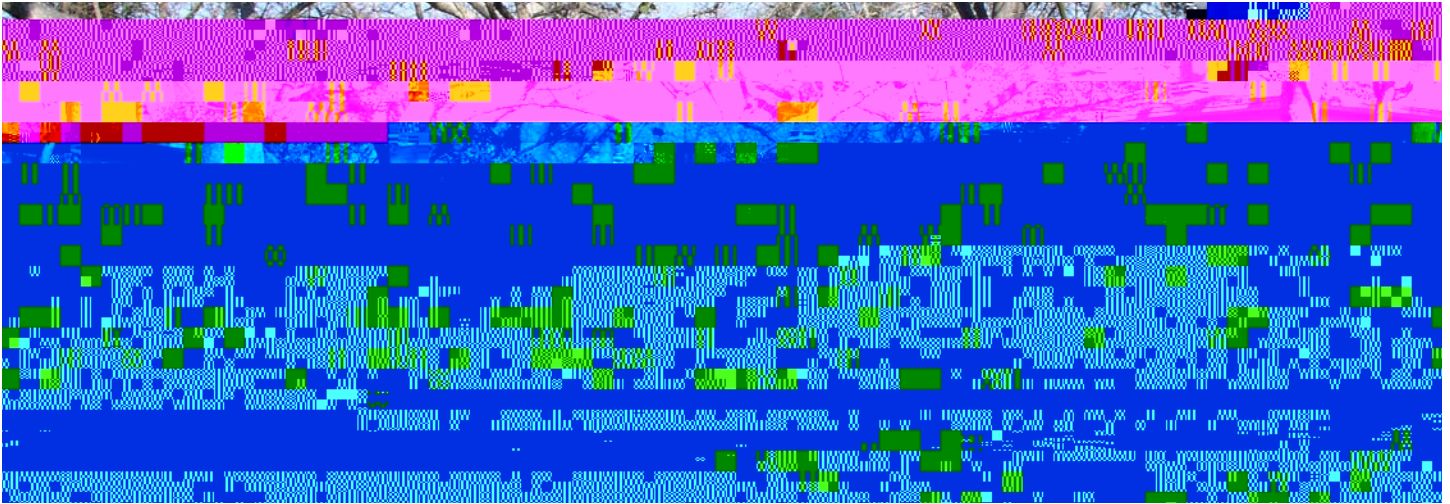




LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

# Baldwin Hills Village (Village Gr



Baldwin Hills Village, now known as Village Green, is a 68-acre residential development that was built during 1941-42. It was declared a National Historic Landmark in 2001, with a period of significance of 1935 to 1942. The landscape planning and layout is a major element in the design. Living units all open out onto landscaped common areas – the landscaping serves as the organizing element and the buildings are a background element. Parking and roadways are at the perimeter. The Village Green Owners Association has supported developing a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) that will be the foundation for understanding – and developing management strategies for sustaining – this great modern American designed landscape. Public recognition would further validate this effort.

## HISTORY

The design is the result of a successful collaboration between architects and landscape architects. The architectural team included Reginald Johnson and Merrill, Wilson and Alexander, associated architects, with noted American urban planner Clarence Stein as the consulting architect. Fred Barlow was the original landscape architect. Stein considered Baldwin Hills Village the most fully realized example of his “Radburn Idea”, which was his adaptation of British Garden City idealism to the American Environment. For Stein and other Garden City designers, providing green space i

lawns, as well as child-friendly walkways and play spaces.



Soon after construction the site was recognized by the AIA for its design quality. It was declared a City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage site in 1977 and a National Register property in 1993. Village Green became a National Historic Landmark in 2001.

Over time, some changes have occurred in the landscape. However, many of these changes have been documented, and the essential character of the site thus far has been retained. The “as planted” drawings by Fred Barlow from 1942 are in the Village Green archives, although the plant list was lost. The record is sparse for changes made from 1940 until 1963. In 1963, the Baldwin Hills Dam broke and the site was inundated. Landscape architect Merrill Winans developed another landscaping plan with different goals and objectives. Much of the tree landscaping was retained but with additional species and plantings. The shrubbery was changed significantly with a new esthetic and different species. Village Green Owners Association also has these landscape plans, dated 1966. Between 1966 and 1995 changes were made on the basis of plant preferences without reference to historic plans. In 1995 Village Green developed a Master Plan; however, it was not fully directed toward cultural landscape preservation and thus has limited usefulness for preservation. Currently, Village Green has excellent landscape consultants, but without long range comprehensive planning and analysis, their task is almost impossible.

The Village Green Owners Association recognizes that its designed landscape is integral to its heritage as well as to its National Historic Landmark status. In addition to creating a CLR report, the association has also voted to adopt the Secretary of the Interior’s “Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes”. The recent formation of Friends of Village Green, a 501(c)(3) preservation organization, will open opportunities to obtain grants to help document, recognize and preserve this legacy.

Village Green is fortunate to have good local and regional preservation organizations that can offer guidance. It is a member of both the California Preservation Foundation (CPF) and the LA Conservancy.

