



COLLECTIONS ASSESSMENT FOR PRESERVATION REPORT

El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument

April 2021

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El Pueblo Park Association
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Los Angeles, CA 90012

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El Pueblo Park Association (EPPA) is dedicated to preserve and support El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic Monument (El Pueblo), the historic center of Los Angeles. El Pueblo was founded by the Spanish in 1781. The modern city of Los Angeles grew outwards from the historic plaza that contains the city's first graveyard, the oldest church and house, multiple museums and exhibit halls, as well as Olvera Street. Working closely with El Pueblo, EPPA secures donations and grants for the preservation activities and sponsors educational activities and exhibits for more than two million annual visitors, many of them school children.

El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument was established in 1953 by the State of California to preserve the historic center of Los Angeles. El Pueblo Park Association was established in 1983 to help support that goal. In 1990, the City of Los Angeles took over management of El Pueblo with the mission to promote, safeguard, and preserve the city's birthplace and culturally diverse heritage through the effective management of its commercial and historical resources and events.

This report concerns three buildings, two of which are within El Pueblo: the Avila Adobe, the oldest surviving residence in Los Angeles; and the Plaza Firehouse, the first firehouse in Los Angeles. The third is a non-historic off-site facility which houses the artifact collection (location not disclosed in this report). The main goal of this assessment is to evaluate the artifact collection and the development of a road map for improving the collection's care and preservation.

The purpose of this Collections Assessment for Preservation (CAP) report is to help the El Pueblo Park Association develop a conservation plan for the Avila Adobe and the Plaza Firehouse and their collections, and to identify priorities that should be the primary focus in order to improve the condition of the collection. The plan can be used to determine allocation of funding for future projects and to determine fundraising and grant goals.

This report will help identify collections and building needs, resolve collections challenges, and improve collections preservation. The staff approach their work with care and work to professional standards with the available resources. However, substantial work is needed for prevention and response to potential problems. Below is a summary of priority recommendation we felt warranted immediate attention, other priorities are listed at the end of each assessor's reports.

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Summary Priority Recommendations

Building

The Avila Adobe and the Plaza Firehouse, as well as the off-site storage facility are generally in sound and good overall condition. However, the assessors identified conditions that are important for life safety that could result in damage to the building and collections, as well as the surrounding El Pueblo. The most urgent conditions include:

- Lack of adequate fire detection and suppression at the Avila Adobe, the Plaza Firehouse, and off-site storage facility. Consider the design and installation of integrated fire detection, alarm, notification, and suppression systems in all buildings.
- Roof leaks are an ongoing problem at the Plaza Firehouse, and moisture in the walls is contributing to deterioration of bricks and mortar in the exterior bearing walls. The most important task is to assess and mitigate water and moisture intrusion, then repair brick and mortar damage and losses.
- Off-site storage facility structural system. If not already completed, commission a structural engineering assessment. Buildings of this construction type, often of mid-twentieth century vintage, often need some strengthening in order to resist strong seismic forces.

Collections

The collections assessment evaluates the display and storage conditions within three buildings under the stewardship of the El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic Monument (El Pueblo): the Avila Adobe, the Plaza Firehouse, and the offsite storage. The survey also assesses El Pueblo protocols and structure in relation to their effects on the long-term preservation of the collection. Objects within the collection range in material type and include textiles and costumes, furniture, ethnographic objects, leather/animal hide, ceramics/glass, metal and wood objects, paintings, sculpture, science and technology artifacts, industrial equipment and transportation vehicles related to firefighting and other trades, as well as extensive archives.

The collection appears to be in relatively good condition overall, due, in large part, to the efforts of the collections manager, Board members, and other full-time and part-time staff who deal with the management of collections care. Minor exceptions are related primarily to storage and systems such as light levels, the lack of a pest management program, and non-archival storage materials. The assessors did identify some areas that could result in damage to the collection. The highest priority areas include:

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- Preparing an emergency preparedness plan for objects. El Pueblo noted that one already exists for staff.
- Making sure the Avila Adobe has smoke detectors and linking smoke detectors to a central fire station.
- Improving seismic stability for objects on display and also in off-site storage.
- Preparing an Integrated Pest Management plan (IPM).

Record images are included in this report. Additional photographs were taken throughout the assessment of each location. To access all assessment photographs, please copy and paste the following Dropbox link into your internet browser:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/go49livdvysc7y0/AAA_6c126dBtBLfVGICZjeFma?dl=0

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Representatives of the El Pueblo Park Association and the El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument provided strong support and warm hospitality during field observation and information gathering. Michael Henderson, Board Member of El Pueblo Park Association, organized this effort, and spent hours providing us with information and guiding us through the facilities with the help of Arturo Chavez, El Pueblo General Manager; Edgar Garcia, El Pueblo Assistant General Manager; Kim Zarate, Collections Manager; and Michelle D. Garcia-Ortiz, Project Assistant in the History Department.

El Pueblo Park Association as support for El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument is an example for communities who need to preserve the tangible and intangible cultural history that underpins the character of their community. This CAP initiative is an indication that the El Pueblo strives to establish and maintain best practices in stewardship of their cultural assets.

Purpose

This report was prepared for the El Pueblo Park Association with support from the Collections Assessment for Preservation (CAP) program of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC).

The CAP program provides small and mid-sized museums with partial funding toward a general conservation assessment. The assessment is a study of the institution's collections, buildings, and building systems, as well as its policies and procedures relating to collections care. Participants who complete the program receive an assessment report with prioritized recommendations to improve collections care.

CAP is often a first step for small institutions that wish to improve the condition of their collections. The goal is to enable the El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument to develop an overall collections and building care program as an integral part of the institution's mission.

Approach

- Field observation
(November 17, 2020)
- Recording information by hand notes and photographs

- Obtaining readily available documentation of the site and buildings from the staff
- Close observation of the site and buildings
- Observe site and discuss collections environmental issues and preliminary findings
- Interpret the information observed and received
- Submit a draft report to the El Pueblo Park Association for review
- Receive comments
- Revise if appropriate and submit final report

Assessors

CAP is a multiple-step process requiring close collaboration of the assessment team, consisting of the institution's paid staff and volunteers, a collections assessor, and a building assessor. El Pueblo Park Association retained the following consultants:

Building assessment:

Historic Resources Group, LLC
12 South Fair Oaks Avenue, Suite 200
Pasadena, CA 91105
(626) 793-2400
www.historisresourcesgroup.com

Assessors: Peyton Hall, FAIA, Historic Architect and Laura Janssen, Senior Architectural Historian

The building assessment report was prepared by Peyton Hall and Laura Janssen. Both are qualified CAP building assessors and have collaborated on numerous CAP assignments.

Historic Resources Group, LLC (HRG) was established in 1989 and is the leading firm devoted solely to historic preservation planning, historic architecture consulting, architectural history, and development services for historic resources in California. The staff includes historic architects, architectural historians, historians and planners, and is composed primarily of principals and senior staff who bring a great deal of experience to each project. All current professional staff meet or exceed the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards in Architecture, Historic Architecture, Architectural History, Historic Preservation, History and/or Historic Preservation Planning.

Collections assessment:

RLA Conservation, Inc.
5418 Packard Street
Los Angeles, CA 90019
(323) 377-8425
www.rlaconservation.com

Assessors: Rosa Lowinger, Principal and Chief Conservator; with Christina Varvi, Principal Conservator.

The collections assessment report was prepared by Rosa Lowinger and Christina Varvi.

RLA Conservation, Inc. provides professional services for the preservation and conservation of museum collections, public monuments, and historic buildings. Working both on site and in studio facilities located in Miami, FL and Los Angeles, CA, the firm specializes in the integrated care of art collections through preservation planning, collections care consultation, condition surveys, and hands-on conservation treatments. The staff at both studios includes professionally trained object and architectural conservators as well as conservation technicians with decades of combined experience in the field of art and architectural preservation. RLA follows the Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice of the American Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC), the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, and other applicable international charters.

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ADMINISTRATION

The management of the three buildings is the responsibility of El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument (El Pueblo), a department of the City of Los Angeles. EPPA is the 501(c)(3) nonprofit “Friends of El Pueblo” organization.

Mission Statement

El Pueblo Park Association is dedicated to preserving and supporting El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument. Working closely with El Pueblo, EPPA secures donations and grants for the preservation activities and sponsors educational activities and exhibits for more than two million annual visitors, many of them school children.

Overall objectives of Collection from Mission Statement:

- Continue acquiring historical artifacts and records of El Pueblo and Los Angeles.
- Store, care for and catalogue the material in our care.
- Make available material in the collection for public viewing free on-site exhibits at the monument.
- Provide access for researchers to artifacts at our off-site facility.
- Build partnerships with other organizations with a view to sharing information and potentially sharing resources.

The Avila Adobe is designed as an interpretative location that showcases a historic Southern California adobe household, which also happens to be the oldest surviving residence in Los Angeles (ca. 1818). The Adobe has one primary period of interpretation: 1840s. The collections and displays reflect this. The collection contains over 350 pieces of furniture and artifacts that are historically appropriate pieces. No artifacts belonged to the Avila family as they have been lost over time.

The Plaza Firehouse was the first fire station in Los Angeles (ca. 1884) and was also the home of the first volunteer fire fighters. The site showcases over 300 artifacts including early firefighting equipment.

Staffing

El Pueblo employs nine (9) full time and several more part time paid staff members, who work between 8 and 40 hours per week. These include a general manager, assistant manager, as well as management and project assistants. Of these, only four (4) individuals are directly involved with the care of the collection. There are an additional thirteen (13) full and part-time non-paid staff members/volunteers. EPPA is a non-profit 501(c)(3) support organization with a Board of fifteen (15) members.

General Manager of the El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, Arturo Chavez, dedicates approximately

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five (5) hours per month to organizing off-site artifact collection at the off-site storage facility. He is a full-time, paid employee working forty (40) hours per week.

Edgar Garcia is an Assistant General Manager of the El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument. In his role as leader of the History Department team, he spends approximately twenty (20) hours per month organizing exhibits, managing on-site museums, scheduling and hiring museum guides, as well as organizing events and historical presentations. He is a full-time, paid employee working forty (40) hours per week.

Kim Zarate is the Collections Manager and is the primary caretaker for the objects within the collection. Prior to her position with El Pueblo, she worked at the Chinese American Museum, also located in the El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument.

Michelle D. Garcia-Ortiz is a paid, part-time Project Assistant and part of the History Department. She assists with the supervision of on-site museums and museum guides. She also assists with history-related exhibits and programs, as well as serving as a liaison to on-site non-profit organizations. Ms. Garcia-Ortiz works twenty (20) hours per week.

Michael Henderson is an unpaid, part-time volunteer and EPPA Board Member. He volunteers approximately

eight (8) hours per week. He spends approximately five (5) hours per month organizing artifact collection at the off-site storage facility. Outside of that, he spends the rest of his time on artifact records collection management, which includes locating and digitizing historical records, assisting with grant submissions, and serving as a Board Member for EPPA.

Facilities, custodial services, security, and landscaping are maintained by El Pueblo Property Management on an “as needed” basis. There is all encompassing 24-hour security throughout the plaza.

Operations

The El Pueblo Park Association was established in 1983 and is a 501(c)(3) non-profit public charity. As far as staff know, the collection is not insured, at least not through the EPPA. Insurance would be covered under an umbrella policy held by the City of Los Angeles. Presumably, the buildings are insured by the City of Los Angeles and for the off-site facility, by the building owner. A partial appraisal was completed in 1985 for paintings, sculpture, and some furniture. However, it is not comprehensive and is likely out of date since it is over thirty-five (35) years old. The budget at the time of the CAP application (November 2019) was \$253,000 including El Pueblo to history and museum operations and the offsite artifact collection. The EPPA budget was \$35,000. There has been no

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update since the museums have been closed for a year due to COVID.

Collections Care/Data Management

Prior to commencing the survey, the EPPA indicated that their main goal for the CAP assessment was to have off-site artifact collection evaluated as well as to develop a roadmap for improving the collection's care and preservation. They also hope to increase staff and Board awareness of collections conservation concerns, improve storage conditions, as well as use this report as a tool to obtain funding for collections care. Current displays in the Avila Adobe and Plaza Firehouse are mostly permanent and very few items rotate.

Any files, digitized files, scans, or other images are stored on the R-Drive on the City server. There is a local server that is incorporated into the City of Los Angeles' larger network, which is maintained by the City. El Pueblo is currently using Past Perfect as their collections management system, but they cannot easily find objects in storage using this system since the program/software does not support location finding in their storage facility. Generally, staff do not have issues with this program, but they are not tied to the system and would be open to other options if one better suited their needs and was within budget. They also have a card catalogue, which helps supplement Past Perfect in terms of location finding at the off-site storage facility.

Security/Fire System

The staff of El Pueblo reported that there have been cases of theft at the Avila Adobe since the rooms are somewhat small. Visitors have removed objects/artifacts from displays inside of various rooms, particularly the Children's Bedroom where visitors can get the closest to display objects. As such, they only have reproduction objects in this location at this time. There have also been break-ins at the off-site storage facility with people trying to obtain precious metals from unrelated equipment on the roof of the facility. As far as El Pueblo knows, no collections items have been impacted by these break-ins.

At this time, there are no security cameras in any of the three buildings. While this is unlikely to be a problem in behind-the-scenes part of the Adobe or Firehouse that are only frequented by staff, it might be advisable to ensure that all rooms that are open to the public are equipped with a security camera to prevent thefts and vandalism. There are alarm systems at the off-site storage facility and Plaza Firehouse, but no security for the Avila Adobe.

There are smoke detectors throughout the Firehouse and off-site storage facility, and they report directly to the fire department. There are no smoke detectors at the Adobe. Sprinkler systems are frowned upon for historic buildings, because a malfunction can cause substantial water damage to the

collection. As such, there are no sprinklers or fire suppression of any kind at the Adobe or at the off-site storage facility. There is a sprinkler system at the Plaza Firehouse which is tested annually. Some type of fire detection and reporting is necessary at the Adobe. Some type of fire suppression is recommended at all locations. Dry suppression could be implemented to minimize the potential damaging effects of water from sprinklers.

Collection Maintenance/Cleaning

El Pueblo staff do not currently have the time or resources to undertake routine cleaning or dusting of artifacts on display. General housekeeping and sweeping are performed by City of Los Angeles custodial services on an “as needed basis” and do not include collection items/artifacts. At the time of the assessment, there was no Collection Care or Collection Management Plan that regulates the cleaning or monitoring of the condition of the collection on display or in storage. That said, the displays were found to be relatively clean during the visit for the CAP assessment, some more so than others. It can be difficult to keep collection items clean at the Adobe and Firehouse since there are naturally occurring gaps and openings in the historic architecture or at windows and doors. Furthermore, during normal site operations, doors are opened at the Adobe as well as large doors at the

Firehouse, which allow dust and urban atmospheric soiling to enter into collections display areas. We believe writing a Collection Care or Collection Management Plan should be a top priority for El Pueblo.

Integrated Pest Management

El Pueblo currently has no integrated pest management plan. There are a few pest traps around the Adobe as well as several inside the off-site storage facility. However, there is currently no concerted effort to inspect and change these regularly. Ideally the traps would be collected and replaced on a monthly basis and the findings recorded. This would allow staff to chart the findings and monitor whether pest activity is increasing or steady, enabling them to notice an infestation as soon as it arose.

While El Pueblo staff indicated that pest control does come and spray site-wise as needed, routine monitoring and use of sticky traps is a more methodical way of tracking potential infestations and catching them before they get out of hand and cause any damage or spread to multiple objects.

Setting¹

El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument (El Pueblo) is located in the heart of downtown Los Angeles, close to the cultural communities of Chinatown, Little Tokyo, and the Arts District. It is situated just north of U.S. Route 101 and roughly bounded by Cesar E. Chavez Avenue to the north, Alameda Street to the east, Spring Street to the west, and Arcadia Street to the south.

History

El Pueblo is near the site of the early Los Angeles pueblo or townsite where forty-four settlers of Native American, African and European heritage journeyed more than one-thousand miles across the desert from present-day northern Mexico and established a farming community in September 1781. Since that time, Los Angeles has been under the flags of Spain, Mexico, and the United States and has grown into one of the world's largest metropolitan areas.

As a department of the City of Los Angeles, El Pueblo is a living museum that continues to fulfill its unique role as the historic and symbolic heart of the city. It was designated Historic-Cultural

Monument No. 64 in 1970 by the City of Los Angeles.²

El Pueblo was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district in 1972. It encompasses approximately 9.5 acres in downtown Los Angeles. The district, centered on an open plaza, includes twenty-two contributing and eight non-contributing resources, which date from the early nineteenth century through the early twentieth century. The district represents a rare, intact, and diverse group of historic/cultural resources that exemplify the founding and early growth of the city. The resources include buildings and sites from the city's Spanish, Mexican, and early American periods, from adobe buildings and large Victorian commercial blocks to Spanish Revival buildings of the early twentieth century.

The district was first listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 3, 1972. The nomination was subsequently amended in 1981 to include five additional contributing resources and to provide additional information on two buildings listed in the original nomination.

El Pueblo is made up of several museums and attractions. This CAP

¹ <https://elpueblo.lacity.org/>

² Los Angeles Plaza Park, HCM-64.
<http://historicplacesla.org/reports/60e804b7-bfdc-461c-82f6-fb4a29e95b6a>

report is focused on two museums; the Avila Adobe and the Plaza Firehouse; and one non-historic off-site storage facility (location not disclosed in this report).

Avila Adobe ³

The Avila Adobe was constructed in 1818 by a prominent ranchero, Francisco José Avila, a native of Sinaloa, Mexico who was alcalde, or mayor, of Los Angeles in 1810. Following Francisco Avila's death in 1832, his second wife, Encarnación Avila continued to live in the house with her two daughters. The Los Angeles Census of 1844 lists Encarnación Avila, age 40, as a widow living in the house with one daughter. For a brief time in January 1847, the adobe was commandeered as a military headquarters by the invading American army under Robert Stockton.

After Encarnación Avila died in 1855, the home passed to her two daughters, Luisa and Francisca and their husbands, Manuel Garfias and Theodore Rimpau. Francisca and Theodore Rimpau and their nine children continued to live in the adobe from 1855 to 1868 until they moved to Anaheim, California where Theodore served as the first mayor. From 1868 to the early 1920s, the adobe was rented and used as a restaurant, rooming house, or was frequently vacant. The condition of the

building deteriorated and was finally condemned in 1926 by the City Health Department, which caught the attention of Christine Sterling, who began a public campaign to save the adobe.

Christine Sterling had a keen interest in the city's cultural history and revitalizing the old plaza area. She wanted to create a "Mexican marketplace" near the Avila Adobe where people could learn about Los Angeles' Spanish and Mexican heritage. In 1928 Sterling saw a condemnation notice on the Avila Adobe from the City health officials stating the building was slated for demolition. Knowing that the Avila Adobe was the oldest house in Los Angeles, she began to raise money to make repairs.

She tracked down the owner of the building who happened to be Miss Sophia Rimpau, a member of the original family. She agreed to rent the adobe to Mrs. Sterling for a nominal amount. Sterling then went to the papers and called in reporters to cover a story on the restoration of Olvera Street and the Avila Adobe. The campaign sparked the support she needed and soon she had enough funds to buy the house.

Through her efforts many of the historic buildings around the plaza were saved. Her dream of creating a "Mexican

³ <https://elpueblo.lacity.org/educational-resources-0>

marketplace” also came to fruition. Olvera Street opened on Easter Sunday in 1930.

Sterling maintained her residence at the adobe but held it open for group and student tours. In 1953 the State of California acquired the Avila Adobe as part of the El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park. Mrs. Sterling remained in the house until her death in 1963.

The Avila Adobe closed in 1971 after damage sustained from the Sylmar Earthquake. Restoration work took five years to complete. The Avila Adobe has been open to the public as a museum since 1977 and is furnished as it might have appeared in the late 1840s.

The Avila Adobe was designated California Historical Landmark No. 145 on June 6, 1934. It is also a contributor to the National Register Los Angeles Plaza Historic District, and part of Los Angeles Historic Cultural-Monument No. 64.



Front porch of Avila Adobe; view to the north.



East façade of Avila Adobe; view to the northwest.



West façade of Avila Adobe; view to the east.

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Rear porch of Avila Adobe; view to the north.

Plaza Firehouse ⁴

The Plaza Firehouse was the first building to be constructed by the City of Los Angeles for housing firefighting equipment and personnel. The City Council hired architect William Boring to design a structure which was built by Dennis Hennessy. Boring's design followed closely a fashion then-current in his native Illinois, with the horses stabled inside the station, as was the custom in colder climates. A unique turntable in the floor made it unnecessary to back the horses in or out. Construction began in May of 1884 and was completed by mid-

August. Firehouse No. 1 opened for business in September that same year.

Before long, the City's ownership of the site was in dispute. Mrs. L.M. Bigelow and Griffin Johnston claimed that the site belonged to them, and in early 1891, the Supreme Court decided in their favor. The lease with Mrs. Bigelow expired in 1897 and the City decided to build all future stations only on municipally owned land, thus ending the Plaza Firehouse's life as a fire station. By then, this section of the Plaza area and Los Angeles Street had become the heart of the City's original Chinatown. Over the next sixty years, the Plaza Firehouse was partitioned and used variously as a saloon, boarding house, cigar store, poolroom, and allegedly, a brothel.

In 1953, the State of California joined with the City and County of Los Angeles to create El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park, of which the Plaza Firehouse was to be a part. The State purchased the building in 1954 and began the process of restoring the structure and installing firefighting equipment and memorabilia. It was the first building on the Plaza to be restored. It opened as a museum in 1960.

The Plaza Firehouse was dedicated as California Historical Landmark No. 730

⁴ Ibid.

on April 8, 1960. It is also a contributor to the National Register Los Angeles Plaza Historic District, and part of Los Angeles Historic Cultural-Monument No. 64.

Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documentation was completed in 1963, including measured drawings and large format photographs.



North and east façades of the Plaza Firehouse; view to the southwest.



East façade of Plaza Firehouse; view to the southwest.



East façade of Plaza Firehouse; view to the northwest.



South façade; view to the north.

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Existing Building Conditions

The scope of the assessment includes three different buildings: the Avila Adobe and the Plaza Firehouse historic buildings located within the El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, and the non-historic off-site storage facility for secure storage of collections and archives.

In general, the General Services Division (GSD) provides maintenance services for all buildings owned by the City of Los Angeles. There are full time staff trades people located at El Pueblo due to its large size, large number of buildings, and large number of tenants and users.

Avila Adobe

The Avila Adobe is thought to be the oldest extant single-family residence in the City of Los Angeles. Its age, with an early Mayor as resident, association with Christine Sterling, and the destination for thousands of school children and tourists elevates it to one of the most important representations of the richly layered cultural history of the city and the region. Today it conveys the construction and ways of living in the early nineteenth century.

The building is in part of archaic earthen (adobe brick) construction. Portions of the building were severely damaged or collapsed during the 1971 Sylmar Earthquake. Portions of the building were reconstructed in and strengthened in the 1970s. The building

was reassessed for seismic performance in the 1990s when all of the structures north of the Plaza were evaluated. No additional seismic-related work was proposed or undertaken at that time. There was no notable damage during the 1994 Northridge Earthquake. There is apparently no available documentation of the structural work done after the 1971 earthquake, though it is reasonable to speculate that there was information available to the engineers who analyzed the building in the 1990s. There are photographs taken of the restoration by architect Burnett C. Turner.

In general, the property is in good condition and appears to be structurally sound with no evidence of roof leaks, major materials deterioration or system failure. However, in general, this occasion is a good opportunity to observe how the overall maintenance, appearance, housekeeping, and operations can be elevated to a new plateau for the future.

The roof was repaired/replaced about five years ago; there are no current leaks. Wood shingles and plank roofing are in good to fair condition, with normal aging due to full daylight heat and light exposure.

There are occasional flooding and possibly problems from tree roots in the unpaved courtyard west of the Avila Adobe.

There are irregular cracks at the interior plaster finishes. Cracks in masonry buildings are of concern; however, cracks in finish plaster are common and not always an indication of problems with the primary structural system.

There does not appear to be any protection against ultraviolet daylight at windows.

There are no weather seals at doors and windows. Daylight is visible at some openings.

Interior walls are heavily soiled, which is telegraphed by the irregular surfaces and grazing natural and artificial illumination. Atmospheric soil in the Los Angeles region is heavy in part due to a dry, dusty climate, and acidic in part due to diesel particulates and tires.

The electrical panels appear to be relatively new and in good condition. It is not known if the distribution, appliances, and wiring devices have been recently inspected for safety and operation. There are electrical wall heaters that are understood to not be in operating condition or are not used. There are power receptacles that are not in good condition.

Interior display lighting fixtures have incandescent lamps.

Operating policies do not allow combustion sources for any purposes. There are no operating fireplaces, stoves, oil lamps, or candles.

The El Pueblo site has 24-hour security personnel and is gated and locked when not open to the public with staff present. However, there is no security detection at the perimeter or interior of the building. There are original and culturally significant objects displayed in the building.

There are no systems for automatically detecting or reporting heat, smoke, and fire. Fire extinguishers for suppression are well placed, inspected, and certified annually. Staff are trained in responding to life/fire safety emergencies. In general, fire safety officers are on site for special events. The Los Angeles Fire Department conducts annual fire safety inspections.

There is no water or pressurized water supply or waste in the building. Toilet facilities are operating in an adjacent building and are separated from the Avila Adobe building.



Figure 1: Wood shingle and plank roofing at east wall and corridor.

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Figure 2: Vine arbor at south wall of courtyard.



Figure 3: Meter and utility closet at northwest corner.



Figure 4: Damage at floor porch boards.



Figure 5: Typical wood window frame, sash, and trim.

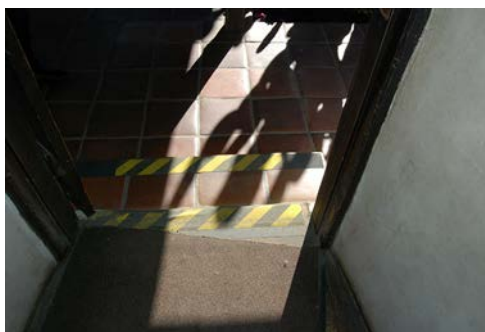


Figure 6: Steps at door threshold.

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Figure 7: Daylight at exterior opening



Figure 10: Soil at plaster finishes



Figure 8: Wear at wood finishes



Figure 11: Wall heater

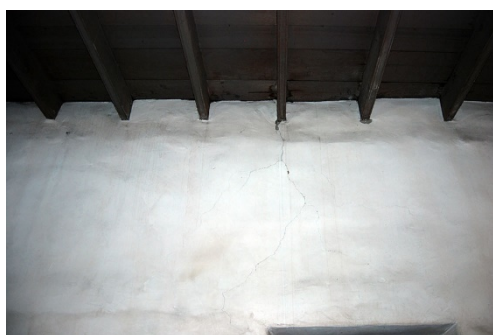


Figure 9: Finish plaster cracks at wall



Figure 12: Damaged and unprotected power receptacle.

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Figure 13: Window from interior.



Figure 14: Interior display/accent lighting

Plaza Firehouse

This structure was built in 1884 and is the oldest firehouse in the city. Like the Avila Adobe it serves as a museum. The firehouse holds a high place among the buildings that represent the development of the city and its most important services to citizens. Archival photographs tell the story of the building's adaptation to other uses and deterioration in the early twentieth

century. Since a restoration in the 1950s, the structure has conveyed very well its original use and architectural design. It is also certain that many of the building's exterior and interior features were reconstructed. There is no available documentation of the work that was done in the 1950s or subsequently.

The structural system is two stories of multi-wythe unreinforced brick, and a wood framed second floor level and roof. As originally constructed this system does not resist seismic forces well; however, documentation of any improvements is not available. The exterior brick was reportedly repointed ca. 2000, which report is consonant with the substantial building rehabilitation and seismic strengthening that was undertaken for the Pico-Garnier Blocks (all of the buildings south of the Plaza) and completed in the year 2000.

The most notable problem with the firehouse is the deterioration of bricks on both the exterior wythe and the interior wythe at some locations. Exterior spalling, disaggregation (exterior and interior) of the components of a brick bearing wall and substantial loss of mortar is a serious problem. These conditions usually result from a combination of water infiltration that transports salts through the bricks and mortar, and bricks and mortar that are soft. Nineteenth century bricks in Los Angeles may not be uniformly

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fired, not of uniform clay mix and strength, and not very hard fired at the center. Softer mortars (usually lime and sand) are suitable for softer bricks but may disaggregate and wash out (particularly if the proportion of sand is too high). Mortar repointing is readily achievable; mortar loss can significantly reduce the strength of the wall.

While there is evidence of water damage from roof leaks, there have been recent repairs. Unfortunately, roof repairs are ongoing. The damage to exterior brick walls raises concerns about water infiltration at the roof, roof-to-wall conditions, and the porosity of the walls.

Past areas of leaks are monitored. The staff has a well organized and effective “rain check” response whereby inspections and reports are made following rain.

There are no “sweeps” that would seal the bottoms of the personnel and apparatus doors. Daylight is visible at the bottoms of doors. Towels were placed on the floor at the interior side of doors to dam or absorb water. Leaves and debris had been blown into the interior space. These openings allow insects and small vermin to enter the building and are large enough to raise concerns about building security.

There are operating security and fire alarm systems, including partial fire sprinklers and regularly maintained fire extinguishers.

There is no heating, ventilating, and cooling system. Staff and volunteers use portable electrical space heaters for comfort at workstations.

There is a small sink, microwave oven, and refrigerator near the staff and volunteer workstation. This sink is the only fixture in the building with water supply under pressure. The bathroom at the upper level is a reconstruction and is not operating or open.

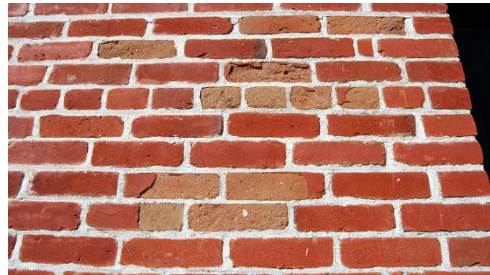


Figure 15: Spalled exterior brick faces expose softer eroded brick.



Figure 16: Eroded brick, mortar loss, poor mortar repointing profiles, with mismatched mortar composition (rear of Hellman/Quon building to left of inside corner).

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Figure 17: Eroded brick, mortar loss, poor mortar repointing profiles, with mismatched mortar composition (rear of Hellman/Quon building).



Figure 18: Water damage at ceiling and exterior wall.

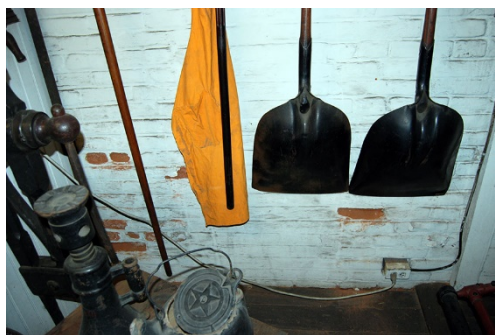


Figure 19: Spalled and eroded interior surface of exterior bricks near grade level at east wall



Figure 20: Threshold at apparatus door



Figure 21: Threshold at personnel door

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Figure 22: Kitchenette with lavatory, microwave oven, and refrigerator.



Figure 24: Portable electrical space heater for comfort near workstation.



Figure 23: Equipment, clutter, dust, loose wiring, and aerosol can.

Off-site Storage Facility

A large volume of collection items and archives are stored away from the El Pueblo site in a building that does not appear to be a historical resource. The building type appears to be of “tilt-up” construction. The perimeter bearing walls are reinforced concrete with interior integral concrete pilasters that provide bearing points for shaped steel girders. The girders support steel purlins that in turn support a corrugated steel roof deck.

The building has minimal door openings for loading and personnel, and no exterior windows. All exterior

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openings are strongly secured, including bars at all roof penetrations.

Exterior steel fences and gates and the building parapet are capped by barbed concertina wire. An exterior wall ladder is similarly protected.

There was no information available concerning the seismic strength of the building. Buildings of this construction type, often of mid-twentieth century vintage, often need some strengthening in order to resist strong seismic forces.

There are heat and smoke detectors in the building that report to a central station, and no fire sprinklers. Fire extinguishers are certified annually.

There is ample ambient utility fluorescent lighting in the building. Power loads are small, as the building is closed and minimally occupied most of the time.

There is no mechanical heating, ventilating, and air conditioning. There are gravity exhausts at the roof; those openings, as previously noted, are secured.

There is one large gas-fired space heater suspended from the roof near the northwest corner. This is a very old appliance, it may not be securely connected, and the heater and gas service may not be improved for seismic safety. The gas service should be shut off, and gas service pipes to the heater should be cut and capped.

It is reported that the roof has been repaired and there have not been roof leaks recently. There is substantial water damage from old leaks at the west side of the building where office partitions and dropped ceilings are inserted in the larger, taller volume of the building.

With consideration of the age and materials of water-damaged ceiling tiles and mastics, a hazardous materials survey of the building should be completed if that information is not already available to the users.



Figure 25: Interior surface of exterior concrete wall at connection to roof framing.



Figure 26: Water stains at interior surface of exterior concrete wall at connection to roof framing

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Figure 27: Water damage at suspended ceiling

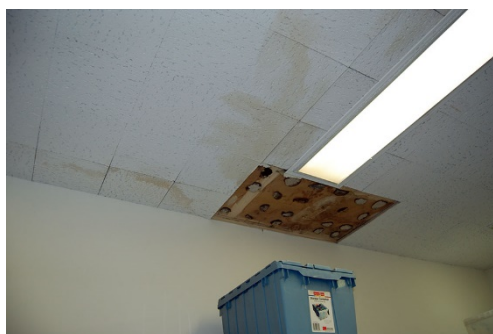


Figure 28: Water stains, loss of ceiling tiles, mastic.



Figure 29: Gas-fired space heater.



Figure 30: Exterior wall with barbed concertina wire.

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Cultural Resource Status

The Avila Adobe is designated California Historical Landmark No. 145 (1934). It is also a contributor to the National Register Los Angeles Plaza Historic District (1972), and part of Los Angeles Historic Cultural-Monument No. 64 (1970).

The Plaza Firehouse is designated California Historical Landmark No. 730 (1960). It is also a contributor to the National Register Los Angeles Plaza Historic District (1972), and part of Los Angeles Historic Cultural-Monument No. 64 (1970).

The Avila Adobe and the Plaza Firehouse each must be considered as an important and primary “item” in each respective museum’s collection. It has often been stated that when a museum’s “building” is a significant cultural resource, that it should be literally accessioned as a part of the museum collection. This approach codifies the importance of stewardship of the “container” relative to stewardship of the “contained.” This equivalency is a clear and natural imperative at this site, where the museum collections are aimed toward researching and sharing information about the Adobe and Firehouse. The most important collections include objects and archival materials that are directly associated with El Pueblo. The Adobe and Firehouse retain sufficient

integrity to continue to evoke the sense of place and time with which they are historically associated.

El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument was listed in the National Register for Historic Places in 1972. The property has been listed in the California Register of Historical Resources as a result of its National Register status. The California Register is an authoritative guide to the state’s historical resources and to which properties are considered significant for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Therefore, properties listed or found eligible for listing in the California Register may be subject to review under CEQA for potential impacts to a historic resource.

California Environmental Quality Act

In most cases there is discretionary review that results in projects on the site being subject to review under the *California Environmental Quality Act* (CEQA). This regulation has several levels of review, depending on the nature of the project. The review alternatives that may apply include a categorical exemption, a negative declaration, or an environmental impact report. A project that conforms to the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (36 CFR 68) and does not include any other substantial construction might receive a categorical exemption or a mitigated negative declaration. CEQA

provides a regulation under the state law for the protection of cultural properties.

Requirements for Treatment

We note in this report two sets of criteria that are appropriate for application to both the Avila Adobe and the Plaza Firehouse because of their special condition of both being museums in historic buildings and being historic buildings with high levels of integrity of character and materials; the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, and the *New Orleans Charter*.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards

The preservation and protection of historic objects and sites is guided in the United States by the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.⁵ These Standards provide four primary treatments to be used in the protection of cultural resources listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The treatments are "Preservation," "Rehabilitation," "Restoration," and "Reconstruction."

The United States Department of the Interior has established standards and

guidelines for each of the four basic treatments. These standards and guidelines are intended as general guidance for any historic preservation project. They are designed to promote responsible preservation practices and to provide philosophical consistency in an approach to the work.

The original distinctive spaces and features of the Avila Adobe and the Plaza Firehouse are substantially intact and convey each building's historic significance. Retaining and repairing significant spaces and features, is important to the overall protection of each building's historic integrity. Therefore, it is important to adopt a treatment standard that preserves the significant spaces and features.

Of the four treatment types presented, "Preservation" is recommended as the guiding principle for the protection, repair, and maintenance of the Avila Adobe and the Plaza Firehouse.

Preservation: Definition & Standards

"Preservation is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property,

⁵ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, by Kay D. Weeks and Anne E.

Grimmer (1995), revised by Anne E. Grimmer (Washington, DC: 2017), <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf>.

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generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.”⁶

1. A property will be used as it was historically, or be given a new use that maximizes the retention of distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships. Where a treatment and use have not been identified, a property will be protected and, if necessary, stabilized until additional work may be undertaken.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to

stabilize, consolidate, and conserve existing historic materials and features will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.

4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of intervention needed. Where the severity of deterioration requires repair or limited replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material will match the old in composition, design, color, and texture.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

⁶ *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, p. 27.

8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

New Orleans Charter

Of particular relevance to El Pueblo Park Association is the *New Orleans Charter*. The Charter was written and adopted by the two organizations in the United States well qualified for and directly concerned both with protection of museum collections and historic building fabric. We recommend that El Pueblo Park Association adopt this Charter as guidance going forward for the Avila Adobe and Plaza Firehouse and their collections.

The New Orleans Charter is the product resulting from two symposia: Museums in Historic Buildings held in Montreal, Quebec (1990) and New Orleans, Louisiana (1991) and co-sponsored by the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) and the Association for Preservation Technology International (APTI). This Charter has been officially adopted by the Board of Directors of both AIC and APTI. The New Orleans Charter was subsequently adopted by the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers at its Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. in March 1992.

Arising from a concern for the coexistence of historic structures and the artifacts housed within them;

Recognizing our responsibility as stewards to provide the highest levels of care for the structures and other artifacts placed in our care;

Recognizing that many significant structures are used to house, display and interpret artifacts;

Recognizing that historic structures and the contents placed within them deserve equal consideration in planning for their care;

Recognizing that technologies and approaches will continue to change; and

Recognizing that those involved in preservation are part of a continuum, and are neither the first nor the last to affect the preservation of historic structures and artifacts;

We, therefore, adopt these principles as governing the preservation of historic structures and the artifacts housed in them:

1. Institutions' statements of mission should recognize the need to preserve the unique character of both the historic structure and artifacts.
2. The preservation needs of the historic structure and of the artifacts should be defined only

after study adequate to serve as the foundation for the preservation of both.

3. Requisite levels of care should be established through the interdisciplinary collaboration of all qualified professionals with potential to contribute.
4. Appropriate preservation must reflect application of recognized preservation practices, including assessment of risk before and after intervention, and the expectation of future intervention.
5. Measures which promote the preservation of either the historic structure or the artifacts, at the expense of the other, should not be considered.
6. Regarding public use, the right of future generations to access and enjoyment must outweigh immediate needs.
7. Appropriate preservation strategies should be guided by the specific needs and characteristics of the historic structure and artifacts.
8. Appropriate documentation of all stages of a project is essential, and should be readily accessible and preserved for the future.
9. The most appropriate action in a particular case is one which attains the desired goal with the

least intervention to the historic structure and the artifacts.

Proposed preservation strategies should be appropriate to the ability of the institution to implement and maintain them.

There are a number of additional applicable laws, regulations, and functional requirements that should be considered:

- Ethics for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works,
- California Historical Building Code (CCR Title 24, Part 8),
- International Existing Building Code,
- NFPA 909, Code for the protection of Cultural Resource Properties – Museums, Libraries, and Places of Worship,
- NFPA 914, Code for the Protection of Historic Structures.

Application of alternative codes and standards can help retain the character and integrity of an historic property, while allowing for or confirming its safety and function. An additional benefit is that alternative solutions sometimes require less construction work and, therefore, may cost less than conformance with regular codes and regulations.

Ethics for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works

To guide conservation professionals and others who care for cultural property, the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) has issued a standard code of ethics. These guidelines should be considered in any work that is proposed for the property. The practice of architectural conservation is represented by the Architectural Specialty Group (ASG), one of the practice groups within AIC.

The *Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice* of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works is as follows:

1. The conservation professional shall strive to attain the highest possible standards in all aspects of conservation, examination, documentation, treatment, research, and education.
2. All actions of the conservation professional must be governed by an informed respect for the cultural property, its unique character and significance, and the people or person who created it.
3. While recognizing the right of society to make appropriate and respectful use of cultural property, the conservation professional shall serve as an advocate for the preservation of cultural property.
4. The conservation professional shall practice within the limits of personal competence and education as well as within the limits of the available facilities.
5. While circumstances may limit the resources allocated to a particular situation, the quality of work that the conservation professional performs shall not be compromised.
6. The conservation professional must strive to select methods and materials that, to the best of current knowledge, do not adversely affect cultural property or its future examination, scientific investigation, treatment, or function.
7. The conservation professional shall document examination, scientific investigation, and treatment by creating permanent records and reports.
8. The conservation professional shall recognize a responsibility for preventive conservation by endeavoring to limit damage or deterioration to cultural property, providing guidelines for continuing use and care, recommending appropriate environmental conditions for storage and exhibition, and encouraging proper procedures for handling, packing, and transport.

9. The conservation professional shall act with honesty and respect in all professional relationships, seek to ensure the rights and opportunities of all individuals in the profession, and recognize the specialized knowledge of others.
10. The conservation professional shall contribute to the evolution and growth of the profession, a field of study that encompasses the liberal arts and the natural sciences. This contribution may be made by such means as continuing development of personal skills and knowledge, sharing of information and experience with colleagues, adding to the profession's written body of knowledge, and providing and promoting educational opportunities in the field.
11. The conservation professional shall promote an awareness and understanding of conservation through open communication with allied professionals and the public.
12. The conservation professional shall practice in a manner that minimizes personal risks and hazards to co-workers, the public, and the environment.
13. Each conservation professional has an obligation to promote understanding of and adherence to this Code of Ethics.

Building and Safety Codes

The property qualifies for the application of two building codes that specifically address the special situations often encountered in existing buildings and historic buildings. Application of these codes are consistent with complying with the Los Angeles Building Code, subject to the approval of the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety.

The currently adopted version of the *California Historical Building Code* (California Title 24, Division 8; a part of the California Building Code) has many alternatives and exemptions for qualified historic structures. Application of its provisions is mandatory upon application to the local building official.

The *International Existing Building Code* is a model code for application to rehabilitation, which is part of the *International Code Council (ICC)* family of codes. This code could be applied, subject to the jurisdiction of the local building official, in any initial project code analysis, or to the resolution of health and safety code compliance issues, as provided by the alternate analysis provisions of the *California Historical Building Code*.

The *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) was signed into law in July 1990. This civil rights statute applies to employment, as well as access to public structures and services or "public accommodations" owned or operated

by private entities. In general, the ADA provides for the application of special rules and minimum access requirements where an alteration “would threaten or destroy the historic significance” of an historic building. Historic buildings include those listed in, or found eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places or designated under state or local law. To use the minimum requirements, consultation is recommended with the California Office of Historic Preservation and local commissions or organizations representing the interests of people with disabilities.

The following table summarizes and prioritizes treatment recommendations for the site. Each recommendation has been assigned a prioritized ranking of “high,” “medium,” or “low.” The rankings reflect the condition of each feature, applicable criteria for the health and safety of the occupants, and the conservation of the building and its contents. The priority rankings should be considered when planning and implementing repairs, but should not be an impediment to any improvements, regardless of priority if funding becomes available that is dedicated or restricted.

Recommendations

Recommendations are classified into three categories according to type.

Housekeeping (H):

Daily and ongoing tasks and responsibilities.

Maintenance (M):

Periodic activities, including inspections to identify conditions, and anticipated cyclical repairs and replacements.

Master Plan (P):

Strategic planning; identification and implementation of major goals and facility improvements.

Priorities

Priorities are classified into three categories, in order to rank the importance in a wide range of recommendations. The following time frames are broad suggestions. Many maintenance and housekeeping items should be done on an ongoing or annual basis; please refer to recommended item for specific timeframes.

- 1 High (1-2 years)
- 2 Medium (3-4 years)
- 3 Low (5 years, or long-term planning goals)

Location

AA = Avila Adobe

FH = Plaza Firehouse

WS = Offsite storage

All = All locations

Item No.	Item Type	Priority	Location	Recommendation
1	H	1	All	Emergency preparation and response for the building Assure that the collections response plan addresses the building as well. The primary risks are earthquakes, structure fires, electrical fire, and roofing failure during a severe wind or rainstorm. Store materials on site needed for emergency response (e.g., tarps; flashlights; charged mobile communications devices; battery operated radios; water and food kits; walking shoes; outerwear). The risk of fire damage can be greatly reduced through operational policies, notification, and suppression. The National Fire Protection Associations codes for historic buildings and museums, reference NFPA 909 and NFPA 914, contain useful suggestions for disaster prevention, preparation, and response.
2	H	1	All	Disaster prevention Schedule an annual meeting on the site with the local fire department company that is the first responder to a fire alarm. Fire fighters provide good advice for fire prevention and mitigation. Instruct fire fighters regarding the value and nature of the collection and storage, planning for choices such as the best way to enter the building when there are choices that are consistent with saving lives, reducing damage to the collection, saving the structure, and preventing the spread to other structures and open areas. Schedule an annual meeting on the site with staff and volunteers to review response to both fires and earthquakes, including a “drill” to walk through the site to reinforce learning of tasks and paths of travel. Emphasize the importance of life safety and escape from a fire and notifying the fire department as soon as possible.
3	H	1	All	Housekeeping (weekly) Use dry soft cotton cloths or lightly moistened soft cotton cloths to wipe down interior wood finishes at walls and ceilings. Avoid soap and detergents. Use gentle detergents such as Ivory soap when needed to remove soil.

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Item No.	Item Type	Priority	Location	Recommendation 38
				Use non-abrasive or low-abrasive cleaners on porcelain or hard surfaces when cleaning is necessary. For example, “Bon-Ami” is preferable to “Ajax” or “Comet.”
4	H	2	All	Housekeeping (monthly) Use dry soft cotton cloths or lightly moistened soft cotton cloths to wipe down interior plaster finishes. Avoid soap and detergents. Use gentle detergents such as Ivory soap when needed to remove soil. Use the references on housekeeping for deep cleaning soil build-up at the base of walls near floors.
5	H	1	All	Record keeping Maintain fire-proof file storage for records of inspections, maintenance, and work done at the site. Include contracts and receipts for work. Include photographs where appropriate of notable conditions, and of work “before and after.” A paperless archive works well if all paper records are scanned and saved, and protocols for back-ups are established and maintained. In general, there should be at least two current back-ups, off site. Digital “cloud” storage is now a reliable alternative for one of the back-ups provided that the service is maintained permanently. An information technology professional should be available for system set-up, establish best practices, and assist staff in maintaining them. Archiving older materials at the secure off-site facility is recommended.
6	H	1	All	Exterior building protection Do not hose down exterior paved areas near the building except for periodic cleaning with a light spray. At Avila Adobe, inspect irrigation to make sure water sprays away from building.
7	H	1	All	Open flame & combustion Prohibit smoking in the building and on the property. Prohibit any open flames in the building and on the property (e.g., fireplaces, ovens, candles, oil lamps, BBQs, tiki torches). Licensed and supervised construction activities are exempted, while noting that building fires are more frequent in vacant buildings and in buildings under

Item No.	Item Type	Priority	Location	Recommendation
				construction. Therefore, strict fire safety practices and no-smoking policies are important during construction periods.
8	H	1	All	Events guidelines Events can be an important opportunity to educate about sites and celebrate them. Event rentals can produce income. Continue to limit these activities and maintain strict guidelines in order to protect the historic buildings and collections. With ample exterior spaces, it should not be necessary to have interior events except for guided tours. Dedicated security personnel should be used during events at the site. Use outdoor spaces for public events where food and beverage are served. Food preparation and consumption should be limited to very few events, designated locations, and should be monitored by museum personnel. Food preparation should be off site only and serving and consumption must be outdoors.
9	M	1	AA	Avila Adobe building walls Retain a firm with experience in building science, structural engineering, building envelopes, moisture, and soils at historic buildings to assess the existing conditions and make recommendations as appropriate for any repairs and mitigation. The composition of bearing walls and the reasons for interior plaster cracks are not known. An important qualification for consultants is the application of non-destructive evaluation (NDE) wherever possible in order to minimize impacts on historic fabric. There are professionals with experience in the evaluation and treatment of earthen architecture. For more information about the vulnerabilities of adobe construction: “Seismic Stabilization of Historic Adobe Structures, Final Report of the Getty Seismic Adobe Project” Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, 2000. https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/pdf/seismicstabilization.pdf
10	M	1	FH	Plaza Firehouse building walls Retain a firm with experience in building science, structural engineering, building envelopes, moisture, and soils at historic buildings to assess the existing conditions and make recommendations as appropriate for any repairs and mitigation. An important qualification for consultants is the application of non-destructive

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Item No.	Item Type	Priority	Location	Recommendation
				evaluation (NDE) wherever possible in order to minimize impacts on historic fabric. Roof leaks are an ongoing problem, and moisture in the walls is contributing to deterioration of bricks and mortar in the exterior bearing walls. The most important task is to assess and mitigate water and moisture intrusion. The next most important task is to repair brick and mortar damage and losses. There was similar and severe damage at the brick walls of the Hellman Quon building prior to the rehabilitation work that was completed in 2000. Water damage to the masonry was not surprising given that the western portion of the building was roofless, open to weather, for many years. In that case, the masonry was given an opportunity to dry, eroded bricks were replaced in kind with bricks salvaged from invisible locations, and brick surfaces were treated with a product that consolidated soft material while adding a breathable coating to help shed surface water while allowing for evaporation.
11	M	1	All	Fire detection and suppression The historic buildings and collection are vulnerable to fire. The buildings have substantial combustible components and collections. The Avila Adobe, the Plaza Firehouse, and off-site storage facility are not fully sprinklered and appear to not have the best available and accessible alarms and reporting systems. Earliest possible detection and automatic fire suppression would increase life safety and decrease risk to the buildings and collections. This is a difficult task because fire suppression systems require intervention into historic fabric and addition of modern devices. Fire suppression systems can potentially damage interior finishes and collections if activated. Consider the design and installation of new integrated fire detection, alarm, notification, and suppression systems in both buildings. This recommendation would raise these very significant properties to a higher plateau of architectural conservation. Retain a qualified fire/life safety engineer to assess the needs, the building, and regulations. Such consultants can articulate conditions and recommendations in a context of performance criteria, which sometimes offer useful alternatives than prescriptive standards. There are provisions for existing buildings, and provisions in the California Historical Building Code that provide for alternative standards and application of performance criteria. A professional engineer knows the best

Item No.	Item Type	Priority	Location	Recommendation 41
				new technology and sources for devices. There needs to be a hands-on, eyes-on working meeting at the house in order to lay out the best options for location and distribution of services and signals after the life/safety engineers have provided a thorough assessment. Coordinate system design with a qualified collections conservator and manager to select an acceptable system for the collection. General guidance. A. The interventions for a fire sprinkler system can be difficult to build and have impacts on physical and visual character. This is always the case when dealing with more significant buildings and building systems. With reference to a typical pressurized water system, it's always a case of exploring the least impactful options while meeting performance standards. In a standard fire sprinkler system, the main valve and backflow preventer, risers, shut-off valves, lateral distribution, pipe drops to heads, heads and covers, detectors, fire control panel are large components. Is it possible to hide them without cutting too much historic fabric? Can they be placed and finished to minimize visual impacts even if they aren't hidden? Are there components of the building that have already been impacted by the past structural and infrastructure work where new interventions would not damage additional original building fabric? Can potential impacts on collections from water flow be mitigated? B. For the Avila Adobe, consider a water mist system which uses very fine water sprays (i.e. water mist) as an option. The small water droplets allow the water mist to control, suppress or extinguish fires by cooling both the flame and surrounding gases by evaporation. There is no heavy water spray. Therefore, this can be less damaging to the building and the collection. A pressurized water storage tank is required. The pressure is high, but the volume of water is lower than a conventional fire sprinkler system. Example: https://www.kidde-fenwal.com/Public/Systems/Kidde-Fire-Systems/HIFOG-Water-Mist-Systems#:~:text=The%20HI%2DFOG%20water%20mist,control%2C%20suppress%20and%20extinguish%20fires.

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Item No.	Item Type	Priority	Location	Recommendation
				C. An aspirating smoke detector (ASD) is a system used in active fire protection, consisting of a central detection unit which draws air through a network of pipes to detect smoke. The sampling chamber is based on a nephelometer that detects the presence of smoke particles suspended in air by detecting the light scattered by them in the chamber. ASDs can typically detect smoke before it is visible to the naked eye. A system like this is used at President James Madison's home, Montpelier, in Virginia for earliest possible detection, without a fire suppression system. The "sniffers" that poke through the plaster walls at Montpelier are small, few, and hardly noticeable. D. Retain a consultant with experience in buildings of the highest historic and architectural significance. Examples are Nick Artim (www.hpg-vt.com) and Arup (www.arup.com). Both firms have analyzed fire safety and engineered fire/life safety for very significant buildings in California. Specialists will analyze the fundamentals of the building, measure risks, understand the operating aspects of the site, and not apply a standard, by-the-book sprinkler retrofit.
12	M	1	All	Electrical system All electrical wiring devices (i.e., power receptacles, switches) and hard-wired junction boxes should be tested on a regular basis in order to reduce fire risk by detecting faults and shorts in the distribution and wiring devices. Replace existing broken power receptacle in the Avila Adobe. Add safety plugs to the receptacles and add a lockable cover. If receptacles are decommissioned but not removed, remove the inner portion from the wiring box and use a blank cover plate. Retain a licensed electrical engineer, or request that the GSD personnel survey the existing service, distribution, and wiring devices. If there is an increased load demand at any point, or shorts at any circuits, repair or replace the components to meet that need.
13	M	1	All	Lighting Replace all electrical lamps with LED type, which is beneficial to building and collection item materials and finishes as well as conserving energy. There are many different lamp shapes and color temperatures available.

Item No.	Item Type	Priority	Location	Recommendation 43
14	M	1	All	Pest control There are many conventional methods used to eliminate pests and insects in buildings. Consult with a collections conservator prior to applications in order to avoid damage to items in the collection. Add “blunder” traps to give an indication of what crawling insects are passing through an area. This will help determine the best approach to pest management. Perform an annual termite inspection. Coordinate selection of any local treatment methods with a qualified collections conservator in order to prevent damage to the collection. Consider periodic (approximately 7-year cycle) full-building fumigation as a preventive measure for termite colonization; termites are endemic and not easy to find or treat. Coordinate with collections manager and conservators to assure that any fumigation materials and their application do not damage collection items.
15	M	1	All	Scheduled inspections Develop and update an inspection checklist that is tailored to the site. This checklist is also a useful tool in “succession planning” to assure that the institutional memory and experience is passed along to new staff and volunteers. This is the first step in writing a cyclical maintenance plan that is tailored to the needs and experience at the site. Large, important systems, especially roofs (all roofs require cyclical repairs and replacement). Schedule inspections twice a year, in the spring and fall, by a designated staff or volunteer, with consulting engineers, contractors, and conservators. Observe all building features and test the operation of all systems. Walk the site thoroughly and observe all plants, hardscape, drainage, fences, etc. Provide a written report with specific recommendations for any needed immediate action and take note of any items that should be watched prior to the next inspection.
16	M	1	AA	Landscape maintenance at buildings There are shrubs and trees adjacent to the Avila Adobe. Horticulture is a part of the site’s character and activity. This report does not assess the plants on the property but recognizes the importance of good practices to reduce the risk of damage to the historic building. Trees and shrubs near the building should be pruned to prevent contact, allowing for movement in high winds. Trees should

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				be maintained in good condition with all due care and treatment to prevent the possibility that falling branches and trees will directly impact the building. Trim tree branches away from rooftops to mitigate the risk of structure and wildfires spreading among the buildings. This practice also discourages vermin and wildlife from entering. Wherever possible, maintain all shrubs and ground cover a minimum of three feet away from the face of the historic building.
17	M	1	All	Doors and windows Add weather stripping to reduce heat transfer, and eliminate air gaps that allow water, soil, and insects to intrude. All exterior doors shall be kept closed and locked at all times, except for the entrance doors used during visiting hours. Follow the conservator's recommendations for UV protection at glazed openings. Add sweeps at the thresholds at the Plaza Firehouse apparatus and personnel doors.
18	M	1	All	Roofing and flashing Inspect roofs, drains, gutters, and rain leaders as part of an annual inspection schedule. Periodically clear debris and leaves off roof, and clear debris and leaves from gutters quarterly to allow them to function properly.
19	P	1	All	Accessibility and visitor safety Historically, most buildings and landscapes were not designed to be readily accessible for people with disabilities. In recent years, however, emphasis has been placed on preserving historically significant properties, and on making these properties-and the activities within them-more accessible to people with disabilities. With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, access to properties open to the public is now a civil right. Many improvements in accessibility were made at the Avila Adobe in the 1990s, with full review by LABD, and some modifications of code were referred to the Disabled Access Commission for review. Because the property is a qualified and certified historic resource providing access (exterior and interior)

Item No.	Item Type	Priority	Location	Recommendation
				for persons with disabilities can be provided while minimizing changes to historic materials and features and preserving the character of the historic property. Since work was completed in the 1990s, there is a new opportunity through consultation with an accessibility expert, in particular a CASp for documentation of barriers and recommendations for any further work according to any updated design guidelines and interpretation of regulations and guidelines. 2019 California Historical Building Code (CBC, Title 24, Part 8, Section 8-6 Accessibility) https://up.codes/viewer/california/ca-historic-building-code-2019 Preservation Brief 32: Making Historic Properties Accessible https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/32-accessibility.htm 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/2010ADASTandards/2010ADASTandards_prt.pdf
20	P	1	WS	Off-site storage facility structural system If not already completed, commission a structural engineering assessment.
21	P	1	WS	Off-site storage facility HVAC: Cut and cap gas supply outside the building envelope. Remove the large gas space heater that is suspended from the roof framing.
22	H	2	All	Housekeeping (general) The appropriate level of care for housekeeping is high for the Avila Adobe due to its high level of significance as an artifact with historic associations, and rare building type. Housekeeping practices affect materials, finishes, pests, and fire/life safety. The following publications are resources that address both houses and collections. In addition, organizing a hands-on collections care workshop for the staff, housekeepers, maintenance personnel, and volunteers will provide professional level knowledge for the upkeep of the house and collection. Sherry Butcher-Youngans, <i>Historic House Museums: A Practical Handbook for Their Care, Preservation, & Management</i> (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993)

Item No.	Item Type	Priority	Location	Recommendation
				Melissa M. Heaver, <i>Housekeeping for Historic Homes and House Museums</i> (Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2000)
23	M	2	AA	Wood repairs There is loss of wood at the front edge of the floorboards of the Avila Adobe. Open cross grain cuts and exposure to moisture cause porch floors to be vulnerable to deterioration. The damage appears to be caused by the smoothness of the interior surfaces, though there could be concealed dry rot (fungal damage). This wood appears to date from the twentieth century, possibly from the post-1971 earthquake restoration. It is recommended to non-abrasively remove the paint, inspect and treat or patch deteriorated wood, and refinish this area in the next dry season, rather than waiting for the next painting cycle. Earlier treatment will conserve more wood over time. A regimen of treatment with borate solution (fungicide) and fills with low viscosity consolidants and permeable epoxy can restore wood profiles. If a board has substantial fungal damage, full board replacement is preferable to dutchman patches in order to avoid a cross grain joint.
24	P	2	All	Long-range building conservation plan Develop a long-term site and facility master plan that responds to a comprehensive review of the functional and conservation program for the museum. Planning will assist in prioritizing and directing improvements in the most efficient way. Planning reduces long-term costs and can result in economies through achieving multiple objectives with single projects.
25	P	2	All	Facility maintenance endowment and/or reserve fund A cyclical maintenance plan and the resources to carry it out is the best way to assure that the site is preserved for another two centuries. Budget an appropriate amount to set aside annually for cyclical maintenance and unanticipated repairs. The best approach is to list all anticipated work and lifecycles in a “reserve study” in order to arrive at the needed reserve, allowing for cost escalation. Higher contributions may be needed in early years to accelerate the accumulation of an adequate reserve. While El Pueblo has the great benefit of City ownership and GSD’s resources, a frequent characteristic of public funding are unpredictable cycles of funding and availability of personnel. Therefore, an

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				EPPA plan, and a cyclical maintenance fund, would supplement the availability of public funding when the needs are great or urgent. Gifts for maintenance are not as appealing to many major donors as naming a major capital improvement but reveal the most sophisticated understanding and appreciation for significant properties. Education about the superior value of a facility maintenance fund for stewardship can promote purposeful giving.
26	P	2	AA	Avila Adobe courtyard Engage a civil engineer to evaluate the rainwater management in the courtyard and propose changes as appropriate to reduce or eliminate the risk of flooding. This task may also require a horticulturalist to evaluate root systems, their impact on drainage, and protection of existing specimens.
27	P	3	FH	Domestic water supply and waste If it is necessary to retain any interior water supply at the Plaza Firehouse, add flow alarms that are switched on by staff when the facility is closed and report to a central station to insure that facility monitoring includes quick response to damaging leaks.
28	P	3	All	Heating, ventilating, and air conditioning The consensus of the conservator and architect is that the buildings do not require mechanical heating and cooling systems. The primary drawback is discomfort for staff and volunteers, which leads to the occasional use of electric space heaters. If space heaters must be used, they should have maximum temperature settings, automatic shut-off switches, and should only be connected to grounded power receptacles and surge protectors. There are no controlled interior environments except as noted below. Existing non-operating furnaces should be decommissioned by disconnecting and capping to “safe off” any power, control, and gas connections. It should not be possible to accidentally or purposefully turn on any heating appliances. The Adobe’s high thermal mass helps to mediate the temperature range inside the building. Natural or mechanical ventilation (moving air at low velocity and volume) can further mediate ranges of temperature and humidity inside the building. However, the consultant team did not conclude that there is a compelling need

Item No.	Item Type	Priority	Location	Recommendation
				for mechanical ventilation. Opening doors and windows for natural ventilation is a security risk.
29	P	3	WS	Off-site storage facility hazardous materials If not already completed, commission a hazardous materials survey.

Overview

This CAP report evaluates two (2) historic sites in downtown Los Angeles, CA with a large non-historic off-site storage facility east of Los Angeles. The two (2) historic sites include the Avila Adobe (1818) and the Plaza Firehouse (1884).

The Avila Adobe is located at 10 Olvera Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012 in the historic center of Los Angeles. It is also located between the neighborhoods of Chinatown and Little Tokyo. The one-story house is approximately 2,500 square feet and was originally constructed in 1818. It was rehabilitated in 1971 following an earthquake. During this rehabilitation, additions were made to the original structure. The original structure houses approximately 350 historic artifacts that are organized around the Mexican period, circa 1840. Though not originally designed as a museum, the 1971 renovations helped improve the structure for artifact display and visitors.

The Plaza Firehouse is located at 501 N. Los Angeles St., Los Angeles, CA 90012, also in the historic center of Los Angeles. It is approximately 0.1 miles southwest of the Avila Adobe. The two-story building is approximately 2,000 square feet and was originally constructed in 1884. It does not have any additions. The firehouse contains approximately 325 fire-fighting related

artifacts. While many of the artifacts date to the early days of organized firefighting, they are not relegated to one time period. Though not originally designed as a museum, renovations performed in 1960 helped improve the structure for artifact display and visitors.

The off-site storage facility is located in East Los Angeles. The building is a large, one-story warehouse facility measuring 12,250 square feet. The structure was built around 1960 and has no known additions. The structure houses several thousand historical artifacts for El Pueblo. Additional objects are stored in this facility for the Chinese American Museum and Italian American Museum.

Los Angeles has a dry, sunny and overall mild climate all year. The hottest months are July through September with a high temperature of 85°F. The coldest months are December and January with the lowest temperatures reaching 49°F at night. Minimal rainfall can occur October through April, rarely exceeding three days in any given month. This assessment was conducted on a seasonably warm day on November 11, 2020.

The Collection

The collection that was assessed as part of the CAP program (excluding archeological objects, photo, and paper material) is comprised of around 2,500 items. Approximately 350 are on display in the Avila Adobe, 325 on

display in the Plaza Firehouse, and the rest at the off-site storage facility. The majority of the objects pertain to the historic sites, though not all of them are from the site itself. The main categories are:

1. Historic textiles and clothing
2. Paintings
3. Furniture
4. Ceramics and glass
5. Ethnographic artifacts
6. Industrial and agricultural tools and equipment
7. Leather/animal hides
8. Metal objects
9. Science, technology, and/or medicinal artifacts
10. Sculpture
11. Stone objects
12. Transportation vehicles
13. Wood objects
14. Replica artifacts used to augment holdings to display the working Adobe and Firehouse's activities.

The first four (4) categories comprise the largest portions of the collection that were addressed during this assessment. While the largest aspects of the collection are archaeological/paleontological artifacts,

photographs, and archival materials, the EPPA identified in their application that these collection items will not be part of the CAP assessment and will be handled separately.

The majority of objects on display at the Avila Adobe are furniture, household goods, and textiles circa the 1840s. Though the adobe was built in 1818, the 1840s Mexican period was selected as the period of significance since Los Angeles came under United States occupation in 1846 during the Mexican American War and was ultimately acquired along with the rest of California as part of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo at the end of the War in 1848. The adobe was also occupied briefly as American Headquarters in 1847.

The house depicts the Californio lifestyle before American occupation. Collection objects include a variety of historic furnishings, textiles, silver, glass, rugs, ceramics and household items for daily use. All original items from the 1840s house have been lost over time. Those on display were selected by museum curators from donations and purchases to represent the 1840s. Additional replica objects are used to fill in the displays to demonstrate the way the house was used during the period of interpretation.

At the Plaza Firehouse, it is mainly firefighting paraphernalia. While the firehouse primarily focuses on early

firefighting, the objects are not relegated to any one time period.

Those collection items which are not on display are stored at the off-site storage facility, which holds a variety of different materials. The facility is generally set up into different “zones”. The majority of the space is one open area with metal shelving. Objects are generally grouped into areas on the shelving. At the northwest corner are a series of rooms dedicated to specific materials, such as paintings, storage materials, and archive materials.

For the purposes of this report, the collection will be divided by their locations in one of three areas: Avila Adobe, Plaza Firehouse, and off-site storage facility.

Avila Adobe

The Avila Adobe is comprised of six (6) replica rooms that display life at the adobe during the 1840s. During normal operation, the building is open to the public six (6) days per week for free. There are both guided and self-guided tours.

The building is one story and generally in a rectangular formation. The living spaces, which show rooms that would have been inhabited by the family living at the adobe include a family room, office, parlor, and two bedrooms. There is also a kitchen. The items on display are a mixture of props and true artifacts (e.g., an historic bench with prop

textiles and pillows). While it is not evident to visitors which are props and which are artifacts, staff have an inventory of everything that is currently on display, including props.

There are multiple objects on display that are set in such a way where they are opened and visible, such as an original ledger. Navajo rugs are placed directly on the floor. There are also textiles hanging from the walls. Per staff, objects in the adobe are not rotated on and off display. This may be beneficial for more light-sensitive objects. It was also noted that objects on tables and cabinets were not waxed down for seismic protection and paintings appear to be only hung on nails. Additional work should be done in display areas overall to improve the seismic protection of the collection objects.

All of the rooms are connected through a central pathway with no doorways between the family room, office, and parlor. There are exterior doors that face Olvera Street as well as through the kitchen and parents’ bedroom, but these are not opened or used for visitor access. The main pathway through the building is generally in one direction, which is an elongated “U” form. One enters into the family room from the central courtyard and passes through archways into the office and parlor. The kitchen and parents’ bedroom are located off of this central pathway. Visitors exit through the children’s room and back into the courtyard. A painted

fiberglass horse at the entrance to the adobe displays an historic, period saddle. There is also an historic wagon wheel and wooden reproduction *carreta* (cart) built in 2004 displayed in the courtyard area.

There are painted metal railings and gates at each room to allow for unobtrusive viewing yet prevent visitors from entering display areas and to try and mitigate them from touching items on display. Since the Children's Bedroom is so small and is the last room before exiting the adobe, stanchions with rope barriers have been employed to allow for access. Staff indicated that despite barriers and signage asking that people not touch or sit on objects, visitors still reach past the barriers and touch items on display.

The Avila Adobe holds the majority of the artifacts at this site, aside from those mentioned on display outdoors. The structure is made from traditional adobe and not climate controlled by modern HVAC systems or any other type of environmental controls. Though there is fluctuation in temperature and humidity in the house, there is currently no environmental monitoring system for the building. During normal operations, doors are kept open, which may lead to strong fluctuations in both temperature and humidity whenever it rains or there are heat waves. It also enables easy intrusions by insects and rodents. Large gaps in wood planks at the doors also enable pests to enter the

structure, even when all doors are completely closed. As previously mentioned, there is no pest management in place at the adobe.



Figure 1: Detail of large gaps within and around exterior door in the Family Room.

At the time of assessment, the Adobe was overall fairly clean. General cleaning services, such as dusting and sweeping, are performed by City of Los Angeles custodial services "as needed" and upon request. City staff do not perform any care of artifacts. Per El Pueblo staff, no maintenance has been done on collections items in a while. Staff indicated that it would be beneficial for them to have guidelines for dusting and general care, as well as training for other staff members.

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The main type of lighting throughout the building is spot track lighting mounted to ceiling rafters in each room. Natural daylight is also utilized. There are wood shutters on the exterior windows, but these are generally left open. Some of the spotlights have been changed from incandescent to LED, which has helped cut down on UV where those changes were made. The plan is to systemically replace all incandescent lighting with LED bulbs. UV readings near windows suggest that there are no UV filters on the glass. El Pueblo staff have indicated that they are concerned about the damaging effect of UV light from artificial and natural light in each of the rooms. There are multiple objects and materials in the adobe in particular that are light sensitive. The upholstery, rugs, ledger, paintings, leather, and clothing are of particular concern. Ideally light sensitive materials would be rotated in and out of storage to help with their longevity. Switching to LED and applying UV filtering film over windowpanes will also further help protect UV-sensitive objects while on display.

Additions to the Adobe site include visitor and staff restrooms, offices, storage rooms (not for collections storage), a classroom, staff break room, and separate display for the aqueduct, which runs underneath the site. Food is not permitted in the adobe itself, only in the nearby break room.

In addition to visitors and school groups, the adobe and courtyard are also sometimes used for television or movie filming as well as other special events. When that occurs, El Pueblo staff supervise and monitor film crews and work with events staff/planners to ensure that the collection is not damaged.

Living Quarters

There are five (5) rooms in the living quarters. They include: Family Room, Office, Parlor, Parents' Room, and Children's Room. Every room has an exterior door. The Family Room, Office, and Parlor doors lead out onto a covered porch that faces Olvera Street. The Parents' Bedroom and Children's Room lead into the courtyard. The Family Room has a second doorway, which also generally leads into the courtyard, as well as a small, covered patio that also connects to the Kitchen.

The living quarters contain furniture, clothing, rugs, upholstery, leather, several paintings, as well as other functional and decorative objects in metal, glass, and ceramic. Vulnerability to light damage is high among spaces with this number of organic items. UV readings taken in each of the rooms varied. Readings taken by windows were generally the highest, confirming that there is no UV filtering film on any of the windows. Readings under select spotlights produced similar results to some of the windows while others registered as zero UV. Staff indicated

that some incandescent lighting had been replaced with LED bulbs. We presume areas with zero UV readings are areas where LED bulbs have been implemented.

The relative humidity throughout each of the living quarters was notably higher than the exterior reading of 26%. Every room exhibited an RH above 30%. RH throughout each of the five (5) rooms ranged from 37.1% to 38.7%. Readings were taken during late Fall on a relatively cool day. We recommend that additional readings be taken during the Summer for a full picture of environmental effects on the collection.

At the time of the assessment (around 2:15 PM) the Parents' Bedroom exhibited very high UV readings compared to all of the other rooms (UV reading of 708 when the next highest was 65 at the Children's Bedroom). This room has two windows, but also has many textiles, some period clothing, paintings, leather, and painted surfaces on display. Colorful surfaces can become damaged over time due to such high UV exposure. Again, additional readings should be taken in the spring and summer as UV will be stronger during these months and objects will be exposed to UV for longer periods of the day.



Figure 2: Overview of Parents' Bedroom with several multi-colored textiles and painted surfaces.



Figure 3: Additional view of Parents' Bedroom with additional leather, textile, and paintings subjected to direct UV light.

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Kitchen

This room may have multiple replica objects. However, it is not clear from the labeling, which artifacts are replicas, and which are historic artefacts. This room is somewhat crowded compared with the other rooms, presumably for the express purpose of demonstrating the way things were used at the time of the house's use. It contains mostly organic material such as wood, but also metal and ceramic cookery and dinnerware.

There are two doors and one window in the kitchen. The door next to the window leads directly into the courtyard while the second door leads out to a small, covered porch area, which is near the second entrance to the Family Room and the main entry into the adobe for visitors.

While the UV and visible light (lux) readings were lower in this room compared to the living quarters, the relative humidity was slightly higher at 40% compared to all of the other rooms, which were each between 37-38%. This is the only room with replica dirt floors compared to the rest of the structure, which has wood floors. This may account for the difference in relative humidity. Again, additional readings should be taken during summer months.



Figure 4: The Kitchen with crowded display areas with one window for natural light.



Figure 5: This image shows the range of object types on display in the Kitchen, as well as the packed earth flooring.

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Plaza Firehouse

The Plaza Firehouse is a two-story building that was originally built as a firehouse. It is located along a busy street in downtown Los Angeles and is across an entrance to the 101 Freeway. During normal operation, the building is open to the public six (6) days per week for free. There are both guided and self-guided tours.

The ground floor was mainly used for storing large pieces of equipment, such as fire hoses and fire engines, as well as small stalls for two horses, which would have been used to pull the engines.

There are large barn doors with windows at the front/main side of the building as well as a smaller set of barn doors at the opposite end of the building on this floor. Behind the stalls is an area that has been repurposed as a staff and volunteer break area and is not accessible to visitors when open to the public. This is the only area where food is allowed in the building outside of special events. The artifacts throughout the first floor are mostly originals, though not all are associated with this building. In addition to the large pieces of equipment, there are approximately thirty (30) fire hats and other accoutrements related to fire fighting. Materials include various metals, leather (straps, equipment, etc.), painted wood, reprints and original historic photographs, and plastics.

Many objects on display, especially the large horse-drawn engine, are highly

accessible to visitors. Some objects are partially cordoned off. There is usually a docent that accompanies visitors or is in the space when visitors arrive, however touching of the objects/artifacts is still a problem despite some limited signage advising visitors not to touch the displays. While the double barn doors are usually left wide open during visiting hours, one of the doors may be closed to limit access on days when they have particularly high foot traffic. When El Pueblo staff and docents are not present, the building is locked and armed with its own security system. El Pueblo security staff must be called to unlock and disarm the building as well as secure the building after use. Staff and security enter through the east side door along N. Los Angeles Street. There are smoke detectors and corresponding flashing alarms throughout the building which connect directly to an emergency alert system for the local fire department. There is also a working sprinkler system throughout the building that is checked annually.

The building is almost entirely lit by natural light during normal operations when only the front/main barn doors are kept open. El Pueblo staff advised that the shutters and windows are never opened. During the assessment, all doors and shutters were closed, but a good amount of natural light still came through two windows on the front barn doors. As such, fading from the natural light is of key concern especially for

leather and painted wood with original decoration. It should stand to reason that the brightest light would be closest to the barn door windows and the only elements close to it are fire hats and possibly some painted wood and leather straps. As suspected, the UV and visible light/lux (intensity) readings with an ELSEC monitor were dramatically higher in front of the main barn doors than by the back end of the building, by the horse stalls. UV readings near the doors were 2199 and lux 836. Further back in the room, they were both zero. The standard recommendation for illuminance of sensitive objects is 50-100 lux. Readings should be taken again during spring and summer months as the intensity of light and duration of natural light is longer during these months.

Overall, the majority of objects on the first floor are in good condition and stable in their current locations. The helmets from various time periods are hanging on the west wall just off of a hook and thus are not seismically safe. It is possible to see lots of dust on the surface. Many are oiled and painted leather and some are also made out of plastic. Similar to the adobe, staff are unable to perform routine maintenance cleaning and dusting of artifacts on display due to time constraints, lack of staff, and lack of training for volunteers and staff members. General sweeping and dusting are performed by City of

Los Angeles custodial staff on an “as needed” basis.

Also similar to the Adobe, the Firehouse is not climate controlled or weatherproof. El Pueblo staff are concerned about light exposure as well as high temperatures during summer months (particularly on the second floor) since there is no air conditioning and the building was not constructed like the Adobe, which tends to have a naturally cooling effect. There are slight gaps between the panels of the main barn doors at the front of the building as well as a 1”-2” gap along the entire bottom of this door. As such, pests, dust, and urban atmospheric soiling can easily enter into the building and impact the collections. Similar to the adobe, there is no pest management plan implemented at the firehouse. At the time of inspection, terry cloth towels were lined on the floor in close proximity to the barn doors. During heavy rains, water can get underneath the doors and into the building. These serve as a minor stopgap for pooling water. In more severe instances, sandbags are employed. There is additional concern since the floors are the historic wood floors and are unsealed.

The gaps and lack of climate control can also contribute to increase temperature and humidity within the space. At the time of testing in late Fall (1:45 PM), the exterior temperature was 81° F and the relative humidity was

22%. Near the main entry barn doors, the temperature was 74.3° F and the relative humidity was 32.8%. At the back of the building on the first floor, the temperature was slightly lower, but the humidity slightly higher. As with the adobe, we anticipate that temperature readings will be higher in summer months and humidity readings higher after rain events.

There is a single staircase leading to the second floor. A brass sliding pole connects the two floors, but the pole is cordoned off and clear acrylic sheeting placed over the opening to ensure that no one can physically slide down the pole. The upstairs is primarily one open room that was used as a living/rest area for firefighters. At the back end of the building on the second floor, five (5) steps lead up to an elevated hallway with five (5) small rooms with doorways. One room is an original bathroom that is locked but has clear glass on the door for viewing purposes. Another is a bedroom that is also locked with clear glass on the door. The three (3) other rooms have solid doors that lock. One room is completely off-limits to El Pueblo staff and belongs to the Box 15 Club. This is a friend's club for this institution and have donated a majority of the artifacts on display in the firehouse. Visitors are not permitted to go upstairs unless a member of the Box 15 Club accompanies them.

On this floor, all of the items in the cases are original and they include

models of engines, leather helmets from the early twentieth century, speaking trumpets in silver, polished medals hoses, and breathing apparatuses. Firearms and other weaponry are in one of the cases and the chairs on display are original to the space. There are also many original photographs.

Similar to the first floor, the main concern here is general environmental impact of the fact that there is no climate control for these items and some are subjected to strong UV. Temperature readings on the second floor were slightly higher than the first floor (76.5° F and 75.2° F respectively) but with slightly lower relative humidity (30% and 31.3%). Similar to the first floor, UV and visible light (lux) readings were significantly higher near windows than towards the center of the floor/room. UV readings near the front windows on the second floor reached 1331 with lux readings of 258. The standard recommendation for illuminance of sensitive objects is 50-100 lux. Near the top of the stairs on the second floor, they were both zero. Direct sunlight was noted shining directly on some of the quilts on display in the bedroom areas as well as on some of the photographs in the main room. No evidence of insect activity was seen on either floor. They were generally dusty but not terribly so and reasonably clean.

A 1909 map of Los Angeles on the wall upstairs appears to have significant

water damage along the bottom edge. Staff noted that there had been a roof leak at the back of the building, but that no artifacts were impacted by that event. The roof has since been fixed. Regardless, the map is cupping and framed and appears to be an important work that should be conserved separately by a trained and paid for conservator. It can likely be reinstalled in its original frame. We do however recommend switching out the glass glazing for acrylics as certain brands can be manufactured with inherent UV blocking properties and are safer from a seismic standpoint. Glazing should also be switched out for the framed wall maps and diagrams that are behind glass. There is significant fading that should be addressed by either making a reproduction and installing them or putting a different UV glazing on the surface.



Figure 6: Overview of first floor of Firehouse facing north with strong light coming through barn door windows and side window. Also note gaps in doors and towels on floor.



Figure 7: Detail of historic firefighting helmets loosely secured on the wall over a doorway and exposed to direct UV light.

Off-site Storage Facility

The off-site storage facility is a single-story warehouse located in a mixed-use neighborhood. The south side of the building backs up to a freeway. There are multiple other warehouses with varying industries in the buildings surrounding the warehouse. As such, there are many different smells and possibly atmospheric pollutants in addition to corrosive vehicle exhaust particulates. Smells are very noticeable outside of the facility, though not noticeable indoors. There are also many large tractor trailer trucks that pass through the area every day, multiple times a day, which in addition to the freeway, may contribute to vibrations amongst the objects stored at the site. As far as El Pueblo knows, there is no air filtration in the building to filter out particulates and chemicals.

This storage facility is leased by the City of Los Angeles from the building owner for a period of ten to fifteen (10-15) years with an option to renew for

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another ten (10) years. It encompasses approximately 12,000 square feet of storage space. It has been divvied up into “zones” for ease of locating items. There are no areas of the building that are fully climate controlled. Fluorescent lighting is used throughout the larger warehouse space as well as in the individual rooms at the northwest corner of the building. When people are not physically on site/in the building, most lights are turned off except for a few lights left on for security purposes. Therefore, exposure to the lighting in this building is relatively limited, depending on curatorial and collections management activities.

This location is not well-known amongst staff members. Only collections staff, upper management, and Board member Henderson regularly access the site. The only people who have full access to the facility are El Pueblo Property Management, full-time El Pueblo staff, and EPPA Board members. No other City staff or even the building owners have access. If they want to enter the building, they must be accompanied by someone from the aforementioned groups who do have access. In addition to El Pueblo, the Chinese American Museum (CAM) and Italian American Museum (IAM) have been allotted some degree of storage space within this same facility. However, in order to access their collection items, members of these two museums must go through

El Pueblo Property Management for entry to the storage facility. El Pueblo staff noted that there is discussion about whether or not CAM and IAM objects should be more separated from the El Pueblo collection or if better storage or signage would help delineate the various collections. We think that it would be beneficial for each group if this could be implemented, especially if there is relatively high turnover within each organization.

Items in off-site storage are generally not brought to either the Adobe or Firehouse and objects in those two (2) locations are not rotated out with items in storage. For those wanting to research objects or documents in storage, El Pueblo staff would prefer if researchers would come to the off-site facility versus staff transporting objects elsewhere or to El Pueblo, as it is safer for the resource materials.

Per El Pueblo’s mission statement, the entire collection’s periods of significance for material culture include Native American, Spanish, Mexican, and American periods up until 1935 and all items related to El Pueblo itself up to the current day, including archeological findings, construction documents, photographs, etc. For objects under the care of El Pueblo, there are essentially three (3) major categories, which were generally organized over the past three (3) years. The first is archaeology, which consists of approximately 400 cardboard boxes located in Zone 1.

These objects are not part of the scope of the CAP assessment and are being worked on in conjunction with archaeologists. Items in this part of the collection came from excavations around El Pueblo. The second major category consists of flat files, such as photographs, prints, papers, architectural drawings, etc. These items are also not part of our CAP assessment as EPPA has received a Hayes Foundation grant to address this portion of the collection.

The last category is a general “catch all” of everything else, primarily three-dimensional objects. Textiles and costumes are stored in boxes with acid-free tissue in vertical, metal file cabinets, but generally are not stored using proper conservation or collections care methods. They would like to have a textiles expert go over the collection and figure out what they have, what is relevant and important among what they have, and whether it is being cared for properly.

Paintings are almost all stored in one of the smaller, enclosed rooms at the northwest side of the building, in Zone 5. El Pueblo staff were starting to organize them at the time of the assessment. Paintings are generally wrapped with what appears to be acid-free tissue and stored horizontally on metal shelving or vertically and resting in front of one another.

Many smaller objects are packed in non-archival cardboard boxes from approximately the 1970s. Many boxes have not been unpacked for years. Some also have a paper inventory to accompany them. The contents of these boxes tend to be small metal and ceramic objects. The boxes are not sequential on their shelves and the bottom two rows are not organized at all and staff are unsure what is in them.

Larger artifacts and objects are stored on open shelves or on the floor. Those on the floor should be lifted up off of the floor onto spacers to help protect them from potential flooding. Items on shelves and in open storage that are not already covered should be covered with sheets to mitigate dust accumulation. Many of these items in open storage do not have inventory numbers. These primarily appear to be pieces of furniture, decorative objects, cookware, architectural elements, taxidermy, and small machinery/tools. At one time, the organization was accepting donations from people to recreate the Avila Adobe with the idea to also recreate other older Los Angeles buildings as well. Once the adequate number of artifacts were obtained to recreate the Adobe, people kept leaving artifacts and objects with the organization and the collection kept growing. To this day it has not been able to be stopped fully due to unsolicited donations and a lack of an accession and deaccession policy.

Furthermore, many objects in storage do not have an accession number.

In addition to these historic objects, there are also items here in storage that are modern, not pertinent to the collection, and have no historical context. The primary example is displays and electronic equipment related to Cheech Marin's exhibit, "Chicano Now". This was an early 2000s show that includes video screens, tables, sound equipment, displays, etc. These items were gifted to El Pueblo by the City of Los Angeles. Of the roughly 12,000 sq ft of storage space, the objects from this show take up 5,000 square feet of space. Some of the materials were hand-produced, however, these objects do not support the period of significance or subject matter portrayed at the Adobe or Firehouse. This is particularly true for "Chicano Now"-related objects which are taking up a large portion of the storage space at the off-site storage facility. EPPA is looking to separate out some potentially smaller items that may be kept and used for future interpretive displays versus deaccessioning the rest of these items that do not serve El Pueblo's mission.

El Pueblo does have several very loose/general inventories that they would like to input into a database, but there is no singular, standardized inventory to work from. There are hand-written registrar's journals from 1972-2013, a set of evaluations from

1985 (also in print), and a collection of scanned "odd" inventories from around 1990. There is a typed "wall-to-wall" inventory from 1990 (presumably for off-site storage items) as well as Avila Adobe and Firehouse inventories from 2005, printed with photographs. Zarate and Henderson used all of the past ledgers to input textile and clothing collection inventory data into spreadsheets, which were then inserted into Past Perfect, their current collections management database. Because Past Perfect does not support location finding within the off-site facility, they also have a card catalogue to help supplement locating artifacts and objects stored in this building.

In terms of cleaning, maintenance, environmental controls, and pest management, Zarate and Henderson have personally organized and cleaned this facility along with four (4) other members of the Board. They do routine maintenance in the warehouse as well, but do not clean any actual objects. Over the past three (3) years, they have made great headway in terms of organizing things at the site and attempting to clear out collections that were not relevant. Zarate has been coming weekly for the past few months but was going to switch to every two weeks at the time of the assessment. Each time she arrives at the site, she first walks around the building to make sure there's nothing glaring like a flood/leak or insect infestation.

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During monthly visits over the past year, Henderson would measure temperature and humidity to get a baseline reading as there is no heating, cooling, or dehumidification in the building. Light levels were not measured during these assessments, though one would imagine they would remain fairly consistent since there is only artificial light, no natural light. The assessing conservators took UV, visible light (lux), temperature, and humidity readings from ten (10) locations throughout the building. Readings were taken between 11-11:30 AM. The exterior temperature was 75° F and exterior relative humidity was 20%. There are no windows inside of the storage facility, so any UV would come from the fluorescent and incandescent lighting throughout the space. The highest UV readings were taken in the open warehouse area with fluorescent lighting. UV generally ranged from 111-125 µw/lumen. The lux ranged anywhere from a low end of 74.5 to upwards of 1050 in zone 9 and over 100 in areas of open collection storage. The standard recommendation for illuminance of sensitive objects is 50-100 lux. UV and lux readings were measured from ground/floor level. One assumes that objects on top of shelves are being subjected to higher concentrations of UV and lux as they are closer to the various light sources in the facility. Textiles, painted surfaces, and other organic material such as taxidermy and leather are more

sensitive to UV light and should either be moved and/or negotiations made with the landlord to alter the existing fluorescent lighting to include UV filtering film or covers for the lighting.

The temperature throughout the building was generally uniform, between 67° F - 68° F. The relative humidity was also fairly consistent, between 38% - 40%. Henderson's year-long data collection of temperature and humidity was not reviewed as part of this assessment. We assume that temperatures will fluctuate with the seasons and humidity levels will increase during periods of heavy rain.

Facilities personnel from the City of Los Angeles will change lights and perform general maintenance on an "as needed" basis, similar to the two other buildings in El Pueblo's care. When Zarate and Henderson come to the site, they do walk around the building during visits to check on objects and for signs of pests. There is no active pest management plan and they have seen a few insects over the course of their visits.

In terms of security, there have been multiple break-ins in the past through vents in the roof with people trying to access the cellphone tower copper wires and pipes on the roof of the building. Security sensors have been implemented by the building's owner along with grates over vent openings and barbed wire around the perimeter of the property/building.

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While there are smoke detectors in the building that presumably alert the fire department, there is no fire suppression on site within the facility. There are no visible pipes and no dry suppression. Since it is a 1960s building, any proposed changes or modifications would have to be negotiated with the landlord.

Even with the threat of vandalism, natural disasters, and fire, there is no formal emergency response or management plan nor any removal plan for the objects within the site. EPPA staff also noted that the site has flooded before. Such a plan will help determine which staff members are responsible for doing what tasks, a chain of command and contact, who will go to each site, prioritizing objects for removal from each location, etc.



Figure 8: Overview of various types of storage in the open part of the off-site storage facility. Open shelving storage (left-hand and back), archival boxes (center), archeological collection in organized archival boxes (right-hand and front).



Figure 9: Detail of current open shelving storage with smaller objects on the bottom and large objects on top. Glass items are on higher shelves, but there is no netting or protection to keep objects from coming off of shelves in a seismic event. Shelves are mechanically fastened between units along the length of the rows.



Figure 10: Detail of Cheech Marin "Chicano Now" objects lining storage isles with mission-specific artifacts on open storage shelving in the background. "Chicano Now" materials take up approximately 5,000 sq ft of the 12,000 total sq ft of the facility.

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Observations and General Recommendations

In general, the collections at the Avila Adobe, Plaza Firehouse, and off-site storage facility are in relatively good condition. Given the general lack of resources in terms of personnel, the size and distribution of the collection, and how many hats each staff member must wear, the conservator-authors of this report found an overall level of organization and housekeeping that spoke to a high level of professionalism and successfully coordinated efforts between El Pueblo staff and EPPA Board members. Numerous areas require additional attention, and they are listed below. However, in general this collection is being well handled and does not exhibit any dire condition situations requiring urgent action.

The most significant need the museum has is upping staff for collections management. Hiring an archivist and curatorial assistant would allow the collections manager to implement programs such as integrated pest management, updating/completing and standardizing their inventory, and performing preventative conservation. Though hiring staff is always a challenge for small institutions, this might be achieved with an internship program that brings in graduate students from local universities, including the Getty UCLA Conservation program, and from local apprenticeship/training programs for accomplishing such tasks. The staff is

to be commended for the work that has been done thus far.

Additional projects would include:

Updating Collection Inventory/ Collections Management Plan

One of the staff's main concerns is having an inadequate inventory of their objects and artifacts. Due to relatively high turnover, they feel that they need to develop a method of standardization and apply it across the board to all items in the collection that have been accessioned. As part of this inventory, staff also need to weed out items that do not serve their mission and period of significance and that should be deaccessioned. Their mission statement is very broad and actually encompasses everything up until 1935, even though the period of significance for the Avila Adobe is the 1840s. Carrying out an updated, standardized, and comprehensive survey will enable them to locate/identify the items of significance and separate them out from the things that are not significant and that can possibly be deaccessioned.

In order to carry out such an inventory, El Pueblo would need additional staff to help implement a true inventory as well as digitize any print documents after they had been inventoried. They would also need a budget for additional equipment such as cameras, one or more computers, iPads, database subscription, and potentially other equipment to facilitate inventorying

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such as Wi-Fi or a mobile hotspot, especially in the off-site storage facility in order to upload information directly to the City server. Although El Pueblo is currently using Past Perfect as their collections database, it would be worth investigating if there were other databases available that support location finding in the off-site facility, which is currently not available in Past Perfect. It may benefit El Pueblo to build upon and/or foster new relationships with other City-run or affiliated museums or other local museums that have similar collections, display environments, etc. (e.g., Rancho Los Cerritos) to see what systems they have in place for inventorying and as data bases and find out the pros and cons/likes and dislikes of those various systems before committing to any new software or system.

Prior to Zarate's hiring, El Pueblo did not have a dedicated collections person. They also do not have a formal accession or deaccession plan. There are no known written policies; anything they may have had is currently missing. Setting new standards for inventorying and carrying out the inventory will help with developing a formal deaccession plan and the deaccession process. Furthermore, there is no formal loan program. There are currently objects/artifacts on loan to La Casa de Adobe, but El Pueblo staff are not sure of the terms or length of the loan as no documentation could be found from

prior to their arrival in their current positions. Developing and implementing formal accession, deaccession, and loan plans will be crucial for long-term planning and care of the vast collection.

Upgrading Fire Safety

Fire detection within the off-site storage facility consists primarily of smoke alarms. It is presumed that this connects to the local fire department, but this should be verified as well as what the average response time is. The Plaza Firehouse has adequate smoke detection and reporting. The Avila Adobe has no smoke detectors at all. This is not up to standards and code and should be addressed as soon as possible. Smoke detectors should connect to the local fire department.

While there are sprinklers in the Plaza Firehouse that are checked annually, there are currently no fire suppression systems in place at the Avila Adobe or off-site storage facility. In terms of the Adobe, this is a common problem for historic house museums because architectural guidelines often make it difficult to install such systems. Wet (water or chemical) suppression systems are not ideal at locations such as the off-site facility, but forms of dry suppression could be implemented both at the Adobe and off-site facility and are encouraged in order to safe as much of the collection as possible in the event of a fire.

A comprehensive fire safety plan should be incorporated into an overall emergency plan. We consider this an item of high priority.

Light Exposure Mitigation

Light levels were found to vary within each structure. Unsurprisingly, areas near windows and within close proximity of fluorescent or incandescent lighting exhibited higher than recommended levels of UV light and visible light (lux/intensity). UV filters on the windows would dramatically reduce the risk of upholstery, textiles, and costumes fading over time. Other organic materials could also be negatively affected in the long run. UV filters or covers would also be of benefit on the fluorescent lighting inside the off-site storage facility. Incandescent lighting should be switched to LED wherever possible.

According to El Pueblo staff, any modifications to lighting or adding UV film at either the Avila Adobe or Plaza Firehouse would need to go through “property management” if it’s not something that El Pueblo staff can do themselves “in house”. Property management would execute contracts for contractors.

Security Upgrading

Staff has reported that in the past, several collection items have been stolen by the public. As such, it would be advisable to install more security monitors throughout the display areas.

These could be as simple as monitoring cameras that are discreetly located in rooms and send information to telephones. Currently areas with many loose items such as set tables and desks are cordoned off to visitors, however it would be very easy to breach these barriers.

Integrated Pest Management Implementation

As of the writing of the CAP report, El Pueblo did not have a comprehensive Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan in place. Due to the large array of organic materials inside of the museum spaces and off-site storage, the means of ventilating the museums through open doors and windows, and the method of object display, pest infestation is a potential concern for the association. This is true of all historic house museums as the collection, methods of display, and means of ventilation are not particular to El Pueblo and are found in many other historic homes that are open to visitors. Pest infestations can be severe and go unnoticed for extended periods of time, with an infestation not observed until damage is systemic and past the point of repair. Therefore, regular inspection and constant vigilance is necessary to ensure that infestations are addressed as soon as possible so that the collection remains intact for a long period of time. El Pueblo should develop a formal IPM plan, assign staff and/or volunteers to regularly monitor traps, as well as

replace traps on a scheduled basis to assist with monitoring.

We understand that City of Los Angeles-run pest control performs treatments on an “as needed” basis. If fumigation treatments are warranted or performed, any collection items that are vulnerable to sulphites should be removed and treated with through anoxia instead.

Changes to Physical Storage and Seismic Improvements

The off-site storage facility has little in terms of HVAC systems. It may be possible to climate control the smaller, lower rooms at the northwest corner of the building and only climate control them rather than modify the whole building. This would have to be negotiated with the building owner. If this is performed, El Pueblo could put their most sensitive artworks in these climate-controlled areas, space permitting.

A large proportion of the cardboard boxes currently used for storage are not acid free. Though many of the objects stored in them are lithic or ceramic and therefore not susceptible to damage from acid, other objects stored in these boxes would benefit from upgrading to archival materials.

There remains concern for the physical safety of the collection during a seismic event, which is likely to occur at some point in Southern California. At the

time of the CAP assessment visit, very few objects were secured, and many hanging elements in the two (2) museums appeared to be mounted to walls with single nails. The collection would benefit from an assessment of seismic stability issues by a designated conservator or mount making professional. Using museum wax would help prevent movement of some objects, but should only be applied to non-porous surfaces, otherwise staining can occur. Depending on the size, shape, and weight of a hanging object, different types of wall mounts are available. This is particularly true for the helmets in the Firehouse which are somewhat precarious and would fall from a greater height than many other objects in this location or the Adobe.

At the off-site facility, glass artifacts should be stored in padded boxes and moved to lower shelves for more stability in case of an earthquake. Also, heavier items on top levels of shelving should be moved to lower levels, where possible, because they create a high center of gravity. In general, staff should gently tie objects on the very tops of shelves down with twill tape and padding with a barrier layer between any padding and artifact surfaces. For other shelves below, install removable straps and/or netting to keep objects from sliding off of the shelves. Between shelving in the individual rows, the shelves have riveted plates near the top, lower surfaces, and at the bottom. This

helps provide some added stability along the length of the row on each side. However, if possible, we recommend that the shelving units be bolted to the floor as well as strapped to one another between rows for added weight and stability by increasing the overall mass. Interns from the UCLA/Getty Conservation program or apprentices from the Broad Diversity Apprenticeship Program would be good candidates to assist with earthquake-proofing the off-site storage facility and museums.

According to El Pueblo staff, modifications at either the Avila Adobe or Plaza Firehouse in terms of earthquake bolting or other seismic improvements would need to go through “property management” if it is not something that El Pueblo staff can do themselves “in house”. Property management would execute contracts for contractors. Bolting shelving to the floor would likely need to be negotiated with the off-site storage property owner before implementing.

Conservation

As of the date of this report, El Pueblo staff noted that they have had no known formal conservation performed on collection items. There was some leather work done by a merchant leather worker as well as some textiles generally treated by a current staff member of the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture who serves as their Civic Arts Conservation

and Collections Manager. It would benefit El Pueblo to foster relationships between their organization and local/regional conservators so that they can become familiar with the collection and types of issues that it faces. Many organizations have found it helpful to have an on-call contract conservator or a pre-qualified list of conservation professionals to call upon. This is particularly helpful in case of an emergency or confirmed pest infestation where triage of objects can be crucial. El Pueblo staff also indicated that they would initially like to have their textile and costume collection assessed by a qualified textile conservator in order to weed out what is important and relevant to El Pueblo’s mission as well as opine on how to properly store all textiles and costumes.

El Pueblo staff also expressed an interest in being able to perform more preventive conservation throughout the collection. One way to implement this is by isolating newly accessioned objects and monitor them for pests before they are placed among displays or in storage. Currently, El Pueblo does not have any dedicated freezers or cold storage that could serve as an isolation area and/or pest mitigation tool. Other means of preventive conservation include adding padding beneath rugs on display on flooring, addressing UV exposure, and rotating light-sensitive objects in and out of storage to help protect them from damage. Larger projects, such as sealing

the wood floors in the firehouse at ground level and adding door sweeps, could be implemented by a contracted entity under the supervision of an architectural conservator or preservation architect.

Finally, it would behoove the City and El Pueblo to have an updated collections appraisal performed once the new inventory is complete and items that do not serve the mission or collection are deaccessioned. This will help ensure there is adequate insurance/coverage of the collection as well as enable staff to weigh the cost of repair versus value of the object.

Staff Training and Guidelines

El Pueblo staff and EPPA Board members expressed interest in additional training for staff, Board members, and volunteers in terms of general collections care as well as disaster and emergency preparedness. There are many online resources for both areas of collections management/care, some of which are provided as links at the end of this report. Using these online training resources and guidelines, El Pueblo should adopt these practices and use them to develop their own in-house guidelines for general care of objects on display for staff and volunteers. These would include dusting, handling of objects, etc.

Digital and hard-copy resources for collections care can be used to create a

small library for staff and volunteers for collections care and inventorying. Presumably this would be stored at the off-site storage facility.

EPPA has donated five (5) books for this purpose and will continue to do so at the request of the Collections Manager. Digital files/copies of books and other resources can likely be stored on the City's server.

The primary goal of the CAP survey is to help the institution identify its long-term goals. By undertaking this collections assessment, the primary goals for El Pueblo are:

Immediate

(To be done as soon as possible)

1. Secure delicate objects such as displayed crystal, glassware, and china using weighted bags, Museum Wax® or a similar stabilizing wax to prevent toppling during a seismic event. Stabilizing waxes should only come into contact with non-porous surfaces and should not be used on unsealed wood or textiles as it can leave residues and stains on the surface of porous materials. Recommend hiring a contract conservator for 1-2 days to help manage this with staff and volunteers.
2. Anchor shelving inside the off-site facility to secure it for seismic activity. Strapping or bolting between rows will also create additional mass and stability among the open shelving areas.
3. Pack glass objects in open storage shelving in padded, archival boxes and place on lower shelves in storage.
4. If possible, move larger items at tops of shelves to lower shelves as

the center of gravity is currently very high.

5. Implement ratchet straps or netting at open shelving and twill tape and padding for those on top of shelves to help mitigate items from falling off of shelves in a seismic event.
6. Immediately install a smoke alarm system in the Avila Adobe and connect it to a central system that will alert the fire department. This was found to be the most important condition. Contact other historic house museums to ask about their selected fire/life safety system. Preference is given to museums in high-fire zones in California and particularly in Los Angeles County, as these will be subject to the same state and county requirements as El Pueblo sites and may be exposed to similar fire dangers.
7. Perform a detailed inspection of all rooms of the Avila Adobe, Plaza Firehouse, and off-site facility to look for insect pests and potential infestations. This should be done by an individual who is trained to recognize pest damage and identify specific types of pests so potential infestations can be correctly identified.

Short-Term

(To be done within 1 year)

1. Using the results of #7 above, develop an IPM program to

monitor and address any pest infestations observed at all locations. This includes regularly placing and replacing sticky traps for insects into most rooms throughout the site and assigning a staff member to collect and replace them on a regular basis and to record their findings. While pest control does come and spray site-wise as needed, routine monitoring and use of sticky traps is a more methodical way of tracking potential infestations and catching them before they get out of hand and cause any damage or spread to multiple objects.

2. Install security cameras throughout the areas visited by the public. Motion sensors can be implemented for security when the buildings are closed.
3. Install UV filters on windows in the display areas downstairs of the main house.
4. Apply for archive grants in order to have the archives assessed for storage improvements and needs, especially in terms of the paintings, textiles, and unknown objects in non-archival storage boxes on open shelving. Grants offered by the California Preservation Program and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) may be applicable.
5. Work with Commission to formally deaccession "Chicano Now" objects to move off site and free up

additional storage space in the off-site facility.

6. Invest in some good archival boxes and packing materials.
7. Move upholstered items and organic materials such as taxidermy or leather in off-site storage to lower shelves and away from fluorescent lighting.
8. Cover items on open shelving with sheets to protect from dust settling on object surfaces.

Mid-Term

(To be done in 2-3 years)

1. Write a comprehensive Emergency Plan addressing the case of fire, earthquake and flooding, as well as the possibility of thefts.
2. Upgrade all storage materials to be made from acid free archival material.
3. Write a comprehensive conservation and collection management plan.
4. Hire an archivist to help inventory and maintain the documentation that is currently housed in the off-site storage facility as well as update and incorporate the more recent inventories at the Avila Adobe and Plaza Firehouse. Standardize the inventory labeling/archiving system across the entire collection under El Pueblo care and input data into an online database.

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5. Hire a conservation assistant or develop an internship program for summers or 6-month stints using conservation graduate students in their 2nd or 3rd year of training.
6. Have a textile conservator assess all important costumes and textiles for the purpose of evaluating storage needs. This project may take up to one month depending on the availability of the conservator.
4. Consider adding at least one freezer to the storage facility to help with intake and isolation of newly accessioned works or to help triage objects noted to have a pest infestation.
5. Consider converting low office rooms at off-site facility into climate-controlled areas for more climate-sensitive collections items.

Long-Term

(To be done within 5 years)

1. Participate in various collection care training programs for members of staff that include object handling, labeling, and proper care. Organizations that provide resources for collections care include the American Institute for Conservation (AIC), the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), and the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). Some of these organizations offer online courses as well as off-site training.
2. Develop guidelines and training for staff and volunteers in handling of collections items and general collections care and maintenance.
3. Following inventory of collection objects, determine which items require additional condition assessment for Museum records.

Environmental Measurements

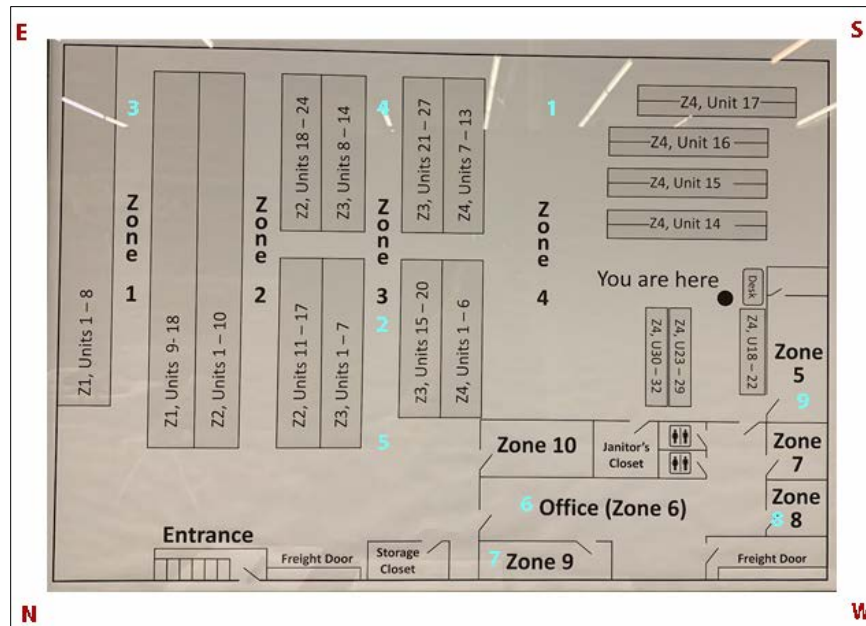
Off-Site Storage Facility:

Readings taken: 11:00-11:30 AM

Exterior Temp: 75° F

Exterior Humidity: 20% RH

	Location	Temperature (°F)	Relative Humidity (%RH)	Visible Light (Lux)	UV (μW/Lumen)
1	Zone 4 – S/SE side *most fluorescent lights working in this area; among archival boxes	68.9	38.1	219	116
2	Zone 3 – center of warehouse	68.2	38.6	90.7	122
3	Zone 1 – East Corner	67.5	39.2	74.5	111
4	Zone 3 – Back Center	67.6	39.3	138	125
5	Zone 3 – Front Center * Directly under light	68	38.1	126	121
6	Zone 6 – Office	67.5	39.3	783	0
7	Zone 9	67.1	39.2	1052	85.8
8	Zone 8	66.9	40	650	4.8
9	Zone 5 – Paintings storage	68	38.8	445	16



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Avila Adobe:

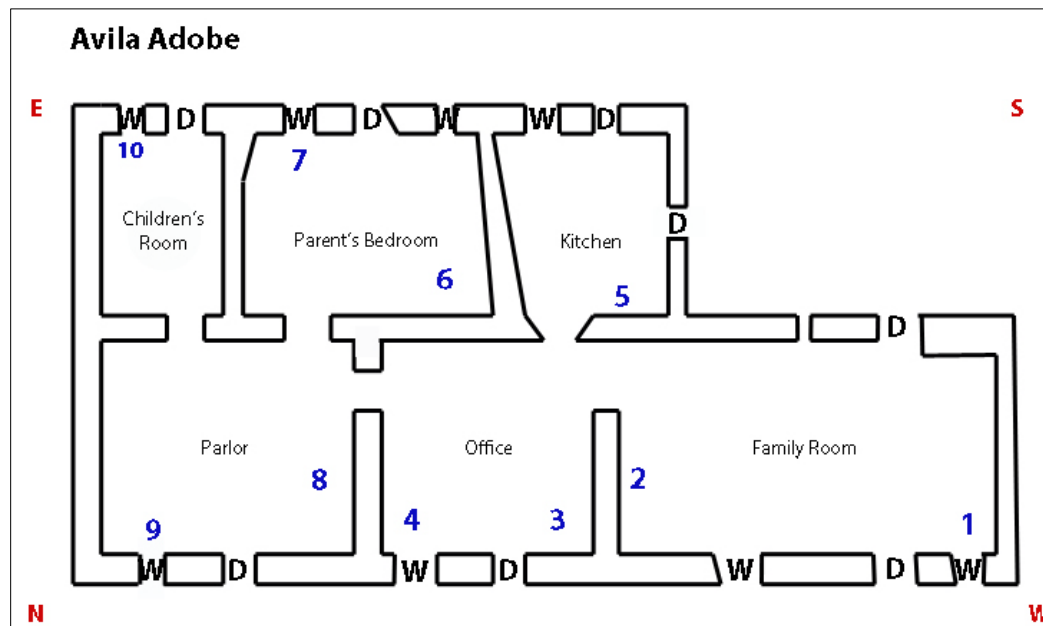
75

Readings taken: 2:15 PM

Exterior Temp: 79° F

Exterior Humidity: 26%

	Location	Temperature (°F)	Relative Humidity (%RH)	Visible Light (Lux)	UV (μW/Lumen)
1	Family Room front window	71.6	37.5	146	58.2
2	Family Room wall under spotlights	71.8	37.7	434	33.1
3	The Office – light on ledger	72.5	37.7	283	0
4	The Office – window	72.3	38.7	90.2	47.3
5	Kitchen – from doorway	72.1	40	84.8	0
6	Parents' Bedroom – spotlight on textiles	73	37.5	435	0
7	Parents' Bedroom – near corner window	73.2	37.1	85.1	708
8	Parlor –light on textile	72.3	37.5	118	0
9	Parlor – window near piano	72.5	37.4	139	55.8
10	Children's Room – near window	72.9	37.2	91	65



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Plaza Firehouse:

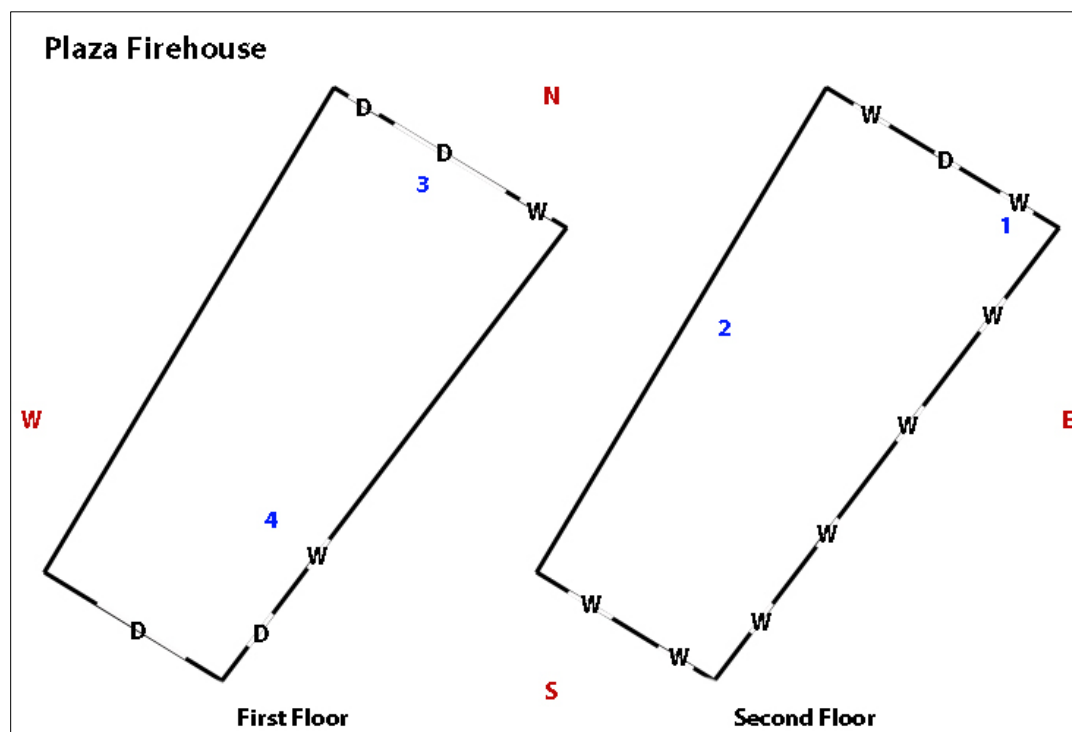
76

Readings taken: 1:45 PM

Exterior Temp: 81° F

Exterior Humidity: 22%

	Location	Temperature (°F)	Relative Humidity (%RH)	Visible Light (Lux)	UV (μW/Lumen)
1	Second Floor – near front window	76.5	30	194	1331
2	Second Floor – near top of stairs	75.2	31.3	16.5	0
3	First Floor – near barn doors	74.3	32.8	380	2199
4	First Floor – mid-way, near chain	73.9	33.5	9.8	0



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Recommended Sources for Collections Care

UV Light Treatment

Historic New England, 2010. "Property Care White Papers, Ultraviolet Protection: Choice and Install." https://www.historicnewengland.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/UV_Protection_Install.pdf

National Park Service, August 2004. "Choosing UV-Filtering Window Films." *Conserve O Gram*, Number 3/10, pp. 1-6.
<https://www.nps.gov/museum/publications/consveogram/03-10.pdf>

Care of Historic Homes

Butcher-Young, Sherry. *Historic house museums: a practical handbook for their care, preservation, and management*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Fisher, Charles E., III, Michael Auer, and Anne Grimmer. *The interiors handbook for historic buildings*, Washington, D.C.: Historic Preservation Education Foundation, 1988.

Heritage Preservation and National Park Service. *Caring for Your Historic House: Preserving and Maintaining*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998.

Integrative Pest Management

Mallis, Arnold. *Handbook of Pest Control*, 7th ed. Cleveland, Ohio: Franzak and Foster, 1990.

Story, Keith. *Approaches to Pest Management in Museums*. Washington, D.C.: Conservation Analytical Laboratory, Smithsonian Institution, 1985.

Online Training and Resources for Collections Management

<https://www.connectingtocollections.org/course-collections-management/>

https://www.getty.edu/conservation/our_projects/education/managing/

https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/teaching/index.html

<https://learn.aaslh.org/products/online-course-collections-management-winter-2020>

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Emergency/Disaster Preparedness and Creating a Collection Plan

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

- www.fema.gov

Studio Protector – the artist’s guide to emergencies

- <http://www.studioprotector.org/OnlineGuide/Salvage/SalvageTechniques/ResourcesforArtSalvage.aspx>

Museum of Modern Art Guidelines for Art Disasters

- http://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/explore/conservation/emergency_guidelines_for_art_disasters.pdf

Getty Conservation Institute: Building an Emergency Plan- A Guide for Museums

- https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/pdf/emergency_plan.pdf

American Institute for Conservation-Alliance for Response

- <http://www.heritageemergency.org/initiatives/alliance-for-response/afr-home/>

ArtsReady.org

- <https://www.artsready.org>

Broad Diversity Apprentice Training Program

<https://www.thebroad.org/dap>

American Institute for Conservation Community Partnership Project for next Los Angeles AIC Conference

<https://www.culturalheritage.org/events/annual-meeting/community-partnership>

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