



LA LAGUNA DE SAN GABRIEL

Historic Structures Report and Preservation Plan

Prepared for
Friends of La Laguna



Prepared by
Garavaglia Architecture, Inc

31 December 2008

Innovating Tradition

LA LAGUNA DE SAN GABRIEL
SAN GABRIEL, CALIFORNIA

Historic Structures Report and Preservation Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

La Laguna de San Gabriel is first and foremost a playground. It is also an icon of childhood to the surrounding community, a cultural landscape, the work of a Mexican master artist, a symbol of post-war development philosophies and practices and was constructed, by hand, in 1965. These are a few of the many reasons that this public space has been nominated to the California Register for recognition as a cultural resource of exceptional historical value. It is also why the Friends of La Laguna (FoLL) were granted money by the California Cultural Heritage Endowment (CCHE) and the Annenberg Foundation to fund the creation of a Historic Structures Report (HSR) and Preservation Plan to guide preservation efforts at the site. This document represents the results of this work. It is a first step towards the development of a comprehensive preservation project focused on the long-term viability of La Laguna as a playground and beloved community resource.

During the course of preparing this document, FoLL, their team of consultants, and the City of San Gabriel worked together to better define the study boundaries of La Laguna. These mutually agreed upon boundaries encompass La Laguna as a historical resource as well as La Laguna as a potential preservation project. Those elements within the boundaries, including landscaping and site features, are subject to review in this HSR and Preservation Plan. FoLL intends to continue their planning and fundraising efforts to support all aspects of a future preservation project within these boundaries. As such, La Laguna remains part of Vincent Lugo Park but is not included as part of the general park renovation project. Part of the ongoing discussions will be how to incorporate signage for and access to La Laguna within the larger park project. However, for the purposes of this document, La Laguna is discussed as a separate entity, subject to alternate forms of assessment and treatment because of its status as a historical resource.

HISTORICAL STATUS

La Laguna has been determined eligible for the California Register of Historic Resources and potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It is the eventual goal of FoLL to list La Laguna as a National Historic Landmark, the highest designation of historical value in the United States. Because of its age (43 years as of the completion of this document) special considerations must be made when evaluating its historical significance. Currently, an application for listing on the California Register is pending with the Office of Historic Preservation in Sacramento. This designation was submitted in November 2008 by Friends of La Laguna and has the full support of the City of San Gabriel. The City has also indicated its support for recognition of La Laguna as a local cultural resource. At a minimum, such a designation will enable the utilization of the California Historical Building Code, as applicable. A broader presentation of La Laguna's significance as a historical resource is presented in Chapter 2.

TREATMENT PROTOCOL

The integrity and historical value of La Laguna should be maintained through use of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation* and the *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* as the guiding methodologies for all work at La Laguna. Addressing deferred maintenance and stabilizing the structures for future use is the goal of this document. Any modifications to the appearance, methods of interaction, placement or circulation through the landscape would be a severe adverse impact on the integrity of the resource and could greatly inhibit its ability to be listed as a local, state or national historic resource.

Preservation of the resource implies no changes to the appearance, use, positioning or materials of La Laguna beyond those measures necessary to return the resource to its original appearance. The goal is to address issues of deferred maintenance and removal of inappropriate repairs.

La Laguna is currently in compliance with California Health and Safety Code Section 115725, Subsections (a), (b), and (d) for the defined playground boundary. The proposed treatment, *preservation*, emphasizes maintenance and repair and does not include removal, replacement or modifications (alterations) to the resource. Therefore, will La Laguna will remains in compliance with this code after repairs are completed and no further code mandated upgrades or alterations to the resource are required. A more detailed discussion of applicable codes and alternative frameworks for evaluation of historical resources is presented in Chapter 1 and in other sections throughout the document.

TERMINOLOGY

La Laguna is comprised of several distinct areas. For ease of discussion, specific terminology has been developed to more precisely describe the condition. These areas are briefly defined as:

- Island Berm – the landscaped area on the west side of La Laguna. It marks the transitional area between the current picnic area and the play structures. The Island Berm is an integral part of the La Laguna experience. Its topographical features and scale of plantings should be maintained. To better integrate it with the surrounding, redesigned park, additional plantings can be incorporated provided they are in keeping with the scale and general plant typologies currently found in this area.
- Sandy Lagoon – the interior, sand filled area where the 15 play structures are found. The sand in this area should be regularly aerated and augmented to maintain a minimum depth in keeping with the current recommendations of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

FINDINGS

La Laguna presents many unique conditions. Its irregular shapes, unconventional utilization of construction materials and highly intensive intended use make development of a preservation plan for this resource challenging. The key universal issues include:

- Small surface spalls (voids, chips, etc.),
- Poorly executed previous patches,
- Minor localized delamination of the finish layer of cement from the base of concrete,
- Damage to the finish surface from excessive wear, and/or
- Recent application of paint to the historically unpainted surfaces.

Some elements do have more major material degradation that requires structural attention. These include:

- Lookout Mountain, which has several large cracks caused by falling trees. These cracks are allowing water to get beneath the concrete surface and this is causing the rebar to corrode and the surface to crack and chip.
- The Dock, which has several severely deteriorated wood posts and compromised areas of wood decking. This element has some material loss at the deck. A non-historic slide was added at an unknown date and recently (2008) removed by the City.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Addressing the first grouping of issues stated above can be done through the repeated utilization of several standard repair methodologies. The main difference is the extent to which each of these procedures must be implemented for any given structure.

- All treatments should be developed in consultation with a concrete conservator. This is particularly important when working with the surface layers. Paint removal will be required on many structures. Determination of an appropriate paint removal protocol, including product selection, testing and methodology development will require testing and verification in the field. Selection of appropriate pigments and development of a surface cement formula to match the historic finishes will require the skills of an experienced conservator. All treatment methodologies, formulas, supply information and application instructions should be recorded for future reference.
- Spalls can be repaired in-kind using a cement plaster with an integrated non-organic pigment to match the surrounding finish texture and color. The damaged area should be chipped back to sound material with clean edges prior to patching.
- Previous patches can be carefully chipped away. With the repair removed, the underlying problem can be more fully assessed and addressed at that time.
- Delamination can be arrested by drilling small port holds to facilitate the injection of an appropriate grout to fill the gap between layers. The injection port hole should then be filled with colored cement after completion of the injection.
- Excessive wear has caused areas of the surface layer to be completely worn away. This is most pronounced on the “mountainous” regions throughout the playground – Lookout Mountain, the Lighthouse, and the three seals. Localized wear is also present on high impact areas where children like to stand or sit such as at the slide platforms and on the low parts of the dolphins. Replacing the lost surface with a new plaster cement coat can be done after the exposed concrete is consolidated (if needed) to stabilize the surface for treatment.
- Paint has been recently applied to many structures. The paint should be removed with non-toxic stripping agents formulated for the specific type of paint and safe for application on a concrete surface. No abrasive cleaning should be used. The correct agent and methodology for paint removal must be determined through carefully testing and consultation with a concrete conservator prior to wholesale application. It may not be possible to remove all the paint from the more detailed surfaces. Once the paint is removed, additional treatments may be necessary to address any underlying issues.

Addressing the more intensive needs of Lookout Mountain and the Dock will require a greater level of intervention to stabilize the structures for continued use. The primary character-defining features of each will remain while damaged areas will be carefully and selectively removed for replacement in-kind. Less damaged areas will be treated to increase their capacity for continued use. This will range from replacement of several of the most damaged sections of concrete on the backside of Lookout Mountain, to use of new foundation posts on the Dock. In all circumstances, as much original material as possible will be retained. No modifications to design, materials or use are anticipated.

With proper maintenance and ongoing preventative measures, the lifespan of La Laguna can be prolonged indefinitely. Maintaining a database of repairs, procedures, materials and maintenance logs will assist the City and FoLL in the proper long-term stewardship of this unique historical resource.

Implementation of these necessary repairs will also increase the general safety of La Laguna. Select additional measures, as presented in the Safety Play, Inc. Audit Report prepared for the City in 2007, can be implemented without harming the overall integrity of the resource. Where such measures are consistent with the *preservation* of La Laguna, the team has made recommendations for their execution. These items are noted with by (*) in the Individual Recommendations in Chapter 5.

VARIABLES AND COSTS

Within these treatment methodologies, there are several areas where more than one approach could be applied with little or no impact to the historic resource. Where more than one option complies with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation* alternative solutions are presented. These alternatives are presented in a prioritized order with the recommended preservation strategy being the preferred approach. The overall recommended preservation strategy cost estimate has an estimated cost of approximately \$1,200,000. This assumes prevailing wages, standard contractor fees and expenses, continued professional guidance and an accurate representation of current conditions based on the team's field surveys. First year maintenance costs of approximately \$38,400 are included in this number but represent only a broad understanding of the anticipated maintenance requirements. Once a full maintenance plan is developed (not part of the scope of this document) these costs should be revisited for further refinement and consideration.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

This document presents the significance of La Laguna as a historical resource, evaluates its current conditions, and provides recommendations for stabilization and repair of all materials and elements within the La Laguna boundary. It is a first step to defining a specific preservation project for implementation. Further work is needed to more fully define the scope of work for the project. FoLL and the City have both committed to ongoing discussions to incrementally develop a project scope. Aspects to be further developed include:

- A mutually agreed upon methodology for addressing liability concerns related to issues raised in recent safety audits for La Laguna,
- A project phasing plan (if necessary) for implementation of the recommendations of this report,
- A maintenance plan, including determination of responsible parties, for the ongoing care of La Laguna after completion of the project,
- Integration of La Laguna into the larger Vincent Lugo Park renovation project, including signage, pathways, ADA compliance and potential impacts on the historical resource, and
- Funding strategies for supporting the initial project as well as an endowment for continued staff training, ongoing care, and maintenance of a treatment database for future repair reference.

TEAM RECOGNITION

This HSR and preservation plan is a collaborative effort by a host of stakeholders and professional consultants. The team is headed by Senya Lubisich and the Friends of La Laguna in concert with Nicole Possert and Frank Parrello of the Arroyo Guild, Mike Garavaglia and Becky Urbano of Garavaglia Architecture, Inc., Daniel Paul of ICF/Jones & Stokes, Mel Green of Melvyn Green & Associates, David Charlebois of California Restoration and Waterproofing and Cy Carlberg, registered consulting arborist. Assistance and guidance was also provided by Rebecca Perez, Steve Preston, Martin Weil and other staff members at the City of San Gabriel. Matching funds and in-kind donations were provided by the City of San Gabriel, the Annenberg Foundation and the Friends of La Laguna. Each of these individuals and entities has expressed a commitment to the long-term survival of La Laguna through their efforts in the creation of this document.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

La Laguna de San Gabriel (La Laguna) is an unique play area within Vincent Lugo Park, owned by the City of San Gabriel (City). As a defined cultural landscape, La Laguna represents a wide range of cultural heritage values that are only recently seeing professional and scholarly attention. It represents several concepts of mid-century park and urban design that have largely been lost in recent years as playgrounds are being retrofitted with generic play equipment. It is a unifying symbol of community for the residents of San Gabriel, where three generations have direct ties to using, playing and visiting this unique playground. It is a form of interactive public sculpture of a type and medium (lifesize concrete animals) that used to be much more common in the post-World War II era. Today, most of these sculptures have been removed from parks and open spaces for various reasons. However, fundamentally, La Laguna represents the vision of the City of San Gabriel in creating a unique attraction through the collaboration with and support to Benjamin Dominguez, a Mexican artist and local resident who created this fantasy world for the children of his community. Through his unique artistry and craftsmanship, his gift is a beloved space that has endured to become a national treasure celebrating art, culture, community and children's play.

The Friends of La Laguna (FoLL) was formed in October 2006 in response to the potential demolition of La Laguna as part of the larger Vincent Lugo Park renovation. Through FoLL's historical research and advocacy to preserve this unique historic and cultural resource, the City of San Gabriel responded to the community and re-evaluated the playground as a resource worthy of retention. In January 2007, the City and FoLL agreed to the protection of La Laguna through a Memorandum of Understanding entitled "Assessment and Conservation Proposal for La Laguna de San Gabriel" which set forth a collaborative framework to secure, protect and preserve the existing La Laguna play area for continued use.

RESOURCE AND SITE DESCRIPTION

La Laguna de San Gabriel is a distinct play area located in the southeast corner of Vincent Lugo Park. The project boundary of La Laguna was agreed upon between the Friends of La Laguna and the City of San Gabriel (see Figure 1.).

The borders of La Laguna are the outside edge of the existing Carolina cherry and oleander hedges along the Alhambra Wash to the south, the demarcation between the asphalt picnic area and the Island Berm to west, the inside edge of the existing linear sidewalk to the north (a second hedge also marks this boundary, a former fence at this location has been removed) and a buffer zone of approximately five feet beyond the sidewalk to the east. The eastern boundary was originally marked with a fence but that fence has been removed. This space approximates the area that Benjamin Dominguez directly, or indirectly, designed during the conceptual phases of La Laguna in the early 1960s as the designer / artist for La Laguna under contract by and in collaboration with the City of San Gabriel.

La Laguna consists of several distinct but inter-related elements (see Figure 2):

- Sandy Lagoon – a curvilinear, amoeboid-shaped area comprising 19,000 square feet, defined by a concrete curb and filled with a ground cover of sand and 15 play elements that share a nautical theme. As the centerpiece of La Laguna play experience, a wooden dock serves as an entry and accompanies 14 concrete play-sculptures constructed during 1964-5 by Benjamin Dominguez, a master concrete artist. Sculpting with concrete was

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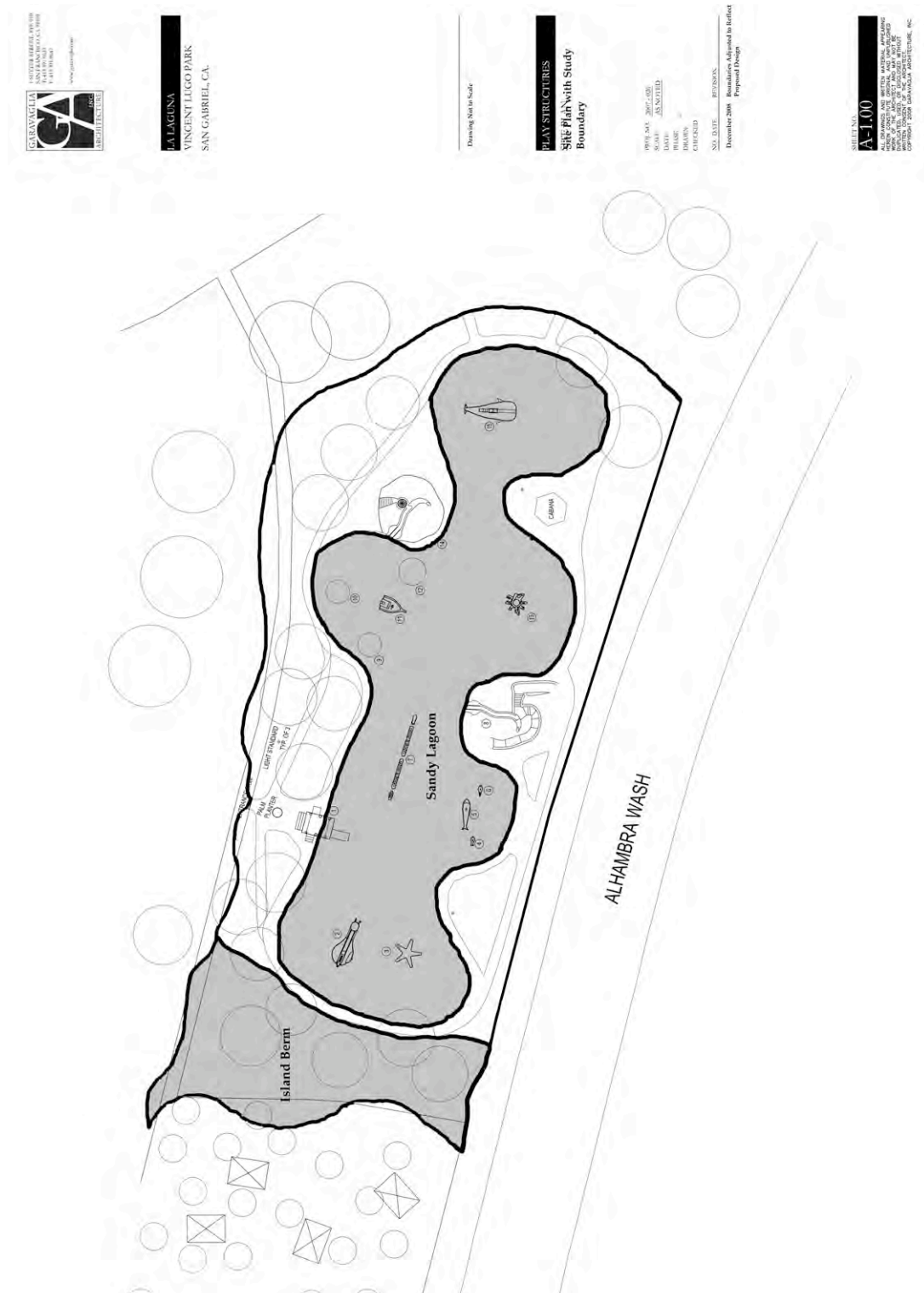


Figure 1. This site plan shows the boundaries of La Laguna de San Gabriel as agreed upon by the City of San Gabriel and Friends of La Laguna. These boundaries mark the official extent of the La Laguna as a cultural landscape. The numbers refer to the photo key in Figure 2. The shaded areas are specific zones within La Laguna that are discussed throughout the text. A larger version is presented in Appendix C. Source: Garavaglia Architecture, Inc.

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Figure 2. This photo key shows the different structures and site features found within the La Laguna de San Gabriel. A larger version of this image is found in Appendix C. Source: Garavaglia Architecture, Inc.

widely recognized as an artistic craft in Mexico and his craftsmanship combines a folk vernacular style with functionality. The sand was a representation of the “sea” to Dominguez and this area evokes a lagoon for the sculptural sea creatures.

- Island Berm – a bermed landscape of tropical themed plants that functionally serves as the entrance for the children. Located on the western side, the theme extends the aquatic, semi-exotic nautical theme of the sandy lagoon and the correlation between these two features is particularly significant.
- Site Features - Flowing walkways, that encircle the Sandy Lagoon and connect to the Island Berm, work to connect the rest of the site features including a consciously-designed landscape buffer of trees and shrubs, a formal entry with a sign artistically designed and lettered, planters, park benches and light fixtures.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

La Laguna embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type of playground design that characterized changing ideals in suburban planning following World War II. It's artistic value, material integrity and skillful execution represents the work of master craftsman, Benjamin Dominguez, an influential Mexican artisan who created numerous “fantasy parks” throughout California and the Southwestern United States during the 1950s and 1960s. This significance is founded in the highly unique, masterfully rendered, hand sculpted play structures at La Laguna. They were conceived of by an influential artist and craftsman and executed according to his vision and planning. As a whole, La Laguna represents the highest form of a type of playground that was sought after during the post-World War II period of urban planning. It is indicative of a national trend, but executed by a hand that elevates the playground to the status of interactive art.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND PRESERVATION GOALS

In 2007, FoLL applied for and received grant funding from California Cultural and Historical Endowment (CCHE) and The Annenberg Foundation to fund a comprehensive study of La Laguna to guide its preservation and continued use. The creation of this Historic Structures Report and Preservation Plan is intended to guide the *preservation* of La Laguna as a historic and cultural resource. The work executed in this report is intended to help inform the treatment of La Laguna as a distinct cultural landscape and play area within the larger municipal park. This report is intended to assess and address material and structural repairs to various elements within La Laguna including repairs recommended to improve safety and access to the historic resource.

In keeping with the mission of FoLL, this document is focused on the following goals of the organization:

- Stabilize and preserve La Laguna for continued use as a play area.
- Document the history and significance of La Laguna and recognize it as a historical resource.
- Conduct assessments to determine the status of La Laguna's physical condition.
- Determine appropriate repairs needed to alleviate problems associated with existing field conditions.
- Ensure that recommended repairs to La Laguna are compatible and appropriate to its character-defining features and historic significance.

- Recommend maintenance procedures (current and ongoing) associated with preserving La Laguna for long-term continued use.
- Determine cost estimates for its current preservation needs based on an overall plan.

APPLICABLE STANDARDS AND CODES

The application of alternative standards and codes can retain the character and integrity of historic sites while providing equivalent safety and functionality for those facilities. There is a wide array of standards and criteria applicable to historic and cultural resources. The information provided here is an overview to fully inform the discussion and decisions about the applicability of these codes and standards when developing a preservation plan and ultimately a proposed project. This is to ensure that the full range of information is presented for *consideration*.

A more thorough review of all the particular provisions for qualified historic buildings or properties will need to be undertaken in the next phase of work for La Laguna and is beyond the scope of this report.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards

As a California Register eligible resource, any work on La Laguna de San Gabriel should follow the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. Therefore, it is important that these guidelines be included as a vital part of the planning and implementation processes. The Secretary of the Interior has developed a series of Treatments and Guidelines for dealing with historic properties. There are four types of treatments, each with their own very specific definitions, standards and guidelines for implementation: Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration and Reconstruction. Of these four treatments, *preservation* is the most appropriate for La Laguna de San Gabriel because of the high integrity of the site as it was originally designed, the extent of the character-defining features intact, and, that any addition or modifications to the site are not needed or proposed.

Preservation

Preservation is defined as "the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property." This includes measures implemented to protect and stabilize the property and focuses on maintenance and repair over replacement with new materials. Additional constructions, such as additions, are not included under this treatment option. However, limited systems upgrades can be considered a preservation measure if it is appropriate to the resource and its functionality.

There are eight standards to govern the implementation of Preservation treatments.

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

As a treatment, preservation allows for the resource to be properly maintained but does not seek to return the resource to a particular point in time, nor does it try to modify the resource in any way. The goal of this treatment methodology is to stabilize the resource for continued enjoyment within the boundaries of its originally intended use. This treatment is also compatible with the goals of FoLL to enable future generations to interact with La Laguna in the same manner and to the same degree as previous generations of San Gabriel residents.

Additionally, the *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* illustrate how to apply the selected treatment (in this case preservation) to cultural landscapes in a way that meets the Standards.

The *Guidelines* contain a section on Special Considerations providing a recommended procedure to find appropriate solutions that meet the Standards. “Although the work in the following sections is quite often an important aspect of preservation projects, it is usually not part of the overall process of preserving character-defining features (maintenance, repair and limited replacement); rather, such work is assessed for its potential negative impact on the landscape’s historic character. For this reason, particular care must be taken not to obscure, alter, or damage character-defining features.”

Selecting a few of the “Recommended” actions to illustrate this best practices approach to the Guidelines:

“Health and Safety Considerations:

- Identifying the cultural landscape’s character-defining features, materials and finishes so that code-related work will not result in their damage or loss.
- Complying with health and safety code requirements, in such a manner that character-defining features, materials and finishes are preserved.

- Working with local code officials to investigate systems, methods, or devices of equivalent or superior effectiveness and safety to those prescribed by code so that unnecessary alterations can be avoided.
- Upgrading character-defining features to meet health and safety codes in a manner that assures their preservation. For example, upgrading a historic stairway without destroying character-defining handrails and balustrades.

Accessibility Considerations:

- Working with local accessibility and preservation specialists to determine the most appropriate solution to access problems which will have the least impact on character-defining features.
- Finding solutions to meet accessibility requirements that minimize the impact on the cultural landscape.

Energy Efficiency Considerations:

- Improving energy efficiency of existing features through non-destructive means."

California Historical Building Code

The California Health and Safety Code (CHSC) recognizes the validity of alternative methodologies for addressing the needs of qualified historical resources. This does not exempt a project from compliance with the CHSC, but rather allows for more flexible and creative solutions to increase safety while maintaining historical significance and character-defining features.

All construction projects must meet a defined minimum level of life/safety requirements to protect human life and the resource itself. The State of California adopted the 2006 International Building Code (IBC) along with specific additions, deletions, and classifications and is known as the 2007 California Building Code (CBC). This code includes requirements for disabled access to sites and buildings, and has developed extensive energy conservation requirements.

In addition, the State has specific methodologies for addressing qualified historical buildings or properties. This code is referred to as the 2007 California Historical Building Code (CHBC). A "qualified historical building or property" is defined in CHBC, Chapter 8-2: "As defined in Health and Safety Code Section 18955 as any building, site, object, place, location, district or collection of structures, and their associated sites, deemed of importance to the history, architecture or culture of an area by an appropriate local, state or federal government jurisdiction." And a "Structure" is defined as "that which is built or constructed, an edifice or a building of any kind, or any piece of work artificially built up or composed of parts joined together in some definite manner."

The intent of the 2007 California Historical Building Code is stated in Section 8-101.2 and is quoted as follows:

"The purpose of the CHBC is to provide regulations for the preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, relocation or reconstruction of buildings or properties designated as qualified historical buildings or properties (Chapter 8-2). The

CHBC is intended to provide solutions for the preservation of qualified historical buildings or properties, to promote sustainability, to provide access for persons with disabilities, to provide a cost-effective approach to preservation, and to provide for the reasonable safety of the occupants or users. The CHBC requires enforcing agencies to accept solutions that are reasonably equivalent to the regular code (as defined in Chapter 8-2) when dealing with qualified historical buildings or properties."

The CHBC functions primarily as a performance-based code rather than as a prescriptive code. Although sections such as "Access" and "Structural" have prescriptive elements, these elements exist to provide a framework within which unique solutions may be custom tailored to the specific problems related to the particular circumstances and set of conditions related to any individual historic resource. Unlike the California Building Code (CBC), the CHBC does not contain the typical set of "triggers" that would require full upgrading of the historic facility. Greater latitude in when compliance is mandated is allowed for historic buildings under the provisions of the CHBC.

Specifically, Section 18961 of the CHSC states:

"All state agencies that enforce and administer approvals, variances, or appeals procedures or decisions affecting the preservation or safety of the historical aspects of qualified historical buildings or structures shall use the alternative provisions of this part and shall consult with the State Historical Building Safety Board to obtain its review prior to undertaking action or making decisions on variances or appeals that affect qualified historical buildings or structures."

The CHBC also provides a specific chapter, Chapter 8-10, for qualified historical districts, sites and open spaces. Section 8-1001.2 states the Scope as:

"This chapter applies to the associated historical features of qualified historical buildings or properties such as historical districts that are beyond the buildings themselves which include, but are not limited to, natural features and designed site and landscape plans with natural and man-made landscape elements that support their function and aesthetics. This may include, but will not be limited to:

1. Site plan layout configurations and relationships (pedestrian, equestrian and vehicular site circulation, topographical grades and drainage, and use areas).
2. Landscape elements (plant materials, site structures other than qualified historical building, bridges and their associated structures, lighting, water features, art ornamentation, and pedestrian, equestrian and vehicular surfaces).
3. Functional elements (utility placement, erosion control and environmental mitigation measures)."

As a California Register eligible site, La Laguna is a qualified historical building or property. As such, it can be subject to the provisions of the California Historical Building Code, as stated in Section 18955 of the Health and Safety Code.

California Environmental Quality Act

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the potential impacts of a project on historic resources must be considered. The purpose of CEQA is to evaluate whether a proposed project may have an adverse effect on the environment and, if so, if that effect can be reduced or eliminated by pursuing an alternative course of action or through mitigation measures.

Under CEQA, a project that results in a "substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource" may have a significant adverse effect on the environment (Public Resources Code Section 21084.1). An "historical resource" is a resource listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register. The Public Resources Code defines "substantial adverse change" as "demolition, destruction, relocation or alteration," activities that would impair the significance of an historical resource (Public Resources Code Section 5020.1q and State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 (b)(1) and (2)).

CEQA also defines activities that would impair the significance of an historical resource as "The significance of an historical resource is materially impaired when a project:

- (A) Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for inclusion in the California Register of Historic Resources; or
- (B) Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics that account for its inclusion in a local register of historic resources pursuant to section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code or its identification in an historical resources survey meeting the requirements of section 5024.1 (g) of the Public Resources Code, unless the public agency reviewing the effects of the project establishes by a preponderance of evidence that the resource is not historically or culturally significant; or
- (C) Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its eligibility for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources as determined by a lead agency for purposes of CEQA." (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 (b)(2)(A)(B)(C))

For historical resources, the most widely accepted way to avoid or mitigate impacts is to follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards the development of the proposed project. The Standards are specifically called out in Section 15064.5(b)3 of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, as an advised strategy for avoiding impacts to historic resources.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Playgrounds are subject to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) if they were constructed after 2000 or if substantial modifications are being undertaken. La Laguna's construction pre-dates 2000 and substantial modifications are not anticipated under the *Preservation* treatment, so there is no requirement to make any individual structures within La Laguna fully accessible. However, it is important to note that if one structure is made accessible, or if the surface material is replaced with a different treatment, all structures will be required to be made accessible to the same degree. Provided the repairs are the result of deferred maintenance, no further work will be required by law to bring the playground up to compliance.

The City had Safety Play, Inc., an outside consulting firm, complete a Safety Audit Report in September 2007 for La Laguna. In terms of ADA accessibility, the Safety Play Report concludes that La Laguna's "equipment was installed before 12/20/00, so the ADAAG rules do not apply" and goes on to define alteration and repair in the context of ADA rules. The consultant team agrees with Safety Play's conclusion.

The consultant team also assumes that improvements undertaken by the City in the rest of Vincent Lugo Park will render the entire park (including La Laguna) to be ADA compliant by addressing necessary changes outside the La Laguna boundary (shown in Figure 1).

According to the ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities (ADAAG), Section 4.1.7(2)(b):

"Alterations to Qualified Historic Buildings and Facilities Not Subject to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Where alterations are undertaken to a qualified historic building or facility that is not subject to section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, if the entity undertaking the alterations believes that compliance with the requirements for accessible routes (exterior and interior), ramps, entrances, or toilets would threaten or destroy the historic significance of the building or facility and that the alternative requirements in 4.1.7(3) should be used for the feature, the entity should consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer. If the State Historic Preservation Officer agrees that compliance with the accessibility requirements for accessible routes (exterior and interior), ramps, entrances or toilets would threaten or destroy the historical significance of the building or facility, the alternative requirements in 4.1.7(3) may be used."

Section 4.1.7(3) states that the minimum requirements for compliance with ADA regulations is:

- (a) At least one accessible route complying with 4.3 from a site access point to an accessible entrance shall be provided.
EXCEPTION: A ramp with a slope no greater than 1:6 for a run not to exceed 2 ft (610 mm) may be used as part of an accessible route to an entrance.
- (b) At least one accessible entrance complying with 4.14 which is used by the public shall be provided.
EXCEPTION: If it is determined that no entrance used by the public can comply with 4.14, then access at any entrance not used by the general public but open (unlocked) with directional signage at the primary entrance may be used. The accessible entrance shall also have a notification system. Where security is a problem, remote monitoring may be used.
- (c) If toilets are provided, then at least one toilet facility complying with 4.22 and 4.1.6 shall be provided along an accessible route that complies with 4.3. Such toilet facility may be unisex in design.
- (d) Accessible routes from an accessible entrance to all publicly used spaces on at least the level of the accessible entrance shall be provided. Access shall be provided to all levels of a building or facility in compliance with 4.1 whenever practical.

- (e) Displays and written information, documents, etc., should be located where they can be seen by a seated person. Exhibits and signage displayed horizontally (e.g., open books), should be no higher than 44 in (1120 mm) above the floor surface.

California Health and Safety Code, Recreational Safety

California Health and Safety Code, DIVISION 104. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, Part 10 (Recreational Safety), Section 115725-115735 states:

- (a) All new playgrounds open to the public built by a public agency or any other entity shall conform to the playground-related standards set forth by the American Society for Testing and Materials and the playground-related guidelines set forth by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- (b) Replacement of equipment or modification of components inside existing playgrounds shall conform to the playground-related standards set forth by the American Society for Testing and Materials and the playground-related guidelines set forth by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- (c) All public agencies operating playgrounds and all other entities operating playgrounds open to the public shall have a playground safety inspector, certified by the National Playground Safety Institute, conduct an initial inspection for the purpose of aiding compliance with the requirements set forth in subdivision (a) or (b), as applicable. Any inspection report may serve as a reference when the upgrades are made, but is not intended for any other use.
- (d) Playgrounds installed between January 1, 1994, and December 31, 1999, shall conform to the playground-related standards set forth by the American Society for Testing and Materials and the playground-related guidelines set forth by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission not later than 15 years after the date those playgrounds were installed.

Essentially, it specifies three criteria that would trigger compliance with the current safety standards by a subject playground:

- 1. If it is new
- 2. If it is a replacement of equipment or modifications of components inside an existing playground
- 3. If it was installed between January 1, 1994 and December 31, 1999.

The City is currently in compliance with Code Section 115725, Subsections (a), (b), and (d) for the defined playground boundary of La Laguna. The proposed treatment, *preservation*, emphasizes maintenance and repair as this treatment does not include removal, replacement or modifications (alterations) to the resource. Therefore no “modifications of components inside an existing playground” are anticipated and the proposed project would maintain the City’s compliance with this Health and Safety code without the implementation of current safety standards.

The City had an outside consultant prepare a safety audit report in compliance with Section 115725, Subsection (c). In accordance with Subsection (c): “Any inspection report may serve as a reference when the upgrades are made, but is not intended for any other use.” This HSR and Preservation Plan report uses the Safety Play, Inc. Audit Report as a reference and any proposed scope of preservation work for La Laguna would only anticipate repairs, not

upgrades. In addition the consultant team's recommendations and proposed work would incorporate a wider array of standards and criteria applicable to historic and cultural resources.

The overall goal of improving safety at La Laguna is achievable through preservation recommendations of repair, replacement in-kind and maintenance procedures. Although the consultant team assumed that La Laguna is fully compliant with Code Section 115725, the Safety Play, Inc. Audit Report was used as a reference for potential safety issues. The consultant team recommends many preservation actions that also serve to address safety issues outlined by Safety Play. Per the *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, the consultant team carefully assessed the Safety Play report's specific recommendations for any potential negative impact on the landscape's historic character. The Safety Play, Inc. recommendations that would result in the removal, modification or alteration of a character-defining feature were determined not appropriate by the *Guidelines* and that the recommendation had the potential to create an adverse change to resource under CEQA.

RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

Specific steps were carried out in order to compile and analyze data necessary to inform the development of architectural evaluation methodologies and treatment recommendations. These include:

- A review of relevant related documentation, including correspondence between Dominguez and the City, historical articles, photographs and books and a full evaluation of Safety Play, Inc.'s 2007 Safety Assessment for the City of San Gabriel.
- Historical research, which included: development of site and individual character-defining features; analysis of spatial configurations; identification of materials and finishes; and analysis of methods of construction and structural stability.
- Original documentation included: photographing configurations and details, analysis of existing property-related drawings and historic photographs, and conducting oral interviews with Dominguez family members and involved members of the community.
- Research and information gathering as to how other municipalities have dealt with safety issues revolving around play features that are of a similar nature.
- A conditions survey and assessment was conducted for each of the primary features as well as a general assessment of contributing features and spaces.

Evaluation and survey work was conducted by various team members throughout spring and summer 2008 to determine overall conditions, document the configuration and details with measurements and photographs and to assess the resource's current material state and potential for preservation. Major elements were surveyed, recorded and assigned values for condition and significance.

Due to the nature of the resource and the overarching goal of *preserving* La Laguna and its continued use as a play area, the consultant team's methodology was focused exclusively on repairs and maintenance as outlined in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation. Potential treatment recommendations of alteration or modification were not addressed as part of this project due to the risk of triggering compliance with the current California's Health and Safety Code's Recreational Safety sections, as presented above. In

general, this compliance would have an adverse impact on a historic resource and negate the overall goals of this preservation project.

TEAM RECOGNITION

This Report is a collaborative effort by between Friends of La Laguna and professional consultant team with an outstanding track record in preservation projects. They include:

- Friends of La Laguna: Senya Lubisich, Eloy Zárate, John Harrington, Eric Kirchhoff (FoLL provided in-kind support for the CCHE grant matching funds)
- The Arroyo Guild: Nicole Possert and Frank Parrello
- Garavaglia Architecture, Inc.: Mike Garavaglia and Becky Urbano
- Melvyn Green & Associates: Mel Green
- California Restoration and Waterproofing: David Charlebois
- ICF/Jones & Stokes: Daniel Paul
- Cy Carlsberg, registered consulting arborist

The City of San Gabriel provided in-kind support (CCHE grant match), staff time, research and access to archives and collaboration with the consultant team. This was an essential and integrated part of the study and report preparation. The City of San Gabriel key participants include:

- Steven A. Preston, FAICP, Deputy City Manager
- Rebecca Perez, Director of Parks and Recreation Department and several of staff members of the department
- Martin Weil, AIA, Martin Weil & Associates, historic preservation consultant
- Parks Commissioner Faye Kirchhoff

CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

The following represents a collaborative effort between the Friends of La Laguna and the consultant team. This information is excerpted from drafts of the California Register of Historical Resources application for La Laguna de San Gabriel. It was submitted to the State Office for Historic Preservation for consideration in November 2008 with the full support of the City of San Gabriel. In addition, the City has indicated its support for listing La Laguna as a local, San Gabriel Cultural Resource. This information will form the basis for this project and future nomination efforts by FoLL and their partners.

DETAILED HISTORIC OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

The story of La Laguna encompasses a wide variety of themes and historical patterns. This is primarily because of the complex confluence of people, trends and tastes that ultimately resulted in the construction, and retention, of La Laguna in the City of San Gabriel. To understand more fully the historical significance of this resource, it is important to know more about its creator, Benjamin Dominguez, including his background, philosophies and body of artistic works, trends in urban planning, including playground design, both locally and nationally and how these factors resulted in the creation of La Laguna in 1964-5, in San Gabriel.

Benjamin Dominguez

Benjamin Dominguez was born in Guanajuato, Mexico in 1894. As a young man he came to the United States, seeking employment in Colorado, and met and married his first wife. Together they had one son, Benjamin, Jr. Upon the untimely death of his wife, he returned to Mexico, remarried, and enrolled in the Academia de Artes Plasticas of the University of Mexico. He completed his studies in 1925 and began his career in the concrete arts. His particular specialty was that of "concrete wood." In Mexico, there was a school dedicated to this technique and Dominguez rose in notoriety for his mastery of the art. His most recognized work in Mexico was at the Chapultepec Zoo in Mexico City where he designed the enclosures for the lions and tigers. Over the next 30 years, Dominguez worked at his craft and raised his 13 children with his second wife, Anna. After World War II, Dominguez moved his family to Juarez, close to the U.S.-Mexico border and began establishing contacts for work within the United States. The 1950s proved to be a time when Mexican-Americans became more visible in American society and Dominguez benefited from friendships with men who had not only crossed the border, but who had also crossed into mainstream American society. He traveled often to El Paso and built a friendship with Ruben Salazar, a native of Juarez and a reporter for the El Paso Tribune-Herald. The youngest Dominguez son, Rene, recalls many meetings and conversations between his father and Mr. Salazar. For the Chicano community, Salazar has come to represent the early integration of Mexican-Americans into mainstream society. For Dominguez he was a valued contact who helped secure early commissions in El Paso.

Early Works

Once Dominguez moved his family to El Paso in 1956, his first commission in the United States was from Washington Park Zoo in that city. Based on the work Dominguez did for Chapultepec Zoo in Mexico City (1942), he was commissioned to create the Bear Pits, erecting a concrete tree for the bears to climb – a piece that no longer remains. This initial commission opened the door to future commissions that primarily featured the play-sculptures that Dominguez had conceptualized while living in Juarez. For his first playground, which was located in El Paso, Dominguez deliberately selected sea creatures as the best medium for children's play. Rene

Dominguez recalls many drawings and discussions while the family lived in Juarez about the smooth surfaces and gentle curves that the sea creatures would provide for slides and safe tactile play.

At the El Paso playground, which was created circa 1959, Dominguez created dozens of pieces - fish, harps, and double slides along with climbing structures that integrated various modes of play - turning his home into a virtual factory. A most popular piece was one that he titled "Sputnik" and that had the appearance of a moonscape in and out of which children could climb. Dominguez painstakingly wrote letters, using a Spanish-English dictionary to translate his words in order to secure commissions. Eventually, his play sculptures became quite popular. In the El Paso area today, a lone turtle remains. The pattern of commissions that emerged in El Paso repeated itself in both California and Nevada. In both states, Dominguez was first commissioned to practice the specialty of *faux-bois*, constructing rustic bridges in Beverly Hills' Coldwater Park (status undetermined) and the Las Vegas Desert Inn Golf Course (reportedly on display at the Wynn Resort.) However, these initial commissions once again gave way to his signature play-sculptures and Dominguez began to build a name for himself through his creation of "fantasy parks" - a name repeatedly used in the media coverage of his parks.

Dominguez' Fantasy Parks

The fact that Dominguez' fanciful creations were often described as "fantasy parks" seems to be part of the shift in the conceptualization of parks and play-spaces. A 1960 article in the journal *Parks and Recreation* noted that, "[t]he break in attitude towards the redesign of play areas has come from our European neighbors...[t]hey conceive that the play area should be an aesthetic and dramatic experience, as well as a physical one." The article continued to state that the "new" park was a museum, an opportunity to see and experience the arts and crafts of the community, a native folklore center. It noted that the "rubber stamp" playgrounds of the past had given way to a new approach to recreation and park design in America. Now, rather than fitting the play equipment, "to create square spaces called playgrounds...[pieces] are selected and placed as required by the contour or position of the land." Greater attention was given to the design of outdoor spaces, creating attractions as much as playgrounds, and showcasing artistic expression. Dominguez' concrete play-sculptures captured the fantastic quality cities sought for their new parks. A significant commission came in 1960, when the Las Vegas Women's Service League hired Dominguez to create a fantasy park that included whales, friendly dragons, mammoth mushrooms and gargantuan turtles. It was often the case that many groups, such as city departments, women's leagues, Kiwanis Clubs, and Rotary Associations, would combine efforts to fund the creation of a park that would not only be a place of recreation but also an attraction. The play-space was intended to appeal to a broad range of ages and to be a unique and distinguishing attraction for residents and neighboring communities.

Rene Dominguez recalls that his father was given creative license in designing the play-space in Las Vegas - something that would be a point of contention in later parks when he did not have full control over the site. With all of his fantasy parks including La Laguna, Dominguez felt strongly that there was an appropriate space for each of the pieces he created and that the various animals should "talk to each other...they should not be separated." He felt that the careful placement of the pieces would create an environment that had artistic appeal to visitors and that would foster imaginative play on the part of the children. The enthusiasm for the Las Vegas Park led to three known commissions in Southern California: Whittier Narrows, Garden Grove, and San Gabriel (all still existing.) Following the commissions for his work, Dominguez

again moved his family and settled in La Puente. He was now in his late 60s and so his younger sons worked as his apprentices, doing much of the hard manual labor of molding the rebar and wire to their father's specifications. On each of the parks, Dominguez himself executed the drawings, models, and all of the fine finishing details for each piece. Many of the details that gave the sculptures their character were made with tools that Dominguez either brought from Mexico or made himself.

At Whittier Narrows, LA County supervisor, Frank G. Bonelli, commissioned Dominguez to create six sculptures around Legg Lake. Of the California works, these pieces most resembled those that he made in Las Vegas. Three pieces in particular, were specifically requested: a fish slide, a Mother Dragon with small mushroom seats, and a double-headed dragon (all featured in the Las Vegas park). Dominguez had a clear vision for each of his pieces and, until his death, was bothered that Supervisor Bonelli wanted the pieces scattered around Legg Lake. Dominguez felt strongly that the pieces communicated to one another and that they should be grouped in close proximity. A similar conflict emerged as Dominguez built Atlantis Park in Garden Grove. Seemingly directed by the Guide for Planning Recreation Parks, The Park at Garden Grove contained multiple elements and areas for play. Dominguez was hired to create several of his signature play sculptures to be integrated with the other park components. As was the case at Whittier Narrows, Dominguez felt that the sea creatures were too scattered and could not communicate, as they should as artistic works and elements of child's play. As a father of 13 children and grandfather to twice as many, Dominguez was keenly aware of the tendencies, and needs of children's play. He understood the creativity that children need to express and the imaginative nature of their play and he wanted his creations to foster that play. He also understood the need to face challenges in both skill and psyche and often provided two different approaches to his sea creatures: one where children could confront the sea creature head on and a second, less intimidating approach for those that were still too timid. Many good examples of this can be found in the La Laguna play area. Rene Dominguez recalls discussing with his father how they should create a dual access to the Lighthouse and Lookout Mountain slides. How children would approach the elements was a concern to Dominguez.

Shortly before his death, Dominguez was approached to create an Aztec play sculpture for "Plaza de la Raza" in Lincoln Park. Although he began some cursory sketches, he died in 1974 before he could begin work on the project. In his place and memory, his son Rene completed the designs and built the Aztec slides. For a man who in many ways represented the immigrant experience, this was an important acknowledgement of his contributions to the communities in which he worked and lived. Plaza de la Raza was created to be a Chicano Cultural Center in Los Angeles, affirming and expressing the contributions of the Mexican-American community. When new safety guidelines were introduced in 2002, the Aztec pyramid was found to be non-compliant with the safety recommendations and was slated for demolition. This playground no longer remains and has instead been replaced by one of the "catalog" play structures that are now a common feature of many city parks.

The Genesis of La Laguna, and its Presence in the Community

Sometime within 1962 to 1963, San Gabriel Parks and Recreation Director Frank Carpenter had seen the sculptures that Dominguez had created at Atlantis Park in Garden Grove, California, and thought that he had found the perfect artist to create a playground in San Gabriel that would be unrivaled by neighboring cities and that could lend a unique characteristic and attraction to the city. Carpenter allotted a 19,000 square foot area of Municipal Park (now named Vincent Lugo Park) to be used for the new "fantasy park." This park was ideally located according to the Guide for Planning Recreation Parks for it was situated in a Post-World War II

suburban neighborhood characterized by single-family track homes. It was adjacent to a local elementary school, which meant that recreational fields did not need to be duplicated. Unlike traditional recreational fields, for the City, creative play and artistic use of space was the desired goal of La Laguna.

The then named Municipal Park had been built in stages. Mr. Carpenter recommended that Benjamin Dominguez be retained to develop the final area of the park to create a unique and outstanding “nautical experience”. He requested that the Parks and Recreation department allocate funds from the 1963-1964 budget to this end. He asserted that this decision would give Municipal Park its most outstanding feature and that it would tie in well with the “Palms Picnic Area” that had previously been built.

When Benjamin Dominguez first began crafting playgrounds, he decided that sea creatures made the best play sculptures for children. He noted that their smooth skin and shapes provided the best and safest surfaces for children to play. He also felt that they were most conducive to slides and climbing features. Dominguez then designed the park using small models to experiment with the manner in which the pieces would interact with each other and the space in which they were placed. He honored the specific request of Mr. Carpenter by creating a snail that would sit at the western end of the Sandy Lagoon. Dominguez wanted to create a feeling of openness through the lagoon that would peak the curiosity and exploratory nature of children. He built the pieces on a “life-like” scale so that children could experience the largeness of sea creatures. At the same time, he provided places where parents could safely supervise their child’s play.

Once work began, Dominguez drew the individual sculptures and then enclosed his workspace using large sheets of wood. Many have speculated on the reasons for this. Some think that he did not want to work in plain view of passing school children and curious on-lookers. Others have suggested that the enclosure may have allowed the concrete to dry more slowly. Once he drew the shape of the sculpture on the piece of wood, he shaped the rebar and wire to complete the frame. Each piece required several layers of work and Dominguez’ own mixing recipes for concrete, but at La Laguna de San Gabriel, Dominguez experimented with the final layer of the play-sculpture. He used pure silicate sand and mixed the final color of the sculpture into the cement. At previous parks, Dominguez had used thick epoxy paint to color the pieces, however, until 2006 the pieces at the La Laguna were never painted. Instead, pigment was mixed into the outer layer of cement upon each piece.

When the Park opened to the public on May 16, 1965 with an attendance of 1,500 children, it achieved its goal of defining and distinguishing the city’s public spaces. It also accomplished the City’s goal of providing a unique play space for children and an attraction for the City of San Gabriel’s Parks Department. This was Dominguez’ ultimate goal and in the three generations of park-goers, the fact that no serious injury has ever been reported speaks to the careful intent of and attention to a safe and creative play experience for children. Over time, the park became a field trip destination for school children and a much used photo opportunity. It also won the heart of the community, whose youth affectionately refers to La Laguna as either “Monster Park” or “Dinosaur Park”.

At the age of 72, Benjamin Dominguez was happy to create his vision for a park and called it “his gift to the children of San Gabriel.” He named the playground that he created in San Gabriel “La Laguna de San Gabriel.” For the artist, the park represented the culmination of a life’s work. For San Gabriel, La Laguna is testament to the broad and continuing pattern of

immigrant and minority communities and the contributions that they make to the broader community.

La Laguna de San Gabriel as a Cultural Landscape

The existing design represents what remains of the original 1964 landscape design envisioned by Dominguez and executed by the City of San Gabriel. Whereas his previous California commissions had been by the piece, San Gabriel designated a line item in their parks budget for the creation of a play area. His play-space was to be a third play area within a larger park, but he imagined, positioned, and created the pieces as he thought they should relate to the space and to each other. Aside from Dominguez' pieces themselves, numerous aspects of the immediate physical context work together to create a cultural landscape expressive of 1960s era trends in landscape design, and one that further enhances the experience of the pieces themselves.

The La Laguna de San Gabriel landscape consists of several distinct but interrelated elements: a curvilinear sandpit with an abstract, elongated amoeba-like form when viewed in plan; the diverse array of play sculptures found in the sandpit that serve as the centerpiece of the Sandy Lagoon; the flowing walkways that encircle the sandpit; and the consciously designed landscape buffer that borders the sandpit. As previously mentioned, the Island berm just west of the sandpit was part of Dominguez' original scheme for La Laguna, and was present in an early site-plan collage that he created for the City of San Gabriel. The theme of the Island berm extends the aquatic, semi-exotic theme of La Laguna itself; adjacent the "Lagoon" is an *Island*. The correlation between La Laguna and the Island berm is a particularly significant relationship in understanding the park as a cultural landscape. The yuccas and palms of the Island berm are distinct from the other landscape elements around La Laguna, as they subtly reference the exotica theme that was prevalent in Southern California from 1946-c.1968. The oceanic, exotica theme of the Island berm landscape has parallels in similarly themed residential and commercial landscapes of the same era as the park. In nearby Rosemead, Bahooka Restaurant & Bar, a Polynesian themed restaurant from 1967 features a similar "Island" of palm trees at its entrance, along with philodendrons: another common plant used in exotica-themed environments. Along Rosemead Boulevard, which is a primary north-south corridor through the San Gabriel Valley, 1960s-era Tiki themed apartment complexes such as the Kahlua in Rosemead, the Kapu Tiki in Alhambra, and the Outrigger Apartments in Temple City feature large A-frame entrances, freestanding Tiki gods, and numerous palm trees as landscape elements, often grouped in clusters near the primary entrance to the complex. All of these features, although modest in expression, work together to define the La Laguna as a distinctive outdoor room.

Another use of trees to create important focal points of a sculptural character is the "Island berm" of yuccas, junipers, palms, and pines that occurs on the western edge of the sandpit. Although overgrown at present, and partially topped by intrusive ivy vines, these simple clusters of plants, by virtue of the form of their trunks and the pattern of their foliage, serve as a quiet counterpoint to Dominguez' play sculptures in the sandpit, and echo, in a more three-dimensional manner, the amoeboid shape of the sandpit found at the ground plane. Dominguez' theme of sea-creatures and the island berm coincided with the already established "Palms Picnic Area" and continued the popular 1960s landscape theme throughout the eastern side of the park.

San Gabriel Parks and Playground Planning during the Post-War Era

While the creation of La Laguna de San Gabriel is located firmly in the context of the San Gabriel Valley's post-World War II sub-urban growth, its significance is rooted in the complicated process of planning suburban spaces, establishing park systems that served the communities living in suburban areas, and the extent to which minority communities left their imprint on the development of cities during the 1950s and 1960s. San Gabriel incorporated in 1913 yet did not immediately undergo significant development and growth until after World War II. Unlike urban areas, the heavily agrarian character of San Gabriel meant that parks and spaces for public recreation were not pressing concerns until tract homes began to dot the landscape during the post- World War II era. Like numerous other communities across the region, San Gabriel sought to accommodate the rapid population increases that accompanied the G.I. Bill and burgeoning defense industry across California. Once a landscape of Japanese owned ranches and individual farms dotted with schools, small businesses, and offices, the open agricultural areas gave way to tract homes, and old neighborhoods expanded to make way for the new residents of the city. Between 1945 and 1955, the population of San Gabriel jumped from 16,840 to 27,786. Planning became a priority at the State level in 1929 when legislature required cities to have planning commissions and allowed cities to require improvements. Amendments to the Map Act prohibited zoning by initiative. These steps created a foundation for planning in cities across California. When legislature enacted the Planning act in 1935, cities and counties moved toward the required master plans (required in 1937). Following World War II and motivated by Federal and State publications, such as Planning the Neighborhood issued by the Federal Government in 1948 (Public Administration Service, chair Frederick J. Adams), cities across California developed and revamped general plans to coordinate and manage their growth. Therefore, in the early 1950s a precise general plan for city development became a necessity for San Gabriel, and, notably, included plans for a city parks system.

Influential publications, such as the aforementioned Planning the Neighborhood helped shape the development of general plans for development in cities. The pamphlet asserted that parks were a necessary part of the health of a neighborhood, important for fostering good social relationships. Furthermore, since the publication and others like it used the "service area of an elementary school" as the unit for defining a neighborhood, the park was meant to function as a meeting point for the various neighborhoods contained within the city. This publication defined the various categories of parks that should be implemented in city planning and argued that, when possible, "parks should be combined with school sites to save on land acquisition costs and avoid duplication of facilities." This was certainly the case in San Gabriel where the plan for a city park originally contained playing fields and badminton courts. However, once the site was chosen next to an elementary school, the components of the park changed in order to provide alternatives to the amenities already available at McKinley Elementary School.

In 1951, in accordance with city's master plan, a 12-acre parcel of land that sat along the Alhambra Wash was purchased and surveyed for use as a public park. Prior to World War II it was a ravine that served as a flood control basin. Over time it also came to function as a city dump. However, under the new master plan, it was to be the location of a new park for the city's residents. The ravine was filled and, in a piecemeal fashion, the city built two play areas for children and made plans for a Little League baseball field that would boast one of the few grass in-fields. It was plainly known as "Municipal Park."

In 1956, the state published the results of the aforementioned study entitled, Guide for Planning Recreation Parks in California. This was an interdisciplinary study that was dedicated to

helping cities develop effective policies and guidelines for their recreational facilities – particularly since it asserted that this was an area of crisis for California. This publication reinforced parks and recreational areas as part of the development of infrastructure in California cities and counties. Furthermore, it provided detailed recommendations for the proposed facilities and their relationship to each other, yet maintained that designers should experiment with new recreational spaces.

As it pertains to La Laguna and the other works of Benjamin Dominguez, the study suggested that the play area for school aged children should include: “swings, traveling rings, horizontal ladder, large-scale play sculpture that children can envisage as a spaceship, lookout tower, a deep sea monster, and a vacant lot area in which children can dig, carve...stage mock battles, build crude huts, and pretend they are hunting in the forest.” These guidelines articulated a new vision for park design. Rather than simply providing a play lot for tots, the recommendations indicated that the park should provide a creative and imaginative experience for park goers.

These recommendations manifest themselves in two parks where Dominguez created play areas, and the guidelines amount almost perfectly to statements made by the respective directors of Parks and Recreation in Garden Grove site of Dominguez’ “Atlantis Park” and San Gabriel. Carpenter articulated his desire to create a park that would draw new visitors and provide a new and unique landmark for the city in an interview stating, “Up to now, the success and popularity of Municipal Park has been our willingness to stretch the imagination a little and create an unusual atmosphere not found in most parks.” Despite the influence of the two pamphlets on city officials, Dominguez was unacquainted with the guidelines based on the fact that he neither read nor spoke English. His design for parks was far more organic and drew on techniques and skills he acquired in Mexico rather than on published guidelines.

Post-War Playground Typologies

The period beginning during the late 1940s and continuing through the late 1960s was one of the most important in the evolution of playground design. Theorists expounding the tenets of Modernism in the fields of architecture, landscape design, and art, found sympathetic partners in the child education, philanthropic, and applied arts fields that were willing to build playground equipment or whole playground environments showcasing the new design ideas (e.g., Isamu Noguchi and Louis Kahn’s project for the Adele Rosenwald Levy Playground, Riverside Park, New York City; 1961-1966).¹ At the same time, new economic prosperity, the pronounced “baby boom” related jump in the non-adult population, as well as the increased interest in family-oriented leisure activities that marked the period prompted the emergence of “Story Book Lands” across the United States. Two parallel typologies for playground design resulted. In one of the paradigms, the Story Book Land fantasy environments were established showcasing children story book creatures, characters and/or structures that were recreated three- dimensionally in a fanciful form of realism. A second typology wedded contemporary pedagogy with the principles of modern art and landscape design in a search for innovative, sculptural expression that prized abstract designs rather than realism.

The company most successful and best exemplifying the second typology during the Post War years was “Creative Playthings” and its later subsidiary, “Play Sculptures.”² Creative Playthings was founded in 1944 by Frank and Teresa Caplan and flourished after exhibiting at

¹ Susan G. Solomon, *American Playgrounds; Revitalizing Community Space* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 2005).

² Ibid.

the New York Toy Fair circa 1950, when a long partnership was formed with Frank and Bernard M. Barenholtz.³ During the postwar period, the visionary perspective of advocates for playground design reform found broader audiences through mainstream architectural and art periodicals, and through exhibitions sponsored by the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) and other cultural institutions.⁴ The high point in thinking about the design of playgrounds was the competition sponsored by the Museum of Modern Art in 1954. The competition showcased a range of modular elements that could form new contexts for play. The media recognition that followed gave playgrounds “a heightened legitimacy in art circles and in more general spheres,” and also provided a further incentive to innovative playground equipment. Creative Playthings achieved great success in the MOMA competition, which resulted in the company subsidiary Play Sculptures. Creative Playthings and Play Sculptures created award-winning slides, climbers, and abstract outdoor equipment used by parks, playgrounds, and schools all over the world.⁵ This includes many of the numerous and ubiquitous Rocket Ship slides and other similarly-themed equipment from the postwar era up through the 1970s seen in school and municipal playgrounds across the United States. In July of 1966, CBS, which was interested in moving into the education industry, purchased Creative Playthings.⁶

Although far less widespread, a third important playground typology emerged during the late 1960s and early 1970s that is often referred to as the “adventure playground” approach. Adventure playgrounds were constructed without traditional playground equipment, often using junk or other salvaged materials to heighten the desire to explore the physical environment in undirected, free form ways that might appeal to a range of children of different age groups.⁷

By the early 1970s, a heightened concern about playground injury-related lawsuits, codification by organizations such as the National Recreation Association (NRA) and the Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) of playground equipment design safety guidelines that essentially advocated “no-risk” playground environments, and a sharp increase in liability insurance premiums, brought this exciting period of experimentation in playground design to a close.⁸ The fate many mid-century playgrounds was sealed in February 1981 when the CPSC released its “Handbook for Public Playground Safety” the first ever federal guidelines designed to reduce the number and severity of injuries on the public playground.⁹ The handbook was published in two volumes, one with technical information and the other in lay language, so that parents, teachers and recreation leaders could be watchdogs in relation to goings-on in their community and school playgrounds.¹⁰ Installations in publicly owned environments such as parks and schools were remodeled, and fantasy and Modernist playground elements destroyed.

³ Oakland Public Library, “Creative Playthings Puppet Family,” <http://www.oaklandlibrary.org/AAMLO/collection/puppets.htm>, viewed 14 Jul 2008.

⁴ Solomon, *Children’s Playgrounds*.

⁵ Oakland Public Library, <http://www.oaklandlibrary.org/AAMLO/collection/puppets.htm>.

⁶ Oakland Public Library, <http://www.oaklandlibrary.org/AAMLO/collection/puppets.htm>. A second company called Creative Playthings was founded in 1951 and early on was focused upon wooden swingsets. Today this company provides playground equipment for numerous schools and municipalities across the country. The two “Creative Playthings” companies do not appear to be affiliated, though more research is necessary to verify this assertion. See: <http://www.creativeplaythings.com/company/history>, viewed 14 Jul 2007.

⁷ Solomon, *Children’s Playgrounds*.

⁸ Ibid., and “Early history of Playgrounds in the United States.” Found at: <http://www.outdoorfunstore.com/playground-history.asp>. Accessed on July 8, 2008.

⁹ Frances Wallach, “Playground safety: the long trail - from the 1940s to the 1990s,” National Park and Recreation Group, 1995. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1145/is_n4_v30/ai_16889608/print?tag=artBody;coll viewed 14 Jul 2008.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Standard equipment meeting the criteria of the NRA and CPSC were often installed in place of the removed features. This process of destruction and replacement has made intact park playground groupings such as La Laguna de San Gabriel quite rare today.

Conclusion

La Laguna de San Gabriel represents an increasingly rare modern resource: an extant mid-twentieth century playground. At this time, such playgrounds are increasingly replaced by the modern catalog park equipment with standardized, non-unique environments for play. Parks and play spaces that were designed to be safe and accessible to children a generation ago are perceived to be defunct and old, and these playgrounds are threatened as new safety guidelines seem incompatible with the creative expressions of decades past. While homes were quickly built in similar style and fashion, cities turned to their parks to provide a gathering place for their diverse community and to create an attraction for visitors. La Laguna de San Gabriel fulfilled and continues to perpetuate that goal. The park is an intact, significant expression of the creativity of the community, the City and artist that created it. La Laguna de San Gabriel embodies the culmination of an artist's career, creatively and uniquely defines the public spaces of the city, represents the mid-century theories governing park design, and is a testament to the diverse contributions of the many communities that comprise the city. La Laguna is a salient statement of the contributions of the minority communities as they assimilate and integrate into mainstream society. It is the mark that Dominguez left behind that gives California one of its most defining qualities: the continued diversity of its communities.

CONSTRUCTION AND MODIFICATION CHRONOLOGY

Very few changes, alterations or modifications have been made to the resource since its construction. Individual elements have had minor surface alterations but the overall resource has extreme integrity. The very minor alterations are noted below.

- 2005** Trees on Lookout Mountain fall after heavy rains, damage adjacent areas, repairs executed with standard concrete patches and techniques
- 2006-** Most creatures painted. In all cases except for "mountain" areas, original, integrally
2007 colored cement layer remains intact beneath paint.

Unknown

Date of concrete sidewalk installation over original pathways – path design is intact

Date of Dock slide installation

Date of replacement of park benches. The current benches are in the original locations and are of a similar design but are constructed of different materials and appear to be contemporary installations.

Aluminum "Cabana" installed on the sidewalk between the Octopus and the Whale. Similar features were installed elsewhere in the park as well.

SIGNIFICANCE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

An evaluation of historical significance requires a reference context to place the resource in its proper and relative place within larger trends, bodies of work or historical periods. Because La Laguna is less than 50 years old, it must rise to a higher level of importance to be considered a historic resource. Concurrent with this project, FoLL completed and submitted for consideration a nomination for La Laguna to the California Register of Historical Resources. This nomination was submitted in November 2008. The historical evaluation and summary presented in various forms throughout this document are largely drawn from this nomination. The nomination

includes an evaluation of significance completed according to standards established by the California Register of Historical Resources and guidelines published by the National Register of Historic Places for resources under 50 years of age. These requirements are summarized below.

California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR)

The California Register program encourages public recognition and protection of resources of architectural, historical, archeological and cultural significance, identifies historical resources for state and local planning purposes, determines eligibility for state historic preservation grant funding and affords certain protections under the California Environmental Quality Act.¹¹

To be potentially eligible for individual listing on the CRHR, a structure must usually be more than 50 years old, must have historic significance, and must retain its physical integrity. In terms of historic significance, the California Register of Historical Resources evaluates a resource based on the following four criteria:

- Criterion 1 (Event): Resources associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.
- Criterion 2 (Person): Resources associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history.
- Criterion 3 (Design/Construction): Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master or possess high artistic values.
- Criterion 4 (Information Potential): Resources that have yielded or have the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

Special Criteria for Resources Less Than 50 Years of Age

Because La Laguna was constructed in 1965, it has yet to reach the 50-year threshold that the California Register requires. This does not mean that it cannot be listed, however, but it does require that certain additional evaluation criteria be met. In this case, it must “be demonstrated that sufficient time has passed to understand its historical importance.”¹²

Additional guidance is provided in the National Register Bulletin, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Nominating Properties that Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years*.

“Properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years may be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, according to the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, only if they are of ‘exceptional importance,’” [Special Consideration Criterion G]. This is done so that enough time has elapsed for the resource to be evaluated within the historical context of its time and to more fully evaluate the importance and influence of the potential resource within its context. The burden of proving ‘exceptional importance,’ becomes less as time passes and the value of the resource becomes more evident. However, the provision for listing properties less

¹¹ California Office of Historic Preservation website: http://www.ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21238.

¹² Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Parks and Recreation. How to Nominate a Resource to the California Register. Technical Assistance Series No. 07.

than 50 years old was included to recognize those properties that are of near immediate influence or that might be threatened prior to reaching the 50-year threshold.

“A thorough understanding of historic contexts for resources that have achieved significance in the past 50 years is essential for their evaluation. In evaluating and justifying exceptional importance, it is especially critical to identify the properties in a geographical area that portray the same values or associations and determine those that best illustrate or represent the architectural, cultural, or historical values being considered. Thus the first step in evaluating properties of recent significance is to establish and describe the historic context applicable to the resource.

“The more recently a property has achieved significance, generally, the more difficult it is to demonstrate exceptional importance. The case for exceptional importance is bolstered when there is a substantial amount of professional, documented materials on the resource and the resource type.

“However, the criteria and National Register program require that nominations for such properties demonstrate that sufficient historical perspective and scholarly, comparative analysis exist to justify the claim of exceptional importance.” In essence, there is a greater burden of proof on the nominating group or individual.

Integrity

Once the significance of the resource has been established, its integrity must be analyzed to determine if its current form retains enough of its original fabric to adequately express why it should be considered historic. To retain integrity a property must have most of the seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. The seven aspects of integrity are quoted as follows:

- Location - Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.
- Design - Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.
- Setting - Setting is the physical environment of the historic property.
- Materials - Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration form a historic property.
- Workmanship - Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.
- Feeling - Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
- Association - Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

According to the Office of Historic Preservation's Technical Assistance Series Bulletin #6:

Integrity is the authenticity of an historical resource's physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance. Historical resources eligible for listing in the California Register must meet one of the criteria of significance described above and retain enough of their historic character or appearance to be recognizable as historical resources and to convey the reasons for their significance. It is possible that historical resources may not retain sufficient integrity to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register, but they may still be eligible for listing in the California Register.¹³

EVALUATION OF ELIGIBILITY

Friends of La Laguna have submitted a nomination, with support from the City of San Gabriel to the California Register of Historic Resources. It was determined that La Laguna eligible for listing under Criterion 3: "Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values." The support for this conclusion is summarized below.

Work of a Master – Benjamin Dominguez

La Laguna de San Gabriel is the final of many parks created by concrete master Benjamin Dominguez. La Laguna Park represents the culmination of Dominguez' artistic work and the many signature elements that he developed over a period of decades, and these signature elements are combined and represented in the park's large play-sculptures. Benjamin Dominguez (1894-1974) was a Mexican immigrant and master concrete artist who brought with him to the United States age-old techniques of concrete working and sculpture garden design that originated in Europe and were learned by Dominguez at the Academia de Artes Plasticas in Mexico City. Dominguez used this knowledge to create unique and highly imaginative children's playgrounds. The distinctive folk vernacular that Dominguez expressed in his play-sculptures and the mastery of concrete art that he displayed, were afforded an opportunity to shape and distinguish child's play during a time when city officials in the United States sought installations that fostered imaginative interaction from the children, but were designed with an aesthetic appeal to parents.

Characteristics of a Type and Period – Mid-Century Playground and Landscape

La Laguna de San Gabriel is significant as an excellent, increasingly rare example of a themed mid-century era playground. The aquatic themed pieces exhibit a combination of imagination, thought, and craftwork that was highly unique from its opening day, and is virtually impossible out of today's playground equipment catalogs. In 1963, Parks and Recreation Director, Frank Carpenter identified Benjamin Dominguez as the artist who could bring a creative nautical experience to the park. He asserted that granting a commission to Mr. Dominguez would result in the most outstanding feature of (then named) Municipal Park.¹⁴ Benjamin Dominguez was one of a known handful of Mexican immigrants who immigrated to Texas in the 1950s having learned the 250 year old European tradition of *faux-bois*: employing concrete to appear as wood. Based upon available research, La Laguna de San Gabriel, and the other playgrounds made by Dominguez, are the only municipal playgrounds in the United States created using *faux-bois* and related techniques of craftsmanship in concrete. Additionally, through the mixing of fantasy and real creatures in a highly considered composition, La Laguna takes its design cues

¹³ Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Parks and Recreation. California Register and National Register: A Comparison. Technical Assistance Series No. 6.

¹⁴ Minutes, San Gabriel Parks and Recreation Commission, November 4, 1963.

from Late-Renaissance sculpture gardens, exposure to which appears to have been part of Dominguez' training. La Laguna de San Gabriel appears to be highly unique as a municipal playground for referencing the Late-Renaissance sculpture tradition, a fortuitous coincidence of the artist's skill and the governing design principles in recreation at that time.

Additionally, La Laguna de San Gabriel is significant as an intact 1960s era landscape, with flowing pathways around an amoeboid shaped sandpit, a simple metal entryway with a sign hand lettered by Dominguez, and a bermed landscape of tropical themed plants that match the theme of the playground. The plantings parallel popular trends in 1960s era landscaping. This last element in particular appears upon early mock-ups of the park done by Dominguez, and the composition of his park was designed in correspondence to it (see Figure 3).

"Modernization," in addition to numerous fears regarding liability, has led to the destruction of playgrounds across the country of a similar character and time of La Laguna. Though La Laguna de San Gabriel appears to have been unique from its beginning, the park has gained exceptional significance as a rare example of its type: a hand-crafted, thoughtful and imaginative playground of one consistent theme, set within a highly intact, mid-century era landscape.

Possessing High Artistic Value – Interactive, Highly Refined Sculpture

The individual pieces are significant for the amount of hand-craftsmanship exhibited as municipal playground pieces. Many of them have highly expressive faces, with teeth—including human style molars-- eyes, antlers, and other features. Others have extended tentacles and tails and other elevated parts that were thoughtfully, purposely scaled by Dominguez for children to crawl and walk around. Dominguez' craftsmanship is present in the smallest details; tongues are portrayed with small fissures, a sea snail features a raked concrete pattern on its shell, many of the creatures feature smooth but slightly mottled surfaces which reveal the soft impressions of Dominguez' hands, and a pirate ship even features the *faux-bois* concrete woodwork in which Dominguez was trained.

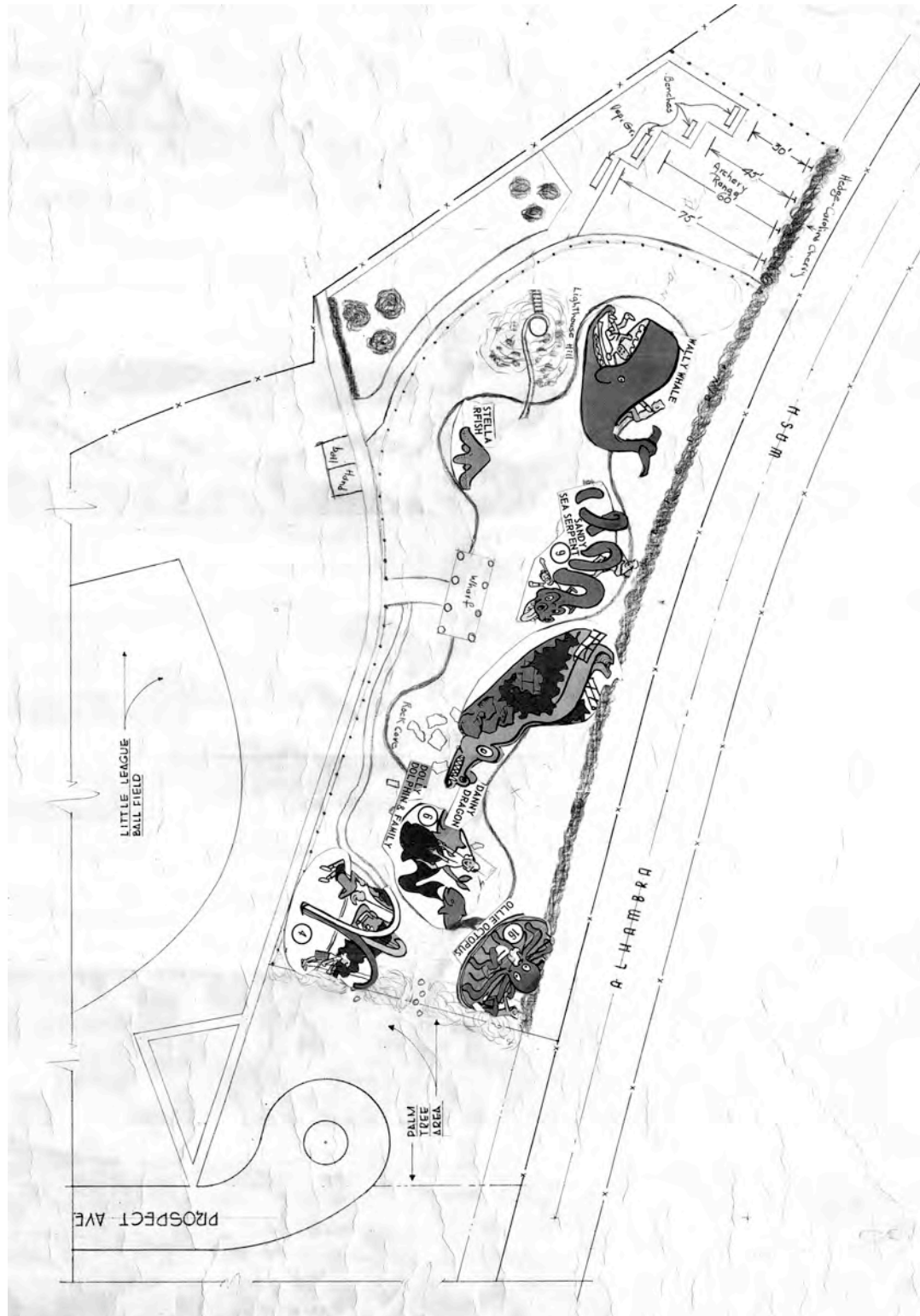


Figure 3. This is an image of the original site plan that Dominguez used to determine the layout of La Laguna. Note the handwritten, "palm grove" to the left. The figures were cut out of a brochure for Legg Lake, another of Dominguez' designs. Source: City of San Gabriel archives.

EVALUATION OF INTEGRITY

The **location** and **setting** of La Laguna de San Gabriel has retained full integrity since its construction. None of the sculptural pieces have been removed, and no other elements within the Sandy Lagoon have been added by the City of San Gabriel over time. This park was ideally located according to the Guide for Planning Recreation Parks for it was situated in a Post-World War II suburban neighborhood characterized by single family track homes, and this setting is still present. The Sandy Lagoon is set next to a tropical themed landscape of yuccas and palm trees that compliment the subtly exotic sea creature theme of the playground itself. This landscape, which is called "Island Berm," is located adjacent west of the Sandy Lagoon and is itself a character-defining feature of the overall scheme. Additional setting features include the presence of a shrub boundary encircling the playground, numerous original sidewalks that contour to the amoeboid shape of the sandpit, and original curbing defining the edges of the Sandy Lagoon. Dominguez' exemplary and thoughtful expression of **design** is retained. The sea creature theme was chosen by Dominguez for its child-friendliness. The design integrity of each piece is retained. Dominguez appears to have been familiar with the European tradition of Mannerist Sculpture Gardens, and the considered composition of pieces as they relate to one another was an intentional design, which is also retained. La Laguna presents a unique use of **workmanship** and **materials**, and the park continues to strongly express Dominguez' unique mastery of both. In Mexico, Dominguez was trained in the *faux-bois* (false wood) technique, which texturizes and colors concrete to provide the affect of wood. Aside from limited examples of his actual *faux-bois* work in the Sandy Lagoon, the same techniques and training are used to present numerous varied surfaces and details upon the sculptures, including highly expressive faces, numerous suspended tentacles and tails, and even handmade human molars with the "Minnie the Whale" slide. Dominguez was a master of concrete and his manner of use is still retained with full integrity at La Laguna. Often, Dominguez mixed paint into wet concrete in a technique similar to *buon fresco*. Though many of the pieces retain their original coloring, unfortunately some were painted in 2006-7. However, the original coloring is known and is present beneath the recent repaint. La Laguna retains its integrity of **feeling** as a whimsical expression of fantasy play thoughtfully scaled to young children. Additionally, due to the style of the pieces, their original coloring, and in no small part to the landscaping itself, La Laguna retains integrity of feeling as a mid-twentieth century 1960s era playground. La Laguna retains its integrity of **association** to Benjamin Dominguez himself as the designer/artist of the La Laguna.

CHAPTER 3: RESOURCE DESCRIPTIONS AND PRIORITIZATION

LOCATION AND SETTING

San Gabriel

The City of San Gabriel dates back to 1771 with the founding of the Mission San Gabriel Archangel, a California State historical landmark, and establishes San Gabriel as the birthplace of the Los Angeles region. The Mission San Gabriel Archangel was founded by Father Junipero Serra and is the fourth of twenty-one California Missions. As the original and oldest settlement north of San Diego and south of San Luis Obispo, it is from San Gabriel that the City of Los Angeles and the greater metropolitan area were established.

By 1852, the area had seen the Spanish replaced by Mexican settlers who were then replaced by American immigrants traveling west. After California joined the Union in 1850, San Gabriel became one of the first townships in the County of Los Angeles. When the 1860 census was taken, there were only 586 persons listed. The City was incorporated as a general law city on April 24, 1913 with a population of 1,500.

Today, with a population of over 40,000, San Gabriel is a multicultural city with an active community of different cultures, religions and ethnicities. It is still home to Mission San Gabriel and portions of the City are included in the recently established *Old Spanish National Historic Trail*. However, San Gabriel also has a rich collection of early to mid-twentieth century roadside architecture as a result of the tremendous growth that the City saw in the post-World War II period.

Vincent Lugo Park

La Laguna de San Gabriel is located in the Southeast corner of Vincent Lugo Park in the city of San Gabriel. A Little League baseball field is present in the Northeast corner of the park. Opposite La Laguna and the baseball field on the western side of the park, two children's play areas and a wading pool were added along with a picnic area. Today, these four features remain in the four corners of the park although they are separated along the north-south axis by an access road to the maintenance yard for the Department of Parks and Recreation.

The park itself abuts the Alhambra Wash and is tucked into a single-family residential neighborhood just south of the San Gabriel Village – a planned neighborhood and commercial district. The Minimal Traditional style tract homes that border the northern park access are characteristic of the post-World War II suburban growth that one can find throughout Southern California. One of the city's seven elementary schools, McKinley Elementary, borders the park's eastern side. Across Alhambra Wash, to the south of the park, is a residential area characterized by more recently constructed apartment buildings, town homes and condominiums. These neighborhoods are considered part of the Valley Boulevard commercial zone and do not have any direct access to the park. The City of Alhambra defines the Western border of the park with its delineation at Ramona Street.

La Laguna Site Description

Setting

La Laguna de San Gabriel is a designed environment comprised of several distinct but interrelated elements. The "Sandy Lagoon" is a curvilinear sandpit with an abstract, elongated amoeba-like form when viewed in plan containing a diverse array of play sculptures. This area serves as the centerpiece of La Laguna. The flowing walkways that encircle the Sandy Lagoon, the consciously designed landscape buffer that borders the Sandy Lagoon, and the Island Berm

on the western edge are other elements that create the overall cultural landscape. The Island Berm serves as a screen from the larger park as well as an informal entrance to La Laguna. These elements were purposefully designed to create a sense of escape for children coming to play.

Dominguez carefully considered the different views and expectations of the people coming to use La Laguna. The landscape is focused on the primary users, the children. These users begin their experience as they enter the Island Berm. This buffer zone serves to create a sense of leaving the orderly, manufactured world and entering a friendly but mysterious environment. The topography changes from flat to three-dimensional as the children climb over the bermed landscape. Their views are filtered through an array of exotic and highly textured plants.

For the secondary users, the parents, a more formal entrance was established along a very linear sidewalk and hedge. There is a formal gate and sign. For the average-height adult, the entire Sandy Lagoon is visible as the gate is approached. They see over the hedge as they enter through an orderly space. For these users, the goal is to provide visual access to facilitate proper supervision, although at the distance of the sand pit edge along the curvilinear pathways and park benches. The landscape and site features all serve to establish these user groups and set the expectations for their interactions at La Laguna.

The cultural landscape has been delineated in such a way to encompass all of these elements that shape the user experience at La Laguna. All elements, both manmade and natural, within this landscape are considered part of the historic resource and subject to the recommendations made in this report.

Entry



Although a chain-link fence distinguishes the outfield of the baseball diamond from the general park area, there is an asphalt pathway and low hedge to guide park visitors from the access road to "La Laguna," which is identified by a sign, inscribed "La Laguna de San Gabriel". The metal sign is rust-colored and squared on three sides with curved "cut-aways" on the top. The words "La Laguna de San Gabriel" are painted in white. Both the concrete pathway and hedge continue beyond this point, but visitors to the Laguna find this to be the official entryway.

Beyond the sign, there is a circular brick planter that contains mature palms. An internal concrete walkway winds around the planter and then follows the outline of the Sandy Lagoon. Just past the planter, on the northern side of La Laguna, is the original wooden dock from which the entire Laguna can be surveyed.

Surrounding Landscape



Integral in defining La Laguna as a destination, the landscape component consists of layers of plantings that serve to define the borders around the sandpit at near ground level where the features serve as virtual living wall around La Laguna. Most obvious are xylosma (north and east), oleander (south) and Carolina cherry (south) plantings that have been pruned into hedges to form sections of an outer parameter around three sides of the Sandy Lagoon. Chinese elms and taller individual plants create a permeable landscape enclosure that serves to define La Laguna vertically while maintaining visual accessibility from other nearby portions of

the park. All of these plant materials were common in early- and mid-twentieth century park environments.

Island Berm

The Island Berm sits to the western boundary of the Sandy Lagoon. It contains four types of palms, Canary Island pine trees, yuccas and junipers that provide accent plantings of a more sculptural character that create evergreen focal points in contrast with relative openness of the Sandy Lagoon. This berm provides a secondary and unofficial entry to the Sandy Lagoon. Historically that unofficial entrance was more clearly defined with flat, decomposed granite pathways through the raised berms. Over time, the berms have settled and the pathways have been blurred with the general space under the landscaping.

Sandy Lagoon

The Sandy Lagoon is an amoeboid shape bordered by a cement curb that surrounds the entirety of the Lagoon. The 14 play sculptures are contained within this area.

Individual Descriptions of Play Features in Sandy Lagoon

Dock (#1)



The Dock represents the official entry point from the larger park into “the Laguna.” It originally was accessed from each side by a short flight of steps up to the dock platform. Today, the gable-roofed open-sided structure retains two sets of steps that provide access from the north and west. A wide metal slide was installed at an unknown point in the past, replacing the south steps. The slide has been recently (2008) been removed because of safety concerns. Nine (9) large wood posts, each approximately eight-inches in diameter, support the platform. Some posts extend up, beyond the platform, representing piers on a wharf. A small, wood-

shingle gable roof shades the central portion of the platform.

There are four wooden steps up to the dock's platform. Originally, all four sides of the dock had stairs to access the platform. One can still see the base for each of the stairways, although only one remains intact. At the front of the dock is a wide metal slide descending into the Laguna. The dock has a simple roof supported by two posts centered on the sides of the platform. The wood was painted a deep red, but is now weathered and chipped.

Sammy the Snail (#2)



West of the dock is a snail, "Sammy". The snail is similar in scale to the whale and, at its center, contains a metal slide. Access to the slide can be found in the rear of the snail. As with other pieces, steps were cut out of the concrete to climb to the top of the structure before sliding down and out of the snail's mouth. The snail is currently painted bright yellow and blue, and has a distinctly graded texture that is different on each side of the snail. (This piece was originally

colored maroon and gold.) The colors wind around the conch-like shell of the snail. The mouth of the snail opens around the slide and at the top of the tentacles are two blue eye-spots. The snail exhibits a very strong surface texture that highlights the craft and care that Dominguez executed on these elements. The highly tactile shell surface is a premier character-defining feature for the snail.

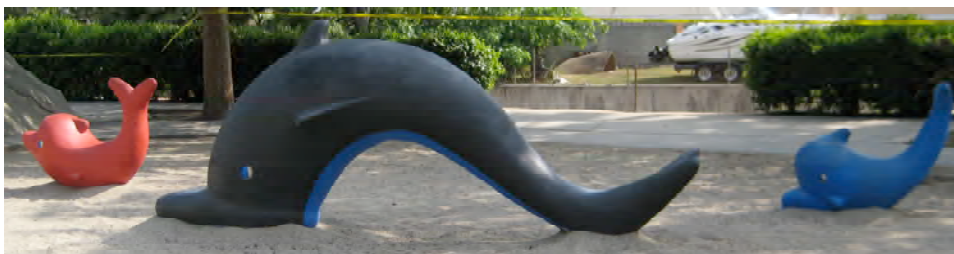
Stella the Starfish (#3)



Next to the snail sits the starfish, "Stella." It is perched on its five legs creating a space for children to crawl and hide under its body. Like the small dolphin, the starfish is also currently painted red. (Historically, it had a maroon-colored finish plaster.) On two of the legs, small notches were made so that, like other pieces, this sculpture could be climbed. The three remaining legs serve as slides back to the sand.

Dolphin Grouping (#4, 5 & 6)

Continuing around to the southern side of the Sandy Lagoon is another grouping of sculptures. These are the dolphin family of "Flipper", "Skippy" and "Peanut", as named by Dominguez.



The "mother," currently painted black and white, appears to be jumping though the sandy water and is frozen just as her head is about to plunge under again.

Her back arches up making a steep climb from her snout. At the top of her back, she stands about three and one half feet off the ground, but the slope to her tail is a gentle curve that creates a small slide for park users. (Historically, this element was blue with a white belly.)

She is centered against her two “baby dolphins” who sit behind her to the south. All three face Lookout Mountain to the east, but the two little dolphins seem to be sitting on top of the sandy water. The dolphin that is closest to Lookout Mountain is currently painted red and stands about two and one half feet off the ground at its highest point. (Historically, this element was maroon.) The other is currently painted blue and does not have its head held as high as the first. (Historically, this element was green.) Both function as perches or resting places and are too small to serve as slides.

Sea Serpent (#7)



The central sculpture in the Sandy Lagoon, snaking through the middle of the Sandy Lagoon is a long blue and yellow sea serpent situated along the east-west axis. The serpent faces west and has a wide open grin that shows the remnants of a toothy smile, a concrete “beard” extends below its lower jaw. Yellow spines/ fins line the back of the sea serpent and provide toe holds for climbing. The length of the serpent submerges into the sandy lagoon three times, creating archways large enough to pass underneath the body of the serpent.

Lookout Mountain (#8)



Dominating the southern side of the Sandy Lagoon is the largest piece of La Laguna: Lookout Mountain. This sculpture reaches a height of approximately 10-15 feet and covers a significant amount of ground at its base. The sides are sloped and have the same rocky construction as the lighthouse and seals. There are two stairways to access the top of the structure, again designed for two skill levels. Facing Lookout Mountain the more gentle and

sloping access is visible on the right hand side. Gentle stairs that are short and large take visitors to the top of the mountain where they can access the largest slide in the Laguna. The more advanced access to the top of the mountain is located toward the rear of the structure on the east side. At the top of the mountain one finds the second and largest sea monster. The tip of the tail curves up and off of the mountain while the body snakes down to the sandy lagoon below. Like the sea monster on the Lighthouse, Dominguez used two colors on this slide as well: a muted green for the body and a light blue for the internal slide. This Sea Monster also has large fangs set in a semi-smiling face. The slide exits between the monster’s eye and nostrils. On the side of the monster’s head are two yellow fins.

Originally, Lookout Mountain had a surface coating of integrally colored cement. Its color was similar to that of the sunken ship, beige with maroon accents. This treatment for the mountain form was also used on the Seals and on the Lighthouse. In all cases, the surface layer (and color) has been worn away by years of children climbing over these surfaces. Three shade trees were

once present along the slide on Lookout Mountain. They fell in 2005, damaging the surface, and have been removed.

Seals (#9, 10 & 12)



To the immediate left of the dock sits a grouping of sculptures. Four pieces are placed in close proximity: three seals perched on rocks and a sinking ship. The concrete “rocks” reach a height of approximately three feet and the seals were designed with the intent that they provide a resting place. A treasure chest sits at the base of the first rock formation. It is a piece that showcases Benjamin Dominguez’s mastery of the art of “concrete wood,” also known as *faux-bois* or *trabajo rustico*. The chest is made of concrete with a grainy texture and reddish color that give it the appearance of being made from wood. Above the treasure chest the date “1765”, exactly 200 years prior to the completion of the Laguna, is scratched into the rock. The second rock and seal sculpture sits just to the east of the first. This rock is distinguished from the first with a skull and cross-bones carved into its side. It, too, stands about three feet off the ground and the seal is perched in similar fashion. The third seal shares the basic characteristics of the other two, except that it lacks a distinguishing marking on the rocks. All seals are facing south and are positioned to stand sentry over the sinking ship that completes the grouping. The seals are all currently painted black and the “rocks” below no longer have their colored surface layer. (Historically the seals were maroon and sat on beige-colored rocks.)

Ship (#11)



The sinking ship, christened “The Red Pirate”, is another example of Dominguez’s concrete wood. The ship appears to be 2/3 submerged, the black-painted captain’s cabin and its three white portholes is just beginning to disappear into the sand and a broken mast on top of the ship provides yet another resting place.

The ship is a warm beige color with streaks of red to show the grain of the “wood” similar to the treasure chest. The name of the ship is written on its side and a chain disappears into the sand, giving the image of an anchor buried below.

Ozzie the Octopus (#13)



Across the Sandy Lagoon, located on the southern side of La Laguna is "Ozzie," an octopus, who faces north. Ozzie retains its original muted blue color with white suckers on its tentacles, colors that were added to the concrete itself. Six of the eight tentacles support the body of the Octopus and each curves back on itself to create a series of hoops that children, to which this sculpture is deliberately scaled, can climb on and through. The two remaining tentacles are wrapped around the head of the Octopus in varying fashion. The tentacle on the right almost makes a figure eight as its tip gently touches Ozzie's head. The tentacle on the right curves up and come to rest on the top of the Octopus' head.

The Lighthouse (#14)

Continuing around the eastern side of the Sandy Lagoon is the second of two "lookouts." The

Lighthouse stands over the imaginary calamity unfolding in the seal and ship grouping of sculptures. In this play sculpture, Benjamin Dominguez combined three of his signature features: rocks, a climbing tower, and a serpentine slide. The base of the Lighthouse is a series of rocks, designed to give the appearance of a rocky-shore line. Once-small shrubs placed behind the rocky base now cover the back side of the sculpture, obscuring one of the stairways to the tower itself. Built into the front of the sculpture and the rocky base are stairs that curve from the ground to the base of the lighthouse.



The Lighthouse stands approximately twenty feet above the rocks with an iron railing at the point of the lens. A red roof adorns the top of the structure. At the base of the Lighthouse, on its northern side, a door way opens to a metal-rung ladder placed inside the cylindrical structure. The ladder extends to an exit located just beyond the mid-point of the tower. The exit gives out to a green sea monster that is wrapped around the currently painted white Lighthouse. The tail of the sea serpent rests on the rocky-base as does its neck and head. Its body is arched upward to

reach the exit from the Lighthouse. The body of the serpent is hollowed to make a slide from the Lighthouse to the ground. The serpent is presently painted in two colors, with a green body and light blue slide. Its toothy grimace is dominated by two large fangs and red eyes. Like the other "mountainous" surface, this one has lost its original surface layer. (Historically, the lighthouse has a white cement surface color and the serpent was an earthy shade of green.)

Minnie the Whale (#15)

Beyond the Lighthouse, in the most eastern point of the Laguna, is another signature feature of Benjamin Dominguez's parks: the Whale. The Whale, called "Minnie" by Dominguez, is presently painted bubble gum pink with a wide smiling mouth that houses very white teeth,



notably square molars. (Historically, this element was blue.) She is oriented on a north-south axis with her mouth opening south. Running through the center of the Whale's mouth is a metal slide that can be accessed by climbing three stairs built into the west-facing side. The exterior of the Whale has a particular texture that is distinct from other pieces in the collection, namely the sea serpents. The red mouth of the Whale also has a clear texture to create the appearance of reality. The Whale's construction deviates from earlier examples of Dominguez's work because the slide and exit are in the mouth of the Whale. Most commonly the artist had created the stairway

inside the mouth of the whale and the slide followed the curve and descent of the Whale's back. The only other known example of this type of Whale sculpture can be found at Garden Grove's Atlantis Park, also constructed by Dominguez.

Additional Site Features

Several site features contribute to the nostalgic feel of La Laguna. Some are related to La Laguna and date to the period of significance and others were installed at different dates as part of general park maintenance and improvements.



Light Standards

These light standards are believed to be original elements of La Laguna as they are depicted in the 1965 Opening Day historic photograph. These standards are a typical municipal design that was utilized in San Gabriel, and throughout Southern California, from the 1920s through the late 1960s. The fluted, tapered concrete post has a rough texture from its exposed aggregate. The "acorn" shade on several of the La Laguna standards is also a typical feature from this era. Most of these standards no longer retain their original acorn shade, making this a nice example of its type.



Cabana

The aluminum cabana between the Octopus and the Whale serves as one of the only shaded areas in that section of the La Laguna. Installed sometime after opening day, these features were also placed in other locations throughout the larger park. While not part of the original installation, its design is in keeping with the exotic theme of La Laguna and is well matched with the palms in the island berm to the west.

Benches

The current benches are constructed of steel brackets supporting a series of aluminum slats. They are modern replacements of the original wood and steel benches. The current benches are in original locations and approximate the original designs.



Planters

The circular brick planter near the Dock dates to the opening day of La Laguna. They were one of the features that the City used to integrate La Laguna with the rest of the park. Because it dates to the period of significance, it has become part of the La Laguna landscape. Its palm tree shades the official entrance gate and provides a connection to the Island Berm to the west.

Walkways

The pathways around La Laguna were designed by Dominguez for several functions. First they serve as a distinct boundary area between the grass and the sand of the Laguna. Secondly, they were the primary circulation paths for parents supervising their children at La Laguna. As such, they acted as an unofficial

border between the world of adults and the world of children, between reality and fantasy. Originally they were covered with decomposed granite. At some point after opening day, the paths were executed in concrete. These are the sidewalks that encircle the area today. The original pattern, location and boundary elements remain intact and are character-defining features of La Laguna. The original decomposed granite walkways were replaced with concrete sometime after opening day.

CHARACTER-DEFINING SPACES AND FEATURES

This section of the report establishes the Character-Defining Features (CDF) of the property. The major features for the site are discussed first, followed by discussion of the features on individual structures. All are presented in a prioritized list according to their historical and architectural significance (see below). Each element and space is listed in the first column. Next is its historical ranking: premier (P), important (I), contributing (C), or non-contributing (NC). If the element or space cannot be listed then it is unknown (UK) - either because there is no valid historical research to verify its importance or it was not accessible for visual inspection. After this, its condition ranking is provided: Excellent (E), Good (G), Fair (F) and Poor (P). Diagrams representing the prioritization of spaces can be found on page 38 of this document.

Significance Evaluation

Assessment of various features and spaces is done according to a double evaluation system. First, each of these elements is assigned a priority rating to create a sense of the relative historical importance of these spaces and features. In assessing the historic importance of each feature, a rating scale of "Premier-Important-Contributing-Non-Contributing" is used. This system allowed for the analysis of the structure as a whole to guide what types of work should be done, and where such work could be completed with the least damage to the historic integrity of the resource. The application of this scale to features and spaces differs slightly and is discussed in greater detail in the appropriate sections below.

PRIORITIZATION OF SPACES

For La Laguna, the prioritization of spaces takes into consideration a number of factors, including the selection of Preservation as a treatment methodology. Documented original intent, function of spaces, modifications to and evolution of the spaces, material integrity and current condition all impact the eventual determination of significance for a given space.

Therefore, when prioritizing spaces, it is important to consider a relative balance of priorities to effectively and responsibly guide the architectural treatments within the area of effect. For La Laguna, the general hierarchy of prioritization criteria was as follows.

Premier (Red)

Premier areas are those areas that are directly associated with the identified period of significance and whose contribution to the interpretation and communication of the historic resource is of primary importance. Loss of these features / spaces would significantly impact the resource and may result in it no longer being eligible for listing on the State and/or National Registers. For these reasons, when developing mitigation plans for project-related work, all areas labeled, “premier” should not be altered in any fashion. Failing to do so could result in a significant impact to the resource.

For La Laguna, Premier spaces were categorized as such because they fell into one or more of the following:

- They were/are critical to the historical interpretation of La Laguna de San Gabriel;
- They were directly produced and/or created by Benjamin Dominguez for the purposes of advancing children’s play;
- They retain a high degree of material integrity and readily communicate their historical appearances and function;
- Define the traditional core of the La Laguna experience.

Important (Blue)

Important areas and features for La Laguna are directly associated with the identified period of significance and informing the interpretation and communication of the historic resource but to a lesser degree than those with a premier ranking. These areas help to define the physical and historical context for the space but do not independently represent the historical significance of the resource. These spaces differ from premier areas because they embody, to a lesser degree, historic aspects of the resource. Sometimes they are secondary landscape features connected to the experience of the park but not directly crafted by the artist.

The loss or significant alteration to these spaces would still allow the historic nature of the space to be discerned, but the overall experience would be severely impacted. Other times they are associated with lesser aspects of the period of significance.

Important spaces were designated because they were designed to influence the experience of the space, but were not directly executed by the hand of the artist. Additionally, they could include:

- Spaces that were directed at secondary users (parents) rather than primary users (children). These spaces include the curb and the sidewalk spaces.
- The curb is important for its role in defining the boundaries of the Sandy Lagoon area of La Laguna. If the park were to lose this transitional element, the sand would become diffuse at the edges of the park and a sense of moving from one space to another would be diminished. Therefore, the curb plays a vital role in defining the everyday world from the imaginary world of La Laguna.
- The sidewalk was the primary circulation route for parents to use while supervising their children. It helped to define the various users of the park and how each experienced it from various heights, locations and vantage points.

- Transitional spaces between the outside world and the fantasy world of La Laguna such as the Island Berm – a less structured entry to the park that shapes the experience in a way that the formal entrance cannot.

Contributing (Yellow)

Contributing areas and features for La Laguna are part of the physical or historical context for the resource but not directly associated with the main historical themes or areas of significance. They serve as visual buffers between La Laguna and the rest of the modern park and provide the immediate setting for resource.

These areas help to further enhance the resource through several means. Potential alterations in these areas would impact the park, but loss of any one area or element may or may not be of consequence to the historical integrity of the resource. However, cumulative loss in these areas is of concern, therefore they are included for further consideration. How these spaces are treated will impact the setting for the resource.

In general, contributing elements augment the interpretation of historic significance but do not hold a high level of historic value themselves. They could be areas that have been previously compromised, more modern intrusions that have acquired historic significance through continued use by La Laguna visitors, were installed after the period of significance but are still of a high artistic or cultural value, still available for replacement in kind, or simply related to the period of significance but not of primary historic importance. The loss of, or modification to, contributing areas lessens the overall level of integrity of the historic resource but not to a level where its interpretation of significance or historical importance is severely compromised. However, loss of all contributing areas would severely impact the resource. It is a cumulative impact that must be analyzed when modifications are made within contributing areas.

Contributing spaces at La Laguna are spaces that:

- Have been modified during the period of significance,
- Are designed for the benefit of secondary users, such as sidewalk landscaping near the park borders,
- Are not directly attributed to the original design but have become important features of the landscape over time such as the light standards and metal shade pavilion and the addition of concrete to the pathways.

Non-Contributing (Grey)

Non-Contributing areas and features for La Laguna are defined as being from outside the period of significance, of poor quality or not related to the period of significance or any figures or events associated with the historic interpretation of the resource.

Any space shaded grey should be considered non-contributing to the cultural landscape and setting for La Laguna de San Gabriel. When possible, all alterations and modifications should be undertaken with designs that only effect non-contributing areas, or that limit their disruptions to mostly non-contributing spaces. However, changes in these areas could impact the park simply because of their proximity to the main resource. Careful consideration of such designs will retain the maximum level of historic integrity and result in the least amount of damage and disruption to the resource as a whole.

At La Laguna, non-contributing areas are mostly comprised areas that:

- Have no clear historical function,
- They historically served as storage and utility spaces, or
- Are associated with activities and uses that are not related to La Laguna, such as access to Alhambra Wash or circulation paths that are unrelated to access to La Laguna.

A Space Prioritization Diagram follows to illustrate how the various spaces intersect and inform the more general site planning and landscape discussions. A spreadsheet summarizing the various spaces and their ratings is also provided for quick reference.

LA LAGUNA
VINCENT LUGO PARK
SAN GABRIEL, CA.

Drawing Not to Scale

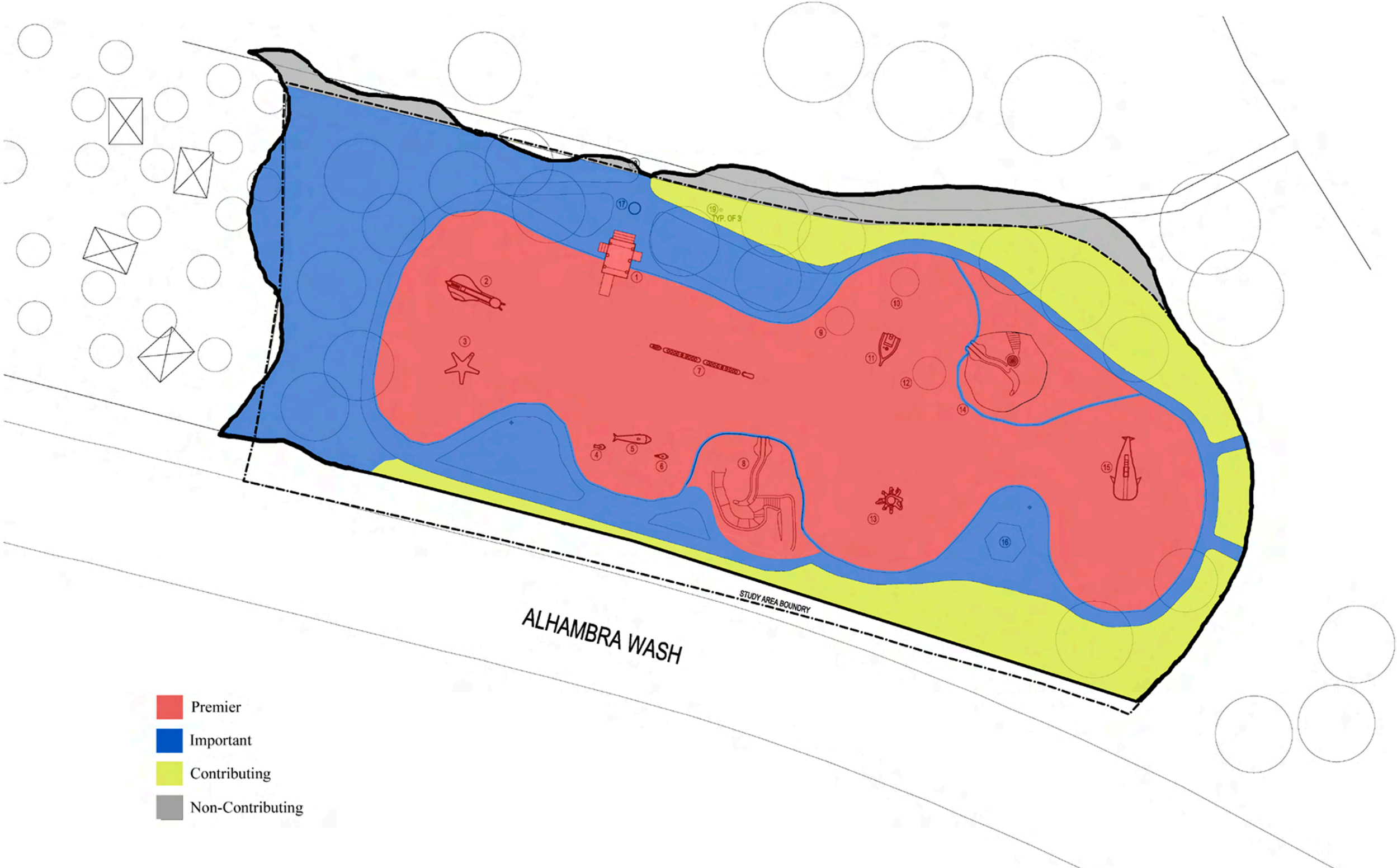
SITE PLAN
SPACE PRIORITIZATION
DIAGRAM

PROJ. NO. 2007 - 026
SCALE AS NOTED
DATE
PHASE
DRAWN
CHECKED

| NO. | DATE | REVISION |
|------------|------|--|
| 10/17/2008 | | Boundaries Adjusted to Reflect Proposed Design |

SHEET NO.
A-1.01

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- Premier
- Important
- Contributing
- Non-Contributing

PRIORITIZATION OF FEATURES

Like space, it is often helpful to prioritize the character-defining features that make up a historic resource. For La Laguna, these features include items on the individual play structures, as well as landscape elements and the landscaping materials themselves. The arrangements are often as important as the objects when the resource is particularly dependent on the interplay of positive and negative spaces. The hierarchy for prioritization is similar to that used for spaces (primary, important contributing and non-contributing, but the definitions are more specific.

Premier

A premier rating is given to those features that are directly associated with the identified period or periods of significance and whose contribution to the interpretation and communication of a historic resources is of primary importance. If these features are removed, the historic integrity of the resources is highly compromised. Depending on the size, scale, and relationship of these items with the period of significance, historic integrity could be lost altogether. For these reasons, when developing mitigation plans for project-related work, all elements labeled, “premier” should not be altered in any fashion. Failing to do so could result in a significant impact to the resource.

For La Laguna Premier features include:

- The play structures and other large features within the landscape
- Original materials
- Anthropomorphic features on each sculpture
- Spatial relationships

Important

Features given a rating of important are also directly associated with the identified period or periods of significance and they also inform the interpretation and communication of the historic resource. These elements differ from premier elements because they embody, to a lesser degree, historic aspects of the resource. Sometimes they are secondary decorative elements, which if removed or altered would affect the space, but still allow the historic nature of the space to be discerned, even if in a more limited way. Other times they are associated with lesser aspects of the period of significance.

For La Laguna Important features include:

- Functional features such as steps and handholds to facilitate age appropriate play
- Texture
- Special artist-intended idiosyncrasies

Contributing

Contributing elements augment the interpretation of historic significance but do not hold a high level of historic value themselves. They could be items that have been previously compromised, modern replacements for original items, been installed after the period of significance but are still of a high artistic or cultural value, still available for replacement in kind, or simply related to the period of significance but not of primary historic importance. The loss of contributing elements lessens the overall level of integrity of the historic resource but not to a level where its interpretation of significance or historical importance is severely compromised.

For La Laguna, Contributing features include:



- Various artist-intended landscape features
- Material used for circulation pathways
- Elements in secondary or Contributing spaces

Non-Contributing

These elements are typically from outside the period of significance, are of poor quality, are still commercially available or are not related to the period of significance or any figures or events associated with the historic interpretation of the resource. When possible, all alterations and modifications should be undertaken with designs that only effect non-contributing elements, or that limit their disruptions to mostly non-contributing elements. Such designs will retain the maximum level of historic integrity and result in the least amount of damage and disruption to the resource as a whole.

A spreadsheet summarizing the various features and their ratings is also provided for quick reference.

La Laguna de San Gabriel Character-Defining Features and Spaces

| Character-Defining Feature | Priority Ranking | Play Structure# |
|---|------------------|---|
| The 14 concrete play structures | P | 2 through 15 |
| extended components such as tails and tentacles present upon these sculptures | P | 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15 |
| faces and facial expressions | P | 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 |
| consistency of the aquatic theme | P | 1 through 15 |
| soft, rounded edges and corners | P | 2 through 15 |
| open spaces between various playstructures | P | 1 through 15 |
| low, open spaces beneath and defined by play structures | P | 3, 5, 7, 13, 14 |
| composition of the playstructures within the Sandy Lagoon | P | 1 through 15 |
| presence of theme sub-grouped arrangements | P | 4 through 6, 9 through 12 |
| examples of <i>faux-bois</i> | P | 9, 11 |
| Hand formed surface texture | P | 2, 15 |
| inset climbing steps within various play structures | I | 2, 3, 15 |
| both large and small handmade steps | I | 8, 14 |
| hand scored groove work to create rocks | I | 8, 9, 10, 12, 14 |
| Dock and its placement | I | 1 |
| texture and workmanship features | I | 2 through 15 |
| surface and colorization techniques | I | 2 through 15 (still visible upon 3, 7, 8, 11, 13) |
| shade trees upon Lookout Mountain | I | 8 |
| The etched year "1765," the skull and | I | 9 through 12 |

| | | |
|--|----|--------------|
| crossbones, and the etched words "Drake" and "The Red Pirate" located in the Seal Harbor subgrouping | | |
| slight irregularities in surface that convey handmade aspect of sculptures | I | 2 through 15 |
| Sandy Lagoon: Ameboid shape of sandpit , curb, sand | P | N/A |
| Island Berm | P | N/A |
| Perimeter hedge landscaping | C | N/A |
| Circular brick palm planter | C | N/A |
| Pathway placement and form | I | N/A |
| Pipe railing inside the Lighthouse | C | 14 |
| Sand as ground cover | I | N/A |
| Metal entry sign | C | N/A |
| Hexagonal picnic canopy | NC | N/A |
| Traditional 1920s design light standard with acorn globe | C | N/A |
| Aluminum park benches | NC | N/A |
| Location of park benches | C | N/A |
| Metal slide added to the Dock | NC | 1 |

CHAPTER 4: CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Once the first step of establishing historical significance of each space and element is completed, the second phase is an assessment of physical condition of the elements. On-site observations and test results are recorded and each element is assigned a conditions rating that corresponds to their physical condition and potential for repair and continued use. Because of the complexity of the La Laguna resource, three different types of condition assessments were used: Structural, Material and Safety. For each structure, a summary of the safety assessment commissioned by the City and completed by Safety Play, Inc. in 2007 is provided along with any notable structural and physical assessments performed by the consultant team.

When looking at La Laguna, this evaluation takes into consideration the entire resource as presented in Figure 1. The interaction between the landscape and site features and the actual play structures is a critical component that shapes the users' experiences. Both types of elements are included in this evaluation.

EVALUATION OVERVIEW

There are two areas that were reviewed in depth as part of the site assessment for La Laguna: structural integrity and material conditions. Under this approach, the pieces and overall assembly of elements was surveyed, studied and assessed. Due to the use of the resource, the area of play safety was also considered. The safety recommendations to meet contemporary standards, as outlined in the City's 2007 Safety Assessment, were reviewed for determination of potential adverse impacts on the historical resource. Consideration of the recommendations as a potential alteration or modification to the resource was also undertaken.

Structural Assessment

Each creature was assessed for its structural integrity using several structural assumptions to facilitate mathematical modeling. This first assumption adopted is that creatures standing on legs (also known as columns or piers) are self-contained structurally where each column acts as an end-bearing pier supported on a concrete spread footing. Below grade the spread footing is often continuous and can be formed into a ring such as is done for the starfish. The structure within the creature above grade acts like it has a beam along the creature's back spanning between its legs. A second assumption was to evaluate some creatures as having a structure that is characteristic of having a below grade continuous beam with multiple above grade beam spans between the two end points of the grade beam such as seen in the Sea Serpent. A third assumption was developed for evaluating the Snail, and the Blue Dolphin. Each of these were assumed to have a below-grade continuous linear beam supporting the majority of the structure but also having features that extend horizontally beyond the limits of the grade beam. This configuration models like a cantilevered structure. One other unique case was the Whale's mouth where the head's structure shape is analogous to a structural channel.

All structures were visually inspected in the field. The inspection was to observe any structural cracks, spalls in concrete, settlement and other conditions. No destructive testing was undertaken as part of this inspection.

Reinforcing steel is present in the structures. Reviewing construction photos of earlier, similar Dominguez structures at other sites, the steel is placed in a grid about 12 inches on center. The steel is probably 1/2 inch diameter bars. Additional reinforcing is placed around edges and at openings. Wire mesh may have been used in some areas.



Because of the curved shape of all surfaces, exact thickness measurements are not available. From visual observation, it is assumed that the typical concrete thickness is about 12 inches. Deducting 1/2 inch for mortar top and bottom plus 1 inch of concrete cover for the reinforcing, a conservative effective depth, "d," for the reinforcing steel is 9 inches. This depth was used for the analysis.

The Dock is a wood structure with posts, beams and decking.

Concrete strength, "F'c," was assumed to be 2000 psi. The reinforcing steel was assumed to be mild steel with an allowable working stress of 18,000 psi.

Because each animal has a unique shape, the loading location varies. Therefore, structural loading was assumed to be a large adult standing at the most critical stress location on each animal. The assumed weight (load) was 300 pounds. (This is equivalent to approximately six children on the back of any animal.) The load was based on the building code criteria for stairs and other elements of a 300 pound point load. Since it would be difficult to place a 300 pound point load on any of the animals, it is assumed that the load was spread over two feet of width. In the case of cantilever horizontal elements, these same criteria were applicable. For vertical cantilevers, such as the Dolphin's tail, a horizontal force of 300 pounds was applied.

A simplified approach was taken and assumes that most of the animals behave as a simple beam. In several of the animals a cantilever condition exists. Lookout Mountain is effectively a slab on grade condition with no special structural load conditions. The thickness of the slab over earth is adequate.

Material Assessment

The existing conditions of the material were surveyed on site in April 2008. Findings were recorded on forms as well as on drawings and sketches. Each element was visually inspected for cracks, spalling and missing features. A rubber mallet was used to selectively sound objects for delamination of the concrete surface color coat from the concrete substructure. Photographs were taken to supplement the recordation efforts. No destructive or material composition testing was completed as part of this assessment.

Safety Assessment

The City had Safety Play, Inc., an outside consulting firm, complete a safety Audit Report in September 2007 for La Laguna. The methods used to create this audit are primarily derived from contemporary safety industry standards for the manufacture, installation and use of modern, factory manufactured playground equipment. Therefore, the evaluation provided in this assessment is set in this context: a comparative analysis of La Laguna to modern metal, plastic and rubber structures. It utilizes sections of the California Health and Safety Code, guidelines published by the Consumer Product Safety Commission and guidelines put forth by the American Society for Testing and Materials, with the underlying assumption that La Laguna was not in compliance with H&S Code Section 115725 and would be upgraded with modifications to the play components that would conform to contemporary playground-related safety standards.

The Safety Play, Inc. report states:

"We reserve the right to change any evaluation and end recommendations in the interest of safety. Some reasons for this are due to the fact of there being so many varieties and customized types of play apparatus that certain existing standards



may or may not apply. ... Hence it is always possible for you to come up with a solution that works.”

Safety Play, Inc.’s report uses several classifications to prioritize repairs. These generally correlate to the perceived hazard level for various deficiencies in design and execution. These priority classifications are defined as follows:¹

Class 1 Hazards

Any condition which is life threatening or can cause severe, permanent disability such as head or neck entrapments, entanglements, crush points, grossly improper guardrails or barriers, certain loose bolts, hazardous surfacing, equipment no longer allowed, etc.

Class 2 Hazards

Any condition which can cause serious or non-disabling injury such as pinch points, some improper use zones, improper equipment for intended ages, some surfacing types or depths, lack of some signs/labels, etc.

Class 3 Hazards

Any condition which may cause slight injury, or, a condition which may not cause an injury but does not meet requirements in ASTM 1487 or CPSC Guidelines such as lack of certain safety signs, poor maintenance, etc.²

In terms of ADA accessibility, the Safety Play, Inc. Audit Report concludes that La Laguna’s “equipment was installed before 12/20/00, so the ADAAG rules do not apply” and goes on to define alteration and repair in the context of ADA rules.

STRUCTURAL AND MATERIAL FINDINGS

The primary materials found within the boundaries of the resource are sand and concrete. The concrete is of two different types: a rough base mix with larger aggregate and an integral color cement mortar finish layer. In some places the finish color layer has worn away completely. In other places it has been covered by paint (applied c.2007.) A limited number of features have their original surfaces exposed although all (except the mountain features) retain their original finish layers to some degree.

None of the creatures exhibited any obvious settlement. Based on this observation it appears that the foundations are adequate.

Site Features

The site features are all in good condition. The light standards have vertical cracks that require repair. Replacement of this standard with one of similar design would also be an appropriate solution. The planter shows little signs of wear in spite of the size of the tree contained within its vessel. The sidewalks are all in good condition with little shifting or undulation. The benches are all relatively recent installations, in good condition, that are placed within the historic bench locations.

¹ All definitions are quoted from *Playground Safety Audit Report for City of San Gabriel, CA: La Laguna Park*. Dated August 17, 2007.

² ASTM refers to the American Society for Testing and Materials. CPSC stands for Consumer Products Safety Commission. Both publish guidelines for product safety, including playground equipment.



Within the Sandy Lagoon, the curbing is fairly uniform and stable. However, the sand is hard-packed and overall levels are quite low. Foundations are exposed throughout the Sandy Lagoon.

Dock (#1)

The Dock was structurally analyzed as a wood deck and joists. It has limited structural integrity in its present conditions. The wood is severely deteriorated, particularly at the decking and foundation, and may have pest damage, including termites. While the roof appears to be sound, overall, it is in poor condition.

Snail (#2)

There is a mixture of textures and patterns that is unique to this piece. Portions of the shell are deeply ribbed and slightly uneven, showing the hand-crafted nature of the texture application. The body of the Snail is quite smooth and even with slight undulations from the hand application of the final cement plaster layer. It has been recently painted yellow and blue. There is evidence near the exposed foundations of the original surface colors of maroon and gold. It is assumed that this piece was painted to cover graffiti tags.

The Snail was structurally analyzed as a cantilevered head. It was found to be structurally sound with only minor surface damage. There is localized delamination on the head, just off its center as well as along the seams separating the colors on the spirals of the shell. In these areas there is crazing of the surface but no water damage from the crazing is apparent. There are minor surface voids along the stairs from continual use and impact. The foundation is exposed at the end of the slide and near the steps. This is one of the pieces that was recently painted. Originally it was maroon and gold cement. Today it is painted yellow and blue.

Starfish (#3)

The Starfish was structurally analyzed as a series of beams on columns. It was found to be structurally sound. This piece also exhibits minor surface crazing, especially on the body. The underside of the structure is retaining a minor amount of water that has resulted in small areas of efflorescence at the boundaries between the original color coats. It has exposed foundations and has been painted red. Its original cement finish was maroon. The overall damage is very minor and the piece is in good condition.

Blue Dolphin (#4)

The Blue Dolphin was structurally analyzed as with a cantilevered tail. It was found to be structurally sound. There is minor surface crazing and several minor spalls along the tail. This piece was recently painted blue. Originally it had green cement finish.

Grey Dolphin (#5)

The Grey Dolphin was structurally analyzed as a beam. It was found to be structurally sound. There is minor surface crazing, particularly on the underside of the arch. These areas showed some efflorescing. There appears to be delamination along the back ridge of the piece as well as areas where the surface layers have worn off on the tail and near the head. This piece was recently painted black. Its original surface was a two-tone blue and white integrally colored cement design.

Red Dolphin (#6)

The Red Dolphin was structurally analyzed as with a cantilevered tail. It was found to be structurally sound. There is minor surface crazing and several minor spalls along the tail. This piece was recently painted red. Originally it had maroon cement finish.



Sea Serpent (#7)

The Sea Serpent was structurally analyzed as with a beam and head / tail. It was found to be structurally sound. There is minor surface crazing and several minor spalls along the tail. This piece was recently painted blue. Originally it had green cement finish. The surface crazing on this piece appears to be deeper than that on the other structures. Areas of moisture retention were observed on the sides along the back arch. There are several material voids along the spikes and tail of this piece, as well as missing teeth in the mouth. (This appears to have been a historical problem based on photographs.) The chin and several spikes have had poorly executed repairwork, with inappropriate cement and low quality execution. There are areas where the rebar is exposed (top of the head, between two of the body segments) that will patching and repair of the surface. The sand here is very low and the foundations are exposed between the arched segments.

Lookout Mountain (#8)

Lookout Mountain appears to be constructed as a built-up mound of soil covered by a reinforced concrete slab on grade. The thickness of this concrete is undetermined. This element was structurally analyzed as a beam and as a slab on grade. It was found to have some areas of concern. There are several large cracks where trees fell and damaged the concrete. The resulting voids were patched with incompatible material. Large cracks have developed and water is infiltrating the interior of the soil mound. Settlement of the soil has shifted the supporting materials and left some areas of the concrete vulnerable to further damage.

The slide portion of this structure is relatively sound and has only minor damage from continual use. There is suspected delamination on the top of the tail and the slide has been the recipient of recent graffiti attacks. This has marred the original green concrete surface of the slide. The "mountainous" surface was once covered with a colored cement coat that has long since worn away. This has left the underlayer of concrete exposed. Weathering of this layer has resulted in a brittle, friable surface.

Poorly executed repairs and the loss of the finish coat have left the surface vulnerable to wear and deterioration. The surface is unstable and very sandy. Moisture is infiltrating the surface through major and minor cracks as well as around the edges of the recent repairs. This element requires the furthest extent of material repair.

West Seal on Rock (#9)

The West Seal was structurally analyzed as a cantilevered head. It was found to be structurally sound with only minor surface damage. This damage includes minor cracking on the seal's chin, a void in the flipper and the loss of the original color coat from the mountainous field surface. This surface was also once a brown color like the mountain field of Lookout Mountain and other similar pieces of elements 8, 10, 11 and 14. The maroon seal was recently painted black.

North Seal (#10)

The North Seal was structurally analyzed as a cantilevered head. It was found to be structurally sound with only minor surface damage. This damage includes minor cracking and a chip along the smile scoring, a deep crack in the mountain field, and the loss of the original color coat from the mountainous field surface. This surface was also once a brown color like the mountain field of Lookout Mountain and other similar pieces of elements 8, 9, 11 and 14. The maroon seal was recently painted black.



This piece was being sprayed by a nearby irrigation sprinkler during the site visit. By the afternoon, this area remained wet because of the shade of the nearby Chinese elm trees. No immediate damage as a result at this time.

Ship (#11)

The Ship was structurally analyzed as a beam. It was found to be structurally sound. Only minor surface conditions were noted. These include slight moisture staining along the sides of the ship, efflorescence in these same areas, minor chips in the finish coat, particularly near the chain port, and general damage from the chain's movement within the port and on the surface of the deck. In these locations, the surface coat has worn off.

East Seal on Rock (#12)

The East Seal was structurally analyzed as a cantilevered head. It was found to be structurally sound with only minor surface damage. This damage includes a void in the flipper and the loss of the original color coat from the mountainous field surface. This surface was also once a brown color like the mountain field of Lookout Mountain and other similar pieces of elements 8, 10, 11 and 14. The maroon seal was recently painted black.

Octopus (#13)

The Octopus was structurally analyzed as a beam connected to legs. It was found to be structurally sound. Wear and tear on this element has resulted in the loss of several of the surface applied suction cups. These pieces have a finer texture than the surface of the Octopus. A large void on one of the upturned arms has exposed the rebar and steel mesh. It has been partially patched. The top of the head showed signs of delamination but the minimal crazing at this location did not appear to be a cause of the damage. This piece retains its original exposed finish.

Lighthouse (#14)

The Lighthouse was structurally analyzed as a series of beams. It was found to be structurally sound, overall. Like the other "mountainous" field surfaces, that at the Lighthouse has lost its finish surface through decades of wear. The slide and lighthouse portions have been painted recently. Originally, the lighthouse was white cement with a red roof while the slide was blue.

There are several cracks along the intentional fissures in the mountain field. Near the tail, these cracks are more pronounced. Minor jacking from rusting rebar was also noted on the mountain form. On the lighthouse and the slide, there was only minor crazing, several small chips in the teeth and around the mouth and evidence of rust staining where the ferrous railing at the top of the lighthouse is beginning to corrode.

As a general note, the shrubs to the back of this element may be trapping moisture. They also obscure a second stairway to the lighthouse.

Whale (#15)

The Whale was structurally analyzed as a cantilevered head. It was found to be structurally sound. This structure shows only minor wear and tear-related damage. There is a void in the beam in the interior of the Whale's mouth as well a small void in the fin and the lip. A small section of rebar is exposed in one of the worn steps. Its original blue surface was recently painted pink. The mouth has been painted red. This has obscured some of the fine surface texture detail found on this piece.

Landscape



Island Berm

There are four distinct species of palms in this grove: Canary Island date palm, Mexican fan palm, California fan palm (the only California native), and Guadalupe palm. They are well-suited to the region and complement the historic character of La Laguna. The California fan palms are marginally infested with diamond scale, a fungus that commonly affects this species. All other palms appear healthy.

The Canary Island pines are a staple of the garden. All are healthy and have no obvious structural weaknesses. The City may want to have them carefully pruned in winter months (January – March, when bark beetles are less active) to feature their branch architecture as well as inspect aerially for any structural problems.

Spanish Dagger, also known as “yuccas”, were emblematic of early southern California gardens. Their drawback is the sharp leaf blades (“daggers”) – once yuccas are large, their leaf blades are usually out of the reach of children.

Typically seen in early southern California gardens, Hollywood junipers are prized for their animated branch tops that combined resemble a windswept tree. Unfortunately these trees have been cut back throughout the years and don’t display the interesting growth habit of the species.

Mediterranean fan palms are the quintessential southern California small-stature palm. They usually do not exceed 20 feet in height, and as such are perfect for the scale of La Laguna. Mediterranean fan palms transplant easily.

Perimeter Plantings

Xylosma, oleander and Carolina cherry shrubs have been “hedged” and create a rather formal aspect to the garden. The xylosma hedge (north and east sides) is healthy and complements the garden nicely. The Carolina cherry shrubs are at the end of their lifespan and should be removed.

Interior Plantings

Chinese elm trees are used to help define the perimeter of the garden and provide human scale and much-needed shade. Aside from small cavities at the bases of three of the trees, (the City may wish to have these trees inspected further) the trees are in good condition.

MATERIAL CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY SPREADSHEET FOR INDIVIDUAL PLAY ELEMENTS

Significance: P=Premier, I=Important, C=Contributing, NC=Non-Contributing

Conditions: E=Excellent, G=Good, F=Fair, P=Poor

| Number | Structure | Significance Rating | Condition Rating | Conditions | Notes |
|--------|-----------|---------------------|------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Dock | P | P | material loss throughout | This piece is in very bad condition. |
| | | | | severe deterioration, possible termite damage at foundation | Many of its support members are severely deteriorated. |
| | | | | very dangerous steps, not functional | |



| 2 | Snail | P | G | delamination - on head, just off center, on spiral, tends to be along seams separating colors | mixture of textures and patterns, unique to this piece with so much contrast |
|---|--------------|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | crazing - on spiral, mostly random and not too bad, on head, all over but no delamination | snail apparently not one of Dominguez' original designs for La Laguna. Added by request of parks manager during construction. |
| | | | | chips on stairs | Faces down centerline of park, directly opposite whale |
| | | | | color - originally maroon and gold, not painted yellow and blue | |
| | | | | foundation is exposed, trip hazard at stair and end of slide | |
| | | | | | |
| 3 | Starfish | P | G | crazing - worse on body than on arms | some minor wear on arms from sliding. |
| | | | | minor moisture retention and efflorescence at boundary between original color coats on underside of structure | not nearly as extensive as other figures |
| | | | | exposed foundations | overall, minor damage, |
| | | | | painted red, originally maroon as seen on underside | |
| | | | | | |
| 4 | Blue Dolphin | P | G | color- painted, originally green | baby dolphins - minor crazing, some chips |
| | | | | | efflorescence doesn't seem to be causing cracks but should be addressed if possible |
| | | | | | |
| 5 | Grey Dolphin | P | G | delamination - along back ridge, crazing too | |
| | | | | worn spots, no surface color on tail and nose from stepping | |
| | | | | color- painted, originally blue and white | |
| | | | | efflorescence along belly cracks | |

| | | | | | |
|----|------------------|---|---|---|--|
| | | | | | |
| 6 | Red Dolphin | P | G | color- painted, originally maroon | |
| | | | | | |
| 7 | Sea Serpent | P | F | crazing - this figure has deep crazing with areas of delamination on sides of body and on head, some areas of concern | very little crazing underneath |
| | | | | chips on head, spikes, tail | sand is very low, foundation is trip hazard between segments |
| | | | | missing teeth | |
| | | | | bad patches on chin and spikes- slopped on and /or wrong color | |
| | | | | rebar exposed on top of head and between two body segments | |
| | | | | | |
| 8 | Lookout Mountain | P | F | cracks-deep cracks throughout - some from tree removal, others may be pre-existing | Slide is relatively good. Mountain has major cracks and has been poorly maintained / repaired. |
| | | | | delamination at top of tail | |
| | | | | patches throughout-many different patches, textures, colors, quality | |
| | | | | Color - surface layer gone | |
| | | | | delamination of surface layer on backside requires structural assessment | |
| | | | | | |
| 9 | West Seal | P | G | cracking on chin | Very little damage of note |
| | | | | color-painted black | |
| | | | | void on flipper | |
| | | | | color coat worn off mountain | |
| | | | | | |
| 10 | North Seal | P | G | crack on mountain- sounded hollow at edges of crack | |
| | | | | color coat worn off mountain | |
| | | | | chip and crack along smile | |
| | | | | irrigation system soaks ground, no apparent damage as of yet | |

| 11 | Ship | P | G | moisture staining and efflorescence (mostly on sunny side) | Why is this element so affected by water? |
|----|------------|---|---|--|--|
| | | | | surface missing and damaged by chain movement | Is it "level" surface or surface texture for faux bois? |
| | | | | chips - on side, on head, on rail | Coloring is good |
| 12 | East Seal | P | G | cracking at rear and side of mountain, relatively minor | minor damage overall |
| | | | | color - painted black | |
| | | | | void on flipper | |
| | | | | color coat worn off mountain | |
| 13 | Octopus | P | G | missing suction cups - surface applied, different texture | very few areas of wear beyond the suckers and footholds |
| | | | | voids - ends and on "figure 8" arm, "figure 8" arm looks like there is impact damage - mesh is exposed, poorly repaired and painted over | crazing is minimal except on head |
| | | | | delamination of surface layer across whole top of head | most of form is original coloring |
| | | | | | some paint where repaired / damaged or tagged (back of the head) |
| 14 | Lighthouse | P | G | cracks along "fissures" in mountain, some severe - near tail contact, jacking noted, some plant growth | curb position is troublesome, doesn't seem to be part of original design |
| | | | | crazed in spots on slide and lighthouse, appears to be finish layer only (~1/4" thick), very little debonding | rusting on lighthouse, not a problem yet |
| | | | | color - painted bright green, white, black ,etc., mountain color gone, color coat worn off | biggest concern = cracking at tail / mountain connection |
| | | | | small chips on teeth and around mouth of serpent | |
| | | | | coating on slide is original, appears to be similar to pool surfaces at the time | |
| | | | | stairs obscured by shrubs | |



| 15 | Whale | P | G | crazing of surface of body - along sides and top, little near foundation or tail | metal slide |
|----|-------|---|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| | | | | void in structural beam in mouth, void on lip | different textures for mouth and body |
| | | | | crazing on tongue - intentional or problem? | seam down center line of figure |
| | | | | rebar exposed on steps | |
| | | | | color - was mostly blue, now pink and red and white, what color was mouth or stairs?, some areas on back at the steps where color layer has worn off | |
| | | | | void on fin | |

Source: Garavaglia Architecture, Inc.

SAFETY FINDINGS

In general, the main safety issues identified by Safety Play, Inc.'s Audit Report are primarily the result of the sand being too firmly compacted, of there not being enough sand around the structures and the lack of fence or other barriers around this section of the park. Also of general note, the slide structures tended to have more perceived safety deficiencies than the other elements, primarily as the result of their lack of handholds or climbing aids.

Based on compliance with the contemporary safety codes, Safety Play, Inc. cites 15 different types of Class 1 hazards, 22 different types of Class 2 hazards, six types of Class 3 hazards and 6 types of hazards that were given no rating. Two structures were recommended for removal (1 and 13.) These recommendations were made with no consideration of the age, material nature, historical value and prior safety record of La Laguna.

Safety Play, Inc.'s report did not consider that La Laguna was currently in compliance with the safety code. The report assumed La Laguna would be upgraded with modifications to the play components which would then require conformance to contemporary playground-related safety standards. Safety Play, Inc. did not evaluate La Laguna as currently in compliance with the safety code as long as the playground was repaired without upgrades, modifications or alterations. Therefore, many of the Safety Play, Inc. recommendations are modifications or alterations that would, if enacted, trigger compliance with contemporary codes and standards. Many of these recommendations would also immediately and severely impact the integrity of La Laguna as a historical resource. They could potentially cause an adverse negative impact under CEQA, are not in keeping with treatment methodologies established by the *Secretary of the Interior Standards for Preservation* or the *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, and would negatively impact the resource's integrity. Such actions could possibly limit the resource's eligibility for listing on the State and National Registers.

Of the regulations used in the Safety Play, Inc. Audit Report, only the California Health and Safety code is regulatory. Section 115725 states that:

"All new playgrounds open to the public, built by a public agency, or any other entity shall conform to the playground-related standards set forth by the



American Society for Testing and Materials and the playground-related guidelines set forth by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission.”

It goes on to state,

“*Replacement of equipment or modification of components* inside existing playgrounds shall conform to the playground-related standards set forth by the American Society for Testing and Materials and the playground-related guidelines set forth by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission.”

These regulations are retroactively applicable to playgrounds installed between *January 1, 1994, and December 31, 1999*, and that playgrounds constructed within this timeframe,

“shall conform to the playground-related standards set forth by the American Society for Testing and Materials and the playground-related guidelines set forth by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission not later than 15 years after the date those playgrounds were installed.”³

It is the position of FoLL that improving safety at La Laguna can be achieved through preservation and maintenance. La Laguna is in compliance with Health & Safety Code Section 115725 and can remain in compliance by taking no action that would replace equipment or make modifications of the components inside La Laguna. It is currently in compliance and a preservation project would not trigger modern safety standards for the following reasons:

1. La Laguna is not a new playground and it was constructed prior to 1994. Therefore it is in compliance with those subsections of the Code.
2. No changes in use or upgrades (modifications/ alterations or replacement of equipment) are being proposed at this time and therefore it is in compliance with that subsection of the Code. Only repairs to address deferred maintenance and to stabilize the individual elements are anticipated.
3. La Laguna is a historic resource as well as a functioning playground. As such, modifications or alterations, for any reason, may impact its historical nature and irrevocably alter a valuable cultural resource. Therefore particular care must be taken not to obscure, alter, or damage character-defining features as recommended by the *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*.

The purpose and goal of this Historic Structures Report and Preservation Plan is the preservation and maintenance of La Laguna. The best solution to address safety is through the preservation treatment developed by the Secretary of the Interior Standards and the *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*. And, those main safety issues identified by Safety Play, Inc. have been appropriately addressed through preservation recommendations by the consultant team.

Additional protection for the playground elements can be found in the grandfather clauses included in the Health and Safety Code, the American Disabilities Act, and the Safety Guidelines and alternative codes, such as the California Historic Building Code. Any proposed project for La Laguna should incorporate this wider array of standards and criteria applicable

³ Emphasis added by the authors.



to historic and cultural resources. Through an ongoing process between the City and FoLL, these issues will continue to be discussed and deliberately analyzed in the context of the long-term preservation and continued maintenance of La Laguna.

Other Cities Approach to Repair of Historic Play Structures

The City of Torrance recently dealt with a similar issue. As part of their park and playground safety efforts, assessments were conducted. Their reports found that one of the play structures, the Rocket Ship in Los Arboles Park, was “non-complaint” with the current safety standards and recommended its removal. The community was deeply opposed to such action and protested the removal of the Rocket Ship. The City’s Recreation and Parks Commission and staff debated their response to the report’s recommendation for removal due to its inability to meet current safety standards.

It was stated by the Parks Commissioner who was interviewed, that the City reviewed the issue carefully. The City designated the Rocket Ship as a local resource and installed a historical marker. They then recommended solutions only for repair, not modifications to the equipment, and did not remove it from public use. Today the Rocket Ship has been preserved in its original location and retains its original appearance and materials with no alterations such as additional handrails. Today park users enjoy it as it was originally intended.

This is just one nearby and relevant example of an agency taking the appropriate and necessary steps to stay in compliance with the Health and Safety Code by repairing a historic playground feature instead of subjecting it to modifications and upgrades to meet contemporary playground safety standards. There are other examples but what this indicates is that repair of playgrounds that pre-date 1994 is an appropriate approach and solution and the consultant team’s recommendations are not precedent-setting but in line with the similar actions of public agencies in California.

Another example is located in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco where there is a set of 19th century swings that have achieved historic status. They were recently removed from a larger park renovation project (just like La Laguna was removed from the larger Vincent Lugo Park renovation project) in order to not subject the swings to meet modern contemporary playground safety standards.

CHAPTER 5: PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of Friends of La Laguna is to preserve La Laguna de San Gabriel for the enjoyment of future generations of children, and their parents, and to do so in a way that is true to the original creations design intent and execution of the City and Benjamin Dominguez. The 15 play features in the Sandy Lagoon were designed to foster creative play for a range of abilities, ages and activity levels. Their design, placement and appearances are key components of their historical and cultural value. Over the years, constant use and inconsistent maintenance have left them in need of repair. This document is designed to generate a plan of action to address the noted problems through a preservation treatment of repair or replacement with materials in-kind and through the utilization of the *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*. All recommendations are intended to:

- avoid any adverse impacts to the historical resource,
- repair or replace in-kind, avoiding any alternation or modification that would then necessitate the utilization of contemporary playground-related standards
- maintain La Laguna's use and current potential to inspire play by children of all ages.

Cognizant that general safety improvements for La Laguna can be significantly achieved through preservation repair and ongoing maintenance, the consultant team reviewed the safety issues and integrated those into the preservation recommendations. An indicated (*) behind recommendations denotes those preservation recommendations that simultaneously address an issue raised in the Safety Play, Inc. Audit Report.

RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

The consultant team recommends that within the context of preservation, the dialogue regarding safety and accessibility issues and risk management strategies should be an ongoing and collaborative process between the City and FoLL. (This was agreed upon and a firm commitment made by City and FoLL during a meeting to review a draft of this report. The City communicated their opinion and concern that these issues may not be fully addressed by the Recommendations in this report.) A focused process, bringing in additional expertise when and as needed, will help resolve these complex issues and thus inform the critical next step of developing a defined capital preservation project, based on this planning report and continued dialogue. FoLL is committed to this recommendation and in taking "baby steps" with the City for this area of emerging preservation and working on creative solutions such as new legislation or risk management strategies that can avoid any adverse impacts to the historical resource.

La Laguna contains a fairly limited set of types of conditions found and range of materials used. The uniformity of construction type and high quality of construction make a general series of recommendations applicable to many individual elements. These broad recommendations are presented here. For discussion of the individual needs of each element, please see the Individual Summary section of this chapter.

Minor surface cracking – "Crazing"

Crazing is minor small cracks in concrete surfaces. Generally it is not a structural issue but it can be a cause for concern if water is being retained in the hairline cracks and accelerating damage. If no water retention is noted, then no repair is recommended. Where the cracks are deep and may cause spalling it may be desirable to repair them with a "V" groove from the surface and



inject epoxy. The surface should then be treated to match the surrounding material. Such repairs efforts will reduce future maintenance.

Deteriorated and Rotted Wood

Areas with deteriorated wood should be repaired by replacing deteriorated and rotted wood elements with new materials to match in-kind. The amount of new replacement materials should be limited only to the most severely deteriorated areas where the original material can no longer adequately support required loads. The appropriateness of treated lumber to be used as replacement material should be thoroughly reviewed to reduce future deterioration.

Concrete Spalls

The concrete spalls vary in depth. Some are only in the finish plaster surface. Most extend through the coating into the structural concrete. The repair procedure should be:

1. Chip back damaged concrete to solid material. Surfaces are to be straight and tapered back to provide both a chemical and physical connection to the original material.
2. Lightly wirebrush existing reinforcing steel to remove rust and old concrete.
3. Patch structural concrete with an approved concrete repair material.
4. Plaster surface with plaster matching the original in proportions. Determine whether to paint or use integral color in the finish plaster.

Work should be done by hand when possible to avoid mechanical damage during the repair process. The minimum amount of materials should be removed in order to facilitate repair.

Paint Removal

Many of the structures have been recently painted. These colors are much brighter than the original finish coat and are not necessarily compatible with the historical color palette. It is assumed that the structures were painted to mask repeated graffiti tags. Even on those elements that retain their original exposed cement finish, localized areas of paint were visible. Several tags appeared during the course of the multi-day survey period.

Paint is not desirable for several reasons.

1. It can greatly reduce the ability of the concrete to get rid of trapped moisture. As moisture is retained within the body of the concrete, it can cause deterioration of the rebar and metal mesh forms, leading to surface cracks, chips and spalling.
2. Over time, multiple layers of paint will obscure the fine surface detailing that was hand-applied by Benjamin Dominguez. This detailing is one of the character-defining features of La Laguna and is a direct connection to the artist and his skill.
3. The integrally colored finish coat at La Laguna is unique within Dominguez' body of work. It represents an evolution of his design process and played a strong role in the overall aesthetic of the space. Application of bright, high-gloss coatings changes this aesthetic and presents a more modern, more manufactured and plastic appearance than was originally intended.

Ideally the paint should all be removed and the surfaces assessed for further treatment. A general process for this removal is:

1. Prior to paint removal, each color of paint to be removed, on each structure, should be tested in a hidden location to determine paint composition – organic or synthetic. A paint removal strategy should then be developed in consultation with a conservator



specializing in concrete. Consultation with a professional is critical to protect the original material's integrity.

2. Test removal products and dwell times in indiscrete locations prior to wholesale application. Determine appropriate methodology for each color at each location. Seek the gentlest, more non-toxic method that proves effective.
3. Execute approved removal methodology. Multiple applications may be necessary. Surface scraping should be limited and should be undertaken by hand with non-metallic implements.
4. Thoroughly neutralize any paint removal residue if necessary.
5. Some paint may remain in deep surface undulations. The overall impact of this residual paint should be assessed prior to implementation of additional removal methods.
6. If paint removal would result in significant deterioration to the underlying surfaces than an appropriately colored paint coating could be used. The condition of the surface should be tested for stability prior to selection of this alternative approach. Any newly applied paint should have a minimum permeability rating of 12 perms to minimize moisture retention in the concrete.

Special Considerations

Lookout Mountain Deteriorated Concrete (on mountainous surface)

The mountain is a slab on grade structure. The mountain has had damage including settlement, and the resulting cracks, and poor repairs from fallen trees. A cause of damage may be settlement of the earth beneath the mountain, which has resulted in loss of support for the surface concrete. Repairs include:

1. Removal and replacement of much of the "slab on grade" concrete on those "mountain" surface sections required after additional testing of settlement/cracking issues. The character-defining features of the structure – slide, stairs and small walls are to remain in place. As necessary, all remaining portions should be adequately supported during construction if any removal of the mountain substructure is required.
2. Construction of new/additional foundations to support the surface.
3. Place soil as a form for the new surface concrete.
4. Add reinforcing and shotcrete to form new surface with in-kind materials. All work will be done to replicate the original surface undulations, variations and texture to the highest degree possible.
5. Finish with the appropriate surface treatment.

Sea Serpent Missing Teeth

The Sea Serpent's teeth appear to have been a problem since opening day. Over time, they have gone from being damaged and chipped to being removed. Using historic photographs, the teeth should be reconstructed in the appropriate cement mortar and installed. Multiples should be cast to ease future replacement.

INDIVIDUAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The following pages present the particular needs of each of the unique 15 play structures within the Sandy Lagoon of La Laguna. Historic photographs are presented along with current views for comparison of conditions. In most cases, original photos from either Benjamin Dominguez' family archives or the City of San Gabriel's archives are presented. The images from the Dominguez family archives show the completed structures prior to installation of the sand. A bullet list of recommendations to address preservation needs are then provided. An indicated (*) behind recommendations denotes those preservation recommendations that simultaneously



address an issue raised in the Safety Play, Inc. Audit Report. Estimates of the anticipated costs for implementation of the preservation-related repair recommendations are given with statements of assumptions that were used to arrive at the costs. These assumptions are as follows:

1. The estimates provided herein are best projections of anticipated costs based on the outlines of work as presented in this document. Costs will vary up and/or down as a detailed work plan is created. These are estimates only and should not be used for bidding purposes.
2. Exact structural repairs (when defined) will have an effect upon the final cost estimate projections. A limited allowance for structural repairs has been included.
3. All structural and material inspections should be field verified at the time of construction. Some destructive testing may be necessary to more clearly define the scope of the work.
4. Projected costs include prevailing wages, contractor's overhead, and contractor's profit.
5. It is presented that no abatement of hazardous materials is involved (i.e., lead, asbestos, etc.).

NOTE: The numbers presented here represent approximate costs for the repair of individual elements only. A total of estimated potential project costs and possible maintenance costs, including recommended and alternate preservation strategies, is included in Appendix G. Some additional cost estimation may be required after finalization of this document and prior to commencement of construction.

Recommended and Alternate Strategies

Some structures have several alternative solutions that could be implemented. Where this was the case, a recommended strategy is presented followed by the alternate strategies, in order of preference. The spreadsheet in Appendix G contains a running total of four preservation strategies.

- Recommended Strategy - The recommended treatment strategy opts for replacement of the worn off finish layers with a new cement finish layer. It also takes the most minimal intervention on the Dock and Lookout Mountain.
- Alternate 1 - Cost Alternate 1 is the same as the recommended treatment strategy but includes the use of Keim for the finish layer as opposed to replacement in-kind with a new cement finish.
- Alternate 2 - Cost Alternate 2 is the same as the recommended treatment strategy but includes a more extensive approach to repair of Lookout Mountain.
- Alternate 3 - Cost Alternate 3 is the same as the recommended treatment strategy but includes the most extensive in-kind replacement of the surfaces of Lookout Mountain.

Site

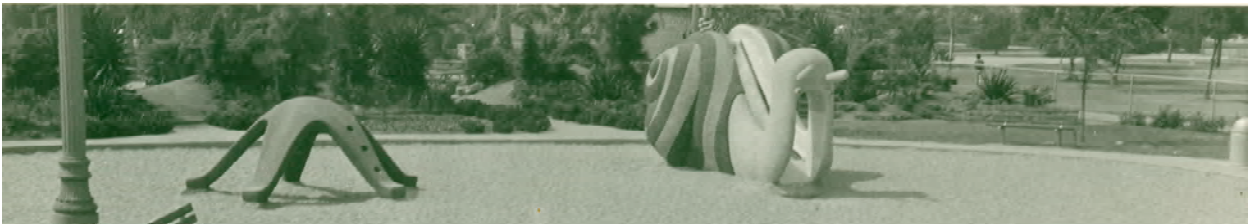
Historic Photograph(s)



Opening day ceremonies, May 1965. City of San Gabriel archives.



Same view, several years later showing maturing landscaping. City of San Gabriel archives.



Looking back at the Island berm after landscaping has matured. Note formal paths through the area and the height of the berms.

Current Photograph(s)



Current appearance looking at the Island Berm, toward La Laguna, May 2007.



Current appearance looking at the Island Berm, toward the Girl Scout Hut, May 2007.

Island Berm Preservation Recommendations

- Remove ivy from area. Care should be taken to protect plants during the removal process.
- Refrain from excessive pruning of the juniper trees. Reconstructively prune to allow trees to regain a more natural form.
- Retain bermed areas. Provide additional, appropriate fill as necessary to re-establish the original berm forms. Care should be taken to properly protect trees during this process to prevent damage to roots or trunks. Do not install ground covers such as turfgrass or ivy. Berms and pathways should be dirt of decomposed granite to match historical conditions.
- Prune pine trees during January-March on a regular basis.
- Inspect trees, shrubs and plantings for disease and pests annually. Address any issues as soon as possible to prevent increased risk to adjacent plants.
- Repair/recreate the historic pathways through the Island Berm based on historical photographic documentation. This will also provide improved ADA accessibility to the Sandy Lagoon.
- Regular pruning appropriate to each species.

Perimeter and Interior Landscaping Preservation Recommendations

- Allow xylosma hedge to obtain a more natural form. Remove oleander and Carolina cherry (south) and replace with more appropriate hedging shrubs, such as strawberry tree.
- Any fencing installed around the north, east and south of La Laguna should be transparent and should be below the visual plane of a typical adult so as to not obstruct views of La Laguna from other sections of Vincent Lugo Park. It should have regularly spaced openings that correspond to historic points of access.
- Regular pruning appropriate to each species.

Please see the Arborist report in Appendix A for general recommendations on appropriate plant species and protection measures.

Sandy Lagoon Preservation Recommendations

- Regularly aerate sand to maintain a loose surface around each element.*
- Add more sand as required to maintain a level of coverage sufficient to obscure all foundations and footings. The level of advised sand depth should be checked regularly to maintain compliance with the recommendations of the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (USCPSC). For example, according to USCPSC publication 324, nine inches (9") of fine sand is the industry standard to provide fall protection up to a height of five (5) feet.*
- Rake sand weekly to remove leaves and debris and to maintain a soft upper zone of sand.*

Pathways and Other Site Features Preservation Recommendations

- Monitor light standards for repairs. Some exhibit large cracks down the length of the shaft and may require repair in the near future. Efforts should be made to retain these standards rather than replace with modern lights. If replacements are necessary they should be of a similar scale and basic form as the existing, including use of the character-defining acorn-shaped globes. In addition, any new standards should be compliant with Title 24.

- The concrete pathways are in good condition. Historically, these pathways were dirt or decomposed granite. This treatment is in keeping with proposed modifications to Vincent Lugo Park. Recreation of the original pathway materials is an acceptable course of action that will potentially have no impact on the historic resource.
- The planters should be regularly inspected and repaired as needed with in-kind materials.
- Avoid overwatering and monitor plant size and health to prevent damage to the plant or the planter.
- New signage within La Laguna is recommended. This signage should be compatible with the existing historic sign but should not attempt to replicate previously installed signage. See the Signage section in this document for suggestions on appropriate design, scale and placement.*
- The existing cabana provides necessary shade. While not original to the park, its function has become integrated into the daily usage of La Laguna. It should be maintained with regular inspections and repaired in-kind.

General Site Preservation and Maintenance Recommendations

- Regular inspections of irrigation system to prevent spray onto trunks, and to prevent ponding or misguided sprays. Like the existing vegetation, new plants should be drought-tolerant and should not require much additional irrigation.
- Clear blocked sprinkler heads.
- Adjust irrigation levels as needed to prevent ponding, overwatering and general wastewater collection anywhere within the La Laguna cultural landscape.
- Inspect all elements for moisture retention, cracking, spalling. Address with appropriate repair immediately. This should be done several days after the first rains to enable the surveyor to view any areas that might be discolored because of moisture retention. Small cracks should be monitored closely but do not necessarily require immediate repair. Spalls and major cracks should be repaired immediately according to the procedures outlined in the materials database to prevent further deterioration. Inspection should pay close attention to those areas previously repaired as well as those previously identified for monitoring. The results of the inspection should be recorded for future reference and a list of items to be reviewed in the next inspection should be generated.

Estimated Implementation Costs

The following are estimated costs based on the current understanding of the potential preservation project. More exact costs associated with implementation of a preservation plan and its maintenance are unknown at this time and are beyond the scope of this report. Therefore it would be anticipated that this detailed study will be included in the implementation project. These numbers are intended to provide a general order of magnitude for the work outlined.

Recommended Preservation Strategy

- Replacement of sand to a depth of at least 12" of loose sand - \$55,200.00
- Design of signage - \$12,500.00
- Installation and construction of informational signage including a central informational kiosk and individual element identification signage - \$57,835.00
- Installation of signage lighting/electrical supply - \$13,323.50
- Pathway surface repair (concrete) - \$556.00
- Pathway surface replacement (decomposed granite) for Island Berm - \$675.00

- Pathway repair (concrete curbing) - \$684.00
- Repair of existing light standards (cracks in concrete) - \$415.50
- Replacement of light standards to meet Title 24 requirements – \$3,200.00
- Cabana repair (metal) - \$187.20
- Park bench replacement – \$9,248.00
- Planter repair (brick) - \$702.50
- Installation of new irrigation system for Island Berm - \$23,778.84
- Reconstruction and augmentation of original landscape design - \$68,330.00
- Initial tree pruning - \$19,675.00

Total = \$246,626.04

Dock (#1)

Historic Photograph(s)



Opening day ceremonies, May 1965. City of San Gabriel archives.

Current Photograph(s)



Current appearance, April 2008.

Preservation Recommendations

- Dock should be repaired with in-kind materials. Elements that are sound material should be reused to the fullest extent possible. In-kind replacement materials should be of the same species, grade, size and cut as the existing materials.*
- Permanent removal of the non-historic slide is recommended. (It was temporarily removed by the City in 2008.) The fourth set of steps should be reconstructed to restore the original configuration of the dock. These steps should utilize locations of existing footings and should approximate the dimensions and construction of the remaining original steps on the other three sides of the dock.

Estimated Implementation Costs

Recommended Preservation Strategy

- Repair of the dock using as much original materials as possible. Limited replacement of members as required. - \$35,872.00

- Replacement of the slide with a reconstruction of the original stairs in this location. - \$2,740
- Paint. - \$3,850.00

Total = \$42,462.00

Alternate Preservation Strategy

- Reconstruction of dock using in-kind materials. - \$31,050.00
- Replacement of the slide with a reconstruction of the original stairs in this location. - \$2,740
- Paint. - \$3,850.00

Total = \$37,640.00

Maintenance Recommendations

- The roof should be inspected for leaks on a semi-annual basis and repairs made accordingly.
- The dock should be inspected annually for termite and pest damage.
- To protect the wood, the dock should be painted every 1-3 years with a non-toxic, exterior-grade primer and paint system. The deck may need to be painted more frequently due to increased wear and contact.

Snail (#2)

Historic Photograph(s)



c1966. Photo by Ron Brown, City of San Gabriel archives.



Before opening day, January 1965. Dominguez family archives

Current Photograph(s)



Current appearance, April 2008.

Preservation Recommendations

- Repair the small voids along the stairs and patch to match the surrounding area. This should level out any depressions and provide adequate coverage of any exposed rebar.*
- Remove paint and reassess surface for future treatment. If the paint was applied to mask graffiti, removal or partial removal of graffiti may be necessary. Repainting/recoating with an appropriate material may also be warranted. This cannot be determined until the paint is removed. Ideally this element will be returned to its original finish layer, however some provisions for alternative surface treatments (paints or mineral coatings) may be required.
- Inject grout along areas of delamination. Small holes should be drilled to facilitate injection. They should be filled to match the surrounding area.

Estimated Implementation Costs

Recommended Preservation Strategy

- Void repair at steps - \$1,518.00
- Paint removal - \$28,910.00

- Grout injection - \$9,720.02

Total = \$40,148.00

Alternate Preservation Strategy

There is no alternate preservation strategy for this structure.

Maintenance Recommendations

- Monitor daily for graffiti. Address as required.
- Inspect areas of grout injection and spall repairs annually to assess performance and address any recurring problems at these sites.

Starfish (#3)

Historic Photograph(s)



Before opening day, January 1965. Dominguez family archives.

Current Photograph(s)



Current appearance, April 2008.

Preservation Recommendations

- Remove paint and reassess surface for future treatment. If the paint was applied to mask graffiti, removal or partial removal of graffiti may be necessary. Repainting/recoating with an appropriate material may also be warranted. This cannot be determined until the paint is removed. Ideally this element will be returned to its original finish layer, however some provisions for alternative surface treatments (paints or mineral coatings) may be required.
- Apply a poultice to draw out salts and remove surface efflorescence. Some testing to assess effectiveness may be required. This should be done regularly as necessary. Acid washes and mechanical scraping should be avoided.

Estimated Implementation Costs

Recommended Preservation Strategy

- Paint Removal - \$4,949.60
- Poultice to remove efflorescence - \$4,200

Total = \$9,148.60

Alternate Preservation Strategy

There is no alternate preservation strategy for this structure.

Maintenance Recommendations

- Monitor daily for graffiti. Address as required.
- Annually monitor poultice sites for reoccurrence of efflorescence. Reapply poultice if necessary.

Blue Dolphin (#4)
Historic Photograph(s)



Before opening day, January 1965. Dominguez family archives.

Current Photograph(s)



Current appearance, April 2008.

Preservation Recommendations

- Remove paint and reassess surface for future treatment. If the paint was applied to mask graffiti, removal or partial removal of graffiti may be necessary. Repainting/recoating with an appropriate material may also be warranted. This cannot be determined until the paint is removed. Ideally this element will be returned to its original finish layer, however some provisions for alternative surface treatments (paints or mineral coatings) may be required.
- Apply a mineral coating to worn areas. (optional)
- Inject grout along areas of delamination. Small holes should be drilled to facilitate injection. They should be filled to match the surrounding area.

Estimated Implementation Costs

Recommended Preservation Strategy

- Paint removal - \$4,437.12
- Apply mineral stain (Keim) to worn areas - \$1,800.00
- Grout injection – \$2,400.00
- Surface repair - \$1,170.00

Total = \$9,807.12

Alternate Preservation Strategy

There is no alternate preservation strategy for this structure.

Maintenance Recommendations

- Monitor daily for graffiti. Address as required.
- Inspect areas of repairs annually to assess performance and address any recurring problems at these sites.

Grey Dolphin (#5)
Historic Photograph(s)



Before opening day, January 1965. Dominguez family archives.

Current Photograph(s)



Current appearance, April 2008.

Preservation Recommendations

- Remove paint and reassess surface for future treatment. If the paint was applied to mask graffiti, removal or partial removal of graffiti may be necessary. Repainting/recoating with an appropriate material may also be warranted. This cannot be determined until the paint is removed. Ideally this element will be returned to its original finish layer, however some provisions for alternative surface treatments (paints or mineral coatings) may be required.
- Apply a mineral coating to worn areas. (optional)
- Inject grout along areas of delamination. Small holes should be drilled to facilitate injection. They should be filled to match the surrounding area.

Estimated Implementation Costs

Recommended Preservation Strategy

- Surface repair - \$2,400.00
- Paint removal - \$8,874.85
- Apply mineral stain (Keim) to worn areas - \$2,900.20
- Grout injection – \$3,000.00
- Poultice to remove efflorescence - \$2,002.00

Total = \$19,177.05

Alternate Preservation Strategy

There is no alternate preservation strategy for this structure.

Maintenance Recommendations

- Monitor daily for graffiti. Address as required.
- Inspect areas of repairs annually to assess performance and address any recurring problems at these sites.

Red Dolphin (#6)
Historic Photograph(s)



Before opening day, January 1965. Dominguez family archives.

Current Photograph(s)



Current appearance, April 2008.

Preservation Recommendations

- Trim tree to remove falling branch hazard.*
- Remove paint and reassess surface for future treatment. If the paint was applied to mask graffiti, removal or partial removal of graffiti may be necessary. Repainting/recoating with an appropriate material may also be warranted. This cannot be determined until the paint is removed. Ideally this element will be returned to its original finish layer, however some provisions for alternative surface treatments (paints or mineral coatings) may be required.
- Apply a mineral coating to worn areas. (optional)
- Inject grout along areas of delamination. Small holes should be drilled to facilitate injection. They should be filled to match the surrounding area.

Estimated Implementation Costs

Recommended Preservation Strategy

- Surface repairs - \$1,606.00
- Paint removal - \$4,336.85
- Apply mineral stain to worn areas - \$1,435.00
- Grout injection – \$2,400.00

Total = \$9,777.85

Alternate Preservation Strategy

There is no alternate preservation strategy for this structure.

Maintenance Recommendations

- Monitor daily for graffiti. Address as required.
- Inspect areas of repairs annually to assess performance and address any recurring problems at these sites.

Sea Serpent (#7)

Historic Photograph(s)



Dominguez and his Sea Serpent before opening day, January 1965. Dominguez family archives.



Before opening day, January 1965. Dominguez family archives.

Current Photograph(s)



Current appearance, April 2008.

Preservation Recommendations

- Remove poorly executed patches and repair to match surrounding area.
- Reconstruct teeth to restore structure to its original form. Extra teeth should be cast at this time to facilitate future repairs. It is recommended that the teeth be cast from integrally colored cement mortar to match historic conditions.
- Inject grout along areas of delamination. Small holes should be drilled to facilitate injection. They should be filled to match the surrounding area.

Estimated Implementation Costs

Recommended Preservation Strategy

- Grout Injection - \$9,780.95
- Teeth replacement (concrete) - \$2,814.00
- Removal and repair of previous patches = \$1,350.00
- Surface repairs - \$18,370.00

Total = \$32,314.95

Alternate Preservation Strategy

- Grout Injection - \$9,780.95
- Teeth replacement (GFRC) - \$8,350
- Removal and repair of previous patches = \$1,350.00
- Surface repairs - \$18,370.00

Total = \$37,850.95

Maintenance Recommendations

- Monitor daily for graffiti. Address as required.
- Inspect areas of repairs annually to assess performance and address any recurring problems at these sites.
- Monitor the condition of the teeth. Replace as necessary.

Lookout Mountain (#8)

Historic Photograph(s)



c.1966. Photo by Ron Brown, City of San Gabriel archives.



Before opening day, January 1965. Dominguez family archives.

Current Photograph(s)



Current appearance, April 2008.



Current appearance, April 2008.

Preservation Recommendations

- Execute material repairs where trees cracked surface. Reinstalling trees on the mountain is NOT recommended. Additional shade could be provided (in time) by additional tree plantings between pathway and the south hedge, or other locations on the far side of the perimeter sidewalk.
- Structural considerations – The shell of the mountain has several large cracks as a result of a tree falling. These cracks are letting water infiltrate the structure and are accelerating deterioration of the concrete surface. To address these problems it is recommended that:
 - Grout injection should be used to fill noticeable gaps between the base fill and the concrete shell. This will restore support to the surface shell where it is unduly stressed.

- Remove the most damaged sections, mostly at the rear, and replace in-kind. This will require detailed surveying and/or molds of the surface to be cast to replicate the existing, original shape and undulations. The stairs, slide and all sound material will be retained. This includes removal of prior repairs.
 - Use surface consolidants on those areas to remain that require further stabilization (steps).
 - No new foundation work is anticipated.
- Color Coat - The color coat has completely worn off the mountain. There are three options that all have no impact on the resource. Each has a different maintenance requirement and various upfront costs.
 - Install a new color coat (limited lifetime) that may have to be reapplied in 15-20 years. *This is the recommended option.*
 - Use a mineral paint to color the existing surface (longer lifetime). This will restore color and be easier to maintain. However, it will do little to protect the unstable surface of the concrete. It will first have to be stabilized with a surface consolidant.
 - Leave uncolored. (indefinite lifetime) but offers no protection of the unstable surface of the concrete.
- Remove any paint recently added and patch if necessary to match surrounding.

Estimated Implementation Costs

Recommended Preservation Strategy

- Surface replacement of back side of mountain only - \$15,609.00
- Surface consolidation of stairs - \$6,000.00
- Surface consolidation of front side of mountain - \$26,000.00
- Surface repairs (patches/voids) - \$42,900.00
- Limited grout injection - \$16,500.00
- Mountain surface color – New integral color layer - \$28,800.00

Total = \$135,809.00

Alternate Preservation Strategy 1

- Surface replacement of back side of mountain only - \$15,609.00
- Surface consolidation of stairs - \$6,000.00
- Surface consolidation of front side of mountain - \$26,000.00
- Surface repairs (patches/voids) - \$42,900.00
- Limited grout injection - \$16,500.00
- Mountain surface color – Application of Keim to mountain surface - \$22,200.00

Total = \$129,209.00

Alternate Preservation Strategy 2

- Surface replacement of entire mountain surface, excluding stairs and slide - \$108,990.00
- Surface consolidation of stairs - \$6,000.00
- Mountain surface color – New integral color layer - \$28,800.00

Total = \$143,790.00

Alternate Preservation Strategy 3

- Surface replacement of entire mountain surface and stairs, retention of slide only - \$93,000.00
- Mountain surface color – New integral color layer - \$28,800.00

Total = \$121,800.00

Maintenance Recommendations

- Monitor daily for graffiti. Address as required.
- Inspect areas of repairs annually to assess performance and address any recurring problems at these sites.
- Inspect surface conditions annually and reassess the performance of the surface treatment. Areas that were consolidated should be surveyed for stability of surface. The wear and condition of a new finish layer, if selected, should be monitored every 3-5 years for performance. Provided the surface is wearing evenly, wait until 75% or more is worn away before reapplying a new layer. All surface coloring and consolidation should be done in consultation with a concrete conservator.

West Seal (#9)

Historic Photograph(s)



c. 1966. Photo by Ron Brown, City of San Gabriel archives.



Before opening day, January 1965. Dominguez family archives.

Current Photograph(s)



Current appearance, April 2008.

Preservation Recommendations

- Remove paint and reassess surface for future treatment. If the paint was applied to mask graffiti, removal or partial removal of graffiti may be necessary. Repainting/recoating with an appropriate material may also be warranted. This cannot be determined until the paint is removed. Ideally this element will be returned to its original finish layer, however some provisions for alternative surface treatments (paints or mineral coatings) may be required.
- Patch the crack in the chin of this element with thin color coat to match surrounding area.
- Mountain (rock feature) color coat - The color coat has completely worn off the mountain. There are three options that all have no impact on the resource. Each has a different maintenance requirement and various upfront costs.
 - Install a new color coat (limited lifetime) that may have to be reapplied in 15-20 years. *This is the recommended option.*
 - Use a mineral paint to color the existing surface (longer lifetime). This will restore color and be easier to maintain. However, it will do little to protect the

- unstable surface of the concrete. It will first have to be stabilized with a surface consolidant.
- Leave uncolored. (Indefinite lifetime but offers no protection of the unstable surface of the concrete.)

Estimated Implementation Costs

Recommended Preservation Strategy

- Surface repairs - \$3,300.00
- Paint removal - \$2,800.00
- Mountain surface color – New integral color layer - \$6,375.00

Total = \$12,475.00

Alternate Preservation Strategy

- Surface repairs - \$3,300.00
- Paint removal - \$2,800.00
- Mountain surface color – mineral stain (Keim) - \$2099.50

Total = \$8,199.50

Maintenance Recommendations

- Monitor daily for graffiti. Address as required.
- Inspect areas of repairs annually to assess performance and address any recurring problems at these sites.
- Inspect surface conditions annually and reassess the performance of the surface treatment. Areas that were consolidated should be surveyed for stability of surface. The wear and condition of a new finish layer, if selected, should be monitored every 3-5 years for performance. Provided the surface is wearing evenly, wait until 75% or more is worn away before reapplying a new layer. All surface coloring and consolidation should be done in consultation with a concrete conservator.

North Seal (#10)

Historic Photograph(s)

None available

Current Photograph(s)



Current appearance, April 2008.

Preservation Recommendations

- Adjust sprinklers to direct spray away from this element.
- Remove paint and patch the chips and cracks along the smile of this element.
- Patch any areas of spalling with thin color coat to match surrounding area.
- Mountain (rock feature) color coat - The color coat has completely worn off the mountain. There are three options that all have no impact on the resource. Each has a different maintenance requirement and various upfront costs.
 - Install a new color coat (limited lifetime) that may have to be reapplied in 15-20 years. *This is the recommended option.*
 - Use a mineral paint to color the existing surface (longer lifetime). This will restore color and be easier to maintain. However, it will do little to protect the unstable surface of the concrete. It will first have to be stabilized with a surface consolidant.
 - Leave uncolored. (Indefinite lifetime but offers no protection of the unstable surface of the concrete.)

Estimated Implementation Costs

Recommended Preservation Strategy

- Sprinkler adjustment - \$0
- Surface repairs - \$6,460.00
- Paint removal - \$2,800.00
- Mountain surface color – New integral color layer - \$6,375.00

Total = \$15,635.00

Alternate Preservation Strategy

- Sprinkler adjustment - \$0
- Surface repairs - \$6,460.00
- Paint removal - \$2,800.00
- Mountain surface color – mineral stain (Keim) - \$2099.50

Total = \$11,359.50

Maintenance Recommendations

- Monitor daily for graffiti. Address as required.
- Inspect areas of repairs annually to assess performance and address any recurring problems at these sites.
- Inspect surface conditions annually and reassess the performance of the surface treatment. Areas that were consolidated should be surveyed for stability of surface. The wear and condition of a new finish layer, if selected, should be monitored every 3-5 years for performance. Provided the surface is wearing evenly, wait until 75% or more is worn away before reapplying a new layer. All surface coloring and consolidation should be done in consultation with a concrete conservator.

Ship (#11)

Historic Photograph(s)



Before opening day, January 1965. Dominguez family archives.



c. 1966. Photo by Ron Brown, City of San Gabriel archives.

Current Photograph(s)



Current appearance, April 2008.

Preservation Recommendations

- Patch damaged surfaces at the side (chain port) head and rear.
- Apply a poultice to draw out salts and remove surface efflorescence. Some testing to assess effectiveness may be required. This should be done regularly as necessary. Acid washes and mechanical scraping should be avoided.

Estimated Implementation Costs

Recommended Preservation Strategy

- Surface repair - \$5,550.00
- Poultice - \$1,400.00

Total = \$6,950.00

Alternate Preservation Strategy

There is no alternate preservation strategy for this structure.

Maintenance Recommendations

- Monitor daily for graffiti. Address as required.
- Annually monitor poultice sites for reoccurrence of efflorescence. Reapply poultice if necessary.
- Inspect areas of repairs annually to assess performance and address any recurring problems at these sites.

Seal (#12)

Historic Photograph(s)

None available.

Current Photograph(s)



Current appearance, April 2008.

Preservation Recommendations

- Remove paint and reassess surface for future treatment. If the paint was applied to mask graffiti, removal or partial removal of graffiti may be necessary. Repainting/recoating with an appropriate material may also be warranted. This cannot be determined until the paint is removed. Ideally this element will be returned to its original finish layer, however some provisions for alternative surface treatments (paints or mineral coatings) may be required.
- Patch the void in the flipper of this element with thin color coat to match surrounding area.
- Mountain (rock feature) color coat - The color coat has completely worn off the mountain. There are three options that all have no impact on the resource. Each has a different maintenance requirement and various upfront costs.
 - Install a new color coat (limited lifetime) that may have to be reapplied in 15-20 years. *This is the recommended option.*
 - Use a mineral paint to color the existing surface (longer lifetime). This will restore color and be easier to maintain. However, it will do little to protect the unstable surface of the concrete. It will first have to be stabilized with a surface consolidant.
 - Leave uncolored. (indefinite lifetime) but offers no protection of the unstable surface of the concrete.

Estimated Implementation Costs

Recommended Preservation Strategy

- Surface repairs - \$9,000.00
- Paint removal - \$2,800.00
- Mountain surface color – New integral color layer - \$5,985.00,

Total = \$11,535.00

Alternate Preservation Strategy

- Surface repairs - \$9,000.00
- Paint removal - \$2,800.00
- Mountain surface color – mineral stain (Keim) - \$2,356.00

Total = \$14,156.00

Maintenance Recommendations

- Monitor daily for graffiti. Address as required.
- Inspect areas of repairs annually to assess performance and address any recurring problems at these sites.
- Inspect surface conditions annually and reassess the performance of the surface treatment. Areas that were consolidated should be surveyed for stability of surface. The wear and condition of a new finish layer, if selected, should be monitored every 3-5 years for performance. Provided the surface is wearing evenly, wait until 75% or more is worn away before reapplying a new layer. All surface coloring and consolidation should be done in consultation with a concrete conservator.

Octopus (#13)

Historic Photograph(s)



Before opening day, January 1965. Dominguez family archives.



Photo by Ron Brown, City of San Gabriel archives.

Current Photograph(s)



Current appearance, April 2008.

Preservation Recommendations

- Inject grout along areas of delamination. Small holes should be drilled to facilitate injection. They should be filled to match the surrounding area.
- Replace the missing "suction cups" in-kind with integrally colored cement mortar. Extra suction cups should be made to facilitate future repairs.
- The surface layer of white concrete has worn off the suction cups. Paint remaining suction cups white to approximate original appearance. This limited application of paint should have no impact on the overall functionality of the material.
- Repair the void in the "figure 8" arm. This will require scrubbing of the exposed mesh and rebar to remove any rust and oxidization, repairing with concrete and patching with a finish plaster to match the surrounding area.

Estimated Implementation Costs

Recommended Preservation Strategy

- Surface repairs - \$9,442.05
- Grout injection - \$5,600.10
- Replacement of suction cups - \$7,400.00

Total = \$22,442.15

Alternate Preservation Strategy

There is no alternate preservation strategy for this structure.

Maintenance Recommendations

- Monitor daily for graffiti. Address as required.
- Inspect areas of repairs annually to assess performance and address any recurring problems at these sites.

Lighthouse (#14)
Historic Photograph(s)



Before opening day, January 1965. Dominguez family archives.



August 1966. Photographer unknown. City of San Gabriel archives.

Current Photograph(s)



Current appearance, April 2008.



Current appearance, April 2008.

Preservation Recommendations

- Grout injection should be used to fill noticeable gaps between the base fill and the concrete shell. This will restore support to the surface shell where it is unduly stressed.
- Patch any areas of spalling with thin color coat to match surrounding area. Repairs should be prepared by chipping back to a sound surface before filling.
- Remove paint and reassess surface for future treatment. If the paint was applied to mask graffiti, removal or partial removal of graffiti may be necessary. Repainting/recoating with an appropriate material may also be warranted. This cannot be determined until the paint is removed. Ideally this element will be returned to its original finish layer, however some provisions for alternative surface treatments (paints or mineral coatings) may be required.

- Color Coat - The color coat has completely worn off the mountain. There are three options that all have no impact on the resource. Each has a different maintenance requirement and various upfront costs.
 - Install a new color coat (limited lifetime) that may have to be reapplied in 15-20 years. *This is the recommended option.*
 - Use a mineral paint to color the existing surface (longer lifetime). This will restore color and be easier to maintain. However, it will do little to protect the unstable surface of the concrete. It will first have to be stabilized with a surface consolidant.
 - Leave uncolored. (indefinite lifetime) but offers no protection of the unstable surface of the concrete.
- Install small metal plates on the top side of the “C” grips inside the lighthouse. This will limit the chance of a child becoming trapped.*

Estimated Implementation Costs

Recommended Preservation Strategy

- Repair ladder –install metal plates on “C” grips - \$2,800.00
- Surface repair - \$7,299.97
- Grout injection - \$14,729.89
- Paint removal - \$29,400.00
- Mountain surface color – New integral color layer - \$13,740.00

Total = \$67,969.86

Alternate Preservation Strategy

- Repair ladder –install metal plates on “C” grips - \$2,800.00
- Surface repair - \$7,299.97
- Grout injection - \$14,729.89
- Paint removal - \$29,400.00
- Mountain surface color – mineral stain (Keim) - \$8,587.50

Total = \$62,817.36

Maintenance Recommendations

- Monitor daily for graffiti. Address as required.
- Inspect areas of repairs annually to assess performance and address any recurring problems at these sites.
- Inspect surface conditions annually and reassess the performance of the surface treatment. Areas that were consolidated should be surveyed for stability of surface. The wear and condition of a new finish layer, if selected, should be monitored every 3-5 years for performance. Provided the surface is wearing evenly, wait until 75% or more is worn away before reapplying a new layer. All surface coloring and consolidation should be done in consultation with a concrete conservator.

Whale (#15)

Historic Photograph(s)



Before opening day, January 1965. Dominguez family archives.



c. 1966. Photo by Ron Brown, City of San Gabriel archives.

Current Photograph(s)



Current appearance, April 2008.

Preservation Recommendations

- Install button head bolts to replace the exposed hex bolts on the slide. The current bolts present a snagging hazard and their replacement does not impact the resource.*
- When the bolts are replaced, patch the small void at the top of the slide to make it flush with the surrounding platform.*
- Patch any voids in the mouth, lower lip and flipper. Patch the exposed rebar in the steps with thin color coat to match surrounding area. Smooth out areas of worn concrete near slide platform to eliminate gaps between elements. Apply only enough material needed to restore original conditions.
- Remove paint and reassess surface for future treatment. If the paint was applied to mask graffiti, removal or partial removal of graffiti may be necessary. Repainting/recoating with an appropriate material may also be warranted. This cannot be determined until the paint is removed. Ideally this element will be returned to its original finish layer,

however some provisions for alternative surface treatments (paints or mineral coatings) may be required.

Estimated Implementation Costs

Recommended Preservation Strategy

- Bolt replacement - \$2,900.00
- Surface Repair - \$6,096.00
- Paint removal = \$23,704.20
- Finish surface replacement, where worn only - \$3,200.00

Total = \$35,900.20

Alternate Preservation Strategy

- Bolt replacement - \$2,900.00
- Surface Repair - \$6,096.00
- Paint removal = \$23,704.20
- Finish surface coloring with mineral stain (Keim) - \$2,805.00

Total = \$35,505.20

Maintenance Recommendations

- Monitor daily for graffiti. Address as required.
- Inspect areas of repairs annually to assess performance and address any recurring problems at these sites.

SIGNAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

A coordinated system of interpretive signage is anticipated throughout the redesigned Vincent Lugo Park. This signage is to provide information on the local environment, water conservation and items of historical interest, including La Laguna de San Gabriel. The design of these interpretive elements has yet to be developed. However, their design should be coordinated with signage located within La Laguna.

Signage within La Laguna originally consisted of a gateway sign (still existing) and two instructive signs on either side of the circular planter near the Dock. To the left was a small placard introducing each of the figures and their names. To the right was a similar sign detailing park rules. Both were constructed of a material and in a style similar to the existing gateway sign.

New signage within La Laguna should seek to be compatible with the historic designs and content but should not attempt to recreate the original signage. The designs should be relatively small (less than head height) and should be carefully placed near the main entry. They should not block views into La Laguna but should command the attention of unfamiliar visitors.

Signage within La Laguna should include, at a minimum, the following information:

- Names of each element. Photos can be incorporated for ease of identification.
- Suggested age ranges for each element (or for La Laguna in general.)
- Supervisory expectations by caregivers.
- Park hours.
- Park rules and applicable municipal code(s). This can be the standard language used in other parks but should conform to the design of the signage within the La Laguna area.

In addition, interpretive information might be included around the sidewalk perimeter such as:

- History of the park with photos
- Information on Benjamin Dominguez and his artwork
- Photos of famous local residents as kids at La Laguna or some other community sponsored art-like project.



Signs at La Laguna on Opening Day, May 1965. The two right-hand images are enlargements of the photo on the left. Source: City of San Gabriel archives.

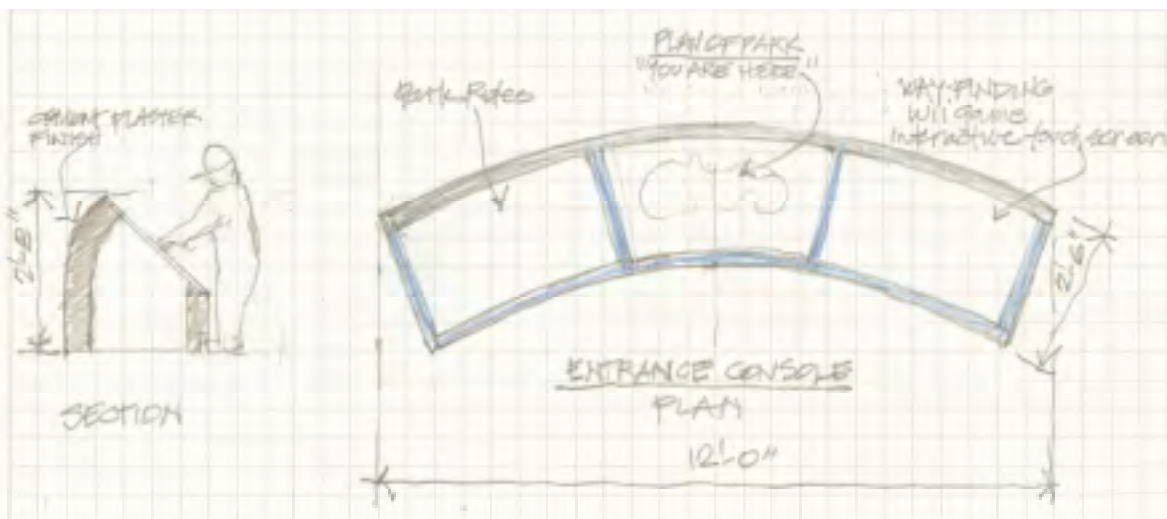
New Signage Concepts

Two types of signage are recommended within La Laguna. The first is informational and instructive, similar to the purpose of the original flanking signs shown above. This is where the visitor will acclimate to La Laguna and the unique play experience created by Benjamin Dominguez. The second type is specific to each play structure, providing at a minimum, its name. While we recommend that both should be sized for children to allow for comfortable access, the information is mostly for the benefit of the parents. Both can be playful in form and have a three-dimensional quality, however they should not distract from the historic resource nor compete with the scale, color or locations of any of the individual elements.

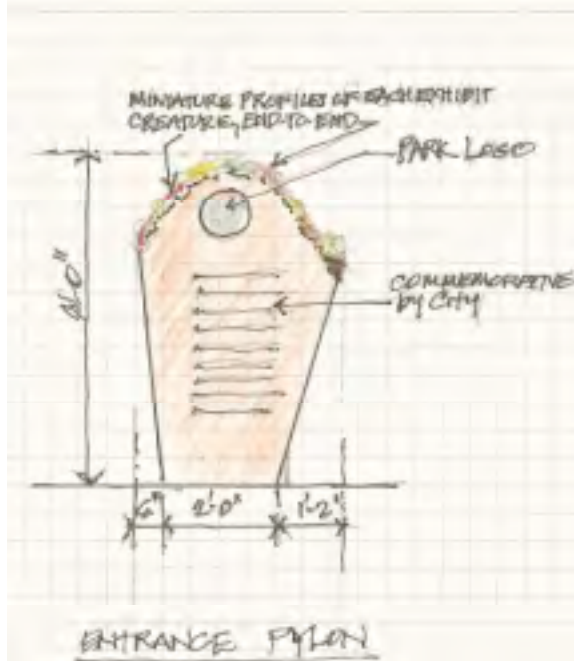
The following concepts are presented to illustrate some of the myriad ways that signage can be developed in an appropriate and create way to address the needs of La Laguna. They are concepts only and are intended to spark further conversation and discussion between the City, FoLL, and the design professionals involved with other aspects of the Vincent Lugo Park project. In general, the signage should complement but not compete with the historical resource. Nor should they be used to block views or impede access to the Sandy Lagoon or other areas within La Laguna. Size and scale should be carefully considered from both an adult and a child's perspective.

Informational Sign

This first concept is for the informational sign near the formal entry.



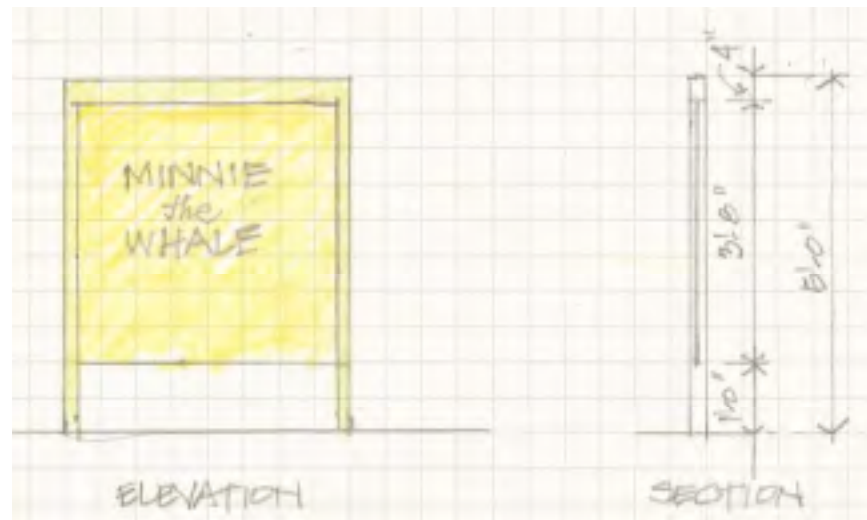
In this concept (shown above) there is a multi-paneled console where the visitor is offered several ways of getting acquainted with La Laguna. The first (left) panel has the rules and regulations. The middle panel has an overview map of La Laguna with names and locations of the various structures. The last (right) panel is presented here with an interactive screen or game-like experience to engage the child in an imaginative experience revolving around the virtual use of the playground. The primary concept here is that the information is presented in a user-friendly way that goes beyond the basic stating of rules to a more contemporary way to interact with the space.



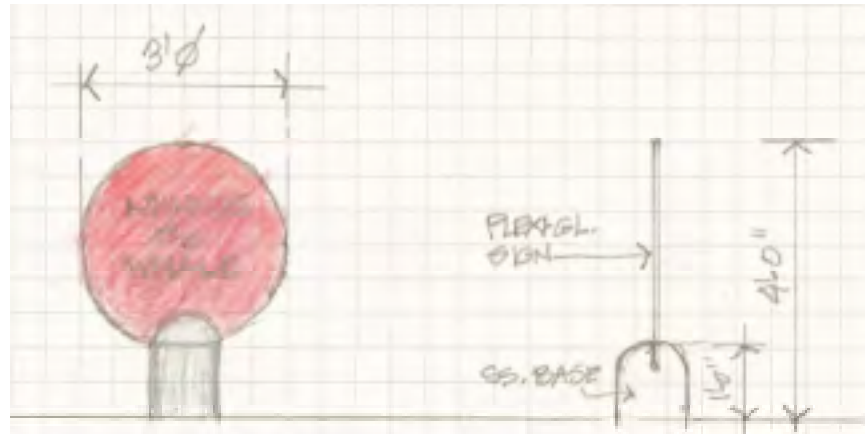
More similar to the original, this second concept (shown at left) is simpler in design. It shows a relatively flat sign of a scale and form that is more reminiscent of the original signage but with more color and detail. One option presented in this concept is to use miniature versions of the play sculptures as accents along the top of the sign. This could also be left plain.

One advantage to this concept is that it can be easily replicated and adapted for use outside of La Laguna. However, it can also be made to be highly referential and specific to La Laguna for added emphasis.

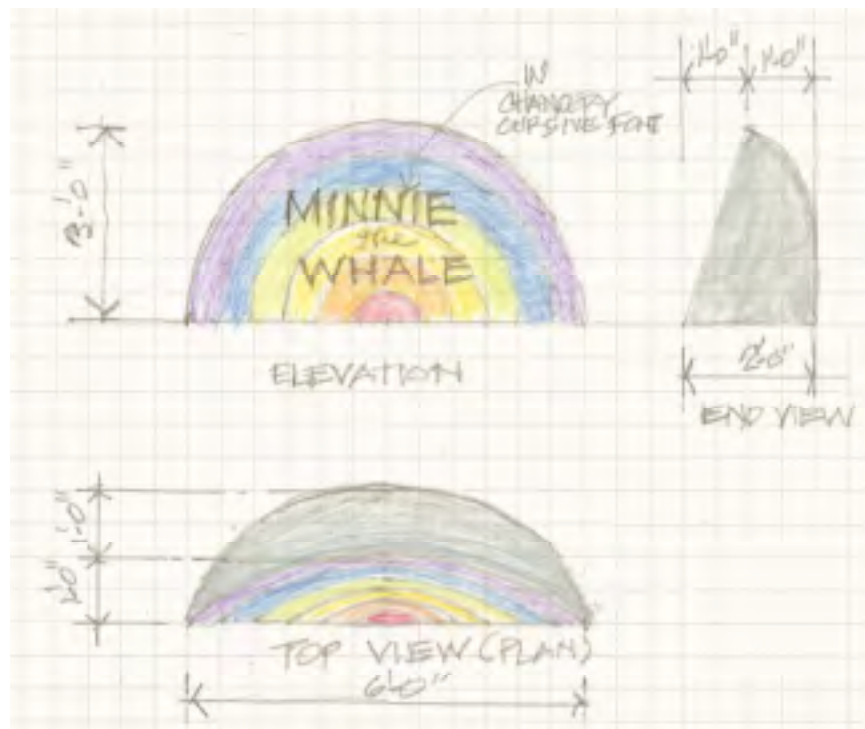
Individual Elements



For the individual signs for each structure, there are a range of general options. The simplest is a relatively flat board stating the structure's name. These placards can be created relatively inexpensively and may contain photographs or other images to augment the text.

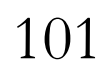


Slightly more sophisticated is an option of more graphic interest. Here the sign is semi-transparent and much more contemporary.



This last concept is more three-dimensional and uses the concrete forms as inspiration. The colors here are merely illustrative of the different treatments that can be used to provide additional visual interest as a backdrop for the test.

All of these concepts can be scaled as appropriate to prevent visual intrusion on the Sandy Lagoon. Generally, the individual identification signs should be large enough to be easily read from an adult standing height, but small enough to be unobtrusive. Placement should be at the edge of the walkway around the Sandy Lagoon in areas of less frequent traffic to avoid tripping hazards. The following shows a conceptual map of possible sign locations.



MAINTENANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

This HSR and Preservation Plan has identified general maintenance provisions with those actions, specific to an individual play element, listed within the Individual Recommendation section. A full and detailed maintenance plan is beyond the scope of this initial planning study. A more comprehensive plan will come into focus as part of the next phase of defining the final preservation project and should be more fully developed as further analysis and testing undertaken. It will be a living reference document, shaped at each step in the process; therefore the Appendices of this report provide placeholders for these future steps.

Proper routine maintenance is essential to the long-term preservation of La Laguna de San Gabriel. These typically small tasks, performed regularly will arrest many problems before they become major issues. They include both monitoring of issues and problem areas as well as swift attention to repairs to keep conditions from escalating.

While some general maintenance issues are routine and should be within the existing expertise of City employees, the regular care of the cement surfaces and various features within La Laguna may require special training and/or regular consultation by experts in the landscaping and concrete/masonry conservation fields. Care at regular periods and of a consistent, high quality is needed to preserve La Laguna in perpetuity. Careful maintenance records should be kept, archived and indexed for reference by such professionals and by City staff.

Preparation of a graffiti-abatement strategy to address causes as well as outline appropriate procedures for removing/covering graffiti as it occurs is recommended. The removal/ masking protocol should be developed with consultation from a concrete conservator to develop a plan that is most sympathetic to the long-term viability of the concrete surface layer.

Development and maintain a database of materials, sources and mixes for future reference is recommended. This should be set-up during the initial preservation work and updated as necessary by City maintenance staff. The database should also include information related to dates of implementation, frequency of implementation and notes on the long-term success or failure of the material, mix or protocol. This is particularly important for concrete repair mixes, color layers and landscape health, since these are the items that will be executed on the more regular basis.

Certain increased maintenance should be expected and anticipated in the first year after completion of the project. This is to address any aftereffects of the project such as minor surface touch-up repairs, increased attention to new landscaping elements and general adaptation of the resource to its repaired condition. This may also include increased monitoring and janitorial work to offset any increase in user numbers. Conceptual estimates for this increased, yet temporary, maintenance need approximately \$38,400.00.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

La Laguna de San Gabriel is an unique community resource. It is historically significant at the local, state and possibly national levels. It retains a very high degree of integrity. It derives this historical significance from its place within a rich history that encompasses the immigrant's struggle and contribution to southern California, the hand of a master craftsman and artist, the growth of southern California from fruit groves to suburban towns and cities and the changing philosophies of children's play in the optimistic post-World War II American society. Its relatively young age has not lessened its value. It remains an exceptional artistic and community accomplishment. The work put forth in this document is designed to help preserve La Laguna for future generations.

In conclusion, most of the repairs to address the deferred maintenance issues at La Laguna are relatively minor – repair of damaged surfaces, removal of recently applied paint and improvements to the sand bed and landscaping. Only two elements require any structural repairs – the Dock (1) and Lookout Mountain (8). These repairs will require some material loss but can be accomplished in such a way so as to retain the overall integrity of the elements and of the entire cultural landscape.

The initial cost estimates for preserving La Laguna is approximately \$1.2 million. This assumes contractors costs at prevailing wages, standard contingency estimates, ongoing professional services and a scope of work similar to the recommended preservation strategy as presented in this document. First year maintenance costs, including landscaping and irrigation are included in this number, and are estimated to be \$38,400. A more comprehensive estimate for La Laguna's capital preservation project will be necessary prior to the start of construction.

In addition, the consultant team recommends many preservation actions that also serve to address safety issues outlined by the Safety Play, Inc. Audit Report. Recommended solutions, such as aerating and adding sand to cover footings, have no adverse impact on the resource yet provide increased safety. Per the *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, the consultant team carefully assessed the Safety Play, Inc. report's specific recommendations for any potential negative impact on the landscape's historic character. The Safety Play, Inc. recommendations that would result in the removal, modification or alteration of a character-defining feature were determined not appropriate by the *Guidelines* and that the recommendation had the potential to create an adverse change to resource under CEQA. Those should not be undertaken as part of a preservation and maintenance course of action.

Lastly, this project has been a collaboration between many stakeholders and professional consultants and represents a collective work. The willingness of the City of San Gabriel to listen, respond and support the goals and efforts of the Friends of La Laguna and the consultant team show a firm commitment, as the Owners of the site, to the long-term health and protection of this valuable historical and community resource. There is agreement and commitment between the City and FoLL that the ongoing discussion and process to take the recommendations contained in this report and develop a defined capital preservation project is the critical next step. That process will specifically include a focused collaboration concerning the issues of safety and accessibility within the context of preservation of the historic resource, La Laguna.



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<http://www.sangabrielcity.com/>

Friends of La Laguna

<http://www.friendsoflalaguna.org/home.htm>

National Park Service: Technical Preservation Services:

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National Program for Playground Safety

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