

Paseo Colorado Redevelopment Project

Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

Appendix D Historic Resources Report

Paseo Colorado Redevelopment Project

Project Impacts Analysis: Historical Resources

**280 E. Colorado Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 91105**



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1. Introduction

At the request of PMC, Architectural Resources Group, Inc. (ARG) has prepared this analysis of Project impacts to historical resources for the proposed Project at Paseo Colorado (the Paseo). The property owner is DDR. Located at 280 E. Colorado Blvd. in Pasadena, California, the subject property is a mixed-use retail, restaurant, and multifamily residential property located in the Civic Center area of Pasadena. It is bounded by E. Colorado Blvd. to the north, E. Green Street to the south, S. Marengo Ave. to the west, and S. Los Robles Ave. to the east (see Figure 1, Location Map). Garfield Ave. and Euclid Ave. ran through the site until they were vacated in the late 1970s for the 1981 construction of the Plaza Pasadena, the fully-enclosed shopping mall that was built after land clearance and consolidation. The complex was then heavily altered in 2001, when it was partially demolished and rebuilt as the mixed-use Paseo Colorado.

The proposed Project (the “Project”) is focused on the eastern end of Paseo Colorado and involves the substantial demolition of the remaining 1981 portion of the property at the east end, along S. Los Robles Ave., which until recently was a Macy’s department store (now vacant).

ARG has prepared this report to assess whether the alterations to the Paseo Colorado will constitute an impact to historical resources under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The historical resource in question is the National Register-listed Pasadena Civic Center Historic District. Paseo Colorado bisects the historic district with contributors to the district lying to the north and south of the Paseo. The “Garfield Promenade,” an area of open space that runs north to south aligned with Garfield Ave. and located near the center of the Paseo, is an important visual connection between buildings in the district, and lies within the district boundaries. It is not impacted by the Project due to its distance from the new construction.

In order to assess potential impacts to the historic district, ARG conducted a site visit to the property, photographed and analyzed views through the Civic Center and Paseo Colorado, and conducted research pertaining to the historical context, development, features, and character of the Pasadena Civic Center Historic District. This report was prepared by Jennifer Trotoux, Associate and Architectural Historian, and Katie Horak, Senior Associate and Architectural Historian, both of whom meet the *Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualifications Standards* in Architectural History and History.

From this analysis, ARG has concluded that the proposed Project will not constitute a significant impact to historical resources under CEQA.

2. Development of the Subject Property

In the late 19th and early 20th century, the principal commercial and retail district of Pasadena was centered on the crossroads of Colorado Blvd. and Fair Oaks Ave., an area now referred to as Old Pasadena. Commercial activity eventually began to advance eastward along Colorado Blvd. as the city grew. A number of multistory department stores were present in this corridor, anchored by Nash and Co. to the west at what is now Arroyo Parkway and the dramatic, Streamline Moderne-style Broadway Department Store to the east at Los Robles Ave. A 1947 local newspaper feature touted these stores,

describing the ensemble as being “each distinct in their chosen architectural loveliness.”¹ However, in the 1950s and 1960s, the general economic decline of Pasadena took a toll on this district, which was headed, in the parlance of the time, toward blight. Dozens of smaller commercial buildings in the corridor, and the stores that occupied them, suffered the same decline.

An urban renewal solution to the perceived problem, highly typical of the era, came in the 1970s with the consolidation of the land covering the three blocks from Marengo Ave. to Los Robles Ave. With the assistance of the City, the Plaza Pasadena was constructed, designed by Charles S. Kober and Associates, and completed in 1980-1981.

Dozens of familiar storefront buildings were lost, replaced with a monolithic Late Modern structure of gray brick and smoked glass with its activity turned inward. For these reasons, many in the local population were hostile toward the Plaza Pasadena from the start. The greatest rallying point against the building, however, was the vacation of the Garfield Ave. axis through the Civic Center, which cut off the Civic Auditorium from the other components of the ensemble (Fig. 5, cf. Fig. 6).

The Plaza Pasadena was partially demolished in 1999 in order to create a new mixed-use project on the site. In 2001, the complex reopened as Paseo Colorado. The changes to the buildings were meant to accomplish a number of goals: first, it created an open-air retail environment to replace the now-dated concept of a fully enclosed shopping mall; second, it reopened the vista between the Pasadena Civic Auditorium and the other components of the National Register historic district to the north; and third, it returned street-level retail to the Colorado Blvd. frontage. These last two elements were among the most critical missing from the urban mall, which turned against the established patterns on the street. With the advent of Paseo Colorado, there was an attempt to combine the shopping mall concept with the extant patterns of retail in the Civic Center area, which was well-established as one of the main retail centers of Pasadena in the late 1920s. The Paseo also included apartments to add a built-in population to the neighborhood.

The main portion of the Plaza Pasadena that survived the demolition was the department store space at the east end, which most recently had been a Macy’s. Two one-story retail buildings were attached to the north façade in an attempt to return street-level retail to the complex.

Development of the Pasadena Civic Center

Portions of Paseo Colorado are located within the Pasadena Civic Center Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The City of Pasadena possesses a significant example of American city planning and civic architecture in its Civic Center. The ensemble of buildings is all the more remarkable when one considers that the population of Pasadena in 1920, just as the planning of the Civic Center was getting underway, was only 45,000; by 1930, when the buildings were largely completed, it was 76,000. The city’s growth in population during the 1920s mirrored the growth of greater Los Angeles.

¹ Almadura, V. “Presenting in Pictures: Pasadena Department Stores” Retrieved from <http://avenuetotheskylakeavenuepasadena.blogspot.com/2011/08/presenting-in-pictures-pasadena.html>

The ideas behind Pasadena's Civic Center emerged from the City Beautiful movement of the early 20th century. Led by the architect Daniel Burnham in Chicago, proponents of the movement supported Beaux-Arts style architecture and planning principles as a way to bring beauty, dignity, and civic order and authority to American cities. The example of the grand yet temporary 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, headed by Burnham as Director of Works, served as a testing ground for major, large-scale buildings, mostly neoclassical in style, in a formal setting with ample space for parks and fountains. While a number of Pasadenans may have traveled to the popular exposition, residents were also exposed to these ideas through speakers who came to present to the many active private clubs of Pasadena. A City Beautiful Association was formed locally in 1914 to promote beautification and coordinated planning efforts.

In 1922, the City, through its newly established planning commission, engaged Burnham's Chicago successor firm, Bennett, Parsons, and Frost, to study the planning needs of Pasadena and to create what came to be known as the Bennett Plan. The Civic Center was the central component of the plan and incorporated several existing buildings, including the YMCA, YWCA, and U. S. Post Office. City Hall was planned as the eastern terminus of the trajectory of people entering Pasadena from Los Angeles, located at the end of Holly Street, which was extended eastward from the earlier commercial center of town (now Old Pasadena). City Hall was set off with a vast plaza that served as the cross axis of the Holly Street corridor and the Garfield Ave. corridor. The Garfield corridor was planned with the Pasadena Public Library at its head in the north, with the Civic Auditorium planned for a site south of Colorado at Green Street. This plan involved the extension of a number of streets through larger blocks for the first time, including Garfield Ave. extended south of Colorado to Green Street and Green Street extended east of Marengo Ave. These street extensions were part of larger plans for improved circulation, especially with the growing dominance of automobile traffic. They allowed for easier paths of travel around the city, which was growing significantly in area during the 1920s and 1930s through development and annexation.

Significant local and regional architects contributed to the success of the Civic Center, including Bakewell and Brown of San Francisco (chosen by competition to design City Hall), Myron Hunt and H. C. Chambers (Pasadena Public Library), Julia Morgan (the pre-Civic Center YWCA), Bennett and Haskell (Pasadena Civic Auditorium), and Marston and Van Pelt (redesign of the YMCA).

Pasadena Civic Center Historic District

The Pasadena Civic Center Historic District was listed in the National Register on July 28, 1980, while the Plaza Pasadena was under construction. The district is centered on the main cross axes of the Civic Center: Garfield Ave. (from the Pasadena Public Library (1925) in the north to the Pasadena Civic Auditorium (1932) in the south), and E. Holly St. (terminating at Pasadena City Hall (1926) to the east). Some of the other major contributing buildings include the Southern California Gas Company Building (1929), U.S. Post Office (1914), County Courts Building (1952), YMCA (1910/1925), and YWCA (1921-23). The district also includes major church buildings, an American Legion post, and Memorial Park. The diversity of building types clustered here indicates how the Civic Center was fairly well integrated into the growing neighborhood. Some buildings, including the Post Office, YMCA, and YWCA, were constructed or under development prior to or concurrent with the planning of the Civic Center as a grouping.

Most of the contributing buildings of the Pasadena Civic Center are located north of Colorado Blvd., which was the major commercial thoroughfare of Pasadena. Dramatic changes to the land uses in the area happened quickly as the City's plans took shape, with Holly Street extended eastward from Marengo Ave.

in 1923 and the residential neighborhoods that had once been well to the east of the city's main commercial district being replaced by institutional, civic, and commercial uses.

Given its remove from the other buildings of the Civic Center, the visual connection with the Civic Auditorium to the south was particularly important within the Bennett Plan. One of the principles of Beaux Arts city planning was the establishment of visual connections among major buildings used by the public by way of wider streets and plazas. These linkages make the city more navigable, but more importantly, they establish a framework of meaning that connects the role of various buildings in society. The ordinary urban fabric between these monuments is strengthened by their location within a web of buildings that represent Federal, County, and Municipal authority, strong social institutions, and the role of the cultural arts.

The extension of Garfield Ave. in the 1920s and the parks provided in the foreground at the foot of Garfield at Green St. (which were included in 1925 Civic Center plans by Bennett, Parsons and Frost) provided a fitting setting for the new Pasadena Civic Auditorium (1932) and served to connect the building visually to its Civic Center counterparts north of Colorado Blvd. (see Fig. 3).

In 1980 the authors of the National Register nomination for the Civic Center Historic District lamented the visual disruption of the Plaza Pasadena in the major cross axis of the district, stating that "(f)uture residents will be hard put to connect the Civic Auditorium with the rest of the Civic Center." The closure of the axis was widely considered a grave misstep in the City's planning history. It turned out, however, not to be an irreversible one.

When the Pasadena Plaza was remodeled and reconfigured into the Paseo Colorado in 2001, the most significant planning error of the prior project was somewhat rectified with selective demolition that opened the axis along the vacated portion of Garfield Ave. The sight lines through the Civic Center were essentially restored. In lieu of returning the land to a public street, the buildings were reconfigured to face the Garfield Promenade in the form of a pedestrian mall.

Current Conditions

The Garfield Promenade as it appears today is pictured in Figures 4 through 10 below. It consists of a linear plaza running north to south through the Paseo, beginning at sidewalk grade on the north end at Colorado Blvd. and terminating at a series of broad steps at the south end at Green St. due to the elevation change between Colorado and Green St. A broad crosswalk leads to the plaza in front of the Civic Auditorium.

The Garfield Promenade is a fully paved linear space connecting Colorado Blvd. and Green St., approximating the spatial proportions of the earlier street pattern. Half way through the Promenade, a cross-axis through the Paseo leads through a row of shops to the east (terminating at the former Macy's store entrance). On the west side of this cross axis, a semicircular fountain and monumental stair lead to a second-floor terrace used for access to several restaurants and a semi-public outdoor space for the residences in the apartment block to the west.

A large number of clustered wood benches, potted plants and trees, and retail kiosks now line the space. Street lights through the length of the space match the lighting that exists throughout the remainder of Garfield Ave. These light standards are likely not remnant historic features of the pre-1980 streetscape, since any existing features of the street were completely removed at that time. The current light standards appear to be reproductions.

The former Macy's department store, as described above, appears largely the same on the exterior as it did in 1981 with the opening of the Plaza Pasadena (see Figures 8-11). This portion of the complex has monolithic massing and is clad in gray brick, with a blind wall along Los Robles Ave. and entrances on the south and north sides. The south entrance is through a smoked glass, atrium-like mass that is accessed by steps, ramps, and planted terraces. A smaller and simpler entrance at sidewalk level serves the north façade, but it is flanked by retail stores that were added with the Paseo Colorado alterations in 2001.

3. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Pursuant to Section 15064.5 of the CEQA *Guidelines*, a historical resource is presumed significant if it is listed on the California Register of Historic Resources (California Register) or has been determined to be eligible for listing by the State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC). A historical resource may also be considered significant if the lead agency determines, based on substantial evidence, that the resource meets the criteria for inclusion in the California Register. CEQA also contains the following additional guidelines for defining a historical resource:

- California properties formally determined eligible for, or listed in the National Register of Historic Places (Section 5024.1.d.1);
- Those resources included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in Section 5020.1(k) of the *Public Resources Code*, or identified as significant in a historical resources survey meeting the requirements of Section 5024.1(g) of the *Public Resources Code*;
- Those resources that a lead agency determines to be historically significant (generally, if it meets criteria for listing on the California Register), provided the determination is supported by substantial evidence; or
- Those resources a local agency believes are historical for more broadly defined reasons than identified in the preceding criteria.

The Project is described in Section 4. which follows.

Department Store/Hotel and Residential Site

The eastern portion of the Project where new buildings for hotel and multifamily residential use will be constructed does not contain historic resources, nor is it adjacent to any known or potential historic district. This portion of the Project does not have the potential for impacts to historic resources.

The portion of the complex to be demolished dates to 1981. To the south of the hotel/residential site is a c. 1980 parking garage that serves the Pasadena Convention Center and the Paseo, and to the north is the Western Asset Building, a c. 2004, five-story office building. Due to the age of these buildings, none appears to be a potential historical resource. The Pasadena Playhouse Historic District, listed in the National Register, ends within half a block of the intersection of Colorado and Los Robles and would not be impacted by the hotel/residential portion of the Project.

4. Project Description

The proposed Project consists of improvements to the Paseo Colorado mixed-use center located on the south side of E. Colorado Boulevard between S. Marengo and S. Los Robles Avenues in the Central District of Pasadena. In summary, the proposed Project would include demolition of the existing vacant Macy's store at the east end of the site and its replacement with two, six- to seven- story buildings. The first of these would be a 179-room hotel on the southern portion of the site set back from E. Green St. The second building would be on the northern portion of the site on E. Colorado Blvd. and would consist of ground-floor retail and restaurant space with approximately 71 residential units on the second through sixth floors.

5. Impacts to the Civic Center Historic District

The proposed Project has the potential to impact historical resources due to its proximity to the Pasadena Civic Center Historic District. The Paseo Colorado complex is three city blocks in length (from east to west), with the Project site at the east end. The only historically sensitive area of the complex is the Garfield Promenade, which is part of a National Register-listed historic district for its significance as a north-to-south visual axis connecting significant buildings in the Pasadena Civic Center.

There is little if any visual connection, and two blocks of distance, between this significant vista and the Project site. In addition to this distance, the large volumes of the Paseo Colorado ensure that the new construction proposed by the Project would not be substantially visible from the Garfield Promenade. The new construction will be visible from the E. Colorado Blvd. and E. Green St. areas of the Historic District, but the new construction would not be substantially larger than other buildings already existing in the immediate surroundings. They are also designed to be compatible with the existing size, scale, articulation, materials, and colors of the existing surrounding buildings.

Therefore, ARG has determined that the proposed Project will not have an adverse impact on historical resources within the CEQA guidelines.

6. Sources

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7. Illustrations

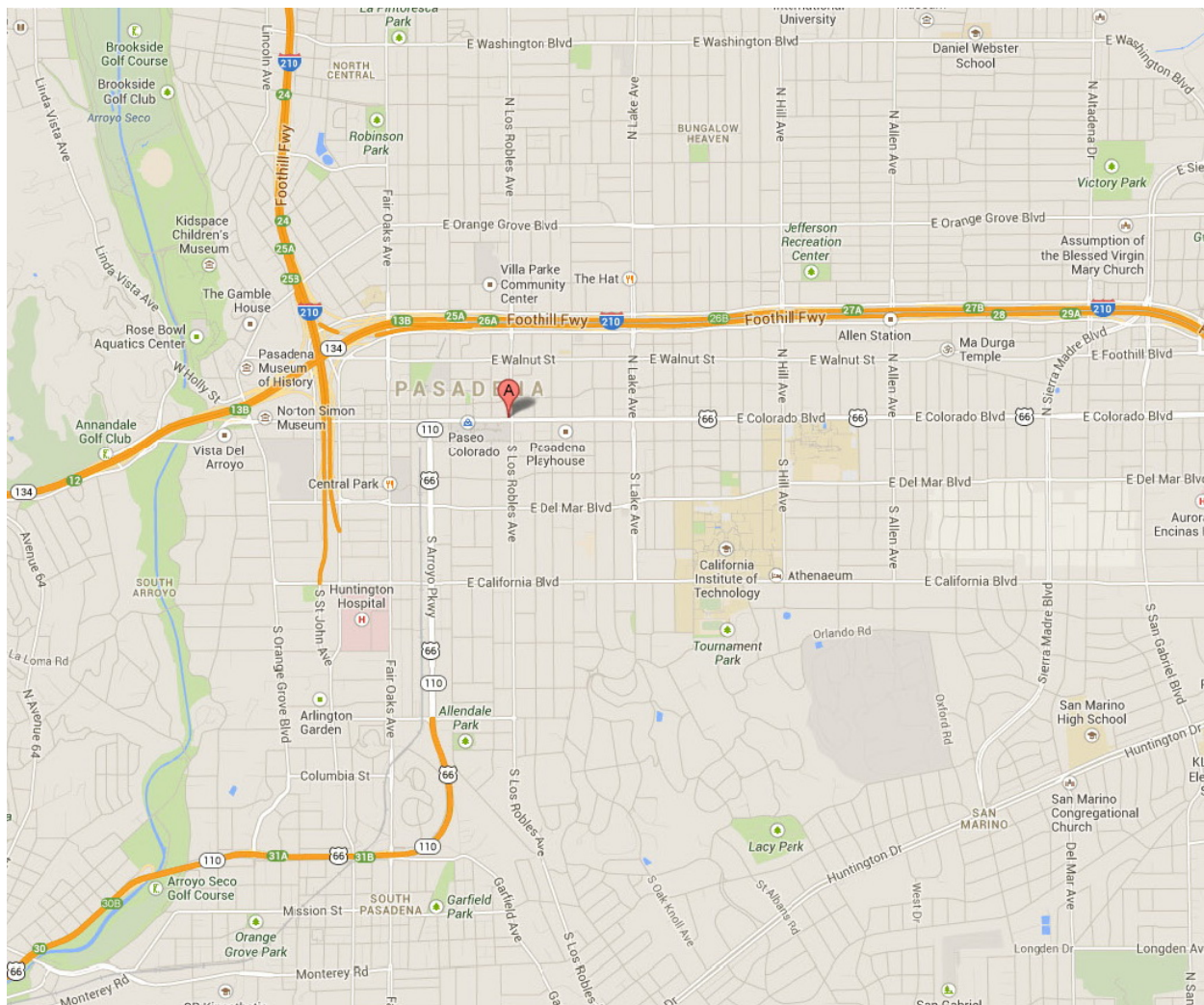


Figure 1: Location Map. Red pin indicates northeast corner of the project site. (Image from Google Maps)

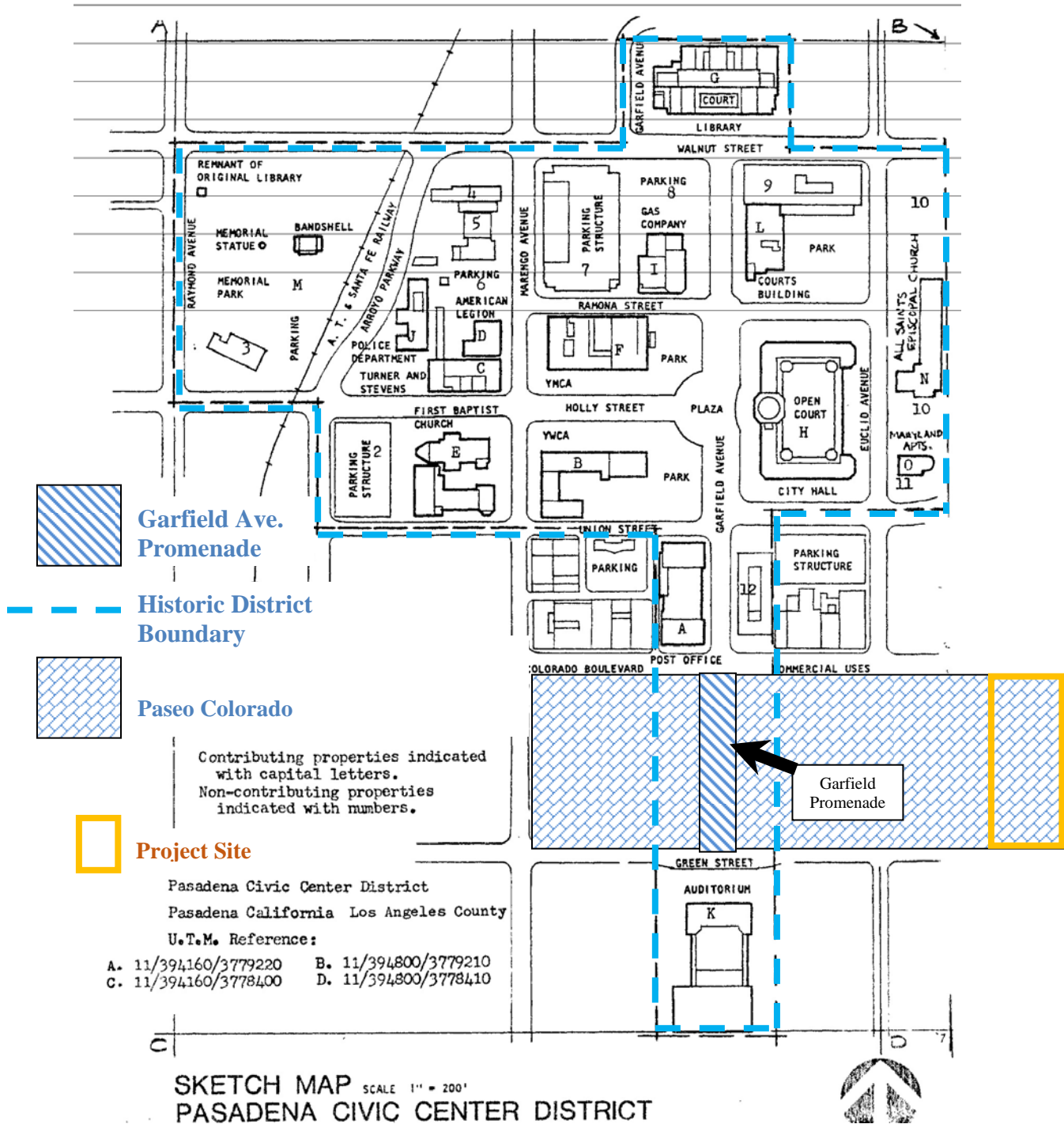


Figure 2: National Register nomination map of the Civic Center Historic District with added markings in blue. Location of Project shown in Orange.



Figure 3: Pasadena Civic Auditorium, view southeast, showing in the foreground one of the twin parks flanking the intersection at the corner of Garfield Ave. and Green St. Date unknown; possibly 1930s (J. Allen Hawkins, Collection of Pasadena Museum of History).



Figure 4: Site of Paseo Colorado as shown on the 1951 Sanborn Map. Note the twin parks flanking the intersection of Garfield at Green Street marked “City Park” (highlighted here in green), one of which is pictured in Figure 1. These parks were planned as early as 1925.

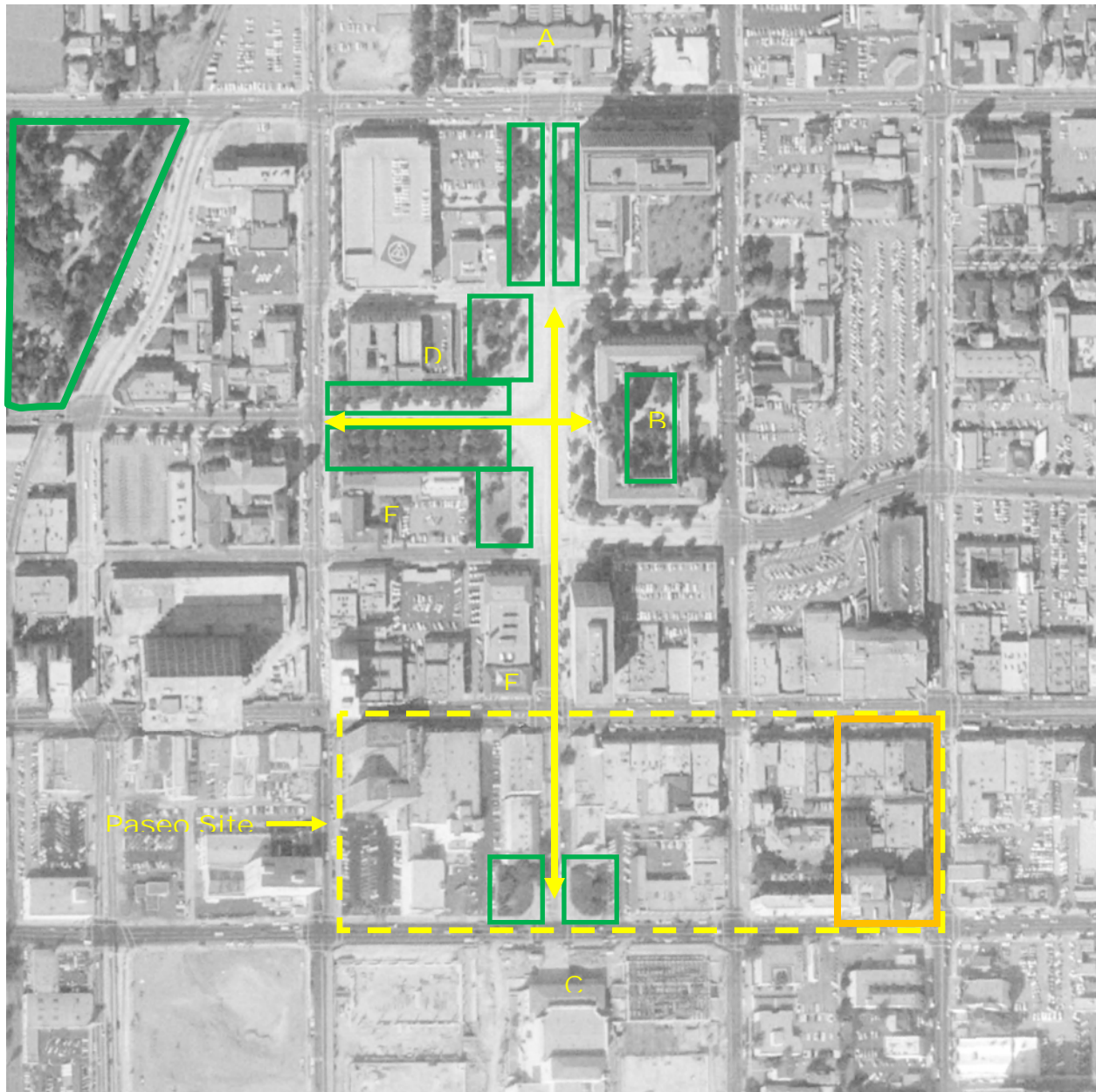


Figure 5: Aerial view of Civic Center, 1972 (www.historicaerials.com).

- A: Pasadena Public Library
- B: Pasadena City Hall
- C: Pasadena Civic Auditorium
- D: YMCA
- E: YWCA
- F: U. S. Post Office

Arrows indicate the major visual cross axes that establish the relationships among buildings in the Civic Center. Parks and open space are outlined in green. Portion in dashed line is the future site of the Plaza Pasadena, see in Fig. 6 as built in 1980-1981. Proposed Project site in orange.

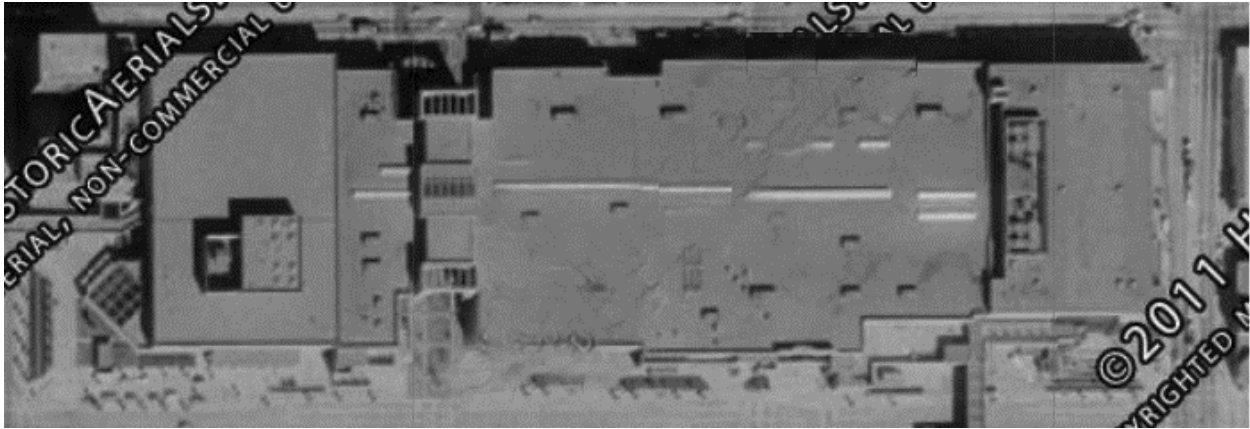


Figure 6: Aerial view of the Plaza Pasadena in 1980 as it was nearing completion. (www.historicaerials.com)



Figure 7: Comparable aerial view of Paseo Colorado shows how the mass of the Plaza Pasadena was broken down into smaller buildings and the Garfield Promenade opened through the complex (indicated by arrow). Rectangle at right indicates footprint of former Macy's store and Project site (Image from Google Maps, 2012).



Figure 8: View southwest of existing Macy's store, north and east facades, corner of E. Colorado Blvd. (foreground) and S. Los Robles Ave. (left). (ARG, 9/19/2013)



Figure 9: View north of south facade of former Macy's store from E. Green Street. (ARG, 9/19/2013)



Figure 10: South entrance of Macy's store, view west. (ARG, 9/19/2013)



Figure 11: View northwest of juncture of Macy's store and Paseo Colorado apartments (south façade on E. Green Street). (ARG, 9/19/2013)



Figure 12: View north toward the Pasadena Public Library through the Civic Center from Colorado Blvd., with Post Office at left and City Hall at right. (ARG, 9/19/2013)



Figure 13: View south through the Garfield Promenade toward the Civic Auditorium. (ARG, 9/19/2013).

