

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 The Venice Canal Historic District

and/or common N/A

2. Location

The District consists of the public right of way of Carroll Canal, Linnie Canal, Howland Canal
street & number Sherman Canal, Eastern Canals, and that portion of Canal Street and the Grand Canal between north N/A not for publication
city, town Los Angeles N/A vicinity of congressional district 27

state California code 06 county Los Angeles code 037

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Recreation

4. Owner of Property

name City of Los Angeles

street & number 200 North Spring Street

city, town Los Angeles N/A vicinity of state California 90012

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County of Los Angeles, Recorder's Office

street & number 227 North Broadway

city, town Los Angeles state California

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historical Property Survey 07-LA-187 2.4/3.5 Venice Boulevard from Lincoln Boulevard to Pacific Avenue, 07219-06221 has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date November, 1976 federal state county local

depository for survey records State of California, Department of Transportation, Environmental Planning

city, town Los Angeles state California 90012

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Venice Canal District and surrounding areas were originally marshland adjacent to the outlet of Ballona Creek at the Pacific Ocean. The area was developed, beginning in 1904, with a series of connected canals. The first canals within this development were located northerly of the proposed Venice Canal District in the "Venice of America" subdivision which was patterned after Venice, Italy and was intended to be a beach resort and cultural center.

The proposed Venice Canal District was an adjacent development to the south of "Venice of America" known as the "Short Line Beach Venice Canal Subdivision Number 1". Recorded in 1905, this development provided four parallel canals, approximately 1,100 feet long, aligned perpendicular to the Pacific Ocean; from north to south these are named Carroll, Linnie, Howland, and Sherman Canals. These canals were bounded on the west by Grand Canal, which connected with the Venice of America canal system at the present location of Canal Street and extended southerly of the current proposed Venice Canal District limits at Washington Street and then to the Ballona Lagoon and the Pacific Ocean. (See map 2, sheet #1, and photograph 1.) Eastern Canal, also a part of the proposed Venice Canal District, is shown in connection with tract 3533, recorded in 1920. This placement is adjacent to the Short Line Beach Venice Canal Subdivision Number 1 (see map 2).

The canals were constructed with a trapezoidal cross section and lined with clay. Concrete banks and concrete walks were constructed along the canal perimeters. To provide access to the three islands formed by the canal system, four concrete vehicular bridges on Dell Avenue and nine wooden pedestrian bridges over all six canals were constructed.

Lots abutting the canals were developed with single family dwellings. The surrounding area evolved into a beachfront resort and amusement center.

In addition to the canals and their rights of way, the proposed Venice Canal District contains 440 square feet of city-owned land, formerly railroad right of way, which also contains small portions of an abandoned railroad bridge northerly of South Venice Boulevard which lie outside the Canal Street right of way on portions of four lots owned by the City of Los Angeles.

The canals within the Venice Canal District are deteriorated. The ecosystem has been endangered by pollutants introduced into the water. Water flow through the remaining system is regulated by a tidegate separating Ballona Lagoon from the Marina del Rey entrance channel and the Pacific Ocean. Water circulation is hindered by the silt, debris, and rubble on the canal bottoms. The courts on the islands, the bridges, and the sidewalks are all substandard (too narrow for two-way traffic) and/or deteriorated (see photographs 2 and 3). The vehicular bridges will be used for one-way traffic. There are future plans, no date has been set, to replace one of the original bridges (the middle bridge on Eastern Canal); intentions are to replace this bridge with one designed in the manner of the original except that it will be widened.

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The canals developed north of the District were filled in starting in 1929 and are presently paved as streets. The Venice Short Line Railway went out of service in 1950 and tracks have been removed.

The canals are public property, owned and maintained by the City of Los Angeles. They have remained intact since their 1905 construction with the same basic cross-section and design details, despite some neglect and deterioration over the years.

The property adjacent to the canals is privately owned and has gone through a number of changes through the years. Photographic evidence suggests that there are probably no more than two structures in the canal area that date from the first decade of this century. A large percentage of the residences have been built in the last ten years, possibly 40 percent. The remainder is divided between circa 1925-35 cottages and 1950s' stucco-covered apartment buildings.

The mix of housing stock is so great that inclusion of the privately owned property would detract from the recognition and importance of the canals themselves.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1905–1920 **Builder/Architect** Moses Sherman/Eli Clark

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Venice Canal District is significant as an early example of community/recreational planning in a coastal marshland area. The proposed Venice Canal District contains the major remaining portion of the Venice Canal system.

Early development in the area was facilitated by the development of mass public transportation from the central part of Los Angeles. The interurban trolley system between Los Angeles and Santa Monica was constructed in 1896 and extended southward through the Venice area to Redondo Beach by 1900. The Venice Short Line was constructed in 1902 by the Los Angeles and Pacific Railway, headed by Moses Sherman and Eli Clark, sponsors of the 1905 development of the "Short Line Beach Venice Canal Subdivision" which makes up the proposed District. This pattern of development illustrates the relationship between construction of the railway transportation system of that era and the concurrent community planning and land development by the operators of the Los Angeles and Pacific Railways (Moses Sherman and Eli Clark).

Although this pattern of land development was repeated in many areas of Los Angeles County by the Los Angeles and Pacific Railway and other railways which eventually formed the Pacific Electric system headed by Henry E. Huntington, the particular development of the Venice of America and the Short Line Beach Venice Canal Subdivision Number 1 was unique. The attempt to create a beach resort patterned after the canal system of Venice, Italy, interfaced well with the particular geographical nature of the marshland adjacent to the outlet of Ballona Creek, to convey a sense of historic cohesiveness through community planning based upon the canal system. Such a canal system appears to be unique to both the local area as well as to the State of California. Although a number of canals were filled in beginning in 1929, the six canals which constitute the proposed Venice Canal District retain the integrity of the original development. Likewise, the Short Line Beach Venice Canal Subdivision Number 1 has, due to its unique canal system, remained distinct from the densely built surrounding neighborhoods.

Other than a few picket fences and diving boards put up by private property owners, there are no intrusions into the proposed Venice Canal District. Boundary lines were chosen to exclude private property and include the canals and the canal rights of way. The northern boundary extends along Grand Canal to North Venice Boulevard, the end of the present and the original canal system. The southern boundary extends along Grand Canal to Washington Street which was the original boundary line for the Short Line Beach Venice Canal Subdivision Number 1. The boundary lines also include the bridge approaches of the abandoned Venice Short Line Railway bridge. (Please see map 2.) As

9. Major Bibliographical References

Basten, Fred E., Santa Monica Bay: The First 100 Years, Douglas-West Publishers, Inc., 1974.
 Ingersoll, Lurth A., Century History of Santa Monica Bay Cities, Los Angeles, 1908.
 Schmidt-Brunner, Hurst, Venice California: An Urban Fantasy, Grossman Publishers, New York, 1973.
 Sweet, Ira L., W.A. Myers, Trolleys to the Surf, Interurbans Publications, Glendale, California, 1976.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 12.11

Quadrangle name Venice, California

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	1,1	3,6,4,7,6,0	3,7,6,1,4,2,0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	1,1	3,6,4,7,8,0	3,7,6,0,7,4,0
E	1,1	3,6,4,3,2,0	3,7,6,1,3,1,0
G			

B	1,1	3,6,4,9,1,0	3,7,6,1,1,8,0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	1,1	3,6,4,7,2,0	3,7,6,0,7,2,0
F			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

(See continuation sheet, Item 10, pages 1 and 2)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Edna Bruce, Legislative Analyst Office of Historic Preservation
Staff Revisions: Carol Branam
 organization City of Los Angeles, Office of the Chief Legislative Analyst date November 20, 1978
 street & number 200 North Spring Street, Room 253 telephone (213) 485-6613
 city or town Los Angeles state California 90012

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Kenn ELLON
 title State Historic Preservation Officer date July 13, 1982

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

of Keeper of the National Register Tommy Lee Davis date 8/30/82
 Attest: Patrick Hill date 8/29/82
 Chief of Registration

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mentioned above, the Short Line Railway was an integral part of the Short Line Beach Venice Canal Subdivision Number 1, and the bridge is therefore included within the boundary lines.

Although both those portions of the Venice Canal system north and south of Washington Street have historical significance, it is important for contemporary geographic and procedural reasons that they be separated in this application.

The area north of Washington Street consists of Sherman Canal, Eastern Canal, Howland Canal, Linnie Canal, and an approximately 1,900-foot long section of Grand Canal. South of Washington Street is found the approximately 1,800-foot long remainder of Grand Canal and Ballona Lagoon which extends for approximately 3,200 feet before terminating at the Marina del Rey entrance channel.

In September 1904, the Ocean Park Improvement Association decided to construct these canals (1). The property owners' association wished to have canals running through their parcels of undeveloped land and have them connected to those canals then under construction to the north by Abbot Kinney. The new canals would join with a channel portion of the Ballona Lagoon, created when the area served as the ocean terminus of the Los Angeles River, and thus have access to the sea at Playa del Rey to the south.

In October 1904, the property owners agreed on a method of assessment for the excavation work but actual construction did not start until July 1905, several days following the opening of Abbot Kinney's canals on the north (2).

The canals north of Washington Street were constructed in a trapezoidal cross-section and lined with clay. Grand Canal south of Washington Street was similarly built. The natural Ballona Lagoon was dredged, and its banks were lined with timber.

The entire canal system, Kinney's to the north and the addition leading south to Playa del Rey, allowed visitors to ride gondolas or other vessels from Venice's amusement zone to the sea at Del Rey.

Over the years a number of changes occurred. Kinney's original canals were filled with dirt and paved over in 1929 after several failed earlier attempts. Oil was discovered in the Venice area that same year and the canals south of Washington Street were lined with producing well towers. North of Washington Street the area remained residential although oil pollution intruded into those waterways.

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Today those areas north and south of Washington Street are distinct and separate. The canal does not flow unimpeded between the areas but is fed under Washington Street through pipes. Residents commonly refer to the "North Canals" and "South Canals", implying the sausage-like sectioning of the areas.

The area north of Washington Street is almost completely developed with housing stock along the canals. South of Washington Street has seen some new construction, and grading for new residential subdivisions has taken place.

North-south streets bounding the North Canals do not penetrate far below Washington Street adding to the difference between the areas. The canals north of Washington Street form a grid of obvious human design. South of Washington Street they form a flattened S-curve following the old lagoon's natural course.

These dissimilarities suggest that the area south of Washington Street should be considered separately.

NOTES

1. Santa Monica Outlook, September 10, October 14, and November 1, 1904.
2. Santa Monica Outlook, October 14, November 1, 1904.
3. Santa Monica Outlook, January 13, May 5, 1906.

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10. VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION OF THE VENICE CANAL DISTRICT

Beginning at the intersection of the west line of Canal Street, being 60 feet wide, and the south line of North Venice Boulevard, being 50 feet wide, then easterly to the intersection of the south line of North Venice Boulevard and the east line of Canal Street, then southerly along the east line of Canal Street to a line parallel to and distant 71 feet northerly from the north line of South Venice Boulevard, being 40 feet wide, then easterly along said line 5 feet, then southerly along a line parallel to and distant 5 feet easterly from the east line of Canal Street to a line parallel to and distant 27 feet northerly from the north line of South Venice Boulevard, then westerly along said line 5 feet to the east line of Canal Street, then southerly along the east lines of Canal Street and Grand Canal, being 69.93 feet wide, to the north line of Carroll Canal, then easterly along the north lines of Carroll Canal, being 70 feet wide, and Eastern Canal to the east line of Eastern Canal, then southerly along the east line of Eastern Canal, being 70 feet wide, to the south line of Eastern Canal, then westerly along the south lines of Eastern Canal and Sherman Canal, being 70 feet wide, to the east line of Grand Canal, then southerly along the east line of Grand Canal, being 70 feet wide, to the north line of Washington Street, then westerly to the intersection of the west line of Grand Canal with a line parallel to and distant 50 feet northerly from the centerline of Washington Street, then northerly along the west line of Grand Canal, being 70 feet wide south of Linnie Canal and 69.93 feet wide north of Linnie Canal, to the north line Grand Canal, then easterly along the north line of Grand Canal to the west line of Canal Street, then northerly along the west line of Canal Street to a line parallel to and distant 28 feet northerly from the north line of South Venice Boulevard, then westerly along said line 5 feet, then northerly along a line parallel to and distant 5 feet westerly from the west line of Canal Street to a line parallel to and distant 72 feet northerly from the north line of South Venice Boulevard, then easterly along said line 5 feet to the west line of Canal Street, then northerly along the west line of Canal Street to the point of beginning.

(See Continuation Sheet, Item 10, Page 2)

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The District excludes three islands containing public and private land within the above boundary. These exclusions are bounded as follows:

1. Beginning at the intersection of the east line of Grand Canal with the south line of Carroll Canal, then easterly along the south line of Carroll Canal to the west line of Eastern Canal, then southerly along the west line of Eastern Canal to the north line of Linnie Canal, then westerly along the north line of Linnie Canal, being 70 feet wide, to the east line of Grand Canal, then northerly along the east line of Grand Canal to the point of beginning.
2. Beginning at the intersection of the east line of Grand Canal with the south line of Linnie Canal, then easterly along the south line of Linnie Canal to the west line of Eastern Canal, then southerly along the west line of Eastern Canal to the north line of Howland Canal, then westerly along the north line of Howland Canal, being 70 feet wide, to the east line of Grand Canal, then northerly along the east line of Grand Canal to the point of beginning.
3. Beginning at the intersection of the east line of Grand Canal with the south line of Howland Canal, then easterly along the south line of Howland Canal to the west line of Eastern Canal, then southerly along the west line of Eastern Canal to the north line of Sherman Canal, then westerly along the north line of Sherman Canal, being 70 feet wide, to the east line of Grand Canal, then northerly along the east line of Grand Canal to the point of beginning.

The streets, boulevards and canals described above are shown on District Maps 105A145, 105A147, 106.5A145 and 106.5A147 prepared by the City Engineer of the City of Los Angeles, California.

SHORT LINE BEACH SUBDIVISION
NO. 1
Maps 2-59

SHORT LINE BEACH VENICE
CANAL SUBDIVISION NO. 1
Maps 7-126/127

TRACT NO. 26683
Maps 822-63

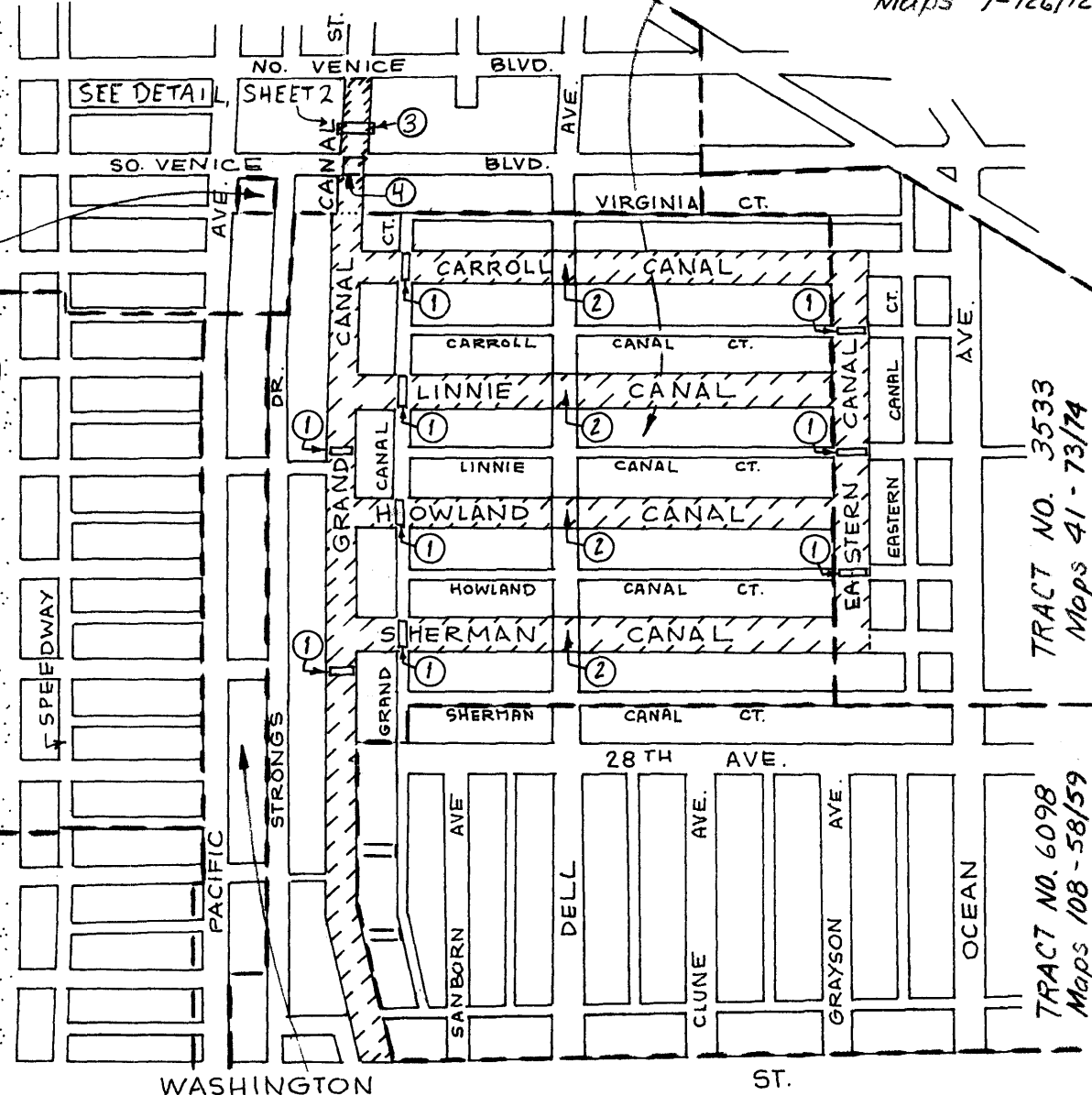
SHORT LINE BEACH SUBDIVISION
NO. 2
Maps 4-42

TRACT NO. 3533
Maps 41-73/74

TRACT NO. 6098
Maps 108-58/59

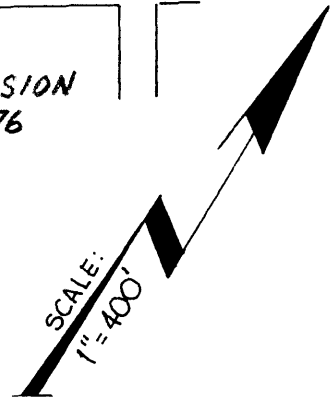
SHORT LINE BEACH SUBDIVISION
NO. 3
Maps 5-116

SHORT LINE BEACH SUBDIVISION
NO. 4
Maps 5-176



VENICE CANALS DISTRICT

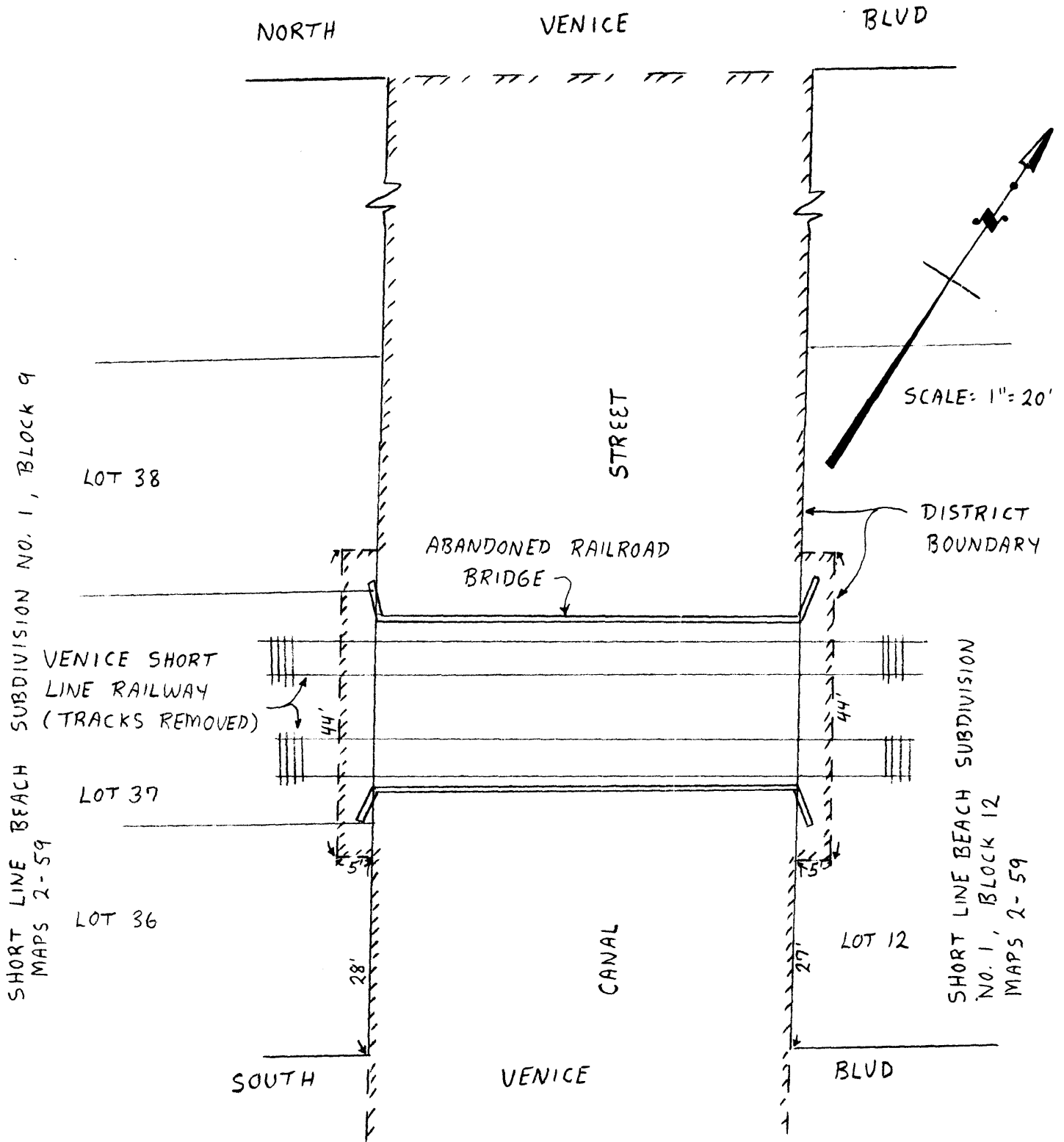
- ① WOODEN PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE
- ② CONCRETE VEHICULAR BRIDGE
- ▨ DISTRICT AREA
- TRACT BOUNDARIES
- ③ RAILROAD BRIDGE (ABANDONED)
- ④ VEHICULAR BRIDGE



CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DONALD C. TILLMAN, CITY ENGINEER

JUN 21 1975

MAP 2
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VENICE CANAL: DETAIL OF DISTRICT BOUNDARY BETWEEN NORTH VENICE BLVD AND SOUTH VENICE BLVD

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MAP 2
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JUL 1 1933