**The Village Green Cultural Landscape Report FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)**

***What is a cultural landscape report (CLR) anyway?*** The CLR is a document prepared according to National Park Service guidelines that looks at the physical and cultural evolution of a historic site and then gives guidelines on how to manage that site to insure changes in the landscape are compatible with the significant historic features. It is being prepared because The Village Green is a National Historic Landmark. There are two parts to a CLR:

**Part I**: **Site History and Existing Conditions**: **Part II:** **Treatment Guidelines**

* Examines the designed landscape Gives guidance on how to manage the cultural
* Documents the history of the property landscape
* Evaluates existing conditions

***Why do we need a cultural landscape report?*** The CLRis a tool to help make decisions on managing our landscape, including trees, grass, and sidewalks in ways that maintain our historic character. Surprisingly, before the development of this report, no clear standards existed regarding preserving the historic character of The Village Green. We do currently have and use detailed maintenance guidelines but they do not take into account our historic character.Without a historical foundation such as the CLR will provide, our property could lose many of the vital historic features we all love and wouldn’t want to see disappear; features that helped us obtain our designation as a historic property in the first place.

***How much are we required to protect our historic landscape?*** The Village Green was designated a Historic Cultural Monument of the City of Los Angeles in 1977 and a National Historic Landmark in 2001. Because of these designations we are encouraged to preserve the historic aspects of our landscape as they were at the time of that designation including features such as the pattern of the walkways and the general character of the buildings and landscape. We are not, however, required to bring back missing features such as decomposed granite paving even though these features are referenced in the Treatment Guidelines.

***What is our obligation as owners of a historically designated property and what benefit is it to us?***  Our designation means the Secretary of the Interior recognizes there is something very special and historic about our property. National Historic Landmarks illustrate the heritage of the United States and it is very uncommon for a privately owned condominium property to be one. Naturally, we therefore have a responsibility to be good stewards of our wonderful historic character. And, in fact, because of it we are also eligible for grant money to fund some of the projects that will help maintain that character.

***What are the Treatment Guidelines going to be used for?*** The Treatment Guidelines will help owners, managers and the Board with future decisions about such things as replacing dead or dying trees. Trees will be planted, and some diseased species, such as the Victorian Box trees will be replaced. As well, the Guidelines will give clearer instructions for best practices to landscape crews that already work here. There are also other rehabilitation options in the Guidelines the community can eventually consider that are based on features of the property from the “period of significance” (see below), that only existed before the flood in 1963 when many of those features were lost.

***What do you mean by the “Period of Significance”?*** The Period of Significance is a concept that establishes a frame of reference for determining significant design features that the architects used to make the complex look the way it does. Our period of significance was defined by the National Register nomination as 1935-1942. Because some of the planned landscape plantings came after World War II, the current CLR considers the period of significance to extend to 1948.

***What is going to change and how much will it cost?*** The CLR does not have a built in plan for implementation nor does it include cost estimates for any of its recommendations. It will be a tool used by the board for decisions only as needs arise and as funds are available. The CLR should be used for routine maintenance decisions such as sidewalk repair and removal of diseased plants. Hopefully, these Guidelines will provide a more uniform approach to our basic landscape needs, and a better way to cost-effectively plan for them in the future.

***When will the CLR be implemented?*** There is no built in timeline for implementation of any part of the CLR. Even if there was, any large-scale implementation would still require community approval and would only be realized very gradually over a period of many years, possibly decades, and only as funds became available. The immediate value of the CLR however will be in managing short-term landscape and property repair priorities such as replacing missing and dying trees. Only later would more elective aspects such as changing the materials of the sidewalks or introducing ground cover be considered.

***What is the community review process?***The community review process is a series of CLR workshops that will allow for community review of and input on the Treatment Guidelines in the CLR. There will be at least 3 workshops during the 90-day review period for community members to learn more, to give feedback and to have any questions answered.

***How can I comment on the Guidelines?*** Youmay comment at any of the CLR workshops or you may turn comments in at the office in an envelope clearly marked “CLR Committee.”

***What are the dates of the community reviews?*** The Workshops will be on Sunday, June 9 from 2 to 4 pm; Tuesday July 16 from 7 to 9 pm; and August 24 from 2 to 4 pm. All of these workshops will be held in the Clubhouse. Information will also be available at the Yard Sale, and Jazz on the Green.

***How will the CLR be approved and what happens next?*** Following the community review period, the CLR draft will be updated and finalized by the CLR Committee and then reviewed by the Board for final approval. There is currently no specific plan for how the CLR will be used following approval by the Board.

***How can I influence what future changes will and won’t be made?*** Influencing the board’s decision as to any aspect of future implementation will be through the same kinds of processes we now use to influence the board.

***Where did the information come from that is in the CLR?*** The history was compiled from original sources such as original blueprints, old photographs, magazine articles and the early Village Green newspapers. Cornell University has archived papers from two of the original architects, and UCLA has records from the builder. Secondary sources such as *Los Angeles Times* articles and recorded interviews with the architects provided additional information, and some early residents also shared their memories. Information on the existing conditions of the landscape came from an all-volunteer survey of the entire complex carried out from 2004-2008.

***Who is the consulting firm and why did we hire them?*** Mundus Bishop’s principal Tina Bishop is one of the top historic landscape consultants in the nation. The CLR Committee reached out to Robert Page, Director of the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation (which is the National Park Service branch) to see who he would recommend. He gave the committee two names, both firms at the top of the profession, and the board hired Tina Bishop upon recommendation of the CLR Committee and after reviewing her portfolio. She has worked on over 30 National Register properties including Alcatraz, Fort Mason, the Golden Gate Bridge Toll Plaza as well as a residential property similar to ours, called Chautauqua, in Boulder, Colorado. Ms. Bishop understands historic landscapes but also understands that there must be flexibility in balancing care for them with contemporary needs. Her role is advisory only.  Her guiding words are: Character, Livability, and Functionality.

Places to **experience decomposed granite** (DG) paving:

Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County on Exposition, across from USC, near Figueroa

Baldwin Hills Overlook; Palisades Park along the bluff in Santa Monica; The Getty gardens

Places to see **colored concrete**: Exposition Park entrance from Exposition, across from USC Expo Line Station – the long concrete benches along the entrance are colored concrete

*For more information, please consult the Village Green website (****villagegreenla.net****), where documents will be posted.*

*To review the CLR Parts I & II, view it on the Village Green website, or check out a loaner copy from the office.*

**Definitions**

**National Historic Landmarks** are nationally significant historic places designated by the Secretary of the Interior because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States. Today, about 2,540 historic places bear this national distinction. Working with citizens throughout the nation, the National Historic Landmarks Program draws upon the expertise of National Park Service staff who work to nominate new landmarks and provide assistance to existing landmarks.

**Rehabilitation** acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's historic character. Rehabilitation standards acknowledge the need to alter or add to a cultural landscape to meet continuing or new uses while retaining the landscape’s historic character

**Preservation** focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials and retention of a property's form as it has evolved over time.

**Character-defining feature** - a prominent or distinctive aspect, quality, or characteristic of a cultural landscape that contributes significantly to its physical character. Land use patterns, vegetation, furnishings, decorative details and materials may be such features.

**Cultural landscape** - a geographic area (including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein), associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values. There are four general types of cultural landscapes, not mutually exclusive: historic sites, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, and ethnographic landscapes.

**Feature** - The smallest element(s) of a landscape that contributes to the significance and that can be the subject of a treatment intervention. Examples include a woodlot, hedge, lawn, specimen plant, allée, house, meadow or open field, fence, wall, earthwork, pond or pool, bollard, orchard, or agricultural terrace.

**Historic character** - the sum of all visual aspects, features, materials, and spaces associated with a cultural landscape’s history, i.e. the original configuration together with losses and later changes. These qualities are often referred to as character-defining.

**Historic designed landscape** - a landscape that was consciously designed or laid out by a landscape architect, master gardener, architect, engineer, or horticulturist according to design principles, or an amateur gardener working in a recognized style or tradition. The landscape may be associated with a significant person, trend, or event in landscape architecture; or illustrate an important development in the theory and practice of landscape architecture. Aesthetic values play a significant role in designed landscapes. Examples include parks, campuses, and estates.

**Integrity** - the authenticity of a property’s historic identity, evinced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property’s historic or prehistoric period. The seven qualities of integrity as defined by the National Register Program are location, setting, feeling, association, design, workmanship, and materials.

**Significance** - the meaning or value ascribed to a cultural landscape based on the National Register criteria for evaluation. It normally stems from a combination of association and integrity.

**Change and Continuity** – There is a balance between change and continuity in all cultural resources. Change is inherent in cultural landscapes; it results from both natural processes and human activities. Sometimes that change is subtle, barely perceptible as with the geomorphological effects on landform. At other times, it is strikingly obvious, as with vegetation, either in the cyclical changes of growth and reproduction or the progressive changes of plant competition and succession. This dynamic quality of all cultural landscapes is balanced by the continuity of distinctive characteristics retained over time. For, in spite of a landscape’s constant change (or perhaps because of it), a property can still exhibit continuity of form, order, use, features, or materials. Preservation and rehabilitation treatments seek to secure and emphasize continuity while acknowledging change.

**Management and Maintenance** - Management strategies are long-term and comprehensive. They can be one of the means for implementing a landscape preservation plan. Maintenance tasks can be day-to-day, seasonal, or cyclical, as determined by management strategies. Although routine horticultural activities, such as mowing and weeding, or general grounds maintenance, such as re-laying pavement or curbs, may appear routine, such activities can cumulatively alter the character of a landscape. In contrast, well-conceived management and maintenance activities can sustain character and integrity over an extended period. Therefore, both the management and maintenance of cultural landscapes should be considered when selecting a treatment.