers the entire area of the proposed HMSB.

### **Methods**

In the event that isolated artifacts of potentially significant age were found, the Project Archaeologist was to collect them and record the location and context. If a potentially important feature or deposit was encountered, construction personnel and equipment would be halted until the find could be identified, evaluated per 36 CFR §800.4 (c), and the Project Archaeologist assessed adverse effects in accordance with 36 CFR §800.5 (a) (1). The MTA was to be informed immediately about any such event. New sites would be recorded on State Department of Parks and Recreation forms, and a trinomial(s) obtained from the South Central Coastal Information Center.

All cultural resources encountered were to be recorded and mapped, and all significant diagnostic resources collected for analysis and curation into a retrievable storage collection in a public repository or museum that met standards and requirements for the curation of cultural resources as set forth at Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 79.

It was anticipated that it would take one day to remove the asphalt, two to three days to excavate two perpendicular trenches, east-west and north-south, and one day to backfill and reapply the asphalt. The work was completed on July 18 - 19, 2001, under the supervision of John M. Foster, RPA. The excavations were 1.5 m deep and 0.60 m wide. The east-west trench was 25.6 m long and the north-south was 15 m long.

The soils exposed in both trenches consisted of silty clay and was fairly dense. The stratigraphy was the same for both and is characterized as follows:

- Asphalt (15 cm thick) over
- Gravel Base (15 cm thick) over
- Clay with small fragments of brick and concrete (15 cm thick) over
- Sandy Loam with brick fragments (35 cm thick) over
- Clay (70 cm thick).

While the individual strata in both trenches varied in thickness, there were no substantial differences. While small pieces of brick and concrete were observed, they were isolated



and unassociated. No other artifacts were encountered. The trenches were photographed, mapped, backfilled, and the surface restored.

### Conclusions

To determine if cultural resources were present, a trenching program was developed to examine the subsurface of the project area. Two perpendicular trenches were excavated to five feet, but no cultural materials were observed. The stratigraphy was internally consistent with several strata observed and no substantial disturbance noted. The brick and concrete fragments are most likely in fill layers. The geotechnical report (LeRoy Crandall and Associates 1983) found that the top three feet in the nearest bore hole consisted of concrete and brick fragments, so our findings are relatively consistent. It is concluded that there are no significant archaeological deposits in the APE of the proposed structure. In view of the fact that the trenching program did not encounter any artifacts, MTA's responsibilities under Section 106 are fulfilled and no recommendations are offered.

## References Cited

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Foster, John M.

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1992 *Historical and Archaeological Assessment of the Southern California Rapid Transit District Union Station Headquarters Project*. Greenwood and Associates. Submitted to Converse Environmental, Pasadena.

LeRoy Crandall and Associates

1983 *Report of Geotechnical Investigation, Proposed Central Maintenance Facility, Macy and Vignes Streets, Los Angeles, California*. LeRoy Crandall and Associates. Submitted to Southern California Rapid Transit District, Los Angeles.

Now What Software

1996 *Time City Flashback Atlas*. Cambrix Publishing, San Francisco.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

1888 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. On file, Los Angeles Public Library, Los Angeles.

1894 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. On file, Los Angeles Public Library, Los Angeles.

1906 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. On file, Los Angeles Public Library, Los Angeles.

1906/1950

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. On file, Los Angeles Public Library, Los Angeles.

## Regulations Cited

36 CFR 800 Protection of Historic Properties. Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (Section 106 regulations)

36 CFR 79 Curation of Federally-Owned and Administered Archaeological Collections

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October 17, 2001

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ATTN: Mr. Hans Kreutzberg, State Historian III

**SUBJECT: CONCLUSIONS ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT AT  
LACMTA PROPOSED HAZARDOUS MATERIALS  
STORAGE BUILDING SITE**

Dear Mr. Kreutzberg:

On behalf of the Federal Transit Administration, attached you will find the LACMTA's *Archaeological Assessment of the Proposed Hazardous Materials Storage Building at the Central Maintenance Facility, Los Angeles*. MTA has completed its archaeological inventory for the proposed Hazardous Materials Storage Building, and found no cultural materials in the two trenches that were excavated within the project area. We now consider our responsibilities fulfilled under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me at (213) 922-7306.

Sincerely,

JAMES L. SOWELL  
Manager, Environmental Compliance & Services

JLS/AV/me

Enclosure

cc: Erv Poka, FTA, L.A. Metro  
Ray Sukys, FTA, Region IX  
Ray Tellis, FTA, L.A. Metro  
South Central Coastal Information Center

SHPO  
October 17, 2001  
Page 2

bcc: Paul Lewicki, 30-1-5  
Glenda Mariner, 99-15-1  
Document Control, 99-17-1  
EC Files