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We hope that you have enjoyed the Union Station / El Pueblo / Little Tokyo / Civic Center. As the Walk is an ongoing, dynamic process of development, we welcome your comments and suggestions for enhancements and improvements.

The White House Millennium Council designates as a Millennium Trail, Angels Walk Urban Trails.

“Honor the Past–Imagine the Future.”
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The White House Millennium Council designates as a Millennium Trail, Angels Walk Urban Trails.  
“Honor the Past—Imagine the Future.”
FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we continue to go into this brave new century, Angels Walk is going even further back in Los Angeles history than it did in its previous efforts. The Union Station/El Pueblo/Little Tokyo/Civic Center Walk is taking us back to the early village, Yang-na, home of the Tongva Indians, which became the settlement El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Angeles, which became our city, Los Angeles. This is the story of a Native American village that was subsequently settled by Spaniards, Mexicans, Chinese, Japanese, Italians, Africans, Portuguese and many others. Each group formulated and reformulated the settlement leaving a rich ethnic tapestry on which the city was built. This Walk then becomes a walk of discovering not just what you can see here but the stories of people who all converged, within a relatively short time, at this special place and claimed it as their own. Some of them named it and some of them renamed it, and as they did, Los Angeles evolved into a city that belonged to everyone.

Start your journey in this modern city by walking into its past — close to the site of the Yang-na village, Patsaouras Transit Plaza. Step into the romance and drama of Union Station and see where thousands of visitors from America’s heartland first stepped onto Los Angeles soil. Visit Los Angeles’ oldest surviving building and take a look at the “million-dollar jukebox” on the site of the old Bella Union Hotel where bawdy times were bad. Visit a lobby with a marble mosaic floor that is designed as a giant compass with a huge globe that does a complete revolution every 15 minutes. See the building that Superman used to fly over and the already famous, though not yet completed, Frank Gehry-designed Disney Concert Hall. Nearby, the biggest U.S. cathedral to be built in the last hundred or so years is under construction. Experience the abundance of art on this second installment of Angels Walk — a bold and colorful mixture of old and new, symbolic and whimsical.

Step out and imagine the once-sleepy village that has become this vibrant City of the Angels, Los Angeles.

— Deanna Molloy

GETTING THERE

METRO BUS
Any line that travels up or down Alameda Street or Cesar Chavez Avenue or otherwise takes you to Patsaouras Transit Plaza and MTA Headquarters (Gateway Tower) is fine. Start the Walk at Patsaouras Transit Plaza. See additional information on page 40.

DASH
For maps and information see pages 38-39.

METROLINK + AMTRAK
From Union Station proceed east through the underground walkway to the MTA Terminal at Patsaouras Transit Plaza and start the Walk at the beginning.

SUBWAY
Take the Red Line to Union Station and walk east to Patsaouras Transit Plaza and start the Walk.

METRO BLUE LINE
Take the Blue Line to the Red Line to Union Station and walk east to Patsaouras Transit Plaza to start the Walk.

STEPPING OUT FROM POINTS ALONG THE WALK
Angels Walk is designed so that it can be joined at any point along the Walk, so feel free to join in at whatever point is most convenient.

AUTOMOBILE
Parking is available at Union Station off of Alameda Street or Vignes Street. Walk east through Union Station to Patsaouras Transit Plaza to begin the Walk.

ACCESS
The entire Walk has wheelchair access by either elevators, lifts or ramps EXCEPT sites #6: Los Angeles Mall/Fletcher Bowron Square, #13: Court of Flags/Civic Mall, and #14: Performing Arts Center. See directions on those specific site pages for special instructions.

JUST A REMINDER
You can start the Walk anywhere along its path and just take it from there.
tiled fountains, the work of three different artisans. Roberto Gil de Montes’ fountain raises up a door-like structure in the middle of a pool of water. Elsa Flores’ fountain is a heart atop an obelisk standing in an oval pool. At the base, water issues from mouths set in two catlike faces. Also enjoy Peter Shire’s horizontal water terraces, which set coppery-bronze globes amid travel images of Los Angeles.

Inside the MTA building, whose lavishness once earned the building the derisive nickname of “Taj Mahal,” is Margaret Nielsen’s playful evocation of nostalgia, bright panoramas of memory as captured in postcards and ephemera from Los Angeles’ past, the glamorous 1930s and ’40s, the city of movies and hard-boiled private detectives and tourists who bought houses and never left.

Interestingly, it was something old, not something new, that drew complaints when it was installed: artist Patrick Nagatani’s mural collage “Epoch” incorporated a series of 1887 photographs by photo pioneer Eadweard Muybridge, showing a naked man in motion. While some workers were shocked, others thought it was silly to take offense at hundred-plus-year-old images of the human buttocks. The man in motion was sent to the building’s boardroom entrance. At his feet are postcard images of trolleys, trains and antiquated modes of transportation. Around him are NASA photographs of space—the stars, destinations that might be.

Visitors to the building are first struck by the soaring bird’s-eye-view murals of James Doolin, visions of Los Angeles through time and history. In a series of murals, transportation is used as a device to cut through more than a century of time and space, from “Circa 1870,” where a train moves inexorably toward a new century, to
The much-derided, much-neglected river is referenced again in a 7,000-gallon aquarium undulating along a wall. Artist May Sun hoped to stock it with fish that once swam in the river, but those turned out to be extinct, unavailable or too small, and so the fish are coastal saltwater and native Pacific.

Native, too, are the faces in Richard Wyatt’s vast mural of painted images of Gabrielino Indians and Latinos and Angelenos past and present, a panoply of faces from the city’s diverse history, all illuminated by light from a glass and steel dome. The faces of Wyatt’s vanished Angelenos also appear etched on glass, gazing into the waters of the aquarium.

Now proceed to the Patsaouras Transit Plaza to find yourself at the edge of a circular drive with patterns that appear as kinetic as the buses constantly in motion around it. The roadway is paved in English brick, and in the center walkway some plant or shrub is always flowering. Named for Nick Patsaouras, a Greek immigrant to Los Angeles who played a large role in shaping the county’s transit programs, and who envisioned the project as a “palace of the people.” His bust stands at the north end of the plaza’s center divider.

As the 26-story MTA Gateway Tower is linked to the 1939 Union Station by the East Portal Pavilion, so does the artwork symbolically link the new edifice to the old, the lavish pre-war train station.

The East Portal connects the two, and its art begins literally at the visitor’s feet, with bronze images of the turtles and trout and sycamore leaves that once swam and swirled in the Los Angeles River. Pre-history is also evoked in a serpentine tile bench along a water sculpture that is modeled like a riverbed fragment set in rocks from the river itself, strewn with bits of crockery and medicine bottles and other artifacts unearthed from the original Chinatown, which stood where the train station now stands.

The river theme makes another appearance here, in the Arroyo, in landscape architect Laurie Olin’s fountains, fences and grills, and walls of Kasota stone, intended to invite repose. Also along the Arroyo, beneath the pedestrian bridges and planters, are Wayne Healy and David Botello’s arboreal tile-murals rendered trompe l’oeil style. Metal tree-trunks are suspended above the planters rather than rooted, and painted tile birds and animals flourish among the trees and bridges.

The lobby leading to the escalators in the East Portal is also enlivened by a dozen multi-colored vertical “lightsticks,” (“The A Train”) each four feet high; artist Bill Bell has chosen fleeting images of freight trains and passenger cars and historical figures and movie stars. The “persistence of vision” phenomenon retains the image in memory well after it has passed in front of the eye. A hidden microphone can activate a sound system that can “speak” to passers-by who happen to slow down to take notice.

After seeing Patsaouras Transit Plaza, the MTA Gateway Tower Building and the East Portal Pavilion, go down the escalator and proceed west through the underground walkway to the main concourse of …
Officially, Union Station’s architecture is Spanish Colonial Revival, but early critics referred to it as Mission Moderne, with its red tiles, its Art Deco touches, and its Mediterranean clock tower.

And, this being Los Angeles, Union Station has a long resume of film roles, among them To Live and Die in LA, the Barbra Streisand / Robert Redford movie The Way We Were, and True Confessions, a film based on John Gregory Dunne’s novelized treatment of the lurid and still-unsolved 1947 Black Dahlia murder case.

Also characteristically, one of the state’s oldest fast-food stops can be found across the street from and north of the station. Lawmen traveling by train with their prisoners used to lock up their charges in Union Station’s two-cell jail and saunter over to Philippe the Original for a bite.

Philippe hardly looks much different from the day it was opened in 1908 by French émigré Philippe Mathieu, who sold beef, turkey, lamb and pork sandwiches for a dime. On a momentous day, ten years later, Mathieu accidentally dropped a roll into a pan roasting juices and served it to a customer, who according to legend came back the next day and asked for another “dipped” sandwich. So was born the French dip.

Philippe used to get a lot of lunchtime trade from workers at the double–domed Terminal Annex, just north of Union Station, which until 1989 was the city’s central post office. Since then, its population has been mostly movie and television companies, among them the makers of City of Angels. Plans are afoot to revive Terminal Annex as a vast high-tech center with an emphasis on telecommunications—fittingly, a 21st–century incarnation of the old-fashioned post office.

Los Angeles’ Love Affair with transportation did not begin with the automobile and the freeway. Getting around has always been critical to the life and growth of this coastal city, and that role was acknowledged over the decades with the building of temples of transportation like the vast and lavish Union Station.

The city and the railroads argued for more than 20 years before ground was broken for Union Station—the last of the great stations to be built in the United States. When it finally opened, on May 3, 1939, more than a half-million people showed up, to be entertained by a panoply of transit through history: stagecoaches, horse drawn streetcars, trolleys and an 1869 locomotive.

Visitors are still dumbstruck by its beauties, like the decoratively painted ceiling with black walnut beams and 3,000- pound chandeliers. Pigeons and sparrows still flutter into the cavernous station and nest among the beams. The tiled waiting room still offers plenty of cushy leather armchairs and elaborately decorated drinking fountains.

Exit Union Station through the front door and proceed through the landscaped area directly west to Alameda Street. Cross Alameda and enter El Pueblo de Los Angeles. Olvera Street and the Avila Adobe are to your right. The newly restored historic area is to your left. After walking around this historic area be sure to walk west through the plaza to Main Street and see the Mission Nuestra/Señora Reina de Los Angeles.
remains fairly close to its original proportions. A king of Spain stopped by the Avila Adobe in 1987, more than 200 years after one of his forebears owned California. On his walk through Olvera Street, King Juan Carlos I dedicated a statue of his ancestor, Carlos III, who supported the American Revolution and granted Los Angeles its charter in 1781.

The Avila Adobe was an abandoned ruin in 1928 when it was condemned and scheduled for the wrecking ball. Civic activist Christine Sterling used it as the cornerstone of her heritage campaign, launching a project to rescue the plaza, even taking up residence in the Avila Adobe in order to supervise the theme-park reworking of Olvera Street. In its day the adobe saw some intense arguments over Mexican versus American rule in California. A century later, Olvera Street provided another sort of political fireworks: in 1932, the renowned Mexican muralist and revolutionary David Alfaro Siqueiros was invited by Olvera Street’s patrons to paint an outdoor mural on the south wall of the Italian Hall. (This truly Italian building was built in 1907 by an Italian construction company as a community center for the large Italian population thereabouts. The hall is located at the north end of Olvera Street).

Siqueiros’ commission, his only public mural in the United States, was to memorialize colonial Mexico—and did he ever. The colonial Mexico that the muralist depicted in “America Tropical,” was radical and revolutionary, painted in imagery of class war and colonialism. When the mural was almost finished, Siqueiros
dismissed his assistants and worked through the night to paint the central image: a Mexican peon crucified below an eagle that could have been interpreted as the Mexican eagle or the American one. After the unveiling, an official outcry prompted the mural’s whitewashing—a treatment which ironically may have preserved the work. At the end of the 1980s the Getty Trust committed itself to uncovering and restoring the mural.

A few doors to the south is the Pelanconi House, the city’s first brick residence, whose owners lived “above the shop,” the shop being a ground-floor winery. Many of the Plaza’s buildings were designed in an Italianate style popular in the mid-19th century, one that cried out “culture” to a city whose new immigrants considered European architecture to be the superior of local design.

The city’s oldest church looks modest and utilitarian compared to the splendor of the chain of missions up and down the length of California. The Church of Our Lady Queen of the Angels was built in 1822 by the first U.S. citizen to arrive in Los Angeles, a New England freebooter named Joseph Chapman. “Blond Joe,” who was very handy with saw and plane, was recruited by the Franciscan padres to build houses and ships—and the church.

The money to build it came from the sale of seven barrels of brandy donated by the padres. Some was auctioned off, as planned, but some was drunk by the workmen. Still, there was enough to build the church, which was dedicated in 1822, the year Mexico won independence from Spain. Like Los Angeles itself, it has been retooled and restyled over the years, with a bell tower, new facades and roof lines. When a young U.S. Army lieutenant undertook the city’s first survey in 1849, he used the front of the church as ground zero—the very heart of Los Angeles.

A mosaic panel of the Annunciation, added to the facade in the city’s bicentennial year, 1981, copies a detail from St. Francis of Assisi’s Porciuncula chapel in Italy; the 1769 expedition of Gaspar de Portola named the Los Angeles River after this modest little place of worship of the modest saint.

After nearly 200 years, the church known affectionately as “La Placita,” the little plaza church, still draws about as many worshippers as tourists. It stands across Main Street from Olvera Street. In the decades before the street was called Olvera Street, in honor of the county’s first judge, it was called “Wine” or “Vine” Street, for the nearby vineyards cultivated by immigrants from Italy and France.

Like the church itself the plaza’s surviving buildings have been remolded more often than a Hollywood back lot—among them the much reworked Pico House, once the finest hotel in Los Angeles.

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After seeing the Mission on Main Street you are very near Chinatown, just go west to Spring Street and then north along Spring Street to Cesar Chavez Avenue to the...
Also commemorates Herbert Lapham, the railway agent who helped the Chinese to buy land covertly at a time when the Chinese-born were barred from owning property.

Also in the plaza stands a statue of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, often called the “father of modern China,” whose leadership helped to overthrow the Manchu dynasty. He visited Los Angeles in 1905.

Although Chinese men were first recorded in Los Angeles as early as the census of 1850, it wasn’t until 1859, when the first Chinese woman took up residence, that the city’s only newspaper took official notice of the existence of a Chinese community.

The original Chinatown’s only remaining edifice is the two-story Garnier Building, once a residence and meeting place for immigrant Chinese. Present-day Chinatown rose up at the same time as China City, an artificial Disneyland-style attraction dreamed up by Christine Sterling, the civic activist who rehabilitated Olvera Street. China City lasted no longer than a decade before it burned to the ground.

**GATEWAY TO CHINATOWN**

Cesar Chavez Avenue & Broadway

**Handicapped**

Walk back to the Mission and proceed south down Main Street and cross the Hollywood Freeway noting the Glenna Boltuch Avila mural, “L.A. Freeway Kids,” and proceed straight down to Temple Street to the…

Although this Walk only goes to the Gateway to Chinatown, you may be interested to know that, for more than a century, one after the next, three Chinatowns have found a foothold in Los Angeles. The current one is the nation’s first planned Chinatown—and the first wholly owned, financed and controlled by Chinese. Its nucleus is the New Chinatown Central Plaza, whose east gate, a pai lou, was erected in 1938. The west gate’s message, “cooperate to achieve,” underscores the extraordinary events that built Chinatown.

A bronze plaque in Peter Soo Hoo Plaza of Chinatown’s main square lists the names of “the founders,” local Chinese who pooled energies and monies to construct New Chinatown after plans to build Union Station routed residents of old Chinatown. The plaque
PRIOR TO ARRIVING AT THE SQUARE, look to your right and notice the austerely styled U. S. Courthouse. Built as a federal building and post office, it is a 17-story classic of Depression-era Moderne style. The Spring Street and Main Street entrances were built with facings of pairs of Doric columns interspersed with aluminum grills bearing the seal of various federal agencies. Rose marble and Sienna travertine ornament the lobbies. In 1940, Architectural Record asked many Angelenos to name their favorite buildings — and this newly finished edifice was one of them.

The square that in the 19th century was both the swankiest and the bloodiest spot in Los Angeles is today named after a reform-minded 20th-century mayor named Fletcher Bowron.

But a visitor might not learn that, though. In 1996, architectural and metal scavengers first plucked out the bronze lettering identifying the site as Fletcher Bowron Square, and then tore the bust of Mayor Bowron himself from its modest pedestal. What was not stolen — although plenty of people no doubt wish it had been — was the Triforium. To paraphrase what poet Alexander Pope wrote of mankind, the Triforium was and is “the glory, jest and riddle” of Los Angeles, although its glory was fleeting.

It is a six-story, three-legged device criticized as a “million-dollar jukebox” and a “psychedelic nickelodeon.” The computerized synthesizer of trilling sound and multicolored lights playing in synch was supposed to be the whimsical keystone of the civic center’s urban revival when it was installed in the 1970s. Its three sides were supposed to represent the three branches of government. Former mayor Sam Yorty envisioned it as “the Eiffel Tower of Los Angeles.”

Alas, the thing never quite operated properly for very long. It played Christmas carols for a few seasons, and chirped out some pop tunes, but in short order, its 1,494 lighted glass prisms went dark and its oval speakers fell silent. The musicians’ union that complained of the free competition need not have bothered. The city dropped tens of thousands of dollars into the Triforium, the way one would drop quarters into a jukebox, but nothing seemed to keep it going. The reflecting pool below it is dry. Rumor has it that it is too expensive to keep up, and too expensive to tear down. Its designer, Joseph Young, has had more success elsewhere, with a mosaic in Parker Center, the downtown police headquarters, and his somber Holocaust Monument. Of the Triforium, he said, “I get very upset when I see it. It’s like a baby who was never born.”

The Triforium stands on the site of the Bella Union Hotel, the city’s first and finest, a gossip-center and meeting place for both the law-abiding and the lawless; one victim of a shooting feud died on its billiard table. The Bella Union’s French restaurant and especially its bar were well-patronized. Below, the restaurants of the current-day Los Angeles Mall offer mostly fast food for the on-the-clock Civic Center lunch crowds.

Across Temple Street from Fletcher Bowron Square to City Hall East is a footbridge, arched like a Venetian model. In 1989, Chinese-American students demonstrating their solidarity with the students and protesters in Tienamen Square in China crafted a replica of the Goddess of Democracy statue that their Beijing counterparts had created, and installed it on the footbridge, to cheers and applause.

The square was the site of the city’s first newspaper, the Los Angeles Star, and is very near Yang-na, the original Los Angeles, the native American village that Spanish explorers came upon in 1769.

The venerable Children’s Museum, with its pioneering interactive spaces for kids, will be moving to two new sites, the Hansen Dam Recreational area and a site near the Roybal Federal Building in the newly developing “Art Park” area.
The sexes, and revolution giving birth to life and hope. Not only do the small bas-relief figures bear appropriate genitalia, but even more objectionable to some were the larger bronze figures accompanying the frieze: a baby girl lying on her back, holding the globe, Atlas-like, in a fountain, bathed in sprays of mist. In a niche below the frieze, very chained and very female, is a naked woman, shackled and squatting next to some books, writing in the dust at her feet with a stick. One federal judge described it as a “shrine to pedophiles.”

The bronzes of the woman and the baby were actually removed for two months, shortly after a complaint from the congressman whose name the building bears. Edward Roybal, a pioneer in Latino rights, was also the first Latino in modern times to be elected to the Los Angeles City Council. Protests by artists, civil libertarians and the mayor of Los Angeles followed. Otterness himself declared, “This art stands for all the best things of this country, the unit of man, America’s commitment to freedom and creativity.”

Both works were returned after a compromise put them behind railings to protect them from vandalism.

CONTROVERSY AND DARING are the last elements one would expect to find in a complex of federal buildings, but the art and adornments at the Edward R. Roybal Federal Building had people talking from the very first.

The quartet of 32-foot-tall perforated steel silhouettes standing in the courtyard near Temple Street is entitled “Molecule Man,” a work by Jonathan Borofsky, whose flying fiberglass men also soar above the tracks at the Civic Center metro station. But regulars have informally christened the piece with the nickname “Swiss cheese guys,” for the series of holes pierced in the brushed steel. The four figures, executed in profile and set at angles, seem to be pushing and tussling. Borofsky later created three similar sculptures, each 100 feet high, for a Berlin-based insurance firm.

“Molecule Man” seems downright sedate compared to what awaits a visitor who ascends the steps to the patio between the federal building and the courthouse. Situated in front of a sweet green oasis of shaded grass, the patio features a frieze and two accompanying statues that almost didn’t stay there.

“The New World” is a year-long creation of sculptor Tom Otterness, whose work stands in a New York museum and in a park near Wall Street. In the right half of the frieze, pudgy, stylized figures of men work and struggle, tearing a globe in two, toppling a statue and deposing a king. On the left, women climb and trudge toward the center, where the two sexes meet. The work is variously interpreted as detailing the long human climb to humanity, the struggle between
SINCE THE MIDDLE OF THE 19TH CENTury, Japanese and Japanese-Americans have come to Los Angeles and called it home. And, in true immigrant fashion, they have contributed many ingredients into the “melting pot,” rendering the taste all the more intriguing for the variety. Despite the diaspora that finds Japanese-Americans, like any other Angelenos, living throughout the neighborhoods of greater Los Angeles, Little Tokyo still holds a place in the saga of Los Angeles’ Japanese, and attracts tens of thousands of visitors. As the old Buddhist church became a museum, so did Little Tokyo’s first Christian church, on what is now Judge John Aiso Street, become the Union Center for the Arts, listed on the National Register of Historic Places and home to the East West Players theatrical troupe.

Around the corner, on First Street, visitors find history under their feet: the history of the street is embedded in sidewalk legends and images. In the 40 years before Pearl Harbor, bookstores and pharmacies flourished along the street. The venerable Anzen hardware store still operates, a block deep and densely stocked, from an impossibly narrow storefront. Nearby, Little Tokyo’s oldest continually operated shop, Fugetsu Do confectionery shop, is still run by the grandson’s founder. It was here that the fortune cookie, so associated with Chinese food, was created. For all their charm, such shops represent a struggle; during the years that it was illegal for Japanese to own property, owners often transferred their businesses into the names of their American-born children.

The anchor to the neighborhood is the elegant Japanese American National Museum, the first rehabilitated portion, of which opened in 1992. The building was the Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple when it opened in 1925, and there, in 1942, Japanese and Japanese-Americans were processed on their first step toward wartime internment camps. The building was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1995. The museum offers seminars, film festivals and exhibitions throughout the year on current and historical topics about the community.

The museum possesses a vast virtual library, video presentations, modern art objects, World War II and internment camp artifacts, antique kimonos and the uniform of “Star Trek” actor George Takei, that convey the breadth and the flow of the story of Japanese-Americans here. Its bookshop is stocked with topical items both serious and whimsical. The new pavilion, a soaring, light “museum without walls,” was designed under the supervision of Gyo Obata, the architect of the
Smithsonian Institution’s Air and Space Museum, and unites historic and contemporary energies.

A few hundred feet away is the somber yet celebratory “Go For Broke” monument, remembering and honoring the too-often overlooked story of Japanese-American soldiers in World War II. The vast black granite monument bears the names of some 16,000 Japanese-American veterans and their officers. It was only in the last decades of the 20th century that the courage and ingenuity of these military units was publicized. Even wearing the uniform of the country that was holding their families in internment camps, these soldiers became some of the most highly decorated of the war.

Within sight of the monument is the Geffen Contemporary Museum of Art, an annex of the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) on Bunker Hill, to the west. For years, until movie mogul David Geffen donated $5 million to the museum’s campaign, it was known affectionately as the Temporary Contemporary, a building intended as a stopgap exhibit space before MOCA was constructed. With elements like interior partitions designed by renowned architect Frank Gehry, its spaces echo the huge warehouse that it once was, but accommodate exhibitions that cannot fit the more conventional spaces of MOCA.

At Second and San Pedro streets is the Friendship Knot, by Shinkichi Tajiri, dedicated to the memory of Dr. Morinosuke Kajima, who “initiated the revitalizing of Little Tokyo.”

Across the corner, at the same intersection, stands a statue of Sontuko (Kinjirō) Ninomiya, the “peasant sage of Japan” during the 18th and 19th centuries. He bears a bundle of sticks and a book. His life symbolizes “the treasured values of perseverance, integrity, and social consciousness.” The round courtyard of the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center is dominated by “To the Issei,” the sculpted stones of Isamu Noguchi, perched atop a brick dais—tribute to the first generation of Japanese in America. The renowned sculptor, a Guggenheim fellow and the first Japanese-American artist to achieve international prominence, was born a few miles to the east, in Boyle Heights, to a Japanese father and Irish-American mother. The center celebrated its twentieth anniversary in the year 2000 with performances of Asian and Asian-Pacific-American artists from the traditional to the cutting-edge, documentaries, music, dance and theatre. It has also hosted exhibitions of Japanese-American roles in the nation’s military history.

Tucked behind the center is the Seiryu-en, Garden of the Clear Stream. At the top of the garden are redwoods and a mountain scape. The lifeline of water rushes down from the mountains over rugged rocks. This represents the first generation of Japanese-Americans, the Issei, and the hard times they had. When the stream hits an island, it divides, marking World War II, and internal conflict and mixed feelings for the Nisei, the second generation. Postwar, the two streams meet and merge into a quiet pool—the third generation. At last, the water disappears and a dry stream symbolically runs out to the city street—the dream of merging with the mainstream community. In addition to its symbolism, the garden, the handiwork of landscape architect Robert Murase, is a space of water and silence in the bustling city.

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Cross First Street and meander through the Japanese Village Plaza with its shops and restaurants and continue south to Second Street where it meets San Pedro Street. The Japanese American Community Cultural Center will be to your left (south). Across San Pedro is Weller Court, which will take you back to First Street. Go west along First Street to Spring Street to…
reasons unknown, the mural was covered for decades by a metal siding resembling corrugation, and unveiled and restored in the last quarter of the century.

The marbled annex to the lobby, with its touches of federalist functionalism in the metalwork, also boasts two marble-walled telephone booths: one for local calls and the other designated “long distance.” The secondary lobby, in a ten-story annex built in 1948 along Second Street near Spring Street, echoes the Art Deco lines of the original. The six-story, 1970s addition to the west strikes a completely different note.

Although the newspaper is no longer printed on the premises, The Times offers tours of the building, including the history of the newspaper and a video presentation about journalism in the lobby.

For decades, the block bounded by Spring and Broadway, and First and Second Streets, was known as Times Mirror Square, the corporate headquarters for the empire of newspapers and other publications the company operated. In 2000, the corporation changed names and hands, being taken over by the Chicago-based media conglomerate Tribune Corporation.

THE MOST POWERFUL NEWSPAPER in Los Angeles could not be housed in a building less spectacular than the civic edifices around it. And so the third home of the Los Angeles Times opened its heavy double doors in 1935, in an edifice that was the height of deco Moderne. Even the architect, Gordon B. Kaufmann, was a big thinker, having put ornamental finishes to the Hoover and Parker Dams.

On the facade several floors above the entrance is one of the few working public clocks remaining in downtown. It is illuminated at night, as is the vast, severe neon sign five stories above Spring Street, reading “The Times.”

The Globe Lobby—so named for the enormous globe that rotates on an axis on a marble and bronze base ornamented with allegorical figures—is sumptuous. Surrounding it above eye-level is the continuous, classically Deco mural “Newspaper,” by artist Hugo Ballin, who also painted murals in Los Angeles’ Central Library. For

At this point you could proceed west, two blocks, up the hill from The Times, to then descend into the Civic Center subway station, and there, suspended over the tracks, with numbers across their chests like suspects in mug shots, are six fiberglass men, Jonathan Borofsky’s work, entitled “I Dreamed I Could Fly.” Each of the Metro-rail train and subway stations has its own distinct artistic theme, from the shock of citrus colors at one station to wall-mounted texts at another—something to read, perhaps, while waiting for the train. From the station, you can ride back to Patsaouras Transit Plaza, or you can continue the Walk and head ½ block north to the Spring Street entrance of...
FOR SHEER GORGEOUSNESS and impressive scale, other civic buildings are hard-pressed to match Los Angeles City Hall. Built during the opulent and optimistic 1920s, it has hosted dignitaries from Queen Elizabeth II to aviator Charles Lindbergh and Nobel Peace Prize winner Nelson Mandela.

For decades, by law, no building could surpass its distinctive 27-story height, an unmistakable profile on the skyline. To underscore Los Angeles’ significance on the California landscape, builders used sand from every county in California, and water from the wells of every one of the state’s 21 missions.

Mindful that this is earthquake country, the group of architects who designed the building created a compressible joint at each floor, like a human spine, to ride out earthquake shudders. After each temblor, a building superintendent walks up 27 stories to check for water leaks from the vast water tanks in the tower, which measures 464 feet above the street.

When City Hall was dedicated in April 1928, in a three-day fete produced by movie theatre tycoon Sid Grauman, 32,000 marchers paraded in celebration. Irving Berlin sang. President Calvin Coolidge pressed a key in the White House to light the tower beacon, named for Lindbergh. It flashed L-A in Morse code each night until security concerns during World War II shut it off.

The domed rotunda which, like the exterior tower, is beloved of moviemakers, is paved in 4,000 pieces of intricately cut vari-colored marble, inlaid in mosaics of circles and loops and checkerboard patterns. At its center is a Spanish ship in full sail, inlaid in brass. A massive chandelier that once hung in the rotunda which was taken down as a precaution after the 1933 Long Beach earthquake, was unearthed and cleaned up for restoration to its original place. A dozen columns, each made of a different kind of marble, ornament the city council chamber. The public works hearing room, another favorite of filmmakers, who may spend as much time there as public works officials do, is ornamented in green, blue and gold. On the ceiling outside the mayor’s suite of offices, for reasons no one can recall, is an ornate set of the signs of the zodiac.

Expensive and extensive renovations costing many times the building’s original $5 million price tag are intended to bring the building up to 21st-century technological standards while restoring the original 20th-century beauties of this civic treasure.

Beyond the south steps of City Hall, a popular spot for official speechifying, is the Frank Putnam Flint fountain. Its white marble was raised up to commemorate the U.S. Senator and developer of the foothill towns of La Canada-Flintridge. The fountain was drained and dried out after a man drowned facedown in one of the fountain’s basins. He was found next to his brown-bag bottle of liquor.

An enclosed pedestrian bridge across Los Angeles Street, a popular spot for rotating art and history exhibitions, connects City Hall to its younger, less glamorous neighbor, City Hall East. That building’s most noteworthy feature is a glazed-tile mural by well-known California artist Millard Sheets. Sheets, whose murals, mosaics and frescoes adorn many public buildings around California and the nation, also designed the official seal of Los Angeles County. In the center is the goddess of agriculture, Pomona—after whom Sheets’ hometown was named. The seal bears symbols from the area’s history, including Juan Cabrillo’s ship, an oil derrick, a fish, and the Hollywood Bowl.

From City Hall cross Spring Street mid-block going west. You will be able to look directly through the Civic Center Mall to the Performing Arts Center and the Department of Water and Power Building. There are two courthouses nearby, the Criminal Courts Building at 210 West Temple Street and the U. S. Courthouse at 312 Spring Street. Continue the Walk going west into the “Court of Flags” and the Civic Mall with its outdoor café and fountain.
The Hall of Records building at 320 West Temple Street is a rarity—a high-rise civic building by architect Richard Neutra, a man famed for more intimately scaled works, private houses in particular. The building’s glass mural, at the Temple Street entrance, “Water Sources in L.A. County”—water being no trivial matter in Southern California—is by Joseph Young, who created the Holocaust Monument in Pan Pacific Park, as well as mosaics for Parker Center, the city’s downtown police headquarters, and stained glass works for various churches and synagogues. He also designed the less successful Triforium near City Hall.

While it can be said that performance art of a kind—at least drama—is created every day in and around the courtrooms of the downtown Criminal Courts Building (the CCB to locals), within a block’s radius there is art that is more venerable and less transitory.

From here proceed west to the Performing Arts Center on Grand Avenue. Just South on Grand Avenue is the site of the future Disney Concert Hall (currently under construction) and farther south on Grand is the Colburn School and the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) where you can connect up with the Bunker Hill/Historic Core District’s Angels Walk.
Jacques Lipchitz’s “Peace on Earth” bronze sculpture, shimmering in the middle of a pool made kinetic by plumes of water shooting up from ground level orchestrated by a computer that seems to have a sense of whimsy. At the top of the Grand Avenue stairs stands sculptor Robert Graham’s “Dance Door.” In the large plaza, open-air performances throughout the year have included a popular Christmastime musical by dozens of tubas. At the north end stands the imposing Ahmanson Theater, whose stage accommodates even the most lavish and complex of musical and theatre productions.

Across First Street is the foundation of the Disney Concert Hall, which has been both a fundraiser and a work in progress. Los Angeles architect Frank Gehry’s daring curvilinear exteriors will contrast with the soaring right angles of the Performing Arts Center.

For those who may want to take a brief detour, farther south on the long spine of Bunker Hill stands the Museum of Contemporary Art, designed by Arata Isozaki and described by architectural critic Robert Winter as “unquestionably one of the most beautiful buildings erected in Los Angeles during the past four or five decades.”

Also to the south, the Colburn School of Performing Arts added some substance to the cultural spine when it took up residence in 1998, moving from a onetime warehouse near the University of Southern California to a dramatic perch next to MOCA. In its patterns, the school’s brick facade is an echo of MOCA’s limestone base, and the roof of its performance hall evokes the pyramidal skylights. A pocket park links MOCA and the music school, and both the bright, soaring lobby and a glass window on the orchestra rehearsal room are intended to create a symbiosis between passers-by and student performers.
CATHEDRAL OF OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS (under construction — open 2002)
555 West Temple Street

Proceed east along Temple Street to Broadway. Note the old Hall of Justice just to your left. Retrace your steps one block and go back to Hill Street and walk south to the MTA station and catch the subway which will return you to Union Station and Patsouras Transit Plaza.

A CATHEDRAL IS A PLACE of the spirit. So look past the unfinished form, if you will, to envision the spirit and style of what it is to be.

The new cathedral, the seat of the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Los Angeles, is more than a century in coming. The city’s original cathedral, St. Vibiana’s, opened its doors in 1876, a fairly modest house of worship named for a rather obscure saint—fitting for a rough-and-tumble frontier town of little consequence. Now Los Angeles is the nation’s most populous Catholic archdiocese, and its new cathedral bears no lesser name than the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels.

The design by Spanish architect José Rafael Moneo invites a journey into cool contemplation that will begin at the heavy bronze doors with their diverse ethnic depictions of Mary, the mother of Jesus: as Mexico’s Virgin of Guadalupe, Peru’s Virgin of Pomata, Colombia’s Virgin of Chiquinquira, and Spain’s Virgin of Montserrat, among others.

Suspended above the doors a lifesized statue of Mary, youthful and feminine, will stand on an upturned crescent moon. Behind her head, a round skylight in a bronze rectangle will admit the sun to create a halo effect. Within the nave, hanging like banners inside a medieval hall, will be some thirty tapestries, the “Communion of Saints” series by Ojai artist John Nava. Nava used novel computer techniques to transfer design to fabric to create the collection, which also is designed as an acoustic device to absorb sound.

The overall design seems determined to span the centuries of the church’s presence in California, from the mission period to the modern. The ascetic geometry and asymmetry of rooflines, reflect-
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