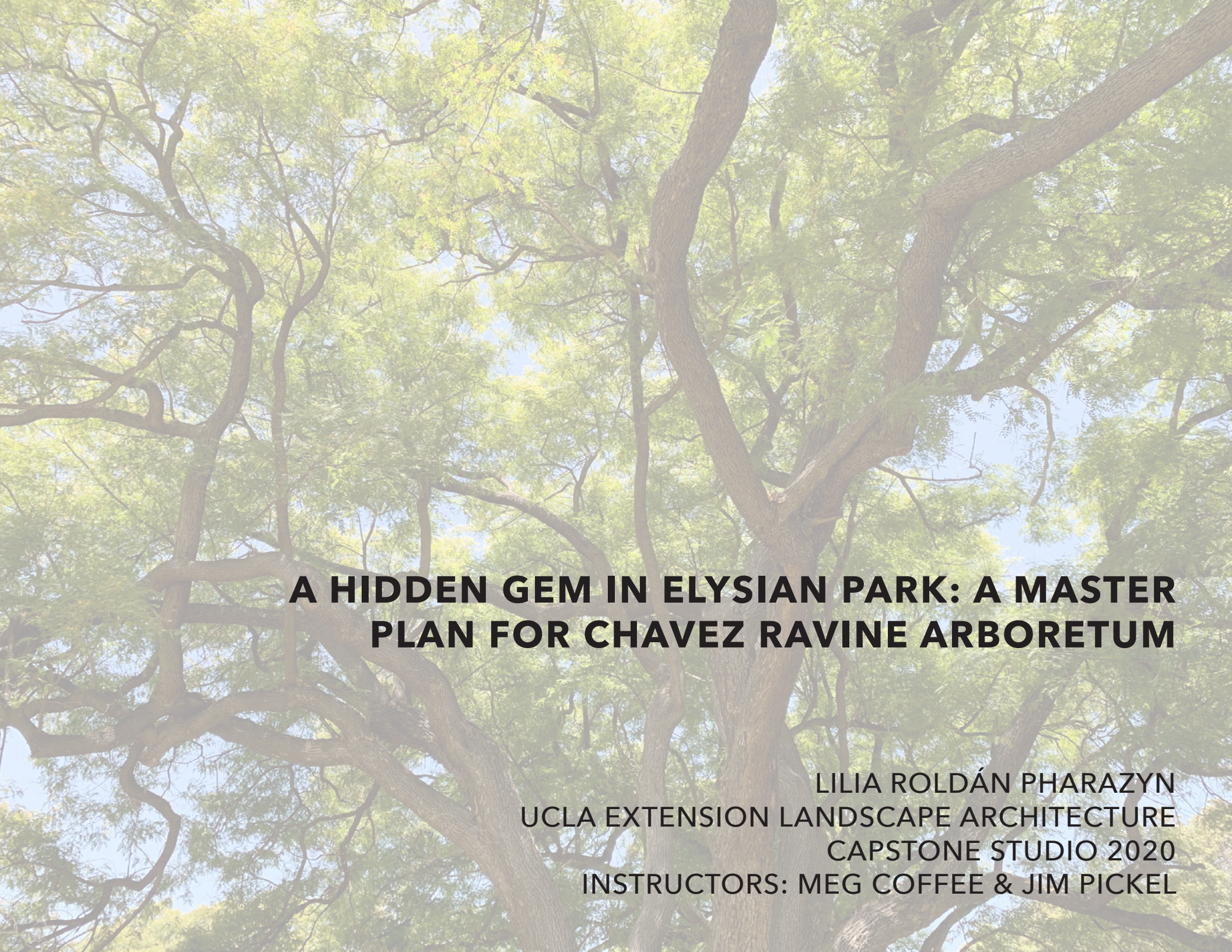

# A HIDDEN GEM IN ELYSIAN PARK: A MASTER PLAN FOR CHAVEZ RAVINE ARBORETUM

LILIA ROLDÁN PHARAZYN
UCLA EXTENSION LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
CAPSTONE STUDIO 2020
INSTRUCTORS: MEG COFFEE & JIM PICKEL

Several years ago I visited the Chavez Ravine Arboretum for the first time with an arboriculture class. I was surprised to learn that it is a historical arboretum – in fact, the oldest botanic garden in Southern California. Boasting beautiful specimen trees and located within the second largest park in Los Angeles, the site holds an interesting story. The history is unknown to many, and I hope to share with you the beauty and potential of this place to finally grow into the landmark it was meant to be.

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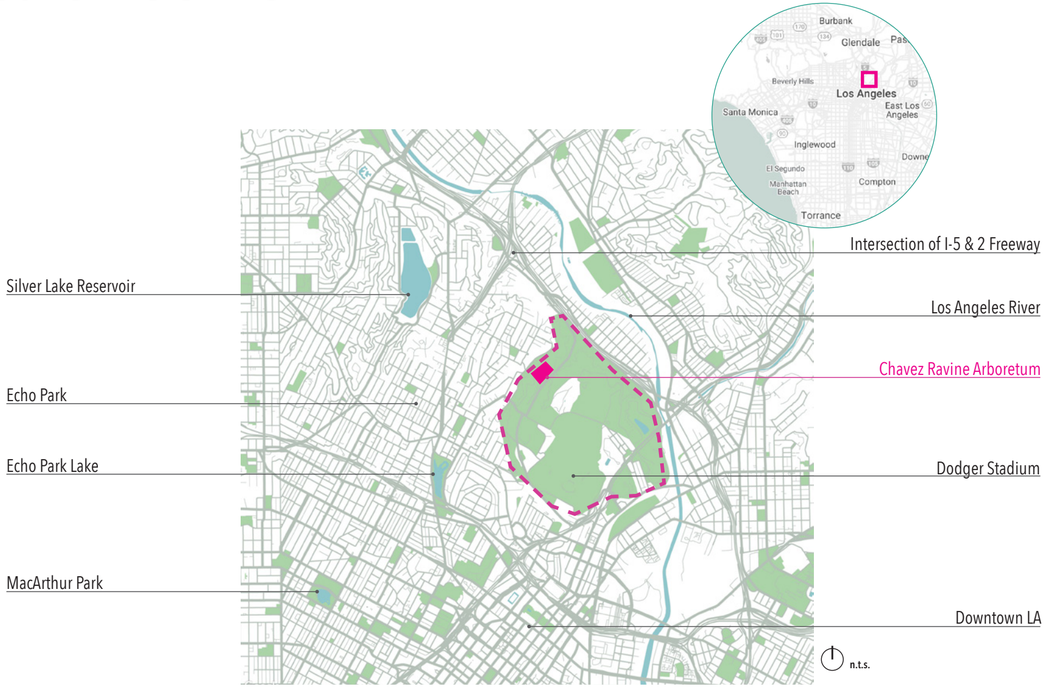
# PROJECT LOCATION




The Chavez Ravine Arboretum is located within Elysian Park, north of downtown Los Angeles. Elysian Park is a 575 acre park and the selected project area is 14 acres located in the northwest area of the park.



# HISTORY - ELYSIAN PARK

This land, before any of these maps were created, was the home of the Tongva people. They lived and took care of this land for thousands of years before the arrival of Spanish settlers in 1769.


1868

In the mid 1800s quarries operated in the area that is today Elysian Park. It was known as Quarry Hill and the map shows the different ravines in the area.

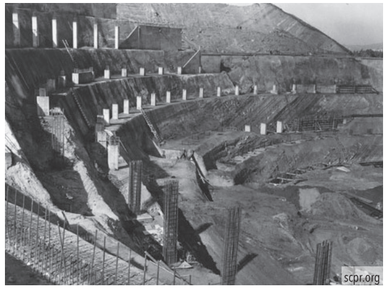

1884

The area was subdivided into parcels to sell, however in 1886 the City decided to allocate this land for a park, and Elysian Park was founded. Several years later a group of horticulturalists petitioned to establish the Arboretum and it was created in 1893.


1928

By the 1920s the street grid had developed surrounding the park and in the communities located in the middle of the park. These communities include Palo Verde, La Loma and Bishop, which were collectively known as Chavez Ravine.

# HISTORY - CHAVEZ RAVINE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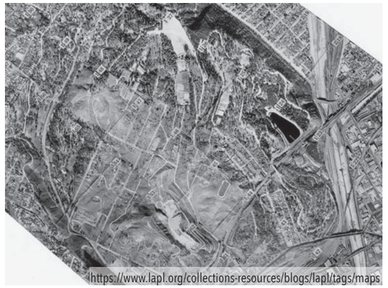

https://www.lapl.org/collections-resources/blogs/lapl/tags/maps

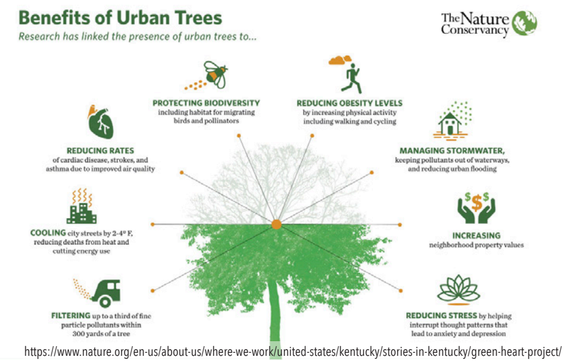

latinoUSA.org

The Arboretum is located in the northern part of Chavez Ravine, the canyon named after one of Los Angeles County's first supervisors Julián Chavez. The name also belongs to the community that was located to the southeast of the Arboretum (see map on previous page) that was destroyed by the government's use of eminent domain to acquire land for a housing project that never came to fruition. The government then sold the land to the Dodgers to build the stadium. There are no memorials or monuments in the park that pay respect to the lives uprooted by the government and many people are unaware of this story of forced displacement of a Mexican-American community.



# PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

There are several reasons this site is worthy of a capstone design project. It is a historic site, 127 years old, and in 1967 was designated a city landmark. Despite the age of the site, there has never been any planning or design of the site. A master plan for Elysian Park was completed in 2006 and in this document it specified the need for a retrofitted master plan for the Arboretum. While reviewing other botanical gardens in the Los Angeles area there are several attributes that make the Chavez Ravine Arboretum stand out. The site is located in the urban core of Los Angeles and it does not cost money to enter. There is an unpretentiousness and openness about the Chavez Ravine Arboretum that makes it unique within the landscape of botanic gardens and has potential to attract diverse visitor groups.



https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/kentucky/stories-in-kentucky/green-heart-project/

- Historic site (127 years old) - protect the history and specimen heritage trees
- Learning and recreation in a horticulture-centric space - nature education facilities are lacking in this area
- Species conservation due to climate change
- Demonstrate sustainable landscaping and rainwater capture practices; promote information on the benefit of urban trees
- Surrounding areas are high need and park poor - not just green space is needed but green space with a variety of high-quality amenities
- Planning context supports the preservation and retrofit of the site (both the Elysian Park Master Plan and the Silver Lake-Echo Park-Elysian Valley Community Plan)



*"Commission an interdisciplinary design team including horticultural, landscape architectural and ecological perspectives to develop a retrofit master plan for the arboretum"*

Recommendation from 2006 Elysian Park Draft Master Plan

*"It would be well worthwhile for any lover of plants to visit this site and see the interesting was well as botanically historical collection of fine specimen trees."*

Theodore Payne, Fall 1956 Lasca Leaves

# PROJECT STATEMENT

## *Develop a landscape master plan for the Arboretum that creates an identity and makes the site accessible to all.*

The project explores landscape architecture as a tool to...

- Develop site identity
- Create interactive educational spaces
- Curate a living museum
- Manage water in a sustainable way

This project will create a layout for 14 acres of the Arboretum that celebrates the existing specimens and adds in new landscape elements that will give an identity and context to the space.

The master plan will include exhibit areas, recreation and leisure opportunities and educational spaces, all connected by a circulation system that is accessible to all. The site design will incorporate sustainability principles and the site's history.

Landscape architects are well-equipped to solve many of the problems climate change poses. Landscape conservation is part of the strategy to maintain our biodiversity and botanical gardens play a key role in this endeavor.



# PROJECT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## *Cultivate a unique identity*

- ☐ Develop a circulation system that is accessible to all and encourages exploration of the site
- ☐ Curate exhibit areas to provide an engaging experience for visitors and give identity and context to the Arboretum

## *Represent the history of the site*

- ☐ Enhance and build upon the historic existing tree collection
- ☐ Craft displays and exhibit components that tell the story of the Arboretum and Elysian Park

## *Celebrate the diversity of Los Angeles*

- ☐ Curate program elements that connect to diverse identities (cultural, economic, age, ability...)

## *Demonstrate environmental sustainability*

- ☐ Re-design drainage to encourage stormwater retention on-site; showcase best practices in demonstration gardens
- ☐ Encourage adventure play and recreational opportunities that relate to the natural world

## *Create spaces for individual and group experiences*

- ☐ Develop educational spaces that foster community engagement
- ☐ Provide opportunities for visitors to engage with the site as an individual or within a group

# USER GROUPS

families


senior citizens groups


outdoor recreationists


youth organizations

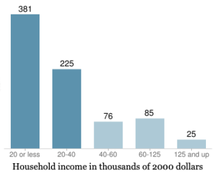

horticulture-related groups

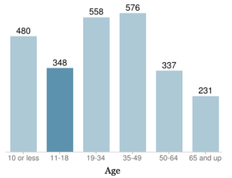
landscape professionals


Additional potential users include Dodger Stadium visitors and employees, and Grace Simons Lodge visitors

Demographic information for the area within the Park (Solano Canyon) and to the southeast of the Park (Chinatown)



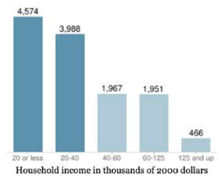


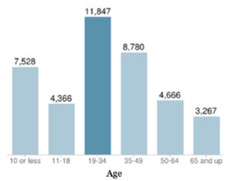




Los Angeles Times Mapping Project: Mapping LA

Demographic information for Echo Park, the mostly residential area west of the Arboretum






Los Angeles Times Mapping Project: Mapping LA

## Project Stakeholders

- City of LA Department of Recreation and Parks
- Los Angeles County Arboretum
- Citizens Committee to Save Elysian Park
- Neighborhood Committees from Solano Canyon, Echo Park
- Southern California Horticultural Society
- Los Angeles Council District 1 & 13
- Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis

# METHODOLOGY

## *Site Typology*

Botanical Garden – Institution with documented collections of living plants for the purposes of research, conservation, display and education.

## *Design Principles/ Focus*

### Horticulture & Nature

- Exploration of plant communities
- Flexible collections/displays

### Health & Well-Being

- Sustainable green space
- Sensory experiences
- Universal accessibility

### Community Oriented

- Education and play for all ages
- Community engagement
- Customizable space

## *Design Processes & Techniques*

### Guidelines for botanical garden design

*Manual on Planning, Developing and Managing Botanic Gardens*, Botanic Gardens Conservation International

- Elements: Buildings (interpretation center, research facilities, storage areas); Key components (plant displays, recreation/special events areas); Operational or 'back-of-house' (nursery, maintenance facilities); Circulation infrastructure (vehicular and pedestrian paths, roadways, parking areas)

### Creating inclusive spaces

*Guidelines for Accessible Exhibition Design*, Smithsonian Museum

- Present exhibits through more than one sensory channel (tactile, audio, visual, etc)
- Include the experiences of diverse groups of people
- Inclusive signage design
- Well light, clearly defined circulation
- Seating opportunities with arm and back support



## *Design Processes & Techniques Continued*

### Green infrastructure opportunities

*Green Infrastructure in Parks*, US EPA

- Capture runoff
- Target hard surfaces
- Take advantage of areas with infiltration potential

### Forms for site design

*Form and Fabric in Landscape Architecture*, Catherine Dee

- Paths: Linear spaces that create linkages for travel/circulation. Hierarchical systems organize into a network of relationships. Within these networks are nodes and foci.
- Edge: The linear interface between two spaces or regions of the landscape that have different functions and/or physical characteristics; edges as social places.
- Thresholds (natural and built): Relatively small spaces between larger spaces – unlike edges they are centered rather than linear spaces.

*A Pattern Language*, Christopher Alexander et. al

- Paths and goals (120): To lay out paths, first place goals at natural points of interest. Then connect the goals to one another to form the paths.
- Terraced Slope (169): On sloping land, erosion caused by runoff can kill the soil… (and) creates uneven distribution of rainwater over the land. Make a system of terraces and bunds which follow the contour lines.
- Garden wall (173): Gardens and small public parks don't give enough relief from noise unless they are well protected. Form some kind of enclosure to protect the interior of a quiet garden from sights and sounds of passing traffic…the enclosure can be soft.

*Site Planning*, Kevin Lynch and Gary Hack

- Enclosure: Readable space has a strong emotional impact. The intimacy of a small enclosure and the exhilaration of a great opening are universal sensations. The transition between the two is even stronger: the powerful sense of contraction or release (157).
- Water: The range of form, the changeableness and yet the unity, the intricate repetitive fluid movement, the suggestion of coolness and delight, the play of light and sound, as well as its intimate connection with life and its attraction for birds and animals, all make water a superb material for outdoor use (176).
- Touch and Hearing: The sense of hearing also conveys the shape of space…similarly if to a lesser extent, we are affected by the feel of a surface (or how it looks as if it should feel) and by its radiation of heat to our skin or vice-versa (161).

# PRECEDENTS

## *Chicago Botanic Garden Learning Campus*

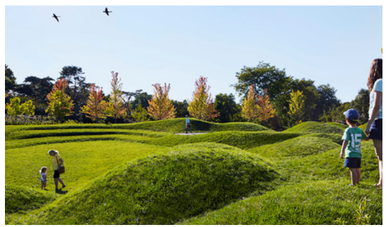
Glencoe, Illinois

Mikyoung Kim Design & Jacobs/Ryan Associates

• 7 acres within the Chicago Botanic Garden
• Goal of the site is to encourage exploration of the entire learning campus and reconnect youth with the natural world
• Stormwater management features: interactive stone water runnel loop that recycles water to a recirculation and treatment system; rain gardens; permeable pavers

### Key Takeaways

• Interactive water feature is a strong component of the site - kids can play in the water and the water is recycled (used on site to irrigate landscape), so reinforces lessons on water conservation
• Clear site mission (youth-oriented space) project elements match this well
• Objective of connecting kids with nature is accomplished, however there are not many areas that have traditional botanical garden elements (i.e. diverse plant collection with associated tags/info)



all images: https://myk-d.com/projects/chicago-botanic-garden/


all images: http://studio-mla.com/design/natural-history-museum-gardens/

## *Natural History Museum Learning Garden*

Los Angeles, California

Studio-MLA

• 3.5 acres that was formerly a parking lot
• Goal was to use both natives and other climate-appropriate exotics to create habitat for wild-life in an urban setting (about 60% CA native plants)
• Design of the plant exhibits takes into account the wildlife needs
• Outdoor amphitheater for events and leisure
• Plant selection connected to the site and history - Transition Garden represents the history of plants introduced to Southern CA from time of missions to present day

### Key Takeaways

• Variety of interactive and passive opportunities to learn (i.e. Get Dirty Zone - soil-oriented activities, walking paths with signage)
• Creative and beautiful way of combining the educational and horticultural components
• Chalkboard signage system is aesthetically pleasing but maybe not practical for a city park
• Gardening courses frequently sell-out - good way to bring in revenue
• Site has lots of program elements - too many for the size of the site?

# *McIntire Botanical Garden*

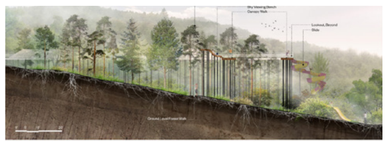
Charlottesville, Virginia

Mikyoung Kim Design

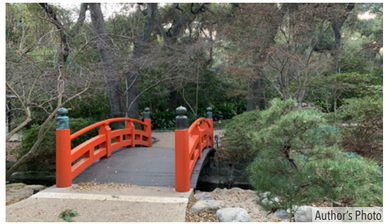
- 8.5 acres within a large regional park
- Emphasis on plants native to the region
- The plan integrates crucial stormwater management and infrastructural issues with current cultural concerns
- A tree survey was commissioned to better understand the site's existing vegetation, so that undisturbed mature areas could be incorporated into the design and serve as an established foundation to the site
- Topography was studied in order to make trails accessible and family-friendly, allowing for engagement across generations despite the steep slopes

## Key Takeaways

- Site size and location within a regional park approximates the conditions of CRA
- Took a naturalistic approach to the site design but also incorporated contemporary, polished elements that will attract users
- Existing natural site features were used as an asset to build upon
- Community engagement informed the designers to create "Masterplan for Healing and Resiliency"



all images: https://www.asla.org/2019awards/620539-McIntire_Botanical_Garden_Masterplan_Resiliency.html

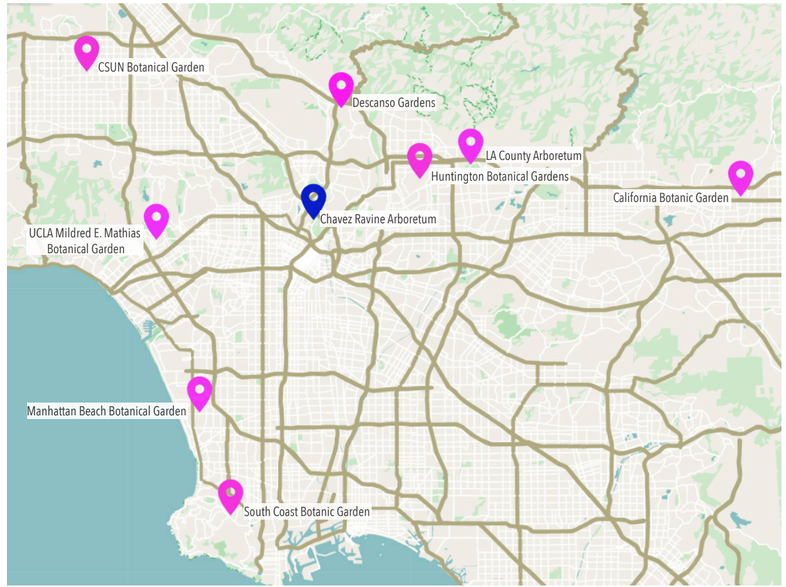


Author's Photo

https://www.toocb.com/the-huntington-l


Author's Photo

# *Botanical Gardens in Los Angeles County*




Reviewing regional botanic gardens offered insight into successful program elements. Photos: Descanso Gardens, Huntington Botanical Gardens, California Botanic Garden

# PROPOSED SITE PROGRAM

Site program and elements listed in order of importance.

**Living museum bridging old and new trees**

- Tree/plant exhibits with interpretive signage
- Demonstration gardens - 2 x 2,000SF (edible and nursery display gardens)

**Educational resources**

- Visitors center with information - 2,000SF
- Plant nursery focused on CA natives and other appropriate plants for the region - 4,000SF
- Outdoor classroom for events - 75 people

**Recreation and leisure opportunities for community use**

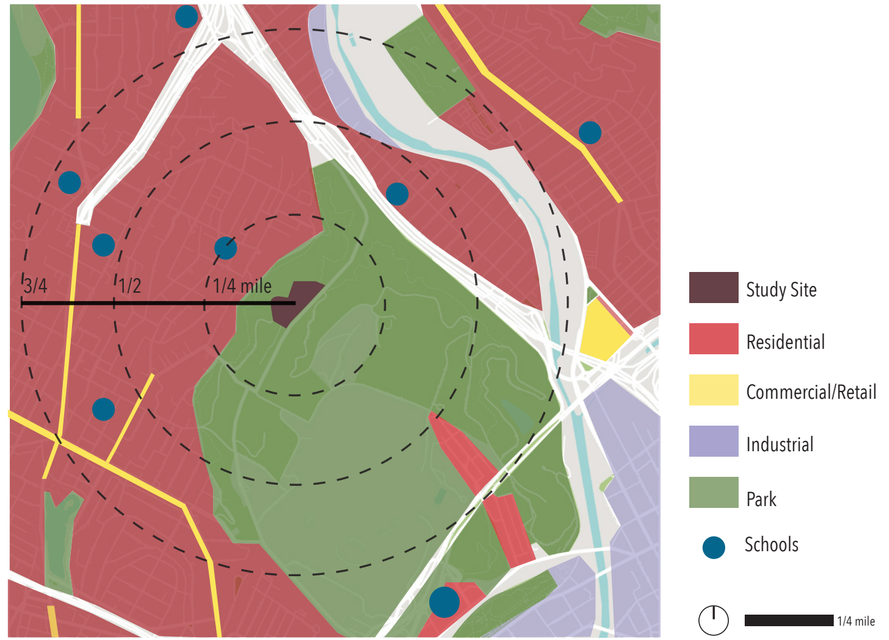
- Walking paths - Minimum 6' wide
- Grand lawn area for flexible uses - 20,000SF
- Playground space that relates to the natural surroundings - 5,000SF

**Site Amenities**

- Cafe/Small Restaurant - 1,000SF
- Bathroom facilities
- Parking Lot - 30 spaces

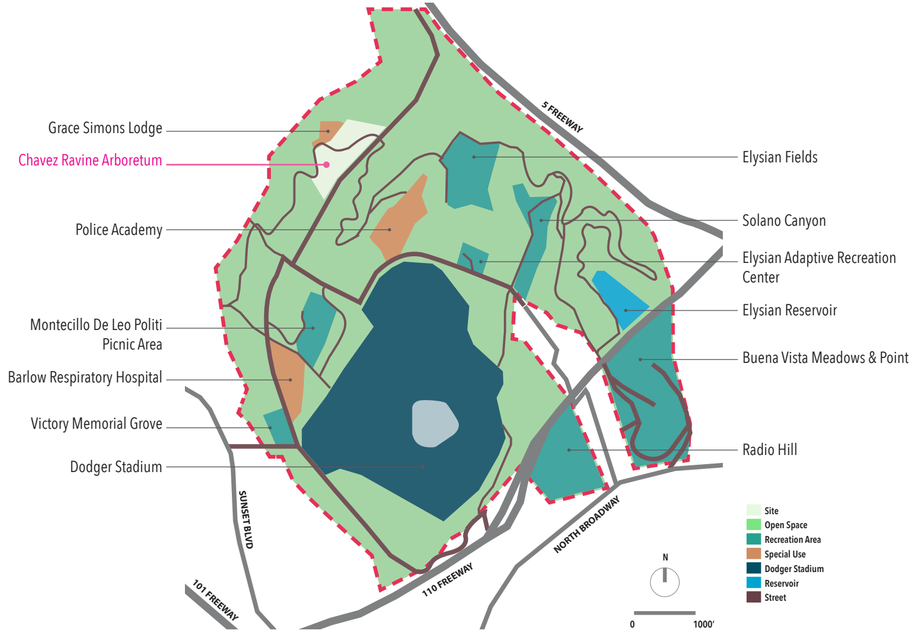


# SITE ANALYSIS - LAND USE




The park is surrounded by mostly residential (primarily single-family) with several commercial corridors within these areas. There are multiple schools within a one-mile radius of the site, ranging from elementary school to high school. One of the main user groups are school-aged children, and given the nearby schools, there is great potential to provide high quality outdoor, nature-based educational resources for local youth.

# SITE ANALYSIS - ELYSIAN PARK PROGRAM

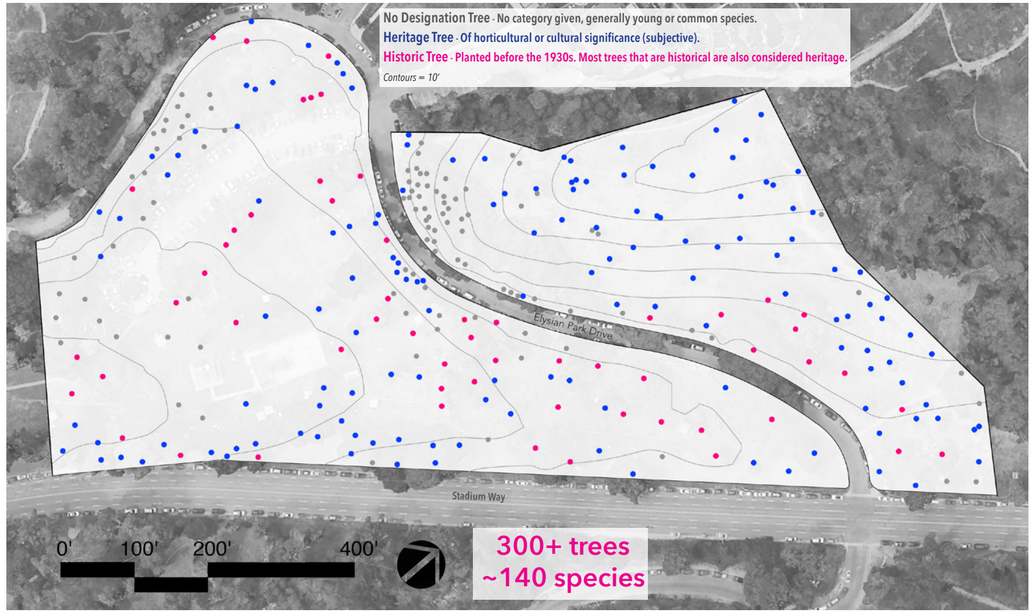



The existing program in the park includes active and passive recreation, such as baseball diamonds and picnic areas. Other uses within the geography of the park but not owned by the Department of Recreation and Parks includes the police academy, Barlow Respiratory Hospital and Dodger stadium, all of which draw users from throughout Southern California.

Leisure and recreation opportunities are part of the proposed program, however given the access to sports fields and hiking trails within the park, the proposed design will focus on passive recreational uses.



# SITE ANALYSIS - TREE INVENTORY




I compiled a tree inventory for the site using a recently updated City dataset (see References for website). There are 3 categories of trees designated by the City within the study boundary. I mapped these data points on the site plan and also verified the information on site. Additionally, I met on site with individuals who have a wealth of knowledge about the site and they provided insightful details regarding the history of when trees were planted or why certain species were selected. In order to meet my goal of telling the history of the site I maintained all historic and heritage trees and most of the trees labeled no designation.

# PROPOSED TREE PROGRAM




Based on the research I divided the site into 4 zones, creating five main program areas. They are: the Australian Garden, the World of Oaks, the California Experiment, Palm Hill, and the Specimen Trees & Palms (those numbered in the diagram at left). The founding horticulturalists were not designing the space in any way, so there is limited organization of the trees, however I was able to find some themes that tell a story. For example the area called the California Experiment was based on the story that the founding members used seeds collected from their trips around the world to create this garden of experimentation to see what would grow and adapt to our Southern California climate. Many trees in our region come from these parent trees planted here.

The World of Oaks was derived from the different varieties of East coast oaks that were planted, like the White Oak and Bur Oak, and as the years passed, European and Californian varieties were also introduced. Oaks are a keystone species, which means they serve as a backbone of the ecosystem. Information on keystone species could be integrated into the educational materials for this area.

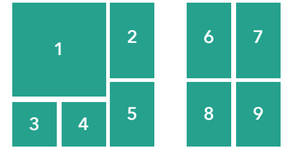
Creating this programming gives a narrative to the site, thus contributing to the design goals of showcasing the site's history and defining the identity of the site as an arboretum. It will also help to guide locations for succession planting which is an important aspect of any landscape. Recreation and Parks has done some of this, for example by planting a young Queensland Kauri that will eventually replace the historic one that is over 120 feet tall. The program areas offer a flexibility for future plantings to experiment with new species that will be more appropriate for our climate as it continues to change.

Some examples of the historic trees are on the following pages. It's important to keep in mind what the area looked like in the late 1800s, early 1900s. Many of these species are now relatively common but in the time period they were planted it was a novel horticultural exploration.



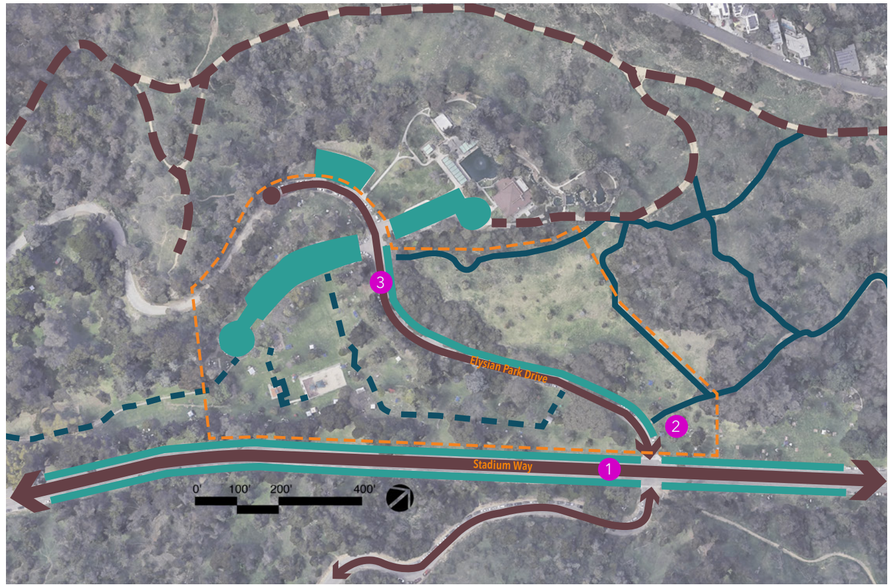
## A sample of the historic trees

KEY




1. *Quercus coccinea*
2. *Jubaea chilensis*
3. *Calodendrum capense*
4. *Chionanthus retusus*
5. *Castanospermum australe*
6. *Eucalyptus cladocalyx*
7. *Cedrus libani*
8. *Toona ciliata*
9. *Tipuana tipu*

# SITE ANALYSIS - CIRCULATION







Primary Vehicular
Secondary Vehicular
Fire Road Access
Parking
Pedestrian (Informal Paths)
Hiking Trail
Site Boundary

There is one way into the Arboretum via Stadium Way to Elysian Park Drive and most users arrive by car because there is no public transportation in the park. Within the site there are no walking paths or sidewalks, which means there is no guidance for visitors on where to go and all pedestrian circulation is on turf. The siting of the parking lot, given the tree inventory, is a good location, however the size/shape of the lot segments the site. There are opportunities to reconfigure the lot, add in a pathway system and bridge the two sides of the Arboretum that is divided by Elysian Park Drive.



# SITE ANALYSIS - PROGRAM





Heritage & Historic Tree Zone
Palm Hill
Picnic/ BBQ Areas
Playground & Restroom
Grace Simons Lodge
Site Boundary

There are several picnic areas and a playground structure. In the northern portion of the site is Palm Hill – an area that was planted with a variety of palm species in the 1970s - although there is no signage or indicators that this is the program of the area. Outside of the site boundary is the Grace Simons Lodge, a venue rented for events, and the natural park landscape that is a mix of chaparral and invasive species. With the existing minimal program, there is an opportunity to layer in programming related to the trees/education and leisure/recreation.

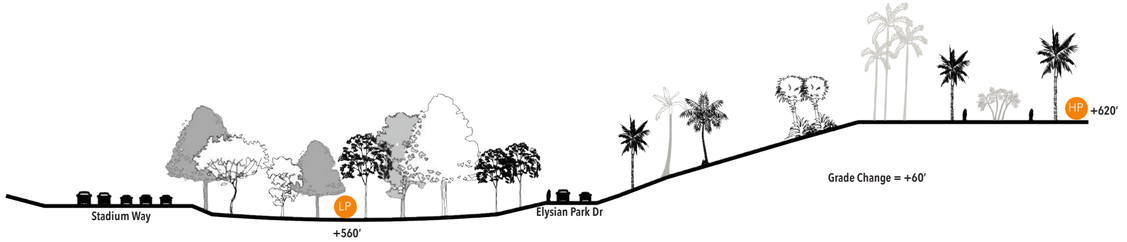
# SITE ANALYSIS - TOPOGRAPHY





The topography of the site includes some very steep inclines and a ravine that has a gentle slope down the center towards the southern part of the site. The swale line in the ravine could be an opportunity to connect the site (create a transition) to the adjacent parkland along the southern edge. The steepest inclines are found at Palm Hill where there are opportunities to develop the pathways in a switchback formation to make it accessible for all visitors to get up the hill.

The sections at right helped inform on the relationship between the different slope grades and the existing trees.

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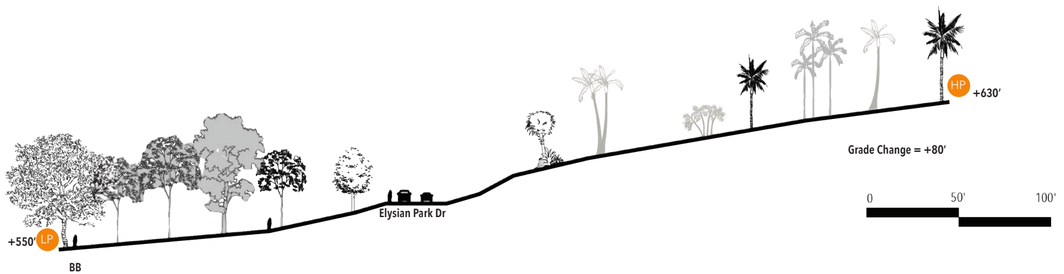


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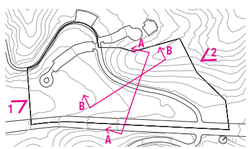
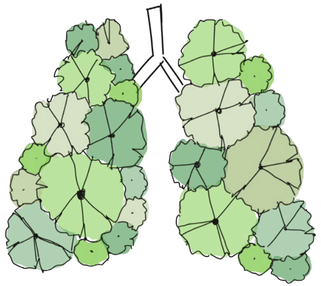


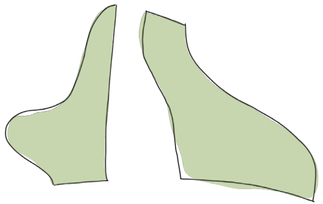
# SITE ANALYSIS - OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS


This diagram shows different areas to take advantage of in my concept design, such as the great view of Downtown LA from the top of Palm Hill or the large, open sunny area that has no existing trees and could be a good place to site a building, a plant nursery or event lawn. Some of the challenges are the existing street network that divides the site and is a source of traffic. The Grace Simons Lodge is adjacent to the site but is fenced off with limited access, providing minimal use to the everyday visitor. There is potential to create synergy between the Lodge and the Arboretum but that will depend on the discretion of the site owner (Dept. Recreation & Parks).



# DESIGN METAPHOR





My design metaphor are lungs – the organ responsible for a process called respiration where there is an exchange of gases that oxygenates our bloodstream. We have two lungs – the right and left- and there are five lobes. The site form is reminiscent of lungs and we have 5 main trees programs that carry us through the site. Visitors that come to the Arboretum will exchange experiences and knowledge. Respiration comes from the Latin *respirare*, which means to a take a breathe but also to enjoy a respite, and I will create spaces to enjoy a respite and take in a breath amongst these historic trees.

# CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT



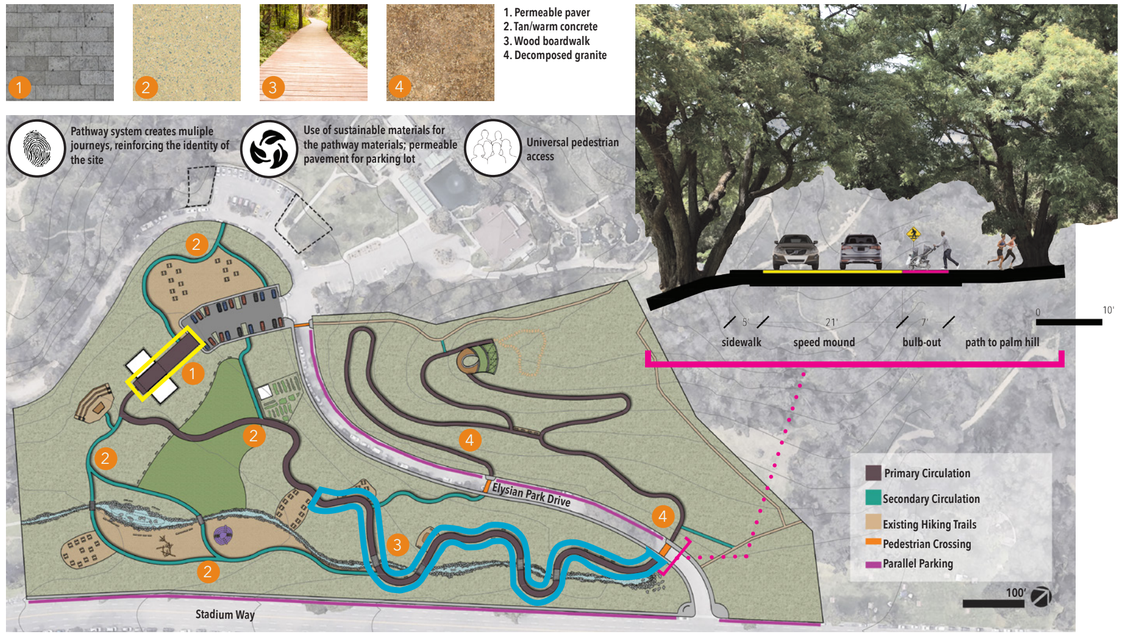
Concept 3
1 parking lot
2 visitors center
3 outdoor classroom
4 picnic grove (all orange areas)
5 demonstration gardens
6 plant nursery
7 grand lawn
8 pond + dry creek bed
9 playground (all purple areas)
10 vista point
Grace Simons Lodge
Elysian Park Drive
Stadium Way
0'
100'
200'
400'


Final Concept
1 parking lot
2 visitors center
3 outdoor classroom
4 picnic grove
5 demonstration gardens
6 plant nursery
7 grand lawn
8 pond + dry creek bed
9 playground
10 welcome signage
11 vista point
Grace Simons Lodge
Elysian Park Drive
Stadium Way
0'
100'
200'
400'

# ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN


# SITE PLAN WITH TREE PROGRAM OVERLAY

# CIRCULATION & PROPOSED MATERIALS



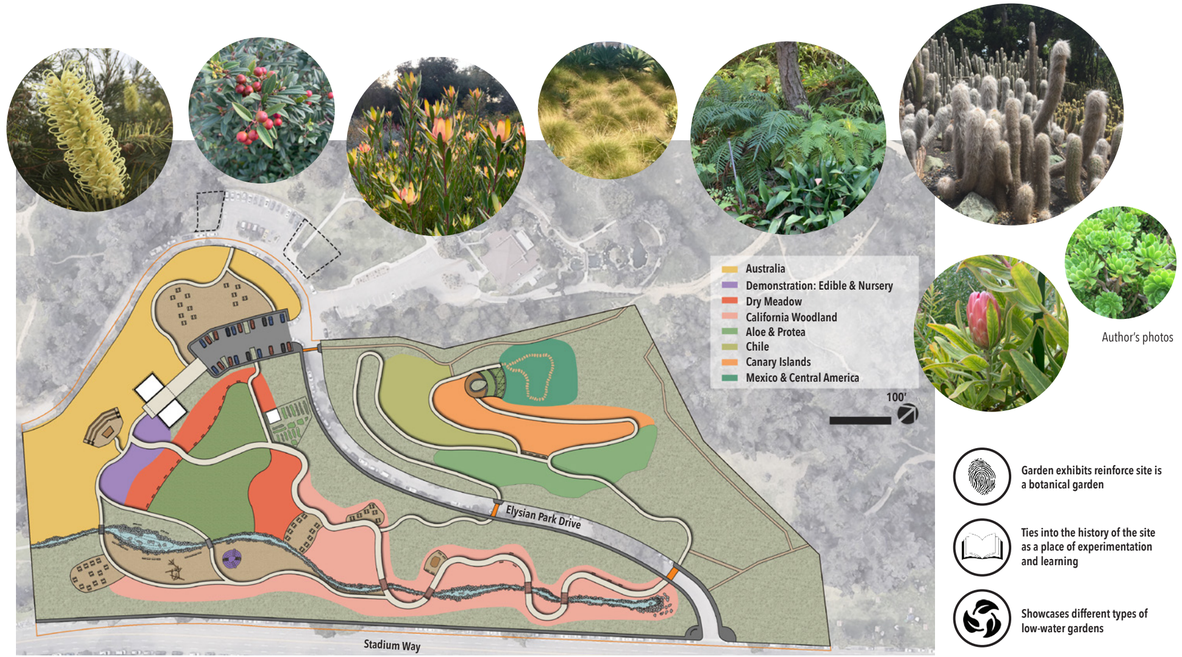

Sidewalks were added along the streets, in addition to bulb outs at crossings and speed mounds for safety. Different materials signal the different zones. The main walkway to the visitors center is a permeable paver (1/yellow) that evokes a more polished and formal feeling for the entrance. This transitions to a tan concrete (2) that is durable yet diverges from ubiquitous gray concrete. Once visitors enter the California Experiment (3/blue) where there is a density of mature trees, there is a boardwalk path that will minimize impact to the tree roots. Palm Hill has decomposed granite pathways, which adds an informality, provides permeability and helps with the heat on this south facing slope.



# WATER MANAGEMENT


The dark blue arrows show how water flows on the site. It can be captured for use on site through a system of runnels covered with metal, stone or wood grates (see middle picture). The grand lawn makes for a perfect location to bury underground cisterns because there are no existing trees here. There is also an opportunity to install above ground cisterns and develop an educational component about the process of stormwater management. The swale is a dry creek for most of its extent, but at its widest area there is a small pond that will serve as an interactive play component and provides the wildlife a water source. The swale feature is for water absorption but also references the potential underground streams that run in this area.

# GARDEN PROGRAM




Author's photos

Garden exhibits reinforce site is a botanical garden

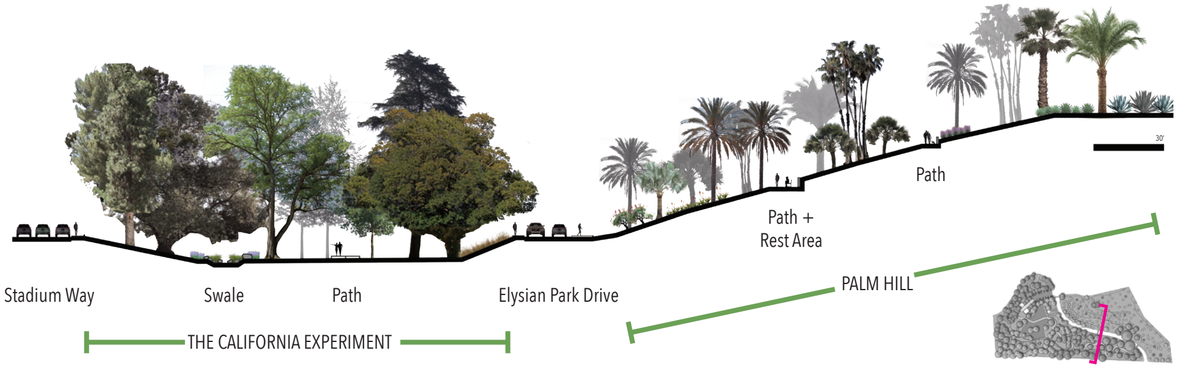
Ties into the history of the site as a place of experimentation and learning

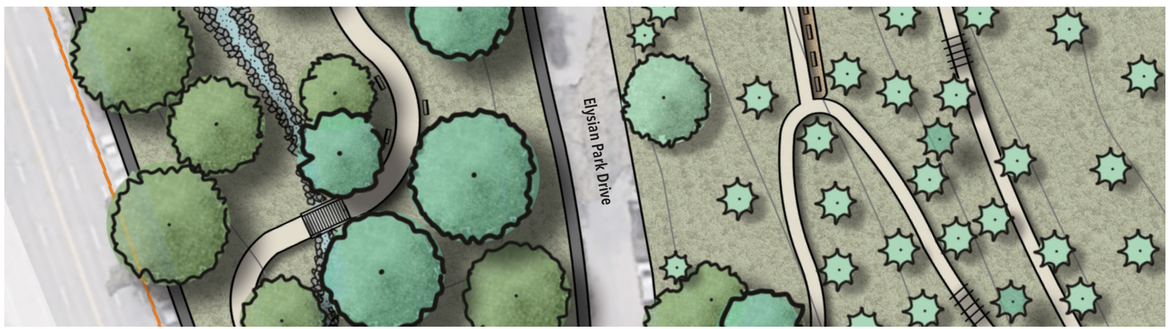
Showcases different types of low-water gardens

In addition to the tree program, there are 8 curated gardens that represent the Mediterranean plant regions. For example, at the base of Palm Hill there is an aloe and protea garden, representing the South African garden. As we move up the hill and gain sun exposure, the gardens feature dry-loving plants from Chile, Canary Islands and Mexico and Central America. The demonstration gardens (purple) will highlight plants that the nursery sells, as well as seasonal edible plants. The garden program has potential to contribute culturally relevant landscapes that will resonate with the diverse visitor groups.

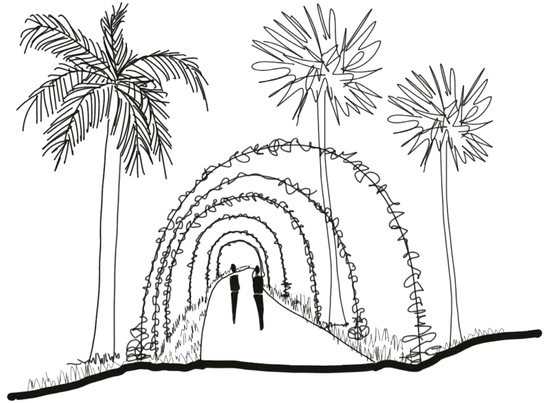


# SITE SECTION

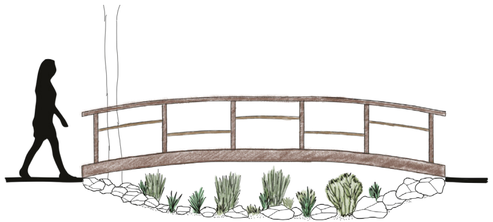


# SHADE STRUCTURE & SWALE CROSSING







There are 6 crossings over the swale in the California Experiment providing opportunities for the visitors to see the dry creek from different angles. These series of bridges are simple in design but create an experiential journey for the visitor.

On Palm Hill there is a need for intermittent shade for visitors walking up the hill due to the south-facing slope and to supplement the limited shade provided by the palms.

Along the path a series of metal arches will support vines and provide shade to those traversing up the hill. There are opportunities to use a variety of vines, including deciduous, flowering and California natives.



# SIGNAGE

***Exhibitions must teach to different learning styles, respond to issues of cultural and gender equity, and offer multiple levels of information.***

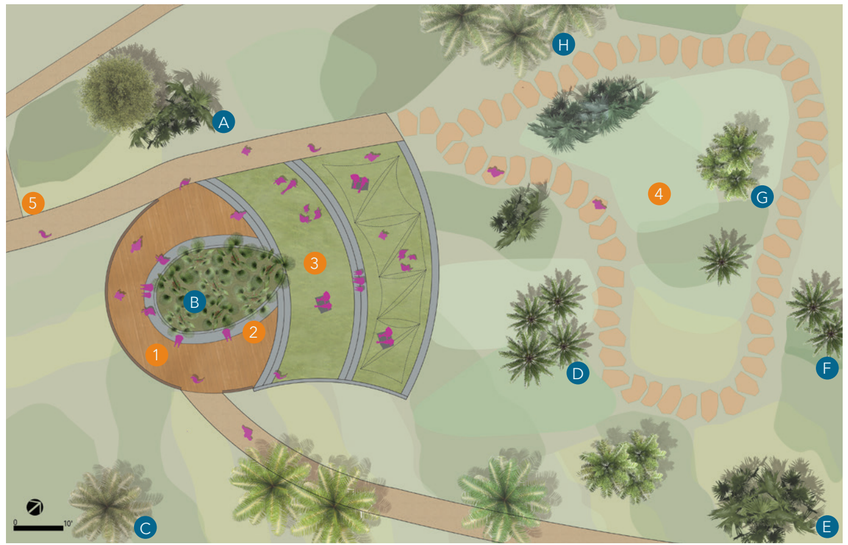
-- Smithsonian Guidelines for Accessible Exhibition Design






Being an arboretum, signage, both for identifying plants and for wayfinding, are an important part of the site. There are opportunities to engage multiple sensibilities through tactile signs, interactive displays, signage placed at multiple height levels and in multiple languages. Proposed signage for the entrance at Stadium Way and Elysian Park Drive uses a large boulder to reference the history of the park as a quarry.

# ENLARGEMENT PLAN - PALM HILL




1. Raised Wood Deck with View to Downtown
2. Concrete Bench Built Around Existing Palm Trees
3. Tiered Grass Picnic Area
4. Walking Loop in the Mexico & Central America Cactus Garden
5. Connection to Hiking Trail

Palm Species List

- A *Rhapidophyllum hystrix (Ex.)*
- B *Washingtonia robusta (Ex.)*
- C *Phoenix reclinata (Existing)*
- D *Sabal palmetto (Existing)*
- E *Livistona chinensis (Ex.)*
- F *Phoenix sylvestris (New)*
- G *Butia capitata (New)*
- H *Phoenix rupicola (Existing)*

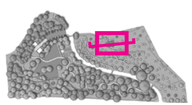
Example Plants in Cactus Garden

*Yucca elephantipes 'Variegata'*

*Agave potatorum 'Snowfall'*

*Pilosocereus leucocephalus*

San Marcos Growers
Plantdelights.com
WEBcactus.RU





# ENLARGEMENT SECTION - PALM HILL

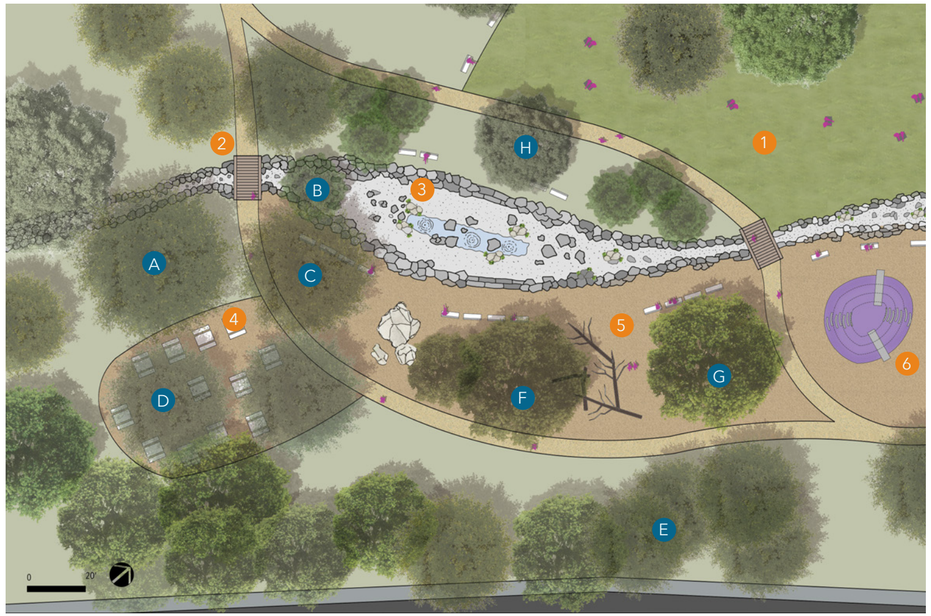

Here we can see how the terracing will work and how the cantilevered deck will provide a different vantage point for the visitors. There are two terraces of grass- the upper terrace has shade sails. The wood deck built around the existing cluster of palm trees offers a place to take in the view and have a seat. I was inspired by late afternoon site visits where I saw people sitting with friends, enjoying the view and the last few hours of light.

# ENLARGEMENT PERSPECTIVE - PALM HILL

Once you traverse up the path to the top of Palm Hill, you are greeted with a nice breeze and view of downtown LA. You can also take a walk through the cactus garden before descending back down the hill. It's the highest point in the Arboretum, and is now a destination where anyone can come up and take a break.



# ENLARGEMENT PLAN - CREEK PLAY AREA




Tree Species List

- A *Quercus alba (Existing)*
- B *Chilopsis linearis (New)*
- C *Quercus lobata (New)*
- D *Quercus cambyi (New)*
- E *Quercus ilex (Existing)*
- F *Taxodium mucronatum (Ex.)*
- G *Alnus rhombifolia (Existing)*
- H *Agathis robusta (Existing)*

1 Grand Lawn
2 Pedestrian bridge
3 Dry creek swale with water feature
4 Picnic grove
5 Playground with boulders and log play structures
6 Mound with slides and climbing

# ENLARGEMENT SECTION - CREEK PLAY AREA


This area features new recreation spaces along the dry creek with nature play features. Kids can explore the swale while parents grab a seat on a shaded bench nearby. This part of the swale has a shallow pond feature where kids can poke around in the water and birds and insects can take a drink. This is one of the programed areas closest to Stadium Way, yet the existing trees and the slope up to the street protect the area from the road. I studied putting a hedge or fence along this edge but there is an element of safety that is lost when you close in the site.



# ENLARGEMENT PLANT PALETTE - CREEK PLAY AREA

UPPER ZONE - Higher points of the swale


*Epilobium canum*


*Perovskia atriplicifolia*


*Cercis occidentalis*


*Aristida purpurea*


*Stipa pulchra*

LOWER ZONE - Lower points of the swale


*Carex praegracilis*


*Chondropetalum tectorum*

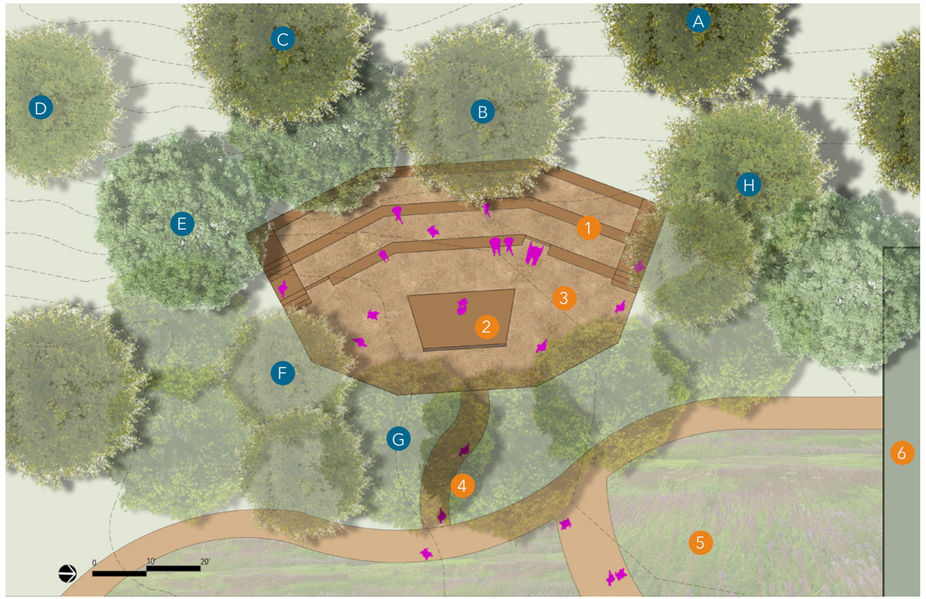

*Chilopsis linearis*


*Achillea millefolium*


*Muhlenbergia capillaris 'Regal Mist'*

This palette gives you a feel of what the dry creek could look like – it doesn't have to be an arid rocky patch just because there isn't water flowing all year. There are higher and lower points of the swale which influences the plant selection because not all plants that can tolerate wet soil can handle periods of inundation. This palette can work with the different sun conditions along the swale and provides interesting forms and colors to enhance this site asset.

# ENLARGEMENT PLAN - OUTDOOR CLASSROOM




Tree Species List

- A *Eucalyptus rudis (Existing)*
- B *Eucalyptus robusta (Ex.)*
- C *Eucalyptus camaldulensis (Ex.)*
- D *Corymbia citriodora (Ex.)*
- E *Liquidambar formosana (Ex.)*
- F *Angophora costata (New)*
- G *Melaleuca ericifolia (New)*
- H *Eucalyptus deglupta (New)*

1 Tiered Benches with Wood Seat and Concrete Base

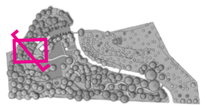
2 Stage 10' x 20' with Built-in Screening Panel

3 Decomposed Granite

4 Concrete Pathway to Outdoor Classroom

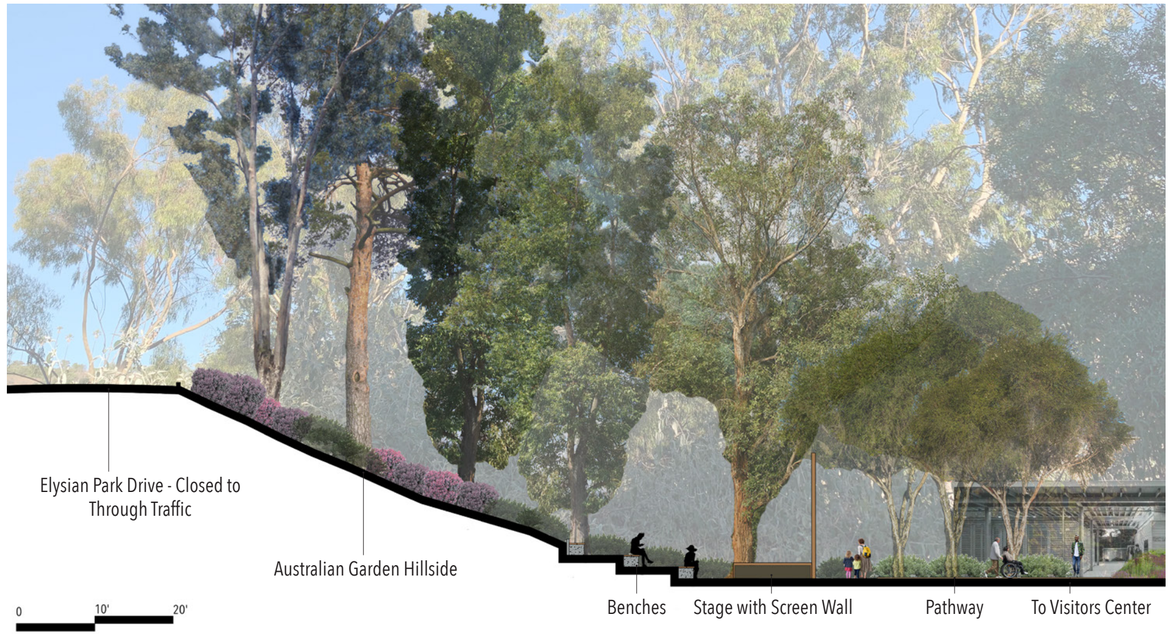
5 Demonstration Gardens

6 Visitors Center





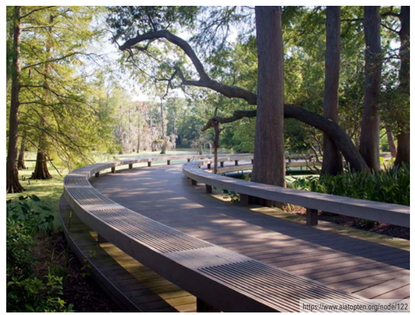
# ENLARGEMENT SECTION - OUTDOOR CLASSROOM




The outdoor classroom is a space where the Arboretum can host lectures and small events. Here you can sit amongst the trees in the fresh air and learn about arboriculture… maybe a class on proper pruning or new pest management techniques.

My objective was to create an outdoor learning venue that could accommodate 65 to 75 people. It's one of the quieter areas on the site given that the road behind it is closed to traffic. The proximity to the Visitors Center and parking lot make it accessible to visitors coming just for an event. The stage has a screening wall which provides the potential to show presentations or evening movies.

# ENLARGEMENT - THE CALIFORNIA EXPERIMENT


This area boasts the majority of the oldest trees on site. The recommended pathway uses the example from ShangriLa Botanic Garden where they built a wooden boardwalk pathway with helical piers and a modular structure to minimize impact to the existing tree roots. While walking through this area, visitors will be shaded by the canopy of large trees and can learn about these historic specimens. There are also some picnic areas and another play area tucked in amongst the canopy.



# ENLARGEMENT PERSPECTIVE- MAIN ENTRANCE


As people enter the Arboretum, they can drop into the Visitors Center, the building on the left, and grab a brochure, view a display on the site's history and learn about the different facets of Chavez Ravine. On the right is the café where you can pick up a drink or bite to eat to take with you on your exploration of the site. Visitors can also just walk straight through, as there is no admission needed to enter. The Visitor Center welcomes the public, creates a front door for the site, yet is also unassuming and accessible.

# USER EXPERIENCE


https://www.scpr.org/programs/take-two/2020/04/02/20754/

The Rodriguez family walks straight past the visitors center and heads to the playground to climb boulders, run across logs and look for insects in the creek. After spending an hour here, they decide to take the pathway to the California Experiment. Along the way they practice reading the signs, and there are some fun information boards with movable pieces that represent different leaf types. While walking they discover another play area – this one with a tree house. After some time checking out this play spot they decide it's time to eat and head to the picnic area to enjoy some lunch at a shaded picnic table. On their way out they notice the demonstration garden showcasing edibles and jot down some of the varieties they want to try out at home. They stop in the visitors center to use the bathroom and pick up a coloring book. Time to go home for a nap!

http://www.sbssla.org/echopark

The Echo Park Senior Group arrives in a small bus and is dropped off at the visitors center. At the visitors center they are greeted by an Arboretum volunteer – a high school student from nearby Cathedral High School. They pick up a map of the site and take a look at the exhibit on the history of Chavez Ravine. One of the members tells the group she had a friend in grade school who lived in the community of Chavez Ravine. The group exchanges stories about the many changes they have seen in Echo Park over the decades. They decide they will do a short loop since not everyone can walk long distances and they head through the Australian Garden and around the World of Oaks. The visit ends in the picnic area in the Australian garden, under the towering eucalyptus trees. It's a short walk back to the bus and the group agrees to come back for future visits – a great outing that's so close by!


https://3rdarm.biz/2019/02/19/elysian-park-arboretum/

A father and daughter have plans to hike the Elysian Park Loop trail. As they head out on the trailhead, they notice the signage for the Arboretum. While on the trail they see the Palm Hill Cactus Garden and decide to go check it out – some interesting specimens! They take a seat on the bench overlooking Downtown LA and give their legs a break. As they descend Palm Hill, they enjoy the variety of palm trees and get some cool pictures of the gardens. Tired from the hike they decide to come back soon and visit the other areas of the Arboretum.


https://www.laparks.org/

The environmental club from a middle school in Westlake comes to the Arboretum for a day of learning and fun. For some of the youth it's the first time they've been in Elysian Park. The group's chaperone guides them to the visitors center and the girls eventually decide on a route – they want to see everything! On their walk they marvel at the trees, noticing that some of them look familiar while many others are new. Afterwards they head to the plant nursery where they visit the greenhouse and get to see the different trees and shrubs that are grown from cuttings and seed. That afternoon there is a group playing music on the event lawn and they head over to sit down, eat some snacks and listen to music.

The Tree ID class from UCLA Extension meets at the visitors center bright and early – too early for some, who head to the café to grab a coffee before the class starts. The class heads to the California Experiment and then up Palm Hill. They enjoy the view on top and head down towards the outdoor classroom. The class spends the last hour here discussing what they've seen. There is a paper sign advertising a film screening at the outdoor classroom mid next-week and some of the students add this to their calendar. After class is dismissed some head to the café to get some food and go to the grand lawn to hang out for a bit. Others pay a visit to the nursery where they buy some plants before they head out.


https://www.wcisa.net/

The local ISA chapter has an all-day training at the Arboretum – they reserved the outdoor classroom for the day and will listen to speakers discuss pest management for the newest shot hole borer and techniques for pruning trees. The group has coordinated with the Arboretum to do some pruning demonstrations on the trees and the group walks over to the World of Oaks to get started. While the demonstration is going on, interested passerby stop to listen in. At lunch they sit in the picnic grove and then return to the outdoor classroom for the afternoon portion. After they wrap up the group heads up to Palm Hill where there is a happy hour with some cold drinks and snacks provided by the café.

# CONCLUSION

The Chavez Ravine Arboretum has many qualities that make this site an asset, yet it remains to be uncovered and shared with the public. There is potential to tell the story of the creation of the Arboretum, the history of horticulture in Los Angeles and Southern California, and the history of Chavez Ravine. Now more than ever we need green spaces that can serve as a respite and provide access to educational and leisure amenities.

This design respected the existing historic and heritage trees, created a pathway network that provides a variety of experiences, developed opportunities for families and organizations to gather and learn about arboriculture, and is centered on telling the history of the site through the creation of a tree program. The design creates a user experience that is centered on the trees and provides a rich experience that is unpretentious and welcoming to all Angelenos.

## *Cultivate a unique identity*

- Develop a circulation system that is accessible to all and encourages exploration of the site
- Curate exhibit areas to provide an engaging experience for visitors and give identity and context to the Arboretum

## *Represent the history of the site*

- Enhance and build upon the historic existing tree collection
- Craft displays and exhibit components that tell the story of the arboretum and Elysian Park

## *Celebrate the diversity of Los Angeles*

- Curate program elements that connect to diverse identities (cultural, economic, age, ability...)

## *Demonstrate environmental sustainability*

- Re-design drainage to encourage stormwater retention on-site; showcase best practices in demonstration gardens
- Encourage adventure play and recreational opportunities that relate to the natural world

## *Create spaces for individual and group experiences*

- Develop educational spaces that foster community engagement
- Provide opportunities for visitors to engage with the site as an individual or within a group



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