

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0680702

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RECEIVED	JUL 31 1978 SHEET
DATE ENTERED	SEP 13 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Plaza Substation

AND/OR COMMON

Plaza Substation; MTA Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
10 Olvera Street

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
Los Angeles

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
25th

— VICINITY OF

STATE
California

CODE
06

COUNTY
Los Angeles

CODE
037

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER: storage
- MILITARY

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
California Department of Parks and Recreation

STREET & NUMBER
P.O. Box 2390

CITY, TOWN
Sacramento

— VICINITY OF

STATE
California 95811

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Los Angeles County Hall of Records

STREET & NUMBER
320 West Temple Street

CITY, TOWN
Los Angeles

STATE
California 90012

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

— FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR
 DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Plaza Substation is a three story unreinforced brick building, 8345 square feet in area. The front and rear elevations are divided into five bays by buttresses which run the full height of the building. The exterior brick surfaces are painted. Because of the slope of the land, the rear of the building is a full three stories, with entrance through a central doorway at ground level, flanked by segmentally arched windows in each bay; the Olvera Street elevation is entered through a large, segmentally arched doorway on the second story level, which stands eight feet above Olvera Street. No fenestration exists along the side walls, except for two small windows at the southeast corner.

The cavernous interior contains a lower floor which opens onto Alameda Street, a second floor opening eight feet above Olvera Street, and a partial floor or loft, existing 15 feet above the second floor. The wooden roof is supported by an open wooden truss system.

The major change in the exterior of the building is the removal of the stepped parapets on the front and rear facades. These were damaged in the 1971 earthquake and removed as a safety measure. Power producing equipment was removed from the building in the late 1950's. The former arch on the east entrance has been flattened, and a ground floor window on the east side has been removed. Vendors' stands have been attached to the front of the building on Olvera Street. The building lies within El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Park, the symbolic "birthplace" of Los Angeles.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1905 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Los Angeles Railway Company

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Los Angeles Railway Company was formed in 1895 "to succeed to the property and franchises" of the bankrupt Los Angeles Consolidated Railway. The new company began immediately the electrification of the earlier company's cable lines. This was the beginning of the expansion and modernization of the system. Three years later the company was completely reorganized and enlarged to include a number of other smaller street railway companies. At this time, Henry E. Huntington became involved in street railway operations in Southern California, serving as the new company's first president.

During the first decade of the 20th century, Huntington was the major force in building a first class transit system in Los Angeles. The expansion of Huntington's transit systems, which also included the Pacific Electric Railway, created the need for increasing sources of electrical power. A number of new substations were built at this time to meet the growing needs of electrical rail transportation. The Plaza Substation was one of the power producing facilities built during this period of rapid expansion of Southern California's electric railway systems.

By 1904 the company had two electrical power substations in operation: the University Substation (1903) and the Huron Substation (1903-04). These two substations, however, were not able to keep up with the power demands of the rapidly expanding transit system. In December of 1903, the Los Angeles Railway Company purchased a parcel of property on Olvera Street just north of the Plaza from Mrs. Luisa Olvera de Forbes. Construction of the Plaza Substation followed on this site. The precise date of construction is not known, although the operation of the substation can be documented for 1906. Construction, therefore, occurred sometime between December of 1903 and 1906. The style was similar to other electrical railway facilities being constructed during the same period, generally following the "Mission lines of architecture".

In 1906 two 1000 kw motor generators were installed, followed in 1907 by a third of similar output. In 1920, two rotary converters, each with a capacity of 1500 kw, were installed. The Plaza Substation served the power production needs of much of the downtown area's streetcars, and was the largest power producer of the Los Angeles Railway Company's substations. By the time electric streetcar service ended in Los Angeles in March of 1963, the Plaza Substation had been phased out and its machinery removed.

The Plaza Substation is an important landmark in the history of transportation in Los Angeles. It is one of the last four remaining substations of the original

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Interurbans Special # 11, "Los Angeles Railway", published by Interurbans, The National Electric Railway News Digest, pp. 4, 39.

An Historical Survey of the Plaza Substation, Doyce B. Nunis, Jr., unpublished manuscript, December 5, 1971.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/4 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Los Angeles, California

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1, 1 3, 8, 5 8, 3, 0 3, 7, 6, 8 9, 8, 0

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

That portion of Lot A as shown on attached site plan, encompassing the building located at 10 Olvera Street known as the Plaza Substation.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John E. Miller, member (Staff revision by Office of Historic Preservation)

ORGANIZATION

Keep Old Los Angeles

DATE

April, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

2755 Medlow Avenue

TELEPHONE

(213) 255-1525

CITY OR TOWN

Los Angeles

STATE

California 90065

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

John E. Miller

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 7/12/78

FDR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

R. B. Roth

DATE 9/13/78

ATTEST:

William LeBouch

DATE Sept. 11, 1978

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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fourteen built by the Los Angeles Railway Company, and is the only substation remaining in the central city. It is presently facing an uncertain future; it does not meet present seismic code requirements, and has been proposed for demolition.