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City of Alhambra Historic Context Statement Outline *January 15, 2021*

HISTORIC RESOURCES GROUP

PREPARED FOR

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City of Alhambra
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Historic Context Statement Outline

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This document represents a draft outline for the City of Alhambra's Historic Context Statement. This project will provide the City of Alhambra with a comprehensive historic context statement that will serve as a foundation for historic preservation planning in the city going forward. The period of study for this project goes through 1980 in order to identify potential historic resources 40 years of age or older.

The Historic Context Statement will be a compilation of existing information – including published histories and historical narratives about the city, as well as previous surveys and property evaluations – supplemented with new research and analysis, providing the City with a comprehensive development history of Alhambra's built environment. The Historic Context Statement will identify important periods of development, historical trends and development patterns, building types and architectural styles, and important persons in the history of Alhambra. Within this framework, the Historic Context Statement will establish relevant themes and sub-themes for the identification and evaluation of potential historic resources. These themes and sub-themes will include specific eligibility standards, integrity thresholds, property types, and character-defining features for evaluating properties in the City of Alhambra for potential listing in the National Register of Historic Places and/or California Register of Historical Resources, or for future local designation. Note that any properties that are identified or discussed herein are included for illustrative purposes only and their inclusion does not indicate a finding of eligibility for historic designation.

Due to shelter-in-place restrictions related to COVID-19, several archival sources have not yet been consulted, including the special collections of the Alhambra Civic Center Library and the collections of the Alhambra Historical Society Museum. The information contained in these archives will be reflected in subsequent drafts of this Historic Context Statement. Construction dates may be subject to change upon confirmation through primary sources. Sub-themes may be subject to change pending further research and field investigation.

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PURPOSE

A historic context statement analyzes the historical development of a community according to guidelines developed by the National Park Service and specified in *National Register Bulletin 16A*.¹ A historic context statement contains information about historical trends and properties, organized by important themes during particular periods of time. Because historic contexts are organized by theme, place, and time, they link historic properties to important historic trends. In this way, they provide a framework for determining the significance of a property and its eligibility for historic listing or designation. A historic context statement is linked with tangible built resources through the concept of *property types*: a grouping of individual properties based on shared physical or associative characteristics.

A historic context statement is not a comprehensive history of an area. Rather, it is intended to highlight broad historical trends that help to explain why the built environment evolved in the way that it did. The purpose of the City of Alhambra Historic Context Statement is to assist in the identification, evaluation, and preservation of significant historic buildings and sites that are important within the context of the development of Alhambra, as well as the larger San Gabriel Valley region. The narrative is organized into chronological periods of development from its earliest known settlement through the 1970s.

¹ U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Nomination Form* (Washington, DC: 1997), <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB16A-Complete.pdf> (accessed November 2020.)

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The following broad contexts have been identified to provide the framework for evaluating properties within the City of Alhambra. Each context then includes identified themes related to specific aspects of the development of the built environment in Alhambra during that period. These contexts and themes are discussed in greater detail in the following section. Please note that themes and sub-themes as presented may be revised pending further research and field investigation.

- **Context: Native American Settlement**
- **Context: European Exploration (1542-1768)**
- **Context: Spanish Rule: Colonization and Mission Establishment (1769-1820)**
- **Context: Mexican Rule: Secularization and Subsequent Land Grants (1821-1849)**
- **Context: Early California: American Statehood and Rancho Development (1850-1874)**
- **Context: Early Development of Alhambra (1875-1902)**
 - **Theme:** Residential Development
 - **Theme:** Properties Associated With Important Persons
- **Context: City Incorporation and Civic Improvement (1903-1919)**
 - **Theme:** Civic and Institutional Development
 - **Theme:** Commercial Development
 - **Theme:** Industrial Development
 - **Theme:** Infrastructural Development
 - **Theme:** Residential Development
- **Context: City Expansion and Industrial Growth (1920-1940)**
 - **Theme:** Civic and Institutional Development
 - **Theme:** Commercial Development
 - **Theme:** Industrial Development
 - **Theme:** Infrastructural Development
 - **Theme:** Residential Development
 - **Theme:** Properties Associated With Important Persons
- **World War II (1941-1945)**
 - **Theme:** Civic and Institutional Development
 - **Theme:** Commercial Development
 - **Theme:** Industrial Development

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- **Context: Postwar Growth and Prosperity (1946-1980)**
 - **Theme:** Civic and Institutional Development
 - **Theme:** Commercial Development
 - **Theme:** Industrial Development
 - **Theme:** Residential Development
- **Context: Alhambra Today (1981-Present)**
- **Context: Architecture and Design (1875-1980)**
 - **Theme:** Late 19th Century Architectural Styles
 - **Theme:** Craftsman Movement
 - **Theme:** 20th Century Period Revival and Exotic Revival Styles
 - **Theme:** Early Modernist Styles
 - **Theme:** Postwar Modernist Styles
 - **Theme:** Late Modernist Styles

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The following section provides a broad overview of the organization of the historic context statement. Each section of the context statement will address a different period in the history and development of the City of Alhambra. The outline below includes a brief description of relevant historical events and trends for each context period, along with examples of specific themes to be addressed as they relate to the development of Alhambra.

As the purpose of a historic context statement is to aid in preservation planning as it relates to the current built environment, themes are primarily identified in association with extant examples of properties dating from the period. Early periods of development from which no extant examples remain are discussed only briefly for the purposes of relating essential background information and historical milestones. The lack of detail included in such sections – particularly with regard to the section detailing the initial settlement of the area by Native Americans – should therefore not be interpreted as a lack of significance of the historical period in general, but rather an indication of the lack of extant properties associated with a particular period of development.

Native American Settlement

The San Gabriel Valley was well-populated before the first Spanish explorers arrived. The area's earliest known inhabitants were members of the Tongva tribe. Dating back some 3,000 years, the Tongva were hunter-gatherers who lived throughout the region that is now Los Angeles County.

This section of the context will discuss the initial settlement of the San Gabriel Valley by the Tongva people.

*There are no known extant built properties
dating from this period in the City of Alhambra.*

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European Exploration (1542-1768)

On a discovery expedition for Spain in 1542, Portuguese navigator Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo became the first European to explore what is now the West Coast of the United States. The expedition did not land, confining their exploration to the coastline, noting the abundance of available water as they sailed past the mouth of the San Gabriel River. They also made the first known contact with the native Tongva people, who rowed out in their canoes to greet the expedition. On a subsequent mapping expedition for the Spanish government in 1602, navigator Sebastian Vizcaino further investigated the region, following Cabrillo's path up the coast and renaming the places first identified by Cabrillo. However, it was not until the arrival of the Portolà expedition in 1769 that the first Spanish party actually traversed the San Gabriel Valley as it conducted an inland exploration of California.

This section of the context will provide a brief overview of European exploration efforts.

*There are no known extant built properties
dating from this period in the City of Alhambra.*

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Spanish Rule: Colonization and Mission Establishment (1769-1820)

In 1769, the Spanish government dispatched an expedition led by Captain Gaspar de Portolà, the newly-appointed governor of Baja California, to establish a presidio (or garrison) against Russian expansion in Alta California. Additionally, a system of Catholic missions was to be founded for the conversion of the native people along the western coast. Portolà sailed into San Diego Bay on April 29th, 1769, and soon set out on an overland expedition with Father Junípero Serra along what would become known as *El Camino Real* ("The King's Road"). Following the Portolà expedition, Spain claimed California as part of its empire. Over the next several decades a chain of Franciscan missions, military presidios, and pueblos were established throughout Alta California, from San Diego to Sonoma.

Mission San Gabriel Arcángel was founded on September 8th, 1771, the fourth in a chain of missions established along the California coast by Spanish Catholic Franciscans between 1769 and 1823. The name of the mission was soon attached to the river and valley, as well as the San Gabriel Mountains, which had been previously called the Sierra Madre by the Spanish. The mission was originally sited on the banks of the San Gabriel River in what is now the City of Montebello. However, after severe flooding in 1776, it was relocated to higher ground five miles to the northwest, in present-day San Gabriel. The mission eventually controlled some 1.5 million acres of land, from the foot of the San Gabriel Mountains extending southward to present-day San Pedro. Local native tribes were absorbed into the mission system, forced to convert to Christianity, and forced to work the mission's agricultural and ranch lands. At the San Gabriel Mission, the native Tongva inhabitants became known as the Gabrielinos. The missions continued to hold these large tracts of land until the Mexican government declared its independence from Spain.

This section of the context will discuss the initial development of the land comprising the present-day City of Alhambra as part of the Mission San Gabriel Arcángel.

*There are no known extant built properties
dating from this period in the City of Alhambra.*

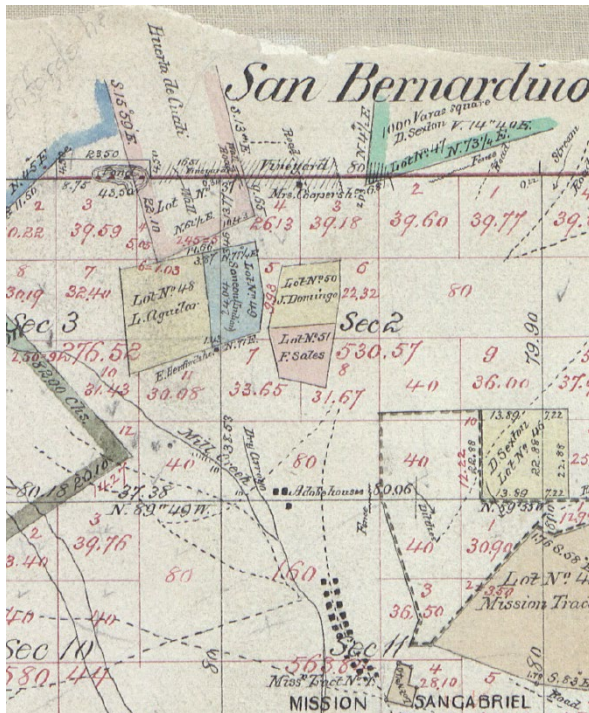
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Mexican Rule: Secularization and Subsequent Land Grants (1821-1849)

In 1821, Mexico won its independence from Spain, making Alta California part of Mexico. By the 1830s, the influence of the mission system was waning, replaced by a focus on secular agricultural settlement. With growing pressure on the Mexican government to secularize the missions, in 1833 the Mexican Congress passed the Act for the Secularization of the Missions of California. The missions were subsequently abandoned by the Franciscan padres and the majority of mission lands taken from the Catholic Church. In order to attract settlers to the region, Spain and later Mexico established a system of land grants, dividing the land into large tracts known as *ranchos*, which were granted to private individuals who were either Spanish or Mexican soldiers, settlers, or financiers.



This survey map, drawn in 1870, shows the Rancho Huerta de Cuati at the top. California State University Monterey Bay Digital Commons.

The signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in February of 1848 officially ended the Mexican–American War and Alta California was formally annexed to the United States. The Treaty also provided that existing land grants would be honored. On September 9th, 1850, California officially became the 31st state in the Union.

This section of the context will discuss the initial acquisition and development of the land comprising the present-day City of Alhambra as part of the Rancho Huerta de Cuati, which was granted to Hugo Reid (1811-1852) and his wife, Victoria Bartolomea Comicrabit (1808-1868), a native Tongva woman.

There are no known extant built properties dating from this period in the City of Alhambra.

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View from Lake Vineyard, circa 1880. Wilson's winery can be seen in the distance. Huntington Library.

On September 9th, 1850, California officially became the 31st state in the Union. Following Hugo Reid's death in 1852, Benjamin Davis "Don Benito" Wilson (1811-1878) purchased the Rancho Huerta de Cuati from Reid's widow in 1854 for \$7,000. Wilson, a prominent landowner who owned substantial tracts in the San Gabriel Valley, subsequently dubbed the land "Lake Vineyard." He ceded much of his control over its development to his son-in-law, James De Barth Shorb (1842-1896), who proved to be an innovative manager. Shorb conceived new types of irrigation and drainage systems that enabled formerly worthless land to be cultivated, and experimented with exotic crops.

This section of the context will discuss both Wilson and Shorb, their development of Lake Vineyard, and Shorb's innovations in cultivation that would later prove to be fruitful to subsequent development efforts.

There are no known extant built properties dating from this period in the City of Alhambra.

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Early Development of Alhambra (1875-1902)

By the early 1870s, the growing property tax burden imposed by Los Angeles County prompted Benjamin Wilson to contemplate subdividing Lake Vineyard in order to generate revenue, as well as diversifying its cultivation. In 1875 the two men, along with several associates, established the Lake Vineyard Land and Water Association to further develop the Lake Vineyard property. This company opened the San Gabriel Winery, which was likely the first commercial enterprise in the area, and also subdivided and sold the first tracts to be recorded from Lake Vineyard: the Alhambra Tract and the Alhambra Addition Tract. These tracts, which were opened for sale in 1875 and 1876 respectively, comprised the original extent of Alhambra, which subsequently flourished as a community throughout the late 1870s and the land boom of the 1880s. As the community expanded, a commercial center began to develop around Main Street, and greater focus was given to the development of religious and educational institutions to serve the needs of the growing population; the area's first churches and schools were constructed during this period, including perhaps most notably the Ramona Convent Secondary School, which opened in 1890.



Birdseye view of early Alhambra, circa 1883. University of Southern California Digital Library.

This section of the context will discuss Wilson and Shorb's subdivision of the Alhambra and Alhambra Addition Tracts, the early settlement of Alhambra and its subsequent growth and development as a community during the land boom of the 1880s, early efforts to develop institutions and commercial operations, and the impact of the introduction of rail transport within the region.

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Based upon research to date, the following themes will be developed to address the built environment related to this period of development in Alhambra. Themes will be organized by development type and/or association with important historical trends or individuals. All themes will be based upon extant examples identified during the windshield study.

Theme: Residential Development

Topics to be discussed under this theme include the initial settlement of the Alhambra and Alhambra Addition Tracts and their subsequent subdivision by lot owners during the land boom of the 1880s as well as known area settlers and pioneers.

Theme: Properties Associated With Important Persons

Topics to be discussed under this theme include extant properties that have historic associations with Azusa's pioneering families or other individuals important in Alhambra's history during this period.

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City Incorporation and Civic Improvement (1903-1919)

The community of Alhambra was incorporated as a City in 1903, which prompted the establishment of many much-needed municipal services as well as improvements and additions to existing infrastructure. Many of the City's earliest institutions were also established during this time in response to the demands of the growing community. Commercial and industrial operations in the area also expanded; while the San Gabriel Winery had closed around the turn of the century, the facility was soon acquired by Alfred Dolge, who developed a substantial felt manufacturing concern on the site as well as a fledgling adjacent settlement known as Dolgeville. Dolgeville was later annexed to the City of Alhambra in 1908 and became part of the growing city.



Alhambra residents gather at City Hall to celebrate the Fourth of July in 1908.
University of Southern California Digital Library.

This section of the context will discuss the incorporation of the City of Alhambra, the subsequent annexation of Dolgeville, and the communities' continued growth as a full-fledged city, including the development of early institutions and municipal services, infrastructural improvements, expanded commercial enterprise, and early industrial operations.

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Based upon research to date, the following themes will be developed to address the built environment related to this period of development in Alhambra. Themes will be organized by development type and/or association with important historical trends or individuals. All themes will be based upon extant examples of properties identified in the windshield study.

Theme: Civic and Institutional Development

Topics to be discussed under this theme include the formation of a local government and the establishment of emergency services; improvements to municipal infrastructure such as street lighting, paving, and widening; the establishment of public utilities including electricity, sewer, telegram and telephone lines, and water supplies; the development of a City school district and the construction of new elementary, junior, and high schools; the opening of a dedicated public library; the expansion of the local church community; and the formation of social clubs and fraternal and service organizations, some of which were formed in response to the progressive ideals of the period.

Theme: Commercial Development

Topics to be discussed under this theme include the continued expansion of Alhambra's business district along Main Street; the establishment of commercial booster organizations such as the Alhambra Improvement Association, the Alhambra-San Gabriel Farmers Club, and the Alhambra Board of Trade/Alhambra Chamber of Commerce to promote local businesses; the expansion of the regional rail system; and the establishment of new commercial enterprises, including competing local newspapers.

Theme: Industrial Development

Topics to be discussed under this theme include the shift toward more extensive industrial activity in the City following the establishment and subsequent operation of the Alfred Dolge Manufacturing Company (later the Standard Felt Company), and the resultant development of additional industrial concerns in the Dolgeville area such as American Pipe and Steel Construction, the Talladay Manufacturing Company, the Electric Heating and Manufacturing Company, and the National Manufacturing Company.

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Theme: Residential Development

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Topics to be discussed under this theme include the overall expansion of residential development in Alhambra and Dolgeville, the subdivision of the initial tracts recorded specifically for residential construction, and the establishment of the city's earliest residential neighborhoods, as well as the establishment of residential estates by some of Alhambra's founding families.

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City Expansion and Industrial Growth (1920-1940)

Southern California witnessed a population boom throughout the 1920s that saw an exponential number of new residents flock to the region. The City of Alhambra was no exception; the City's population more than doubled over the course of the decade and comprised nearly 30,000 people by 1930. The resultant demand for housing prompted a real estate boom during this decade; a substantial portion of the City's housing stock was constructed during this period, and commercial and institutional operations were also expanded to meet the needs of the growing community.



Real estate salesmen show off the advantages of the Mayfair Tract, which was opened for residential development in 1929. Huntington Digital Library.

The City of Alhambra entered the Great Depression as vastly more robust community than it had been ten years earlier. The City's focus on developing industrial activities during the previous decade sustained the community throughout the economic decline of the Great Depression; by 1940 production exceeded \$8,000,000 and employed nearly 4,000 people. Trade in the area was aided by the construction of the Alhambra Airport, which opened in 1930; the airport was later designated an official shipping station for Lockheed Martin's military airplane orders and continued to operate through the early 1940s.

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This section of the context will discuss the continued growth of the City of Alhambra throughout the 1920s and 1930s and the impact of the population and real estate booms on the built environment of the City.

Based upon research to date, the following themes will be developed to address the built environment related to this period of development in Alhambra. Themes will be organized by development type and/or association with important historical trends or individuals. All themes will be based upon extant examples of properties to be confirmed during the field survey.

Theme: Civic and Institutional Development

Topics to be discussed under this theme include the expansion of institutional operations during this period to meet the demands the City's rapidly-growing population; these efforts included new and/or expanded facilities for the police and fire departments as well as many existing churches, the construction of the City's first dedicated hospital, and a new post office, which opened in 1936. The City's first public parks were also established during this period, including Alhambra Park, which opened in 1920; Story Park, which opened its initial northern portion in 1928 and its southern portion in 1931; and Granada Park, which was opened in 1934. Preliminary research also indicates that some institutional development from this period – including several improvements to Alhambra's school buildings – may have been undertaken as part of the Public Works Administration (PWA) and Works Progress Administration (WPA) programs of the New Deal era; however, further research is required to confirm the extent of work.

Theme: Commercial Development

Topics to be discussed under this theme include the continued expansion of commercial enterprise and development of commercial buildings in Alhambra during this period of growth for the City.

Theme: Industrial Development

Topics to be discussed under this theme include the establishment of the Alhambra Industrial Syndicate; the increase in the organized promotion of Alhambra as a site for manufacturing; and the direct solicitation of industrial concerns, resulting in a significant expansion in industrial development during this period. Plants that established operations in Alhambra during this period include the A. L. Boyden Company, the

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Alhambra Foundry, the American Liquid Meter Company, C. F. Braun & Co., the Haddon Automatic Sprinkler Company, the Reliance Gas Regulator Company, the Southwest Welding and Machine Company, and the Winroth Pump Company, among others.

Theme: Residential Development

Topics to be discussed under this theme include the explosion of residential subdivision and the associated boom in residential construction during this period, with an emphasis on intact residential neighborhoods, significant multi-family residential properties types, extant examples of outstanding, rare, or unique residential development from this period, and/or residences displaying a unique method of construction.

Theme: Properties Associated With Important Persons

Topics to be discussed under this theme include extant properties that have historic associations with individuals important in Alhambra's history during this period, including extant properties that have historic associations with important individuals in the 1920s and 1930s, such as the group of fine artists known as "The Eight," who became known for congregating at homes on Champion Place, which was eventually dubbed "Artists' Alley." This group of artists included Victor Clyde Forsythe, sculptor Eli Harvey, commercial artist and painter Sam Hyde Harris, painter Frank Tenney Johnson, painter Marjorie Reed, painter and illustrator Norman Rockwell, painter Jack Wilkinson Smith, and sculptor Hughlette "Tex" Wheeler. Research is ongoing to identify the extant residence(s) associated with each artist and determine the extent of their association.

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World War II (1941-1945)

The bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 marked the United States' entrance into World War II. Development in all sectors was limited during this period; residential construction was largely halted for the duration of the war to divert essential materials to the war effort, and many industrial concerns converted their operations to wartime manufacturing. Existing rail lines were taken out of service in 1941-1942 and replaced with bus lines. World War II also saw the United States Army's 78th Regiment anti-aircraft artillery unit billeted in downtown Alhambra, which prompted the conversion of existing facilities for wartime use.

This section of the context will discuss the continued growth of the City of Alhambra throughout World War II, including the ongoing operation of commercial and industrial concerns and the impact of the war on the local community.

Based upon research to date, the following themes will be developed to address the built environment related to this period of development in Alhambra. Themes will be organized by development type and/or association with important historical trends or individuals. All themes will be based upon extant examples of properties to be confirmed during the field survey.

Theme: Civic and Institutional Development

Topics to be discussed under this theme include the development of institutional buildings in and around downtown Alhambra during this period of limited growth for the City.

Theme: Commercial Development

Topics to be discussed under this theme include the development of commercial buildings in and around downtown Alhambra during this period of limited growth for the City.

Theme: Industrial Development

Topics to be discussed under this theme include the development of industrial properties in and around downtown Alhambra during this period of limited growth for the City.

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Postwar Growth and Prosperity (1946-1979)

The years following World War II represented a period of dramatic growth and change in the City of Alhambra, not only in terms of development activity, but in population and community makeup as well. The postwar era brought unprecedented economic prosperity to the community, which motivated construction and development within the City; it also contributed to the de-centralization of downtown commercial development as the City expanded and eventually – with the establishment of the Alhambra Redevelopment Agency in the 1960s – spurred changes in how such development activity was directed, resulting in a marked transformation in the built environment of Alhambra. At the same time, Asian Americans began to settle in the communities of the San Gabriel Valley, and Alhambra became home to many Chinese Americans beginning in the late 1960s and 1970s. As the character and identity of Alhambra's residents evolved, so did their needs, and commercial and institutional operations developed in the City in the later postwar era began to reflect its increasingly diverse inhabitants.



Main Street looking west from Garfield Avenue, circa 1955. Los Angeles Public Library.

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This section of the context will discuss the economic growth that followed the conclusion of World War II and its impact on the City of Alhambra, including increased development across all sectors; development milestones include the subdivision of the former sites of the Alhambra Airport and the Midwick Country Club for large-scale residential development in the late 1940s and early 1950s; the construction of new municipal and institutional buildings in the 1950s and early 1960s; the rise in popularity of Valley Boulevard as a commercial corridor in the 1960s; and the relocation of Southern Pacific railroad tracks to below street level in the 1970s. Please note this section of the context may be divided into two separate sections pending further research regarding postwar development patterns specific to the City of Alhambra.

Based upon research to date, the following themes will be developed to address the built environment related to this period of development in Alhambra. Themes will be organized by development type and/or association with important historical trends or individuals. All themes will be based upon extant examples of properties to be confirmed during the field survey.

Theme: Civic and Institutional Development

Topics to be discussed under this theme include the completion of new municipal buildings in the late 1950s and early 1960s, including a new high school, post office, fire station, police station, city hall, and library. Several new park facilities were opened as well, including Almansor Park in 1947 and the Alhambra Municipal Golf Course in 1955.

Theme: Commercial Development

Topics to be discussed under this theme include the shift in commercial activity on Main Street eastward toward Chapel Avenue; the subsequent blight of the Downtown Alhambra area; the transformation of Valley Boulevard into a second major commercial corridor and a center for Asian American business operations; and the shift toward automobile-related commercial enterprises.

Theme: Industrial Development

Topics to be discussed under this theme include the continued industrial growth in the City during the postwar era.

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Theme: Residential Development

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Topics to be discussed under this theme include the subdivision of residential tracts and residential construction during this period – particularly in areas subject to redevelopment such as the former sites of the Alhambra Airport and the Midwick Country Club – with an emphasis on intact residential neighborhoods, significant multi-family residential property types, extant examples of outstanding, rare, or unique residential development from this period, and/or residences displaying a unique method of construction.

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This section of the context will briefly discuss the major development milestones associated with the City of Alhambra's recent past, bringing the historic context statement narrative to the present day. Topics will include the continued work of the Alhambra Redevelopment Agency and its subsequent closure in 2012; the revitalization of Main Street; the redevelopment of the Sears tower as Fremont Plaza; the development of Auto Row on West Main Street; the construction of the Plaza on Main at the corner of Main and Fourth Streets; and the construction of the Alhambra Renaissance Cineplex at the northeast corner of Garfield Avenue and Main Street.

As this period is outside the timeframe under consideration for the current historic context statement, no themes or sub-themes will be identified for this period.

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Architecture and Design (1875-1980)

This section of the context will discuss various architectural styles from the periods that are represented among extant properties in the city. Themes will include a brief overview of each style, its influences and known practitioners, and character-defining features. Themes will be organized as follows:

- **Theme:** Late 19th Century Architectural Styles
- **Theme:** Craftsman Movement
- **Theme:** 20th Century Period Revival and Exotic Revival Styles
- **Theme:** Early Modernist Styles
- **Theme:** Postwar Modernist Styles
- **Theme:** Late Modernist Styles

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NATIVE AMERICAN SETTLEMENT

The area's earliest known inhabitants were members of the Tongva tribe, hunter-gatherers who lived throughout the region that is now Los Angeles County.

EUROPEAN EXPLORATION (1542-1768)

- 1542** Portuguese navigator Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo becomes the first European to explore what is now the West Coast of the United States.
- 1602** Navigator Sebastian Vizcaino further investigates the Pacific Coast region.

SPANISH RULE (1769-1820)

- 1769** The Spanish government dispatches an expedition led by Gaspar de Portolà to conduct an inland exploration of California.
- The first recorded reference to Alhambra ("El Susa") appears in the diary of Fr. Juan Crespi, a missionary with the Portolà expedition.
- 1771** *Mission San Gabriel Arcángel* is founded on the banks of the San Gabriel River.
- 1776** Due to severe flooding, the Mission is relocated to higher ground in present-day San Gabriel.
- 1781** *El Pueblo de la Reina de Los Angeles* is founded on September 4th, the second town created during the Spanish colonization of Alta California.

MEXICAN RULE (1821-1849)

- 1821** Mexico wins its independence from Spain, making Alta California part of Mexico.

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- 1833** The Mexican Congress passes an act to secularize the California missions.
- 1838** The 128.26-acre Rancho Huerta de Cuati is granted to Hugo Reid and his wife, Victoria Bartolomea Comicrabit.
- 1848** The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ends the Mexican-American War and cedes Alta California to the United States.

EARLY CALIFORNIA (1850-1874)

- 1850** California is admitted to the Union on September 9th, becoming its 31st state.
- 1852** Hugo Reid dies on December 12th.
- 1854** Benjamin Davis “Don Benito” Wilson acquires Rancho Huerta de Cuati from Hugo Reid’s widow, Victoria Bartolomea Reid, and dubs the property “Lake Vineyard.”
- 1867** Wilson’s daughter, Maria de Jesus Wilson, marries James De Barth Shorb, who joins his father-in-law in developing his San Gabriel Valley land holdings.
- 1870s** As population increases in Los Angeles County, the cost of government increases and property taxes are raised – eventually to as much as fifty cents per acre. Wilson begins to consider subdividing Lake Vineyard in order to raise money.
- 1873** The Southern Pacific Railroad line through the San Gabriel Valley is completed.
- 1874** B. D. Wilson subdivides a portion of Lake Vineyard for development as the Alhambra Tract (MR003-266), which is surveyed in June.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF ALHAMBRA (1875-1902)

- 1875** Acreage in the Alhambra Tract is offered for sale to the public for the first time in April.

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Wilson and Shorb – along with several associates – establish the Lake Vineyard Land and Water Association, which is incorporated in May.

- 1876** The Alhambra Tract is recorded in September.
- The Alhambra Addition Tract (MR003-298) is surveyed in October and recorded in December.
- 1877** All five and ten-acre plots in the Alhambra Tract are sold within two years.
- 1878** St. James Chapel, a 20x35-foot frame building, is dedicated in January. It remains the only church building in Alhambra until 1888.
- Benjamin Wilson dies on March 11th.
- 1880** **At least 25 families reside in Alhambra.**
- 1880s** The land boom of the 1880s prompts many owners of parcels in the original Alhambra and Alhambra Addition Tracts to subdivide their acreage into smaller lots to meet the demand for land and housing in the area.
- The San Gabriel Winery is established.
- 1885** Alhambra residents begin to focus on developing Main Street as a commercial center, opening the first store in the region in 1885, and the area soon begins to function as a commercial hub for the San Gabriel Valley.
- 1887** The Alhambra Hotel opens for business.
- The Southern Pacific Railroad builds a full-service depot at the southeast corner of Garfield Avenue and Marengo Road, with a passenger waiting area, loading dock, Western Union office, and resident stationmaster.
- The Alhambra and Pasadena Street Railway is completed in February. The horse-drawn trolley route begins at the Southern Pacific depot at Garfield and Mission and runs north to the Raymond depot of the Santa Fe Railroad in Pasadena.

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- 1888** The San Gabriel Valley Rapid Transit Railroad is completed. This line links the new town of Monrovia with Los Angeles via Alhambra.
- 1890** **The United States Census records the City's population of 808 residents.**
- Ramona Convent Secondary School opens.
- 1893** Alhambra's first hospital is established in a remodeled bungalow by Drs. Milbank Johnson and O. O. Witherbee at the corner of Boabdil (Main) and Second Streets.
- 1896** James De Barth Shorb dies on April 16th.
- 1901** The Los Angeles and Pasadena Electric Railway (the predecessor of Pacific Electric) begins construction on the Alhambra line in October.
- 1902** The electric railway line is opened on June 21st with cars running through to General Hospital in Los Angeles on a 30-minute schedule.

CITY INCORPORATION & CIVIC IMPROVEMENT (1903-1919)

- 1903** Alhambra is incorporated as a city on July 11th.
- Alfred Dolge comes to Alhambra to establish a felt-making factory, the Alfred Dolge Manufacturing Company, with the financial backing of Henry Huntington, William Kerkoff, and associates.
- 1906** The City files its first building report, noting that 161 construction permits were issued in 1906, with a total value of \$200,343.
- 1908** Dolge's felt company is reorganized as the Alfred Dolge Felt Company, and the company adds the production of piano felt as well as the fabrication of piano hammers and ladies' slippers. The company's name is soon changed to the Standard Felt Company.
- 1910** **The United States Census records the City's population of 5,021 residents.**
- 1915** Alhambra becomes a chartered city of the third class on March 8th.

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- 1917** The United States declares war on Germany on April 6th, marking the country's entrance into World War I.
- 1918** A ceasefire and armistice is declared on November 11th, marking the conclusion of World War I.

CITY EXPANSION & INDUSTRIAL GROWTH (1920-1940)

- 1920** The United States Census records the City's population of 9,096 residents, an increase of 81.2% over the previous decade.
- 1923** Building permit valuations reach \$7,231,330 in 1923, a high that will not be equaled until immediately after World War II.
- Assessed valuation in the City totals approximately \$13,000,000.
- 1929** Stock prices on the New York Stock Exchange plunge, precipitating an economic collapse that results in the Great Depression.
- 1930** The United States Census records the City's population of 29,472 residents, an increase of 224% over the previous decade.
- The Alhambra Airport opens in April.
- 1940** The United States Census records the City's population of 38,935 residents, an increase of 32.1% over the previous decade.
- Construction in Alhambra has increased more than 600% since 1910. Assessed valuation in the City totals more than \$27,000,000.
- Annual production in the Alhambra area now exceeds \$8,000,000 and employs nearly 4,000 people. As a result the area now ranks 14th in value of products in California.
- Mark Keppel High School opens.

WORLD WAR II (1941-1945)

- 1941** Japan attacks the American naval fleet stationed at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7th, prompting the United States' entrance into World War II.

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Retail trade totals \$15,000,000.

The Pacific Electric red cars make their final trip on the Alhambra, San Gabriel and Temple City line.

1945 Japan surrenders to the Allied forces, marking the end of the hostilities of World War II.

POSTWAR GROWTH AND PROSPERITY (1946-1980)

1946 Building permit valuations reach a new high at \$8,148,006.

1948 Building permit valuations set a new record at \$12,309,205. This is the last year in which permit valuations peak; they later fall annually until 1953.

1949 Retail trade jumps over 400% since 1941, to \$65,000,000.

1950 The United States Census records the City's population of 51,359 residents, an increase of 31.9% over the previous decade.

1953 Building permit valuations reach a new low at \$4,657,885.

1960 The United States Census records the City's population of 54,807 residents, an increase of 6.7% over the previous decade.

1960s The Alhambra Redevelopment Agency is established.

1965 The City of Alhambra draws up its first General Plan.

1966 The Alhambra Historical Society is established.

1970 The United States Census records the City's population of 62,125 residents, an increase of 13.4% over the previous decade.

More than half of the City's population lives in multi-family residences, reflecting the increasing density of housing in the City in the postwar era.

1980 The United States Census records the City's population of 64,767 residents, an increase of 4.3% over the previous decade.

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ALHAMBRA TODAY (1981-present)

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- 1990** The United States Census records the City's population of 82,106 residents, an increase of 26.8% over the previous decade.
- 2000** The United States Census records the City's population of 85,804 residents, an increase of 4.5% over the previous decade.
- 2003** The City of Alhambra celebrates the 100th anniversary of its founding.
- 2010** The United States Census records the City's population of 83,089 residents, reflecting a decrease in population for the first time since the City's founding.
- 2012** The Alhambra Redevelopment Agency ceases operations.

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