

Laura O'Neill

Associate Research Scientist, Architectural Historian, Desert Research Institute

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INTRODUCTION

I have been professionally involved in the field of historic preservation since 2006 and have worked on a wide variety of project types, including Section 106 reviews, California Environmental Quality Act reviews, Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit projects, Historic Structure Reports, historic resource surveys, historic context statements, design guidelines, HABS/HAER recordation, and national, state, and local landmark nominations. My experience with different property types is equally as varied and includes bridges, roadways, railroad lines, canals, hotels, commercial buildings, industrial buildings, campuses, historic districts, theaters, single- and multi-family residences, and government buildings. I have had the opportunity to work on many of the most iconic buildings in the Los Angeles area, such as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the industrial complex formerly home to Howard Hughes' Hughes Aircraft Company. I currently have the privilege of working on the nationally significant built resources on the Nevada National Security Site.

WORK EXPERIENCE

2021 - Present

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In my current role, I serve as a built environment subject matter expert for the Cultural Resources Management team within the Division of Earth and Environmental Sciences. I work on complex Section 106 reports, agreement documents, and mitigation work products.

2008 – 2021

Senior Architectural Historian, GPA Consulting

I managed a wide variety of historic preservation projects, wrote complex reports, mentored lower-level staff, managed project budgets and schedules, and developed and cultivated client relationships and new business. I was a member of the firm's leadership team and advisory board.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

2019: Speaker, American Planning Association Conference, California Chapter

2018: Speaker, California Preservation Foundation Adaptive Reuse Workshop

EDUCATION

Master of Architecture I

Concentration: Historic Preservation
Awarded 2009

California State Polytechnic University
Pomona, CA

Bachelor of Arts, Political Science

Awarded 2002

Lehigh University

Bethlehem, PA

QUALIFICATIONS

- Meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards in Historic Architecture
- Meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards in Architectural History

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

- Ventura Historic Preservation Committee, Chair, January 2020-Present; Member, October 2019-Present
- Santa Monica Landmarks Commission, Chair, July 2016-July 2018; Member, November 2014-July 2016

REPRESENTATIVE PAST PROJECTS

Historic Resource Surveys and Context Statements

- Fremont Postwar Architecture and Development Historic Context Statement
- San Diego LGBTQ Historic Context Statement
- Latinos in 20th Century California Historic Context Statement
- Pasadena Late 19th and Early 20th Century Residential Architecture Multiple Property Documentation Form
- SurveyLA (Citywide Los Angeles Survey Project) – Multiple Themes of the Context Statement and Multiple Community Plan Area Surveys

National, California, and Local Landmark Applications

- California Aerospace Museum California Register Nomination, Los Angeles, CA
- Ahrya Fine Art Theatre, Local Landmark Application, Beverly Hills, CA
- Margaret Esherick House, National Register Nomination, Philadelphia, PA
- Bono's Restaurant and Deli National Register Nomination, Fontana, CA

Evaluations in Technical Reports (Section 106 and CEQA)

- Los Angeles Times-Mirror Square Historical Resource Technical Report
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art Historical Resource Technical Report
- Evanston Inn, Pasadena, Historical Resource Technical Report
- Holly Street Bridge, Section 106 Compliance Reports, Pasadena
- Arroyo Seco Parkway, Section 106 Cumulative Impacts Analysis, Los Angeles, South Pasadena, and Pasadena

Historic Structure Reports, Treatment Plans, and Secretary of the Interior's Standards Compliance

- Bradbury Building Tenant Improvement Guidelines, Los Angeles, CA
- Anthony-Kerry House Historic Structure Report and Certificates of Appropriateness Applications, Beverly Hills, CA
- Japanese Pavilion at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Secretary of the Interior's Standards Compliance, Los Angeles, CA

Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit Projects

- Temple Art Lofts, Vallejo, CA
- Rosslyn Hotel Annex, Los Angeles, CA
- Casa de Rosas, Los Angeles, CA

SPECIAL SKILLS

- Advanced knowledge of preservation laws, policies, and best practices
- Expertise in applying the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and National Park Service Briefs and Bulletins
- Experience with applying ordinances, planning documents, and municipal codes in numerous jurisdictions
- Expertise in critical reasoning and persuasive technical writing
- Ability to read and understand complex architectural and engineering drawings
- Expertise in multiple software programs, including the latest historic resources survey technology
- Ability to build custom MS Access databases for historic resource documentation

FEATURED PROJECT

Hughes Industrial Historic District and "Spruce Goose" Hangars

I have been working in this historic district since 2011, beginning with the creation of a comprehensive treatment plan for the district, which is comprised of the former Hughes Aircraft Company campus. I have continued to work with the property owners and tenants on building and site improvements ever since, including the adaptive reuse of the massive wooden hangars where the infamous "Spruce Goose" flying boat was produced, which is now home to Google.