

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD
MUNICIPAL ARTS DEPARTMENT

REQUEST FOR
HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT DECLARATION

NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT: Manzanar (?)

LOCATION: T 14S, R 14E (approx. area 8 sq.mi)(CROSS STREETS) Hwy 395 - approx. 9 mi. north
LOS ANGELES, CA. (ZIP) No of Lone Pine

COUNCILMANIC DISTRICT NO. No

OWNER'S NAME & ADDRESS: Department of Water and Power

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION OF MONUMENT: None

ARCHITECT: None

DESCRIBE ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES: Originally housing and appurtenant structures for relocation
and confinement of Japanese in 1942-45 (Remaining - cemetery
(photograph to be provided) plot and sentry house)

DESCRIBE HISTORIC-CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE: War relocation authority
(if necessary, attach a sheet)

SOURCE/S OF INFORMATION: Historical (attach. Manzanar feasibility study)

NAME & ADDRESS OF PROPONENT: Honorable Councilman Robert Farrell, Eighth District

Telephone No. Councilman Farrell, 485-3331

(This portion to be filled in by Cultural Heritage Board members.)

HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NO. _____

DATE OF BOARD ACTION: _____

REASONS FOR DECLARATION: / DENIAL:

BY: _____
CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD MEMBER

9/17/75

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

P.O. BOX 2390
SACRAMENTO 95811

June 27, 1974

Mr. Ronald A. McCoy
City of Los Angeles
Department of Water and Power
Post Office Box 111
Los Angeles, California 90051

Dear Mr. McCoy:

The 1972 House Resolution No. 135 directs this Department to conduct a study and develop a plan for the acquisition and preservation of a portion of Manzanar Internment Camp as an historical unit of the State Park System.

Our draft feasibility study is attached for your comments. Please make any comments you wish on the report itself, as it is a working copy.

We would appreciate your comments by July ¹⁵/₈, 1974.

Sincerely,


for Robert F. Uhte, Chief
Design and Construction Division

Attachment

Manzanar

MANZANAR
FEASIBILITY STUDY
DRAFT

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
P.O. Box 2390, Sacramento, California 95811

Location

The site of the Manzanar Internment Camp is located in Inyo County halfway between Independence and Lone Pine in Owens Valley. The camp is situated at the eastern base of the Sierra Nevada near Mount Whitney in the Desert and Desert Mountains Landscape Province.

Manzanar is immediately adjacent to California State Highway 395 and is four hours driving time from Los Angeles or seven hours from San Francisco.

Physical Characteristics

Climate

During the summer and autumn, there is a late evening-early morning northerly wind on the Mojave Desert. Conversely, in the heat of the afternoon, a southerly wind that is occasionally strong is common. Summer skies are mostly clear with occasional thunderstorms from May through August. The days are hot and dry, the nights cool.

Winter and spring are relatively mild. Daytime temperatures are in the 50s, night temperatures in the 20s. The greatest amounts of precipitation fall from October through February. Strong northerly winds blow during the months of February, March, and April. The closest weather station, 46 miles to the north at Bishop at an elevation only 200 feet higher than that of Manzanar, recorded mean extreme high air temperatures for June and July of 109°F with a normal daily maximum of 98°F in July. The mean extreme low temperature for January is -6°F with a normal daily minimum of 20°F. Normal precipitation, consisting of both rain and snow, is 6 inches per year.

Geomorphology

The project site is located at a 3,900 foot elevation and is midway between the bases of the Sierra Nevada and Inyo mountains. This 500-acre site is on the gentle slope rising uniformly to the base of the Sierra Nevada. It has a sweeping view of the Sierra Nevada crest, similar to most areas in this valley.

The site is located between two fault lines in the valley on alluvial materials deposited from the Sierra Nevada. When a major earthquake destroyed the nearby Inyo County Courthouse on March 26, 1872, land in the area dropped 20 feet.

Vegetation

The land, like all of Owens Valley, is former agricultural land, largely abandoned when water was preempted by the City of Los Angeles in 1912 through 1924.

Nevertheless, the site is an oasis compared to the surrounding arid areas. Trees outline the street pattern of the abandoned camp, though little of the native shrub has reestablished itself.

Wildlife

Tule elk were introduced to Owens Valley in 1933 and to the Manzanar area in 1971. These animals conflict with nearby agriculture due to crop and fence damage and overgrazing. This conflict has been reduced considerably by control of the herd numbers.

Cultural Resources

The Owens Valley was originally inhabited by a group of Paiute people, few of whom remain in this area today. They were, in aboriginal times, a typical California/Great Basin hunting and gathering people oriented to the east slopes of the Sierra, the Owens River and its many tributary streams and Owens Lake itself.

There are no known prehistoric archeological values in the study area; however, there is evidence of prehistoric Indian occupation in the Owens Valley region.

The region was settled around 1903. Farmers planted extensive apple and pear orchards in the study area. A community developed in the area and was named Manzanar, presumably from the Spanish word for apple orchard.

The City of Los Angeles acquired almost all of the valley floor lands to obtain water rights and transport the water to the city. As a result, the land reverted to its present barren state.

Historic Data

In February, 1942, acting in response to pressures exerted by those who would "destroy the Japs," President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 condemning 110,000 Japanese Americans, including 93,000 native-born Californians, to imprisonment without a charge, a hearing, or a trial on a judgment of "guilt by lack of evidence"¹ This act resulted from the public hysteria created by the attack by Japan at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

On February 20, 1942, General DeWitt was empowered to carry out the evacuation. On March 18, the President created a War Relocation Authority, and five days later the first of the affected aliens and Japanese of American birth were given their orders to report for relocation and confinement. In some parts of the country, particularly in the midwest, similar orders were to be sent to those of German and Italian descent, but this never happened.

In California, the primary movement to the assembly areas brought thousands of persons of Japanese extraction into assembly centers in Fresno, Marysville, Merced, Pinedale, Pomona, Walerga, Salinas, Santa Anita, Stockton, Tanforan, Tulare, and Turlock. In Oregon, Japanese were taken to a center in Portland; in Washington, to Puyallup; in Arizona, to Camp Mayer.

By April, all had been placed in ten permanent camps located at Tule Lake and Manzanar in California; Minidoka in Idaho; Topaz in Utah; Gila River and Poston in Arizona; Heart Mountain in Wyoming; Amache in Colorado; and Mc Gehee and Denson in Arkansas.

This study focuses on Manzanar, a harsh 6,000-acre tract in Inyo County's Owens Valley. Although only 280 miles from Los Angeles, there is even today a sense of remoteness and isolation about the area. The 10,000 people interned at Manzanar realized the futility of leaving and grimly settled down to sit out the war.

Though somewhat better than most of the other camps, Manzanar was made up of temporary blocks of barracks patterned after old CCC camps or Army "theater of action" camps. A typical block contained 15 tarpaper-covered barracks, each divided into four, five, or six rooms. There is a difference of opinion as to how many people were accommodated in each room, but lack of privacy was a problem. Furnishings were an army cot, a pad, and a blanket. Many rooms had small stoves. Chairs and tables were often built by the internees from scrap lumber and boxes. Some furniture was provided by friends who, in occasionally visiting the camp, noted the lack of household goods and conveniences.

Each block contained a mess hall, a laundry and bath house, and a latrine for each sex. One of the barracks was improvised for use as a school. However, this facility contained no books, desks, or equipment of any kind suited to the purpose.

Imprisoned under law by the Relocation Authority, the internees of Manzanar tried to carry on a semblance of the life that many, as American citizens, had known before the war. But this was impossible for the reality of subjugation was always present. Despite the degrading experience, many of the young men joined the service when it was announced in 1943 that the Army would enlist recruits for an all-Nisei combat team to fight in Europe. This combat team later distinguished itself as the most decorated single fighting unit in the U.S. Army. Japanese Americans also served in the Pacific theater as interpreters.

It was not until late in the war that the illegality of imprisonment of the American citizens of Japanese extraction was determined. In a case filed by Mitsu Endo, the Supreme Court reversed itself and ruled that loyal citizens could not be detained within relocation centers against their wills.

The Manzanar Camp was closed in 1945. With the exception of several buildings, floor slabs, two rock sentinel gate stations, a few graves, remains of a "tea garden," the hospital foundations, and the mess hall debris, the campsite was soon reclaimed by the desert. To many Japanese Americans it continues to "symbolize a moment in their lives when all the world was enclosed within a one-mile square."²

Present and Potential Land Use

The City of Los Angeles owns the land at Manzanar, with its Department of Water and Power administering the area for purposes of water collection and transportation to the city. The project area is under lease for cattle grazing.

A 4.33-acre area surrounding the rock sentry house and police post is leased to the Japanese-American Citizens League for a historic site. A historic plaque is attached to the sentry house and is registered as a California Historical Landmark. The plaque reads:

"In the early part of World War II, 110,000 persons of Japanese ancestry were interned in relocation centers by Executive Order No. 9066, issued on February 19, 1942.

Manzanar, the first of ten such concentration camps, was bounded by barbed wire and guard towers, confining 10,000 persons, the majority being American citizens.

May the injustices and humiliation suffered here as a result of hysteria, racism and economic exploitation never emerge again.

CALIFORNIA REGISTERED HISTORICAL LANDMARK NO. 850

Plaque placed by the State Department of Parks and Recreation in cooperation with the Manzanar Committee and the Japanese American Citizens League, April 14, 1973."

Inyo County has a vehicle maintenance facility in the project area. It is a fence-enclosed compound surrounding the original auditorium building for the internment camp. The building functions as a maintenance and repair garage with storage of many vehicles and pieces of equipment in the compound. If evicted, the county wants adequate compensation to replace this facility. Some other original camp buildings are located in the surrounding area. A portion of the auditorium is reported to be used as an American Legion Hall in Lone Pine.

The airport, directly across Highway 395 from Manzanar, is also owned by the City of Los Angeles. It was completed on August 10, 1943, with two inches of AC on six inches of base. This airport is now considered "abandoned" by the Federal Aviation Agency. It has been used by aircraft up to 28,000 lb. of gross weight (DC 3). Present use is limited to infrequent airplane landings and a few automobile racing events during the summer months. Both Independence and Lone Pine have small airports. The Federal Aviation Agency says that if any of the three airports is to be developed to a greater degree, it should be the one at Manzanar, which could then serve both towns. To receive federal aid in rehabilitating the facility, Manzanar Airport would have to be included in the "National Airport Plan."

Inyo County's Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors are in favor of developing Manzanar as a historic unit of the State Park System.

Access and Utilities

The project site is immediately adjacent to and on grade with State Highway 395. Roads within the site are in varying degrees of disrepair, most being nearly obliterated. Power and water would be available from the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. Electric powerlines run along the highway. Water in moderate supply could be provided from wells. Telephone service is available from the Continental Telephone Company.

The soils are suitable for sewage leaching. The nearest sewage treatment facility is nine miles downhill in Lone Pine.

Park and Recreation Values

Criteria

Areas included in the State Park System must help meet the following objectives of the Department of Parks and Recreation:

1. Preserve the best examples of California's scenic and natural landscape.
2. Preserve significant evidence of the state's history.
3. Provide adequate opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Historic Significance

The historic significance of the internment camp of the Japanese Americans can certainly be regarded as a notable aspect of U.S. history in relation to mass wartime psychology as exemplified by the public and official reaction to the presence of Japanese populations in America at the outbreak of World War II. The first Supreme Court decision on internment of American citizens was a judicial landmark in civil rights. The fact that 10,000 Japanese Americans were forced to live at Manzanar, their Constitutional rights denied, is a sad chapter in U.S. and California history.

Landscape Significance

The environmental resources of the Manzanar project are not of special significance to the State Park System. The project lies in the bottom of the Owens Valley and shares with all remaining lands in this valley sweeping views of the crest of the Sierra Nevada on the west and of the Inyo mountains on the east. The valley is protected from development by City of Los Angeles ownership. The Inyo County planning goal of confining new development to existing towns protects the valley from strip development along the highway.

Similar observations apply to the physical surroundings of the site itself. The land, like the rest of the Owens Valley, is former agricultural land that was largely abandoned at the time when water was preempted by the City of Los Angeles many decades ago. Plant and animal life do not differ significantly, if at all, on this site from such life in the rest of the Owens Valley. Geological resources are also basically similar throughout the area.

Recreation Significance

The PARIS demand allocation subsystem considers population projections; socioeconomic characteristics of the population; geographic location of the population, recreation areas, and facilities; current travel time, and seasonal travel patterns. The PARIS inventory subsystem includes the outdoor recreation areas and facilities of public agencies, plus those private areas that provide significant outdoor recreation opportunities.

A facilities analysis for Inyo and Mono counties — the two counties affected by this project — is as follows:

	Inyo	Mono	Total
Total facilities needed — 1970			
Camping units	2,416	1,103	3,519
Picnic tables	2,188	1,252	3,440
Boat access sites	941	829	1,770
Miles of trail	832	286	1,118
Existing facilities — 1970			
Camping units	2,612	4,631	7,243
Picnic tables	501	547	1,048
Boat access sites	233	1,015	1,248
Miles of trail	696	550	1,246
Additional facilities needed — 1970			
Camping units	-196	-3,528	-3,724
Picnic tables	1,687	705	2,392
Boat access sites	708	-186	522
Miles of trail	136	-264	-128

The Inyo County Planning Commission states that there is a lack of seasonal camping sites adjacent to Highway 395 for overnight stops by travelers.

Southern California metropolitan centers appear to be the primary source (80 percent) of visitors to recreation areas within the county. There is apparently enough acreage available to meet in-county and out-of-county recreation demand, but access, water, and development may present problems.

Many camping opportunities are provided along U.S. Highway 395 by the counties, and are used mostly by nonlocal campers. It is anticipated that the impact of these facilities will increase as a result of action by the U.S. Forest Service to remove people from stream banks and generally establish more control in the mountain areas for environmental benefit.

According to the criteria defined in *CORRP, 1974*, the Manzanar Project would rank third for allocation of Land and Water Conservation Funds in this planning district.

Responsibility

Since eighty percent of the visitors to the Manzanar area are from southern California metropolitan centers, it is the state's responsibility, rather than that of local government, to provide for out-of-area recreationists. Private enterprise can also provide recreation facilities.

Since the scenic and natural landscape is protected, the state is responsible only for preserving evidence of the state's history here and for providing opportunities for outdoor recreation. The closest State Park System units are Bodie State Historic Park, 120 miles north in Mono County, and Red Rock Canyon State Recreation Area, 90 miles south in Kern County. There are no units of the State Park System in Inyo County.

The Division of Highways has established criteria for highway rest stops to be provided at 60-mile intervals. Manzanar is approximately 30 miles south of such a stop at Division Creek on Highway 395.

The federal government is providing recreational opportunities on its vast landholdings. It still has some responsibility for historic interpretation of Manzanar in that it was a federal order that allowed the camp to be created.

Recommendations

Proposed Acquisition

The entire formerly enclosed 495-acre camp area, plus cemetery, is necessary for an adequate interpretation of the Manzanar story. Since the City of Los Angeles values this land only for its water rights, it should be feasible to transfer the land to the State Park System at no cost to the state. The City of Los Angeles would retain the water rights but would be relieved of taxes on the land.

The county would probably prefer that the land be leased to continue their property tax collection.

Development

Before any development is undertaken, this project is subject to a thorough evaluation of resources; public hearings, and the adoption of a resource management plan and a general development plan by the State Park and Recreation Commission, as required by law.

The primary purpose of this project would be historic interpretation. A supplemental purpose would be development of a garden with structures for shelter. This facility would provide former inmates solace, the general community an opportunity to reflect and focus on the area's history, and the traveler a resting place.

Commercialism is not intended.

Interpretation would project the story of Manzanar objectively. It would depict the "flow of history," or what happened before, during, and after the period that the internment camp was in operation. This would be accomplished in reconstructed evacuee barracks. A citizens' advisory committee should be established to assist the state in this interpretation. Composition of the committee would include national civic organizations, such as the Japanese-American Citizens League; Japanese-American churches, such as Buddhist and Japanese Christian churches; Japanese-American veterans' organizations, such as Nisei Posts of veterans of foreign wars; and many other responsible entities within the Japanese community. The National Japanese-American Citizens League would assist in selection of committee members.

A road would be reconstructed through the camp following former road patterns to the cemetery just outside the rear boundary. This road would also serve an area in which evacuee barracks would be reconstructed in an isolated location. Isolation will allow the visitor to imagine what the former camp atmosphere was like.

The entire camp area would be fenced with barbed wire to control access, which will help reduce the vandalism potential and impart more of the original camp feeling.

Physical remains throughout the camp, such as foundations, roads, gardens, and trees, would also be interpreted, but not restored. There is a possibility that one guard tower could be reconstructed.

The total cost of development is estimated at \$300,000. This would include equipment and administrative facilities.

Proposed Operations

A historic unit of this size would normally be operated with one full-time ranger, one permanent-intermittent ranger, and some seasonal aide help. This would amount to \$19,000 in annual salaries. Operating expenses are estimated at \$3,000 a year.

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

P.O. BOX 2390
SACRAMENTO 95811
(916) 445-8006

September 3, 1976



Manzanar War Relocation
Center

Ms. Sue Kunitomi Embrey, Co-Chairperson
The Manzanar Committee
1566 Curran Street
Los Angeles, CA 90026

The National Register of Historic Places program is administered in California by the Director of Parks and Recreation. The attachment gives some background for the program. The property indicated above has been submitted for the Register.

- The nomination form has been received by the Office of Historic Preservation.
- As an owner of the property or portion, your comments would be appreciated within the next 15 days.
- As the unit of local government containing the property, your comments would be appreciated within the next 15 days.
- As your organization has been identified as having an interest in historic preservation in this area, we would appreciate your comments within the next 15 days.
- The State Historical Resources Commission will consider this property and make a judgment as to whether or not it meets the criteria on _____ at _____ in _____
- The State Historical Resources Commission recommended the nomination of the property by the State Historic Preservation Officer to the Keeper of the National Register.
- The State Historic Preservation Officer has forwarded the nomination to the Keeper of the National Register, U. S. National Park Service, Washington, D. C. 20240.
- The property was placed on the register July 30, 1976

Placement on the Register does not affect the title in any manner. Protection of the property is limited to the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Federal agencies are required to follow procedures developed by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

For further information, please contact the Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Parks and Recreation, Post Office Box 2390, Sacramento, California 95811 or 916-445-8006.

Sincerely,

Dr. Knox Mellon
Historic Preservation Coordinator
Office of Historic Preservation

Attachments