Greeks of the New World:
Intersections of Neo-Prehispanic Style and Pan-Americanist Ideologies in Southern California

Madeline Ann Gonzalez
Pasadena, California

Bachelor of Arts: Art History, Saint Mary's College of CA, 2017

A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Virginia in Candidacy for the Degree of Master of Architectural History

Architectural History Department
School of Architecture

University of Virginia
May 2022

Professor Lisa Reilly
Professor Sheila Crane
Professor Jessica Sewell

Table of Contents

Abstract…… 3

Acknowledgements……... 4

Figure List……...……... 5

Introduction……... 9

Chapter One: The Beginnings of Neo-Prehispanic Style……..…….. 20
Pan-Americanism and the Pan-American Union Building……. 20
The Search for American Architecture and the 'Aztec' Hotel…….28
Continuing Mayan Tradition & Frank Lloyd Wright……. 37

Chapter Two: Neo-Prehispanic Design in a Pan-American Landscape…… 45
Southern California as a Pan-American Architectural Landscape……. 45
Regionalism in Design & The Eastern Columbia Building……. 52
The Miracle Mile: In the Beginning……. 60

Chapter Three: Neo-Prehispanic Form and the Future of American Architecture..…….. 70
Skyscrapers as 'Native' American Architecture of the Future……. 70
Bullocks Wilshire: A Temple to Pan-America……. 78

Conclusion……... 88

Bibliography…… 93

Figures…… 101

Abstract

Amid the early decades of the 20th century, the United States became more global as a result of its territorial acquisitions in the Pacific and its World War I victory in Europe. This led to the rise of an ideology referred to as Pan-Americanism, which eventually became interpreted within the context of the United States as a way for the country to envelope, re-contextualize, and declare the entirety of the Western Hemisphere 'American.' The rise of this cultural ideology mirrored the popularity of Neo-Prehispanic Style across the country. Neo-Prehispanic Style, more familiarly referred to as Mayan Revival Style, was interpreted architecturally in the United States as a re-imagination of indigenous Latin American forms, with stylistic and architectural references to the Mayan, Aztec, Incan, Zapotec, and other pre-Columbian groups. Too often, Neo-Prehispanic style is categorized simplistically as part of the general revival movement of the early 20th century or under the "Zig-Zag Moderne" classification of Art Deco. While there has been some attention paid to the style in academic writing, these resources fail to critically look at Neo-Prehispanic style, rarely question its presence within the landscape, and do not attempt to understand why it became so prevalent in Southern California. This thesis provides a more critical look at the style in the context of a Pan-American cultural landscape, a step away from previous publications that only sought to survey and document the style's presence. The research presented within this thesis helps in expanding the definition and interpretation of Neo-Prehispanic style, and creates a path for it to be studied not as a small part of larger architectural movements, but rather as a unique expression of United States culture in Southern California during the early decades of the 20th century.

Acknowledgements

There are many people in my life who have contributed to the successful completion of this project in both direct and indirect ways, and I am grateful to all of them.

I would first like to acknowledge the wonderful role my thesis committee played, from reading drafts to guiding me through the process, I am deeply grateful.

I am also thankful to all the professors and wonderful people within the Architectural History program and the Architecture School who have been kind, welcoming, supportive, and genuinely interested and involved in the various projects and research papers I have submitted over the semesters.

I would then like to thank my mom, who not only introduced me to Los Angeles architecture and the ideas of preservation and heritage, but fully supported my love of art and architecture and never doubted that I could carve a career for myself through following my passions in life.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank my architectural history cohort. From trivia nights to our group messages, I am grateful to everyone for creating a community amid the initial isolation of the pandemic and all the wonderful support we have given each other the past two years.

FIGURE LIST

Figure 0.1: Plaster re-creation of a Mayan temple in ruins. Taken at the 1898 Columbian World's Fair, Chicago. The Field Museum Library, *Cast of Mayan Ruins, World's Columbian Exposition Exhibition.* Photograph. Wikipedia Commons. c. 1898. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cast_of_Mayan_ruins,_World%27s_Columbian_Exposition_exhibit_(3795473451).jpg
Figure 0.2: The Mayan Theater, Los Angeles, CA. Opened 1927, architect: Stiles O. Clements. Library of Congress Online, *Mayan Theater Los Angeles California*. Photograph. Wikipedia Commons. 2010. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mayan_Theater#/media/File:Mayan_Theater_Los_Angeles_California.jpg

Figure 1.1: The street-facing exterior of the Pan-American Union Building. User: Bestbudbrian, *Pan American Building, Washington*. Photograph. Wikipedia commons. 2015 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan_American_Union_Building#/media/File:Pan_American_Building,_Washington.jpg
Figure 1.2: The Latin American Allegory Sculpture. *South America*, 1910 in *The International Bureau of the American Republics* (Washington DC: 1910), 723
Figure 1.3: The United States Allegory Sculpture. *North America,* 1910 in *The International Bureau of the American Republics* (Washington DC: 1910), 727
Figure 1.4: The Patio Area of the Pan-American Union Building. Organization of American States, *Main Building Patio*. Photograph. Organization of American States photo gallery. n/d https://www.oas.org/en/protocol/photo_gallery.asp
Figure 1.5: The Fountain in the Center of the Patio in the Pan-American Union Building. From left to right is a depiction of an Aztec, Zapotec, and Mayan figure. *Symbolic Figures…*, 1910 in *The International Bureau of the American Republics* (Washington DC: 1910), 725
Figure 1.6: Detail of the Blue Aztec Garden, 1928 (above) and detail 2018 (below). Keystone View Company. *Corner of the Aztec sunken gardens, Pan-American Union bldg., Washington, D.C*. Washington D.C, ca. 1928. Meadville, Pa. ; New York, N.Y. ; Chicago, Ill. ; London, England: Keystone View Company, Manufacturers and Publishers. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2017659486/.
Luis M Castaneda, *Statue of Xochipilli and Jade Fence in the Blue Aztec Garden of the Pan-American Union Building, Washington, D.C*. Photograph. Tumblr, https://tmblr.co/Z_1EluPqHMH3
Figure 1.7: The Aztec Hotel, c.1920s. *The Aztec Hotel*, 1926 in *Pacific Coast Architect* (Los Angeles: Western Stars Publishing Corporation 1926), 28.
Figure 1.8: Lobby of the Aztec Hotel. 1-3: *Interior of the Aztec Hotel,* 1926 in *Pacific Coast Architect* (Los Angeles: Western Stars Publishing Corporation 1926), 29,30.
4: David Gebhard, *N/*A, 1993 in *Robert Stacy Judd: Maya Architecture, the Creation of a New Style* (Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1993), 27
Figure 1.9: Architect Robert Stacy Judd dressed as a Mayan Priest in promotion for his work. David Gebhard, *N/A*, 1993 in *Robert Stacy Judd: Maya Architecture, the Creation of a New Style* (Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1993), 30
Figure 1.10: Detail of the exterior of the Aztec Hotel, ca.1920s *The Aztec Hotel*, 1926 in *Pacific Coast Architect* (Los Angeles: Western Stars Publishing Corporation 1926), 29.
Figure 1.11: Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House. Julius Shulman, *Exterior View of the Hollyhock House, Los Angeles, 1921*, Photograph, Wikipedia, 1921,

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Exterior_view_of_the_Hollyhock_House,_Los_Angeles,_1921_(shulman-1997-JS-220-ISLA).jpg
Figure 1.12: The Freeman House. User: Mattis/Sandbox, *Samuel Freeman House, Hollywood, California*, Photograph, Wikipedia, May 2008, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Samuel_Freeman_House,_Hollywood,_California.JPG
Figure 1.13: The Millard House. User: Mattis/Sandbox, *Millard House, Pasadena*, Photograph, Wikipedia, 20 July 2008, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Millard_House,_Pasadena.JPG
Figure 1.14: The Storer House. User: Mattis/Sandbox, *Storer House, Hollywood Boulevard*, Photograph, Wikipedia, May 2008, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Storer_House,_Hollywood_Boulevard.JPG
Figure 1.15: The Ennis House. User: Mattis/Sandbox, *Ennis House Front View,* Photograph, Wikipedia, January 2006, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ennis_House_front_view_2005.jpg
Figure 1.16: Detail of horizontal beams of the Freeman House. Liz Kuball, *The Freeman House*, Photograph, Curbed LA, 12 March 2019, https://la.curbed.com/2019/3/12/18262103/freeman-house-frank-lloyd-wright-thefts-stolen
Figure 1.17: Storer house detail of the blue tiles in the pool. Joel Puliatti, *Storer House, view of the North Façade with pool*, Photograph, anothermag.org, 10 December 2014, https://www.anothermag.com/art-Photography/4179/10-things-you-might-not-know-about-frank-lloyd-wright
Figure 1.18: Detail of the Hollyhock House concrete block design. Marvin Rand, *Southwest Terrace Detail with Abstracted Hollyhock Blossom Reliefs*, Photograph, Library of Congress, 1965, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hollyhock_Southwest_terrace_detail_HABS_CAL,19-LOSAN,28-3.jpg

Figure 2.1: Examples of Pro-Grammatic architecture in Los Angeles. The Tamale Café is in the shape of a Tamale, and Ben Hur Drip Café in the shape of a coffee pot. 1: Water and Power Associates, *Two young women pose for the camera while sitting in the rumble seat of an early model car parked across the street from The Tamale, located at 6421 Whittier Boulevard in East Los Angeles*, Photograph, 1928, https://waterandpower.org/museum/Programmatic_Style_Architecture.html
2: Water and Power Associates, *View showing a car in the parking lot of the Wilshire Coffee Pot Restaurant*, Photograph, 1925, https://waterandpower.org/museum/Programmatic_Style_Architecture.html
Figure 2.2: Example of building in Los Angeles that experimented with color. Madeline Gonzalez, *Detail of Wiltern*, 2021, Photograph.
Figure 2.3: Example of fantastical design styles: A Storybook Home. Getty Images, *The Witch's House in Beverly Hills*, Photograph, 2019, https://la.curbed.com/2019/10/30/20929956/storybook-fairytale-style-architecture
Figure 2.4: Mexican Fan Palm, in Los Angeles ca.1930s. Palm Drive, looking North from Adams Blvd. Water and Power Associates, *A view of Palm Drive north from Adams Boulevard, with two-story houses on either side and cars parked on the street.* Photograph, c.1930, https://waterandpower.org/museum/Early_City_Views%20(1800s)_4_of_8.html
Figure 2.5: Monroe Doctrine Coin, front and back. North and South America are depicted as woman allegories. VCoins, *1923 S Monroe Doctrine Centennial Commemorative Silver Half Dollar*, Photograph, 2020, https://www.vcoins.com/en/stores/coins_to_medals/37/product/1923_s_monroe_doctrine_centennial_commemorative_silver_half_dollar__bu/1299949/Default.aspx

Figure 2.6: An example of a Spanish-Mission Style home: The 1928 Burns House, a Mediterranean Revival home built by Guy Worth Calkins. Lisa Boone, *Burns House*, Photograph, 2016, https://www.latimes.com/home/la-hm-glendale-home-tour-20160818-snap-story.html
Figure 2.7: Example of a Neo-Prehispanic style frieze on the exterior of a building. Wiltern Theater, Los Angeles. Madeline Gonzalez, *Detail of Wiltern from Western Ave.*, 2021, Photograph.
Figure 2.8: The Eastern-Columbia Building. Adrian Scott, *Eastern-Columbia Lofts*, Photograph. https://www.laconservancy.org/locations/eastern-columbia-lofts
Figure 2.9: "Founded by Adolph Sieroty." Madeline Gonzalez, *Detail of Lobby Entrance to Eastern-Columbia Building*, 2021, Photograph.
Figure 2.10: The Eastern-Columbia Building and its color in context with the surrounding buildings. User: dragonskullz2009, *Eastern Columbia Building*, Photograph, devianart, 26 July 2017, https://www.deviantart.com/dragonskullz2009/art/Eastern-Columbia-Building-694859859
Figure 2.11: Clock Tower Friezes. Mark Peacock, *Eastern Columbia Building*, Photograph, flickr, 4 July 2016, https://www.flickr.com/photos/7623944@N03/36328806884
Figure 2.12: Lobby Entrance. Madeline Gonzalez, *Full Photo of Eastern-Columbia Lobby Entrance*, 2021, Photograph.
Figure 2.13: The Growth of the Miracle Mile. 1: Water and Power Associates, *Aerial view looking north of Wilshire at La Brea*, Photograph, 1922, https://waterandpower.org/museum/Miracle_Mile_1920s, 1930s.html
2: Miracle Mile Residential Association, *Kodachrome Image of the Miracle Mile*, Photograph, c.1945, https://miraclemilela.com/the-miracle-mile/historical-photos/
Figure 2.14: Wilshire Tower. Madeline Gonzalez, *Wilshire Tower,* 2021, Photograph.
Figure 2.15: Wilshire Professional Building. 1: Madeline Gonzalez, *Wilshire Professional Building,* 2021, Photograph.
2: Madeline Gonzalez, *Detail of Wilshire Professional Building, Wilshire Exterior*, 2021, Photograph.
Figure 2.16: The Dominguez Wilshire Building, Madeline Gonzalez, *Dominguez Wilshire Building,* 2021, Photograph.
Figure 2.17: Wilshire Tower, an abstracted form of Uxmal. Above: Wilshire Tower c.1936. Below: Uxmal. 1: Adrian Scott, *Wilshire Tower,* Photograph. https://www.laconservancy.org/locations/wilshire-tower-0
2: Rob Young, *Day 10: Uxmal*, Photograph, Wikipedia, 25 November 2012, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pyramid_of_the_Magician_(8264902976).jpg
Figure 2.18: Wilshire Tower: blooming tower frieze detail. Madeline Gonzalez, *blooming tower frieze detail*, 2021, Photograph.
Figure 2.19: Side Street Frieze, pyramid center with extending hands and an eagle and dragon. Madeline Gonzalez, *Side Street Frieze: Wilshire Tower*, 2021, Photograph.
Figure 2.20: Street-facing Frieze, bearded man with protractor. Madeline Gonzalez, *Street-Facing Frieze: Wilshire Tower*, 2021, Photograph.
Figure 2.21: Adam and Eve Scene. Madeline Gonzalez, *Lobby Entrance: Wilshire Tower*, 2021, Photograph.

Figure 3.1: Example of skyscraper in Neo-Classical style. Francisco Mujica, *Classic and Neo-Classic*, 1929 in Francisco Mujica, *History of the Skyscraper* (New York: 1929), Plate II
Figure 3.2: Example of Skyscraper in Gothic Style. Francisco Mujica, *Gothic*, 1929 in Francisco Mujica, *History of the Skyscraper* (New York: 1929), Plate II
Figure 3.3: Example of set-back skyscraper. Francisco Mujica, *New York Telephone Building, New York* 1929 in Francisco Mujica, *History of the Skyscraper* (New York: 1929), Plate LIX

Figure 3.4: Sketchings of indigenous Mayan architecture. Francisco Mujica, *Restoration of the Pyramid of Tikal, Guatemala*, 1929 in Francisco Mujica, *History of the Skyscraper* (New York: 1929), Plate III
Figure 3.5: Sketchings of indigenous Mayan architecture. Francisco Mujica, *Restoration of the Pyramid Huatusco, Mexico*, 1929 in Francisco Mujica, *History of the Skyscraper* (New York: 1929), Plate III
Figure 3.6: Illustration of Francisco Mujica's vision of "Neo-American" skyscraper. Francisco Mujica, *Perspective of a 68-story Office Building in Neo-American Style*, 1929 in Francisco Mujica, *History of the Skyscraper* (New York: 1929), Plate CXXXI
Figure 3.7: Illustration of Francisco Mujica's "Neo-American" hundred story city of the future. Francisco Mujica, *The City of the Future: Hundred Story City in Neo-American Style,* 1929 in Francisco Mujica, *History of the Skyscraper* (New York: 1929), Plate CXXXIV
Figure 3.8: Sketching of a pyramid in Tikal, Guatemala. Particularly interesting to note the inclusion of figures and other architectural elements in the foreground and background. Alfred Bossom, *The Original American Skyscraper,*1934 in Alfred C. Bossom, *Building to the Skies: The Romance of the Skyscraper* (London: The Studio, 1934), 18
Figure 3.9: "The 35 Story Building of Today," the tip and general form is reflective of Bossom's imagined restoration of the Tikal pyramid. Alfred Bossom, *The 35 Storey Building of Today*,1934 in Alfred C. Bossom, *Building to the Skies: The Romance of the Skyscraper* (London: The Studio, 1934), 19
Figure 3.10: Bullocks Wilshire, Los Angeles, CA. Craig Baker, *Bullocks Wilshire Building*, Photograph. Wikipedia. 19 July 2018, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bullocks_Wilshire_Building.jpg
Figure 3.11: Los Angeles Transit map, 1928. *1928 Los Angeles Transit Map*, map. Los Angeles Public Library. 1928
Figure 3.12: Close up of Patina Green detail on Wilshire Bullock's. Madeline Gonzalez *Detail of Wilshire Bullocks Pre-Oxidized Patina*, 2021, Photograph.
Figure 3.13: Detail of Bullock's Wilshire Tower. Madeline *Gonzalez Detail of Bullock's Wilshire Tower*, 2021, Photograph.
Figure 3.14: Preliminary sketch of Bullocks Wilshire. R.W. Sexton, *Preliminary Sketch, Bullocks Store, Los Angeles, Calif*, 1928 in R.W. Sexton *American Commercial Buildings of Today: Skyscrapers, Office Buildings, Banks, Private Business Buildings, Stores and Shop*, (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Inc., 1928), 187
Figure 3.15: Detail of mural, *Speed of Transportation*. Bullock, *Speed of Transportation,* 1996, in *Bullocks Wilshire* (Los Angeles: Balcony Press, 1996), 15

Figure 4.1: América Tropical, Mural. David Siquieras posing with newly completed mural (above), and the restored mural (below). 1: *Roberto Berdecio, a close associate of Siqueiros during the 1930s, stands in front of América Tropical shortly after completion.* Photograph, Getty Images, c.1930s
2: Luis C. Garza, *A Modern Look at a Modernist Past*, Photograph. NPR, 2010.

Introduction

In 1922, a team of archeologists from the United States ventured into the countries of Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras to inspect the hieroglyphics found among the ruins of Mayan civilization. Writing for *National Geographic Magazine*, they described and published their discoveries, and placed themselves within a growing group of early 20th century scholars who praised the architecture and cultural artefacts of Mayan/Pre-Columbian civilization while simultaneously disparaging its people and their descendants. They guessed that Mayan Civilization began around the same time as the beginnings of the "Christian Era," and while Europe evolved into the modern era, the Mayan people were "slowly fighting upward from savagery to barbarism to the threshold of civilization."[1] Given this supposed timeline, in addition to the visual evidence of the monumental architectural ruins present in the landscape, *National Geographic* began to refer to the Mayans as the "Greeks of the New World."

While on the surface this comparison may seem to be based in an appreciation of the Mayan people, in reality it stems from a complex subtext of United States culture in the early decades of the 20th century. It was during this time that Mayan Civilization, and the ruinous monuments of civilizations that remain from other indigenous groups, were first considered to be the beginning of American history – a shift in focus from the idea that American history began with the arrival of the pilgrims and the United States colonial era. This change in focus was accompanied by a shift in definition of the word 'America.' By the early 1920s, 'America' had come to be defined not by its territorial borders, but as an idea: a sphere of influence strong enough to represent an entire hemisphere, a powerful force that could not be confined to territorial borders. Although the two phrases, 'America' and the 'United States,' may appear to

[1]Morley, Sylvanus. "The Foremost Intellectual Achievement of Ancient America," *National Geographic* Vol. 41 (1922), 109-131.

many to be interchangeable, when the United States is referred to as 'America' it embodies an ideology that presents the United States as *the* leading hemispheric influence.

By comparing Mayan Civilization to Greek Civilization and calling Mayan people 'Greeks of the New World,' intentional parallels are drawn between European pre-history and American pre-history. The United States held two goals, intentional or unintentional, with this comparison. The first is a reminder of the founding goals of the United States, specifically that of democracy. By comparing Mayan ruins to Greek ruins, Mayan inspired architecture is elevated and represents the same ideals as traditional Greco-Roman style architecture on American soil. The second goal of this comparison was for the United States to undeniably establish a pre-history for itself that could rival European history. Blatantly ignoring and finding excuses for the fact that these architectural ruins were discovered in other areas of the Western Hemisphere and in entirely different countries outside of the United States, the idea of 'Greeks of the New World' created an avenue for the United States to architecturally re-interpret what the country saw as its own heritage to rival Europe, all while continuing to subjugate and look down upon the historic indigenous groups and remaining cultural groups still found in Latin America.

The United States praised its 'Greeks of the New World' through the celebration and re-creation of architectural styles that mirror native indigenous design, using symbols and elements from indigenous cultures to cement its presence, history, and cultural significance among the rest of the world. The resulting architectural style, Neo-Prehispanic style, is therefore one that encompasses this way of thinking. It is a re-interpretation of indigenous form through an Anglo lens, mirroring the way the United States re-interpreted indigenous American history to serve its own purposes and to establish itself among the histories of the world.

Neo-Prehispanic Style and Pan-Americanism

Neo-Prehispanic style is defined within this thesis as Anglo iterations of indigenous Latin American form and design. Distinct historical Latin American indigenous cultures were repurposed into a singular blended style that sought to emulate legitimate indigenous construction, design, and purpose. Therefore, for example, the plaster re-creations of Mayan temples that were popular attractions at World Fairs in the late 19th century would not fall under the umbrella of Neo-Prehispanic style because the form the monuments took was an attempt at a faithful re-creation of solely Mayan architecture and was not reinterpreted through an Anglo context of form or design. [*Fig. 0.1*] However, a structure like the Mayan Theater in Los Angeles would be considered Neo-Prehispanic as it takes the familiar Anglo structure of a movie palace and reinterprets various indigenous Latin American cultural symbols, hieroglyphs, colors, and general design as the exterior decoration. [*Fig. 0.2*] Because it is widely recognized that the design and form of indigenous groups beyond that of solely Mayan Civilization were reinterpreted within this architectural style, this thesis chooses to use 'Neo-Prehispanic' to describe this style and rejects the more widely-used term 'Mayan Revival Style.'

This term was dismissed by scholars in the early 21st century for two primary reasons.[2] First, 'Mayan Revival' implies that only Mayan art and architecture were revived into contemporary contexts. This is simply not the case. Many structures that have traditionally fallen under the umbrella of Mayan Revival also bear influences from Aztec, Incan, Zapotec, and other Pre-Columbian origins, thus making the phrase Mayan Revival diminutive and unable to reflect the breadth of the various cultures that were used within the design. Additionally, the word

[2] Specifically, authors Ruth Anne Phillips and R. Sarah Richardson ("Stone, Water, and Mortarless Constructions: Frank Lloyd Wright and the Pre-Columbian Inca") and Abigail Van Slyck ("Mañana, Mañana: Racial Stereotypes and the Anglo Rediscovery of the Southwest's Vernacular Architecture, 1890-1920) present this argument within their text and argue against the use of the phrase Mayan Revival, favoring the more inclusive "Neo-Prehispanic."

revival implies the existence of an architectural form in the past that is revived in the contemporary. Because this style is a blend of different cultural influences and was re-interpreted through Anglo modes and forms of construction and building, it cannot be called a true architectural 'Mayan Revival' because there is nothing specifically architecturally Mayan that is revived.[3] Unlike other revival movements of the late 19th and early 20th century, the forms and designs of indigenous Latin American cultures were blended, abstracted, and re-interpreted into a context diametrically different from the form's original structural purpose. This has led a number of contemporary scholars to embrace the term Neo-Prehispanic as an acknowledgement of these elements.[4]

Despite the emergence of the term Neo-Prehispanic and growing attention to the specific way to refer to these 'revival movements' within the United States, there are very few sources devoted entirely to a discussion of Neo-Prehispanic style. The most prominent of these few sources is a book written by architectural historian Marjorie Ingle titled *The Mayan Revival Style*, published in 1984.[5] Within her text, Ingle surveys and categorizes the style from its initial appearance and earliest iterations to its disappearance amid the onset of mid-century modernism. Contemporarily, it remains the only comprehensive survey and history book published about Neo-Prehispanic style. Although Ingle undoubtedly discusses its origins and nuances as it appeared through time, her work lacks discussion of possible motives that led to the style's popularity and fails to situate and critically assess Neo-Prehispanic style in the context of a cultural landscape. As a result of simply categorizing the buildings that fall under the style and

[3] Unlike other revival styles, the Italian Revival Style for example, the contemporary usage of the architecture is incredibly removed from its original purpose. Because the original contexts of Mayan/Aztec temples are so incredibly removed from its context in early 21st century architecture, the word revival was rejected as the new architecture is a new type, a new form.
[4] Examples of scholars include (but are not limited to) Phillips, Richardson, Van Slyck, Gonzalez, Gebhard, Strum, Pool.
[5] Ingle, Marjorie. *The Mayan Revival Style: Art Deco Mayan Fantasy*. Salt Lake City: G.M. Smith, 1984.

only briefly alluding to possible influence, an important part of the history of Neo-Prehispanic style is missing. Nearly every source consulted within this thesis cites Marjorie Ingle's work when discussing Neo-Prehispanic origins and motives, resulting in a systemic and overarching lack of consideration to further question and critically assess the style's origins within the sources that rely on her interpretation.

One of the most crucial missteps in Ingle's work was the fact she ignored the connections between the earliest iterations of Neo-Prehispanic style and the burgeoning Pan-Americanist political movement. Ingle's text, and many others, point to the construction and decoration of the Pan-American Union Building in Washington D.C. as the first example of Neo-Prehispanic style within the country.[6] The Pan-American Union Building was once the center of Pan-American affairs in the Western Hemisphere, and is a seminal building within the conversation between Neo-Prehispanic design and Pan-Americanism. After a quick description of the building, a discussion about the architects, and an explanation of why this particular building can be considered Neo-Prehispanic, Ingle quickly moves on to the next example of early Neo-Prehispanic design in her text. Ingle failed to notice and comment on the parallels between the political ideals of Pan-Americanism and the ideals of Neo-Prehispanic style. A more critical look at the ideologies behind Neo-Prehispanic design reveals these connections, and as Pan-Americanist ideologies grew stronger throughout the early decades of the twentieth century, the connection between these two ideas and the impact they had on the resulting cultural landscape of the United States should not continue to remain unremarked.

Pan-Americanist ideologies can be first traced to nineteenth century Central American revolutionary military leaders who called for the unity of South and Central America in times of

[6] Nearly every source consulted from the 1970s onward within this thesis draws attention to the Pan-American Union Building as the first example of Neo-Prehispanic style in the country.

war, mainly for the creation of a unionized defense.[7] The United States would not adopt Pan-Americanism into its politics until 1890, when Washington D.C. hosted the first International Conference of American States. This date, forty years later, would be decreed as "Pan-American Day."[8] However, the definition of Pan-Americanism for the United States would focus on very different themes than the original Latin American revolutionary definition.

In 1915 John Barrett, a former executive officer of the Pan-American Union, wrote an essay for the *North American Review* titled "Practical Pan-Americanism" in which he delved into the history of Pan-Americanism from the perspective of the United States.[9] He defines Pan-Americanism as "the common or concerted action or attitude of the twenty-one American republics for the welfare of one or more of all of them without infringement of their sovereignty or integrity."[10] In simpler terms, Pan-Americanism is defined at this time as an ideological attitude in which all 21 countries in the Americas can exist peacefully, support other neighboring countries, and not have to fear transgression. Pan-Americanism was much more ideological than political and, in the United States, came to be synonymous with the idea of fraternity and peace. Because Pan-Americanism as a movement was not limited solely to politics, its ideology caught on culturally and began to be represented in artistic movements, nationwide advertisements, and most important to this thesis, architecture.

Surprisingly, very little scholarly literature exists that discusses the connection between the rise of Pan-Americanist ideology and accompanying architectural styles in the United States. Despite numerous references to Pan-Americanism in primary sources and allusions to the

---

[7] Gonzalez, Robert Alexander. *Designing Pan-America: U.S. Architectural Visions for the Western Hemisphere.* Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2011.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Barrett, John. "Practical Pan-Americanism." *The North American Review* (1915) 413–23.
[10] Ibid, 415.

influence of Pan-American policies in contemporary sources, Robert Gonzalez's book *Designing Pan-America* (2011) is the only seminal text that devotes itself entirely to making these connections.[11] In this book, Gonzalez traces the effects the ideologies of Pan-Americanism held on United States design, specifically in architecture, beginning with early 19th century cultural references and concluding with Pan-Americanism's lasting effects on United States culture today.[12] Neo-Prehispanic design is referenced in the discussion surrounding the Pan-American Union Building but, unfortunately, it is where the discussion of the style in terms of Pan-Americanism ends.

Ultimately, this thesis contributes to the discussion of Neo-Prehispanic style by interpreting the style though the context of the Pan-Americanist movement. The Pan-American Union Building in Washington D.C. is the first example of Neo-Prehispanic architecture in the United States, but the 'heartland' of the style is widely considered to be Southern California. Many homes, movie palaces, skyscrapers, hotels, and commercial buildings constructed between the 1910s and the 1930s in Southern California contain elements of Neo-Prehispanic design and are interpreted within this thesis as occupying a Pan-American landscape. Although enlightening, impactful, and important, these connections and their broader social implications remain little discussed in academic writings. It is for this reason that this thesis narrowed its scope to the landscape of Southern California, which proves, as the epicenter of the style, that Neo-Prehispanic style and Pan-Americanist ideologies are intrinsically interconnected and that

[11] Gonzalez, *Designing Pan-America.*
[12] Gonzalez in this text looks at 19th century World's Fair plaster re-creations of Mayan ruins, he analyzes cultural phenomena like the popularity of Copa Cabana Club and Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz's marriage in the 1950s, and the lasting expressions of unity in the Americas that were developed in the 1970s and 1980s in Pan-American locations like Mexico and Florida.

Neo-Prehispanic style can best be understood through its placement within the context of this cultural landscape.

Thesis Overview

As a result of the interconnectivity between Neo-Prehispanic style and Pan-Americanist ideologies, United States architects between 1910-1940 employed Neo-Prehispanic design to present and reflect a specific Southern California Pan-American landscape, and used Neo-Prehispanic form to represent a culturally rich American past and fruitful Pan-American future.

The first chapter of this thesis establishes the connection between Neo-Prehispanic style and Pan-Americanism, revealing that they are inextricably linked as a result of the United States' desire to define architecture that is native to the Americas. This chapter takes steps beyond the writings of Ingle and Gonzalez, and further details how the desires of Pan-Americanism are expressed through Neo-Prehispanic style in architecture. It analyzes three of the 'first' expressions of Neo-Prehispanic style in the United States: The Pan-American Union Building in Washington D.C., Robert Stacy-Judd's Aztec Hotel in Monrovia, CA, and Frank Lloyd Wright's Millard House in Pasadena, CA.

The second chapter of this thesis defines Southern California as a Pan-American cultural landscape by connecting various cultural and architectural histories. After establishing the characteristics of this landscape, it then looks specifically at Neo-Prehispanic design and the specific Pre-Columbian symbols that were re-interpreted through Pan-Americanism in the context of this cultural landscape. This chapter expands upon previously published works and conventional ideas about regionalism in design by introducing the ways in which the cultural landscape in Southern California promoted, transformed, and elevated Neo-Prehispanic design

along the exterior of buildings constructed within the late 1920s. This is accomplished through detailed analysis, empirical evidence, available resources, and primary source articles.

The third and final chapter of this thesis focuses on Neo-Prehispanic form, and how it was interpreted into skyscraper design. Skyscrapers were argued to be true 'indigenous American' architecture, and combined with Neo-Prehispanic form, began to mirror the architectural goals of Pan-Americanism. This allowed for the creation of the ultimate Pan-American skyscraper in the landscape of Southern California: a structure that combines both the form of skyscrapers and Neo-Prehispanic style design. This chapter begins with a contextualization of skyscraper form and two architects who argued that skyscrapers should emulate Pre-Columbian pyramids. It concludes with a detailed analysis of the previously mentioned skyscraper, and its meaning within the context of the Pan-American landscape.

While there are some amounts of existing literature that discuss Neo-Prehispanic style, very little of it attempts to understand the cultural motives that informed Neo-Prehispanic form and design and the way those elements are reflected its surrounding cultural landscape. While some of the individual structures that are discussed in this thesis have already been interpreted within other texts, they often lack a broader analysis or a discussion of a motive for design choices beyond some broad postulates.[13] Architecture and the symbols it carries do not exist in a void, and are not a singular entity in space. They reflect and are a part of a broader geographical, societal, and cultural landscape that is imperative to understand in order to fully grasp their lasting importance and place amid the given landscape.

[13] There are a number of writings of Robert Stacy-Judd's work that are referenced in this text and can be found in the bibliography that do not specifically mention the presence of Pan-American ideologies. The same can be said for Frank Lloyd Wright. This is also true of the more famous buildings, although there is a great deal of information on the Eastern Columbia Building and Bullocks Wilshire, none of these resources mention possible Neo-Prehispanic influence, nor do they mention the ideals of Pan-American ideologies and resulting architecture.

Although the rise of Neo-Prehispanic architecture during the early decades of the 20th century may be interpreted by some as appreciation for Indigenous American art and architecture, during this period that appreciation did not extend to the peoples and culture that created the original forms that were the basis of the style. As is discussed within the chapters of this thesis, authors and historians of the time consistently diminished the achievements of indigenous groups, published harmful language, and consistently referenced harmful stereotypes.[14] In Los Angeles, the peak of the Neo-Prehispanic architectural movement coincided with the peak of Mexican repatriation efforts in California and other states that border Mexico.[15] The United States fostered and promoted the use of Neo-Prehispanic design while actively disparaging and removing those who held cultural heritage to the style's origins, and reinterpreted indigenous cultures as a means to assert Anglo superiority within the Western Hemisphere. The results are beautifully designed buildings, stunning pieces of architecture that still hold a prominent place in the history of architecture of the United States. But these buildings must still be held accountable to the unsavory mindset that led to their design and construction. They should be studied within the correct contexts, and interpreted amid city, state, and national histories in a way that is more critical than simplistic discussions about construction and art deco styles.

This thesis, through closely examining buildings constructed between 1910-1940, presents a new method of interpretation through Pan-Americanism that reveals physical and cultural landscapes that were ignored in past discussions of Neo-Prehispanic design. Through revealing the present cultural ideologies present in the landscape of the United States within the

[14] Examples include, but are not limited to, George Oakley Totten, Stuart Chase, Frank Lloyd Wright, and general newspaper and magazine publications found within the bibliography of this thesis.
[15] Delpar, Helen. *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican: Cultural Relations Between the United States and Mexico, 1920-1935*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1992.

first half of the 20th century, a fuller understanding of the buildings constructed during this time can be gleaned, and we can better understand the reasoning and thoughts behind the design decisions that are an integral part of the fabric of the Southern Californian region.

Chapter One: The Beginnings of Neo-Prehispanic Style

Pan-Americanism was not simply just a political movement, it became the name for an ideology that, on the surface, appeared to celebrate Latin American heritage but in reality promoted racist stereotypes and aligned itself with the ideals of Anglo superiority. As the first architectural expression of Pan-Americanism, the Pan-American Union Building employed early iterations of Neo-Prehispanic style that captured these sentiments. As a result, other early examples of Neo-Prehispanic style are reflective of the same harmful ideologies. Through an examination of three early projects completed in Neo-Prehispanic style, it is evident that Neo-Prehispanic style and Pan-Americanism must be understood in context of one another, and that Neo-Prehispanic architecture reflects and is an agent of this broader American cultural movement.

Pan-Americanism and the Pan-American Union Building

Contemporary historians now recognize the Pan-American Union Building as the first example of Neo-Prehispanic design in the United States.[16] It is a notable, important, and necessary building to discuss in the context of this thesis as it solidifies how Neo-Prehispanic style and Pan-Americanist ideologies are interconnected through usage and interpretation from the style's very beginnings, specifically pre-World War I. Through a more detailed discussion of the definition of Pan-Americanism in the United States, this section interprets how Pan-Americanist political and social ideologies are reflected in the design of the Pan-American Union Building and subsequent iterations of Neo-Prehispanic style.

[16] Carla Breeze, Marjorie Ingle, Robert Gonzalez, are a small sample of the historians who recognize the Pan-American Union Building as the first example of Neo-Prehispanic design within the United States.

The ideology of Pan-Americanism first arose in the political landscape of the United States as a direct result of (then) recent global territorial acquisitions. Around the turn of the 20th century, the United States expanded its empire into the Pacific first as a result of claiming uninhabited guano islands, then in a more meaningful way through the territories gained after the victory of the Spanish-American War.[17] Resulting from an increasingly globally and imperially-minded United States, questions about the exact definition of United States architecture arose, especially as the nation attempted to build colonies in its newly acquired territories.[18] Namely, what architectural design can reflect only the United States, and therefore the ideals of America? Coupled with an energetic surge of nationalism after victory in the Spanish-American war, the United States began to eagerly look both inward and to its neighboring countries for architectural inspiration. As a result, Pan-Americanism in the United States became not only a political ideology for hemispheric unity, but evolved into a social construct representative of United States superiority. The entire hemisphere came to be interpreted by the United States through only its own contexts and points of view, and it was understood that everything within the Western Hemisphere could be used to represent a great pre-history of the United States that could rival European history.

As mentioned in the introduction, John Barrett – a former executive officer of the Pan-American Union – defined Pan-Americanism as an ideological attitude in which all 21 countries in the Americas could exist peacefully, offer support, and not have to fear transgression. Barrett then further proceeds to describe how the United States, upon noticing the growing influence of Latin American countries, noted its own responsibility in protecting individual sovereignty. He

[17] Immerwahr, Daniel. *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019.
[18] Ibid.

points, in his text, to three particular developments that occurred in the decade leading up to 1915, the year this essay was published. First, the opportunity and potential of curating United States foreign relations with Latin America. Second, the new desire of Latin American countries to become closer socially, politically, financially, and commercially with the United States. And finally, the fact that the 'old world' was presently engaged in World War I while Pan-America, a phrase now interchangeable with 'new world,' was "destined to become the mightiest combination and influence for universal peace and good will among nations and men."[19]

As lofty as this final goal may sound, it is hard to ignore the centricity of the United States in what is supposed to be a *Pan*-American ideal. The United States brought an imperialist mindset to Pan-Americanism, and did not see its Latin American counterparts as equal politically, socially, economically, or racially. Despite the words 'pan' and 'union' surrounding this discussion, the United States saw itself as vastly superior, with much of the political discourse centered around its interests.[20] The United States expressed Pan-Americanism through the idea that Latin American countries should be 'taught' how to operate a country, and racist stereotypes of the tropics, which portrayed brown people as 'slow' and 'lazy,' permeated the ways in which the United States interacted with Latin American countries.[21] The centrality of the United States is further seen in the fact that the first Pan-American International Conference was held in Washington D.C.. This city would eventually be established as the political center of Pan-American affairs despite its far location from the geographic center of the Americas.[22]

---

[19] Barrett, *Practical Pan-Americanism*.
[20] Jackson, Davina. "Contexts and Conclusions." Essay. In Pan-Pacific Modern Design and Architecture, edited by Douglas Snelling, 229–43. Routledge, 2016.
[21] "Latin America in Pan-American Civilization." The Bulletin of the International Bureau of the American Republics (Jan 1910): 207-213. Print.
[22] Gonzalez, *Designing Pan-America,* 8.

In order to officially cement the center of Pan-America in Washington D.C., the Pan-American Union Building was conceived, and eventually constructed and designed by two American architects in the heart of the city.[23] [*Fig. 1.1*] The building's chosen location had historic ties to United States history, particularly George Washington, and was described by the International Bureau of the American Republics (the original name for the Pan-American Union) as romantic, with a "historic and poetic fitness."[24] Architects Albert Kelsey and Paul Philippe Cret designed and constructed the building between 1908 and 1910. The original purpose of the Pan-American Union Building was to create an office to receive Latin American delegates, to provide a space big enough to host all 23 Latin American delegates comfortably, and house a library of Latin American affairs that would be in commemoration of Columbus.[25] In an endeavor to make Latin American delegates 'feel more at home' during their visit, the design of the Pan-American Union Building attempted to incorporate Latin American elements into the building through botanicals and design. This led to the earliest elements of Neo-Prehispanic style in the country, visible in the tile work, gardens, and sculptural elements of the building.

The plan of the Pan-American Union Building and its exterior design was conceived in a Beaux-Arts style, featuring white Georgian marble and a symmetrical façade with sculptural elements on the street-facing exterior. The inherent symmetry found in Beaux-Arts architecture proved useful to architects Kelsey and Cret as they attempted to allude to unity between the Latin Americas and the United States through the placement of allegorical sculpture at either side of

---

[23] A contest was held for the plans of the building, advertising to Latin American architects. Ultimately, two American architects would win. Today, the Pan-American Union Building is in the heart of Washington D.C., adjacent to the Washington Monument, where hundreds of tourists walk by daily.

[24] Hale, Annie Riley. "The Romance of the New Building's Location." *The Bulletin of the International Bureau of the American Republics* (May 1910): 713; This building was located on the corner where a hotel had once stood and where George Washington had supposedly stayed many times.

[25] "The International Bureau and Its Building." *The Bulletin of the International Bureau of the American Republics* (May 1910) 721.

the entrance. On the left is an allegory of South America, and on the right is an allegory of North America/United States.[26] Placing an allegory of one country singularly opposed to an allegory of an entire continent diminishes the cultural differences of Latin American countries and, again, reveals the centricity of the United States in the design of the Pan-American Union Building. The Latin American allegory, designed by Isidore Konti, is of a woman crowned by a condor, with a war-like shield, and an olive branch held under her left arm. [*Fig. 1.2*] Under her right arm is a male youth, meant to symbolize the "spirit of progress," holding a "winged globe of advancement."[27] Both these figures are described in 1910 by the *Bulletin for the International Bureau of the American Republics* [BIBAR] as having facial features that "follow the characteristic Latin outlines."[28] Finally, a parrot and what appears to be a banana leaf are behind the figures and around their feet, symbolically representing the flora and fauna of Central and South America. The allegory for the United States, however, tells a very different story. [*Fig. 1.3*] Designed by Guzton Borglum, the allegory features a woman who is described as Anglo Saxon, "symbolizing the mother nature that keeps an aggressive but judicious race together."[29] In her right hand she holds the "torch of enlightenment," and on her left she holds back a young boy, described by BIBAR to represent "the restless spirit of enterprise."[30] By her feet is the base of a Greco-Roman column alluding to democracy, and a machine-gear alluding to technology and enterprise. The presence of these figures and the stories their decorations tell cements the perceived differences between Anglo-America and Latin America. North America is described from the un-named author of BIBAR as "energetic and aggressive," while South America is

[26] While the allegory of the "United States" is in fact called "North America," the way in which it is discussed, and the features chosen negate entirely Canada and Mexico. It is clear that North America is interchangeable with the United States, and this discussion will treat the sculpture as such.
[27] Ibid, 723.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid, 727.
[30] Ibid.

"leisurely and restful."[31] Despite the fact these sculptures were placed to symbolize unity, their presence only puts into sharper focus the way that United States citizens saw themselves compared to Latin America and its people.

Once inside the building, the earliest examples of Neo-Prehispanic style are visible, present throughout the interior tile work, relief panels, lighting, water, plants, and statuary. Most of this interior decoration originated from a desire to make the visiting Latin American delegates feel more comfortable, or more 'at home.'[32] In the minds of architects Kelsey and Cret (as well as most of the United States) Latin America was interchangeable with the general idea of the tropics, and much of the interior design of the building was based upon this presumption. Suffice to say, not all of Latin America exists within the tropic regions, and the supposition that Latin America and tropical imagery are interchangeable further reveals the ignorance of the United States and the Pan-American Union's prerogative of utilizing Latin American resources instead of attempting to understand Latin American culture, or its people. This desire to make Latin American delegates more 'at home' through symbolization of the tropics created a fictional fantastical atmosphere, and as the un-named author for BIBAR describes, "entering the building, one leaves the climate and locality of Washington behind."[33] This author, clearly swayed by the 'exoticism' of the building, proceeds to describe the plants, the open stair ways, and the corridors as 'exotic' and different from what the author was accustomed to in Washington. They proceed to further remark upon the interior noting in particular the Datura Lily, described as "growing in luxuriance on the tablelands of Mexico," and the ways in which it "has been extensively used as a motive for embellishment."[34] The ceilings were described to feature "strange forms from the

[31] Ibid, 722; A notable example is "Latin America in Pan-American Civilization."
[32] Gonzalez, *Designing Pan-America,* 13.
[33] "The International Bureau and its Building," 725.
[34] Ibid, 728.

Tropics: peace pipes, lilies, and serpents." And finally, the author was particularly taken with the "suggestion of outdoor life" inside the building, tangible through the presence of a greenhouse which revealed the "dreamy and genial climate" of Latin America.[35] These varying elements of supposed Latin American tropicality in Beaux-Arts decoration reveal the ways that presumed Latin American imagery and symbolism were interpreted in the context of Anglo design, and thus created the first example of Neo-Prehispanic style in the United States.

The most explicit example of Neo-Prehispanic design could be found in the enclosed patio area of the Pan-American Union Building. [*Fig. 1.4*] The patio was surrounded by 'tropical greenery,' and featured specially designed Enfield tiles arranged in the shape of Mayan figures and hieroglyphs.[36] Surrounding this patio were "reproduced well-known archeological fragments from Mexico, Guatemala, and Peru," or in other words, free standing statues that were casts from archeological expeditions of Latin America.[37] The center of the space, described well into the present day as the symbolic heart of the patio, features a fountain designed by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney.[38] [*Fig. 1.5*] The base of the fountain contained three figures, representing the "three ancient Mexican races – Aztec, Zapotecan, and Mayan."[39] The details of these individual figures sought to replicate their respective culture through facial features, clothing design, and general formal design decisions. However, the posing of the statuary originated from a western art historical tradition. In an attempt to represent Mayan or Aztec figures in sculptural form, Whitney had relied on traditional Western modes of contrapposto, and designed the figures to act as caryatids supporting the base of the fountain.

---

[35] Ibid, 725
[36] Enfield Tiles and Pottery works (1906-1930) were a popular tile manufacturer from Pennsylvania during this time. https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/443294
[37] "The International Bureau and its Building," 725.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.

The enclosed patio led to an outside pool/garden area commonly referred to at the time of the building's opening as the 'Aztec Garden,' or sometimes the 'Blue Aztec Garden' due to the bright, vivid, almost turquoise color along the walls and some of the statuary [*Fig. 1.6*]. This particular color of blue began to be associated with Mayan/Aztec/Pre-Columbian groups during this time for perhaps a variety of reasons. The physical artefacts that were found amid the ruins featured elements of jade and turquoise, or contained a natural patina from the aged bronze in the discovered artefacts. As these artefacts were discovered and documented, these blue and green colors came to further represent the idea of the art of Mayan, Aztec, and other Pre-Columbian groups.[40] Why the garden received its name, despite containing Mayan, Incan, Toltec, and Aztec sculptural references, may be attributed to more general familiarity with Aztec civilization over Mayan civilization, and emphasizes why the term Neo-Prehispanic is more suitable to this study than 'Mayan Revival.'

Thus, the resulting design of the Pan-American Union Building is one that combines the unique cultural expressions of the Maya, Inca, Aztec, and other Pre-Columbian groups into one general design within Anglo architectural contexts. And as the United States sought to define for itself a great pre-history through Pan-Americanism, it introduced Neo-Prehispanic style as a method for re-contextualizing specific cultural histories into an Anglo 'American' historical fantasy. The Pan-American Union Building is a lasting representation of perceived Anglo superiority, with a design that features a fictional narrative, loosely based on ruins and artefacts. Colors, motifs, and styles from various Pre-Columbian cultures were condensed into one, displayed only through an Anglo context, used to represent the idea of 'America,' and derived

[40] The colors of turquoise blues and sage greens may have already entered into Anglo imagination concerning art of the Pre-Columbian era. After first contact, conquistadors like Hernan Cortez collected various objects, artefacts, caudexes, and textiles to send back to Spain/Portugal. These objects featured Maya Blue pigments, Quetzal Feather headdresses and works of art, and jade and turquoise stone masks.

from racist pre-suppositions of Latin American character. From the allegories that wing the entrance of the building to the fountain in the garden, Neo-Prehispanic design is present only because it was re-appropriated and warped into Anglo architectural expressions. The United States utilized Neo-Prehispanic design and architecture to promote its interests instead of properly honoring or considering the people from which the designs themselves originated.

Neo-Prehispanic style is intrinsically connected to the political ideologies of Pan-Americanism. The Pan-American Union Building was conceived from racist pre-suppositions, featured a homogenous design that negated individual Latin American cultures, and is a result of a mis-guided attempt to make visiting Latin American delegates feel 'more at home' by displaying tropic imagery in the design and flora of the building. This racism, homogenous design, and 'tropical' imagery are notable aspects of Neo-Prehispanic style that will appear in every iteration of the design until it fell out of fashion in the mid 20th century.

The Search for 'American' Architecture and the 'Aztec' Hotel

The pre-World War I expressions of Pan-Americanism in design within the Pan-American Union Building were tied to political ideologies. It was not until victory in Europe post World War I that the sociological aspects of the 'greatness' and 'might' of the United States became more overtly intertwined with the ideas of Pan-Americanism as designers and architects began to more fervently search for architectural symbols that were uniquely associated with United States ideals. Amid this change, Neo-Prehispanic style architecture evolved from associations with political buildings to representations in commercial architecture, specifically the architecture of Robert Stacy-Judd. This section will discuss this shift, and how Robert Stacy-Judd's architecture exemplifies the changing narrative of Pan-Americanism within United States culture.

The United States' involvement in World War I between 1917 and 1918 marked a turning point in Pan-Americanist politics within the country: namely, a greater rise in nationalism and a subsequent eager search for ways to represent the United States as a new leading world power.[41] The United States proudly believed that it was not only the most technologically modern country on Earth, but that the rest of Europe agreed fully with that sentiment.[42] In this period the United States saw itself as a "generator" of culture and technology, with the effects of its technological productions rippling around the world.[43] This left United States artists and intellectuals with a desire to express the "country's power and leadership" through "its cultural distinctness and rich heritage."[44] And because art and architecture are the most visible examples of culture, the United States quickly began to assign more value to its own cultural artefacts: primarily, the Pre-Columbian ruins of Latin America.

Coincidentally, these cultural artefacts also answered a pressing question for architects and designers of this era: what constitutes 'pure-American' architecture? Nationalism created a need for a 'pure-American' design, or in other words, a design with roots only from the Americas and without European/Eastern influence. Pan-Americanism and the disastrous effects World War I had on the European landscape made this question more pressing to American architects wishing to exemplify architecturally the United States victory in Europe. If the United States and its new architecture truly wanted to influence and impress the world, it would have to

[41] Eggener, KeithL.. "Nationalism, Internationalism and the 'Naturalisation' of Modern Architecture In the United States, 1925–1940." *National Identities*, vol. 8, no. 3, 1 Sep. 2006: 245 This sentiment can be found in a number of sources in the bibliography of this thesis. To name a few: John Barrett ("Practical Pan-Americanism"), Claude Bragdon ("Architecture and Democracy"), and Ralph Doane ("The Story of American Architecture in the Philippines").
[42] Ibid, 244.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid, 245.

look inward, and find something organically American to produce. The ruins of the Mayan, Aztec, and other Pre-Columbian groups were quickly seen as the answer.

What led these United States architects and designers to justify these ruins, created within the context of a different culture, in a different country, as their own? Part of the answer lies in the post-World War I goals of Pan-Americanism. John Barrett's 1915 definition of Pan-Americanism primarily discussed hemispheric unity, but the global effects of World War I caused the focus to shift, and Pan-Americanism became synonymous with the belief that everything in the Western Hemisphere was shared, even culture, and all belonged to and was interpreted through the United States. The United States laid claim to the pre-history of the Americas because, through Pan-Americanism, the United States saw itself as the *entirety* of the Americas. Therefore, the United States was able to give itself a rich, tangible, and archaeologically interesting pre-history that could rival Europe or Asia, even if that pre-history did not geographically originate from the United States itself.

Then the question must be asked – why did the United States not look into its already existing pre-history of Native American tribes? While some Native American 'revival' architecture exists, it was little used to represent the themes of 'pure-American' architecture.[45] Native American tribes were not even represented symbolically in the Pan-American Union Building. In the 1920s, architecture that re-interpreted Native American pueblos were present in the American Southwest, as is discussed in architectural historian Carla Breeze's book *Pueblo Deco.*[46] Her text serves as a cohesive collection of buildings constructed within the decade of the 1920s in what is called a Pueblo Revival style. The Pueblo Revival Style is a 'revival' of the

[45] Pure-American architecture meaning, again, architecture whose form and design solely originates from the United States.
[46] Breeze, Carla. *Pueblo Deco*. New York, NY: Rizzoli, 1990.

architecture of the Pre-Columbian Native Americans of the American Southwest, featuring decorative features of geometric shapes, adobe or faux adobe exteriors, and deep earthen tones and turquoise colors. However, the majority of these buildings feature some recognizable Neo-Prehispanic elements, thus revealing, in comparison, the already deeper and richer Neo-Prehispanic influence on United States architectural culture. In addition, unlike Neo-Prehispanic style, the Pueblo Revival is almost entirely contained to domestic homes in the American Southwest.[47] Although there are a few notable exceptions, it did not have the far reaching effect on the United States landscape that Neo-Prehispanic style did.[48] This may be in part due to the deep amount of racism prevalent with the United States towards Native American tribes during this period of United States history. Native Americans were both homogenized and othered in society, so much so that they had to "immigrate" into Anglo-American culture in order to be culturally accepted as citizens of the United States.[49] Although Native American people and cultures were 'alive' and present within the fabric of the country, they consistently faced rejection from Anglo-American culture/society. It was clear that Anglo-Americans were not willing to embrace Native American culture as 'American.'

Unfortunately, Anglo-American homogenous assumptions and racism were prevalent in the ways that Pre-Columbian cultures were considered as well. As was noted in the discussion of the Pan-American Union Building, the unique cultures of the Pre-Columbian indigenous groups were presented together in one style, with no meaningful distinction. This was not confined to architectural design. Despite archeological work in uncovering the 'mysteries' of the Yucatan

---

[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid. Notable exceptions include the Hotel Franciscan in Albuquerque, the La Fonda Hotel in Santa Fe, and The Guardian Building in Detroit.
[49] Hertzberg, *The Search for an American Indian Identity,* 157. Here, Hertzberg refers to a cultural immigration. Native American people were thought to be so different that they had to change aspects of who they were, how they dressed, how they spoke in order to be seen as 'American.'

Peninsula (where the majority of Mayan ruins are found), the various Pre-Columbian cultures were discussed in magazines, articles, and books in a broad matter and were all referred to as part of a singular group of indigenous people.[50] In addition to this broad generalization, a great amount of societal disconnect existed between the present 'Indians' who resided in Mexico and Guatemala and the architectural wonders that were pre-historically produced in those countries. Authors wrote extensively about Latin America and its people but spoke of the Mayans and Aztecs as a dead race, replaced by the present 'Indians' and 'Mestizos' who lacked artistic drive and the ability to be creative.[51] These suppositions came primarily from Anglo-centered racist perceptions of contemporary Latin American people who were consistently described in texts as "slow," "dreamy," and "lazy."[52] These authors clearly struggled connecting their pre-conceptions of Latin Americans to the architecture built by their ancestors, and instead elected to hypothesize that the entire race of Mayans, Aztecs, and other Pre-Columbian cultures had completely died out and had been replaced by the present people of today, who they guessed had origins from the United States Native American tribes.[53]

A final important reason behind why the United States claimed Neo-Prehispanic design as its own is connected to the cult of 'dead societies' and 'lost civilization.' The fantastical scene of adventuring into the jungle, finding lost treasure, and discovering ruins became fetishized within United States culture, and is represented in a number of artistic cultural expressions in the

[50] Park Stephen M. "Mesoamerican Modernism: William Carlos Williams and the Archaeological Imagination." *Journal of Modern Literature* 34, no. 4 (2011); Hertzberg, Hazel W. *The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements*. 1st ed. Syracuse University Press, 1971.
[51] Morley, "The Foremost Intellectual Achievement of Ancient America."
[52] Particularly in Stuart Chase's *Mexico: A Study of Two Americas.*
[53] This is a postulate put forward by many authors, particularly George Oakley Totten (*Maya Architecture*) and Francisco Mujica (*History of the Skyscraper*).

time period of the 1920s, from early silent films to adventure books to a ballet.[54] As the symbols of ruins, jungles, and hidden pyramids began to intoxicate the average United States citizen with the spirit of adventure, ruinous Pre-Columbian monumental architecture became a nationally recognizable symbol of Pan-American values. Pyramids in ruins not only allude to a great American pre-history, but ruins themselves were interpreted as "expressions of great states," an important marker of a triumphant civilization.[55] Utilizing this pre-history architecturally, the United States could place itself historically among the Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians. Although Neo-Classical architecture would remain the standard for 'serious' buildings like civic centers and banks within the architectural landscape of the United States, architects began to express Neo-Prehispanic ideas more freely in their commercial architecture.[56] Soon theaters, hotels, homes, and eventually skyscrapers would incorporate Neo-Prehispanic design as a notable expression of America.

While contemporary scholars recognize the Pan-American Union Building as the first example of Neo-Prehispanic design, Americans of the 1920s may have believed another building to be the first: Robert Stacy-Judd's Aztec Hotel. [*Fig. 1.7*] Constructed between 1924 and 1925, the Aztec Hotel is located in Monrovia, California, and can be found lateral and to the north of Historic Route 66.[57] The hotel was constructed in a "L" shape, featuring a rear patio with scenic views of the local San Gabriel Mountains. The street-facing exterior is decorated heavily with Mayan inspired geometric shapes, influenced primarily by Mayan hieroglyphs and stone

---

[54] Ingle, *The Mayan Revival Style*; This fetishization is still present today. From recent 'adventure' films to the much beloved *Indiana Jones* movie series, more often than not the protagonist is in a South American jungle, recovering treasure, and dealing with mysterious tribes.
[55] Braun, Barbara. *Pre-Columbian Art and the Post-Columbian World: Ancient American Sources of Modern Art*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993. Print. 301
[56] Pflueger, Timothy. "What of the Vertical in American Architecture?" *The Pacific Coast Architect*, February (1927): 82–83.
[57] Gebhard, David. *Robert Stacy Judd*: *Maya Architecture, the Creation of a New Style*. Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1993.

carvings.[58] There are some visible influences of Pueblo Deco as well, notably seen in the exterior thick white stucco made to resemble adobe, and accompanying circular drainage holes.

The interior of the hotel continues this cultural blend, with the public lobby a "mixture of arts and crafts" of the Pueblo Revival, countered with accents of Mayan hieroglyphic façades as door frames.[59] [*Fig. 1.8*] The interior continues the faux adobe thickness of the walls which feature murals inspired, and at times directly copied, from Mayan hieroglyphics.[60] The coloring of the hotel is perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of Stacy-Judd's design. An unnamed author from *Architecture and Building* magazine visited the hotel shortly after its opening and described the walls as "stuccoed and finished in a green color, with a faint admixture of brown and blue, giving a general effect of sage green."[61] The Aztec Hotel was specifically colored in this way to stand out among the many other classic white stucco Mission Revival structures in the area.[62] Stacy-Judd undeniably achieved this affect while simultaneously using the color to suggest age through the appearance of a green "aged patina surface," mirroring the colors of Pre-Columbian artefacts.[63] A final colorful note is found within the hotel lobby, where a "strong rich blue" fades toward the ceiling.[64] This is not the first time these colors were used in conjunction with Neo-Prehispanic design, as rich blues and aged-patina greens were utilized in the Blue Aztec Garden within the Pan-American Union Building as well.

Robert Stacy-Judd was an emphatic promoter of both himself and his architecture, gained national and international notoriety for his designs, and commanded an attentive national

---

[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid, 59.
[60] Ibid.
[61] "An Adaption of Mayan Architecture," *Architecture and Building* 58 (June 1926): 77
[62] Mission Revival architecture was present and notable in the landscape of Southern California. Based on the presence of the California Missions, Mission Revival architecture usually features white or cream thick adobe exterior walls, red Spanish tiles, and arched doorways.
[63] Gebhard, *Robert Stacy-Judd*, 59.
[64] Ibid.

audience.[65] He "reinforced his authority by transforming himself into the personage of a romantic explorer archaeologist…" and published a series of books, written a decade after the construction of the hotel, of his adventures into the Yucatan Peninsula, where he "explore[d] the mysteries of the Mayan pyramid."[66] In promotion for the Aztec Hotel, he had photographs and architectural renderings published in newspapers, discussed in both low and high brow architectural design magazines, and present in trade journals.[67] He would even go as far as to dress up as a 'Mayan Priest' to promote himself and his works. [*Fig. 1.9*] The hotel was advertised across the country as the first building in America to ever use Indigenous American form. As a result, it is often cited as a prime example of the 'Mayan Revival' in both past and contemporary literature. But why would a building, inspired by Mayan hieroglyphs and with elements of Pueblo Revival, be called the 'Aztec Hotel'? For decades, Stacy-Judd would defend his choice of name by claiming that that the average American lacked understanding of Mayan culture, and the word 'Aztec' was more recognizable, especially to travelers along Route 66 looking for a place to stay.[68]

The name of the hotel, the blended aesthetics of Mayan and Native American Southwestern Art, and the colors that were specifically chosen to give the hotel an air of 'ancient exoticism' further reveals the problems behind the label of 'Mayan Revival' within architecture. As David Gebhard, one of Stacy-Judd's biographers, bluntly states, "Stacy-Judd's references to Maya architecture were essentially an applique of decorative elements attached to the two street façades."[69] The only element that came directly from Mayan architecture is the "suggestion of a

[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid, 2.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid, 42.

stepped temple platform posed at the street corner of the parapeted roof."[70] Ten years after the construction of the hotel, critic Gerhardt Krammer would comment on Stacy-Judd's design decisions, stating "ornament, neither Mayan nor Mexican in either feeling or character, has been unscrupulously strewn over the wall surfaces of the building…the designer had failed utterly in interpreting the symbolism or the craftsmanship of the original."[71] This may have some truth because, as noted in Stacy-Judd's biography, Stacy-Judd already arrived at the final plan for the hotel when he decided to incorporate Mayan elements at the last minute.[72] Thus, there is very little that can be considered legitimate Mayan architecture, and most of the Mayan inspired design is either entirely out of its original context or only vaguely geometrically similar. [*Fig. 1.9*] Yet, this hotel is consistently listed as an example of 'Mayan Revival Style,' further cementing the why the term 'Neo-Prehispanic' is best representative of the architecture discussed within this thesis.

Robert Stacy-Judd and his hotel are a pointed encapsulation of the effect that Pan-Americanism had on architecture and the relationship that citizens of the United States had with Latin America and Pre-Columbian cultures. The Aztec Hotel mirrors the attitude that the cultures of Indigenous Americans, whether from the Southwest, Mexico, or Guatemala, were not seen individually as unique cultures, but rather as a part of the fictional narrative they tell together as a whole in Neo-Prehispanic style. Stacy-Judd himself encapsulates the American fascination of the explorer, as his buildings are surrounded by the commercialism, theatrics, exoticism, and mysticism that permeates the idea of an 'explorer of ancient civilization.' The fact that Stacy-Judd routinely dressed as a Mayan priest in promotion for his architecture further relays the idea

[70] Ibid.
[71] Krammer, Gerhardt T., "Maya Design," *Architect and Engineer*, 122 (August, 1935): 21-35, 41
[72] Gebhard, *Robert Stacy-Judd*, 41.

that United States citizens felt they could claim the traditions of the indigenous of the Americas as their own. The hotel itself, an Anglo-inspired building, with a Mayan inspired design added at the last minute, intended to attract tourists and to have the appearance of age, encapsulates the Pan-American desire to claim an American history through Pre-Columbian civilization.

Continuing Mayan Tradition & Frank Lloyd Wright

While the previous section examined how the United States claimed cultural Latin American artefacts as its own, this section discusses the popular perceptions surrounding Latin American people during the 1920s, and the way that those perceptions were represented in architecture. Not only were contemporary Latin Americans described as 'lazy' and 'sleepy,'[73] but it was postulated that it was now the job of the 'lively and energetic' Anglo-American to assume the production of culture and continue the tradition of 'American' architecture. These postulations are visible in the architecture and design of Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian houses, where a great admiration for Pre-Columbian people led him to attempt to emulate their culture through an entirely Anglo context.

The racist perceptions of Latin American people as 'lazy' and 'sleepy' were reinforced prominently in George Oakley Totten's book *Maya Architecture.*[74] Published in 1926, this very popular book was read equally among archeologists, artists, designers, architects, and the general American public.[75] Although it is one of many works published during this period that contained photographs, drawings, and architectural renderings of Mayan design, it was influential due to the way it thoroughly categorized the architecture and design of the Mayan ruins that had been

[73] A common stereotype referenced in a number of books and articles from this time. Robert Stacy Judd: *The Ancient Mayas,* William Henry Hudson: *Idle Days in Patagonia,* Stuart Chase: *Mexico: A Study of Two Americas* are a small sample of authors reinforcing this stereotype
[74] Totten, George Oakley. *Maya Architecture.* Washington, D.C.: The Maya press, 1926.
[75] Ingle, *The Mayan Revival Style.*

discovered thus far, and sorted them into distinct eras of time.[76] Within this text, Totten also included poetic verbiage surrounding the Mayan, presented a postulate on the suspected origins of the Mayan race, and asked questions about the future of Mayan architecture in contemporary society.

In the introduction to his book, on the very first page, he describes Mayan civilization as a "half-forgotten race," one "that ran its course and died."[77] He then goes on describe how the "embers of the dying fire" – the remaining architecture found in the Yucatan and Guatemala – "were fanned to life" by Anglo American explorers and the "art once more flamed forth to their eternal glory."[78] He ends this section by describing Mayan art as "awakened by a young and vigorous people of the north" who "take up the work where Maya left it off, and carry on."[79] With these words, Totten draws upon the previously discussed notions of 'dead' civilizations and American reclamation of indigenous architecture, and further claims that it is only Anglo Americans who are fit to continue the tradition of American architecture.

In a later section, Totten ruminates on these thoughts even further. He asserts that Anglo Americans should not seek to replicate Mayan forms exactly, but should transform, conventionalize, and adapt the architecture to "modern esthetic (*sic.*) judgement."[80] On the other hand, the indigenous of the Americas should "continue the art of the lapidary…[and] encourage the dying remnants of folk dances which suggest great possibilities…"[81] Thus, Totten establishes an opposing dichotomy between Anglo Americans and Latin Americans: 'lively and energetic' Anglo-Americans are capable of reproducing, improving, and re-contextualizing Mayan Art to

[76] Ibid.
[77] Totten, *Maya Architecture, I.*
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid, 14.
[81] Ibid.

modern needs, but 'lazy and sleepy' Indigenous Americans are implied to only be capable of reproducing Arts and Crafts objects and other elements of their culture. It is necessary to carefully analyze and consider Totten's writing due to the popularity of his text at the time of its publication. Multiple resources that discuss the history of Neo-Prehispanic design consistently cite Totten as influential to understanding the design's early history. His text continues to be a resource to some contemporary scholars due to the way it categorically sorted Mayan history and architecture by eras of civilization and supplied both photographic and graphic illustrations of design. Upon reading Totten's words and thoughts concerning Latin American cultures, one can surmise how his own prepositions, prejudices, and personal postulates reflected and shaped the way many Anglo-American readers of his work perceived Mayan Architecture and their Latin American neighbors.

It is with these facts in mind that we consider the architect Frank Lloyd Wright, and the homes he designed in Los Angeles during the early years of the 1920s. He was at one point described in an article by authors R. Phillips and S. Richardson as an "un-intentional participant" of Neo-Prehispanic style due to the way he idealized 'primitive people' (indigenous Americans) and sought to replicate what he considered to be their ideals in his architecture.[82] These ideals included the idea of the indigenous of the Americas as "purer and closer to nature" and "strongly linked to the land," a broad generalization that would lead him to emulate Pre-Columbian form.[83] Wright also admired Latin American culture for being what he considered "mysterious, magical, otherworldly" and wanted to emphasize how connected the 'uncivilized' were to nature.[84]

[82] Phillips, Ruth Anne and R. Sarah Richardson. "Stone, Water, and Mortarless Constructions: Frank Lloyd Wright and The Pre-Columbian Inca." *Latin Americanist*, vol. 57, no. 4, 1 Dec. 2013.
[83] Ibid, 105.
[84] Braun, *Pre-Columbian Art and the Post-Columbian World,* 300.

In academic writing, Robert Stacy-Judd's work is often described as archaeological, theatric, colorful, and associated with the themes of lost or dead civilization, whereas Frank Lloyd Wright's work is usually described as subdued, mystical, romantic, and associated with the themes of indigenous relation to nature.[85] Despite approaching Latin American civilization in diverging ways, both architects greatly admired Pre-Columbian cultures and sought to emulate their influence in their work. Wright, however, participated in this discourse by attempting to reflect a new aspect of 'American' culture through his architecture, one that was antithetical to the Anglo 'machine age.'[86] To accomplish this, he based the design of his Neo-Prehispanic homes upon presumptions about Latin American indigenous culture and the relationship indigenous groups have with surrounding nature. And due to the presence of Pan-Americanism within United States culture, Wright was under the belief that these associations were not only truly 'American,' but that they could fully aid in the creation of an entirely new aspect of culture that draws upon a pre-existing American past, and bring it into a contemporary setting, antithetical to the machine age.[87] George Oakley Totten's writings reflect this ideal: it is up to the Anglo American (the culture creators) to continue the spirit of past 'American' art and architecture, and re-represent it for the modern day.

Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House, built in 1921, is perhaps the best-known example of this era of his architecture. [*Fig. 1.11*] But it is not the only one. There is also the Freeman House (1922), the Millard House (1923), the Storer House (1923), and the Ennis House (1924-1926). [*Figs. 1.12-1.15*] While each house features a unique aesthetic design, they bear many similarities in terms of construction and layout. Each house features texturized concrete

[85] This claim comes from the author. This pattern became noticeable amid the research required for this chapter, notably in Patricia Bayer's text, Barbara Braun's text, and Carla Breeze's text.
[86] Phillips, "Stone, Water, Mortarless Construction."
[87] Braun, *Pre-Columbian Art and the Post-Columbian World.*

blocks that act like tile along the exterior. They contain organic geometrics, and are placed along exterior walls and among porticoes reminiscent of the tops of Mayan temples. Wright also continues the familiar Neo-Prehispanic color schemes of patina green and Aztec blue within these homes as well. A notable example is The Freeman House, which contains a patina green element along the exterior exposed walls, specifically the horizontal beams that lie across the walkways of the home. [*Fig. 1.16*] Another example could be found in The Storer House, which features a pool with tile in the same 'Maya blue' color that has been repeatedly linked architecturally to the art of the Pre-Columbian civilizations.[88] [*Fig. 1.17*]

While these colors were used as accents, the majority of the homes featured neutral earthen tones, significantly through the usage of ornamented concrete blocks. These blocks were not stuccoed over nor were they painted, rather they remained bare and exposed to the surrounding natural environment. Unlike Robert Stacy-Judd who essentially copied and pasted Mayan hieroglyphs and geometrics onto his buildings (particularly the Aztec Hotel), Frank Lloyd Wright made intentional decisions regarding the shapes, textures, and forms that his weaving concrete patterns would take.[89] For example, the Hollyhock house takes its name from the design of its concrete textiles, which resemble Hollyhock flowers in a style reminiscent of Mayan design. Composed in an abstracted symmetric style with thick geometric lines, this design style is reminiscent of the geometric shapes that are found running in registers along the walls of the Pre-Columbian ruins. [*Fig. 1.18*] As a result, Gabriel Weisberg noted how Wright "used primitive ideas within designs stemming from his own imagination," and authors R. Phillips and S. Richardson described how he "internalized and often intellectualized his

[88] Stone, Andrea Joyce. *Reading Maya Art: A Hieroglyphic Guide to Ancient Maya Painting and Sculpture*. New York, New York: Thames & Hudson, 2011.
[89] Ibid.

sources."[90] These comments both mirror Totten's sentiment: Wright had taken inspiration from indigenous form and 'elevated' it into the context and ideals of Anglo design. This is particularly prevalent in the Millard House.

The Millard House, built in 1923, is a three-story structure positioned against a sloping terrace in the foothills of Pasadena, a city-suburb of Los Angeles.[91] During construction, Wright paid a great deal of attention to the concrete blocks, notably supervising the mixture, noticing discrepancies in color, and utilizing that information to place the blocks in accordance with the presence of sunbeams on the house throughout the day.[92] This allowed the house to blend in with the surrounding vegetation and, because he blended concrete using local sand, to appear as if it were a natural part of the surrounding landscape.[93] Built for widow Alice Millard, a supporter of the arts who made a living by selling rare books, the house was meant to act as a peaceful intellectual refuge.[94]

Although officially named the Millard House, Frank Lloyd Wright in his life had affectionately referred to this home as "La Miniatura." Wright described the house as "one of his finest efforts," and stated that he "would rather have built this little house than St. Peter's in Rome."[95] Wright would later go on to say that it was the first of his 'Usonian' houses. The word Usonian is a term that Wright used throughout his career to describe homes that are purely of the United States in character, opting to use the phrase 'Usonian' (as in the US) rather than "American" in order to separate the United States from Canada, Mexico, and the other countries

---

[90] Weisburg, Gabriel. "Frank Lloyd Wright and PreColumbian Art—The Background for His Architecture." *Art Quarterly* 30 (1967): 51; Phillips, Ruth Anne "Stone, Water, Mortarless Construction," 97.
[91] Lockwood, Charles. "'L.A. Homes Mark Architect's Most Turbulent Period*." Los Angeles Times,* January 30, 1983.
[92] "La Miniatura," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, D.C.: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1976), Section 8.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Lockwood, "L.A. Homes Mark Architect's Most Turbulent Period."
[95] "La Miniatura," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form

within the Americas.[96] However, by giving this house a Spanish nickname and declaring its design that clearly originated from Neo-Prehispanic forms as Usonian (and therefore only within the context of the United States), Wright is in fact participating in Pan-Americanistic attitudes by claiming indigenous design, recontextualizing it, and presenting it as exclusively associated to the United States.

While Wright may not have intended to participate in Neo-Prehispanic design or Pan-Americanism in the same way that Robert Stacy-Judd did, his structures can still be interpreted through similar Pan-American values. Wright's architecture can be exemplified as the ideal that George Oakley Totten postulated, where it is 'necessary' for Anglo-Americans to transform pre-existing Neo-Prehispanic style into a modern context to maintain the livelihood of the Pre-Columbian art and architecture and therefore establish a 'true American' style of architecture. And as a result of labeling these homes as 'Usonian,' Wright claims Pre-Columbian contexts as part of United States culture and territory. As a whole, Wright inadvertently contributed to the architectural Pan-American understanding of the Western Hemisphere: anything within the Western Hemisphere could be claimed as American, and the duty of the Anglo-American is to continue the architectural traditions of the Pre-Columbian groups, admire and reflect ancient American form, and use that form to define American culture in the 20th century.

Conclusion

As the ideals of Pan-Americanism became enwrapped with the desire of the United States to define an architectural style that could be viewed as solely American, Neo-Prehispanic design was eventually seen as the ultimate expression of American architecture; it was regarded as a

[96] Boone, Mary Elizabeth. *"The Spanish Element in Our Nationality"*: *Spain and America at the World's Fairs and Centennial Celebrations*, 1876-1915. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019.

design that had no influence from sources outside of the Americas. Neo-Prehispanic style and Pan-Americanism are inextricably linked, as evidenced from different architects on how, even at times unintentionally, one cannot consider Neo-Prehispanic style without also considering the effects that Pan-Americanism had on American attitudes and American culture. With the exception of the Pan-American Union Building, the buildings discussed within this chapter are located within the landscape of Southern California. The next chapter will reveal why this is, while simultaneously dissecting the unique Neo-Prehispanic design decisions found in the Southern Californian landscape.

Chapter Two: Neo-Prehispanic Design in a Pan-American Landscape

Amid a rich cultural history and comparisons to other geographic areas, Southern California's Pan-American landscape fostered and supported the emergence of Neo-Prehispanic style, to the point that it is well-regarded today as the style's epicenter. This Pan-American landscape also led to distinct regionalism in Southern Californian design, one that blurs the boundaries of the United States and Latin America. Thriving among these elements, Neo-Prehispanic design in Southern California is a result of a created Pan-American landscape, and was such a strong representation of the landscape that it became synonymous with the region itself.

Southern California as a Pan-American Architectural Landscape

Having defined Pan-Americanism, its ideologies, and the way those ideologies permeated architecture and design, understandings of Pan-Americanism will be furthered within this section by proving the existence of a Pan-American landscape in Southern California. With influence from California's economic and political history, along with a created tropicality of landscape, a specific image of Pan-Americanism was created within Southern California that allowed for the prominence of Neo-Prehispanic design in everything from its domestic typologies to design in monumental commercial buildings.

Despite the foundation of the Pan-American Union Building in Washington D.C., Pan-American attitudes and Neo-Prehispanic architecture flourished within the landscape of Southern California. The question must then be asked, why Southern California in particular, as opposed to Northern or Central California, or the rest of the country? Part of the answer lies in California's unique economic history. By the mid-to-late nineteenth century the San Francisco

Bay Area was widely regarded as the center of Californian industry. San Francisco was the more 'serious' city, the center of capital, banking, and economy on the west coast of the country.[97] This led to the city of Sacramento, only 90 miles inland by river from the San Francisco Bay, to be the state capitol once California received its statehood in 1850.[98] To a contemporary Californian, it may be difficult to imagine that San Francisco was the bustling cosmopolitan center of wealth and business while Los Angeles was considered a smaller town surrounded by ranches, notable for its farming industry.[99]

However, it was this perceived difference between the regions of California that allowed for freedom of expression within Southern California's built environment. San Francisco was the more 'serious' city while, simultaneously, the burgeoning film industry in Southern California led the region to appear more fanciful.[100] This resulted in a landscape of pro-grammatic architecture, buildings that experimented with color, and the creation of distinct, fantastical, design styles.[101] [*Figs. 2.1-2.3*] As the 20th century progressed, the prominence of this landscape further resulted in monumental instances of pro-grammatic architecture, especially movie palaces featuring 'revival' designs from the Mayans to the Egyptians.[102] By the 1920s, Los Angeles fostered an environment where any architecture was possible. This freedom from

[97] "The Treatment of Less Formal Buildings." *Pacific Coast Architect* XXXI, no. 6 (June 1927): 55–55.
[98] Starr, Kevin. *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.
[99] Ibid.
[100] "The Treatment of Less Formal Buildings," *Pacific Coast Architect*.
[101] Pro-Grammatic architecture in the landscape of Los Angeles during the 1910s is endlessly amusing. Notably, there was a tamale shop in the shape of a tamale, a drug store in the shape of an owl, an oil store in the shape of a dog, and a café in the shape of a coffee pot.; The buildings that experimented with color in the 1920s include the Eastern Columbia Building, the Wiltern, the Jewelry Building (all blue) & the Richfield Oil Building, the Art Deco Building, the Seban Building (all black and gold); storybook houses, homes made to look like they came from fairy tales, constructed in the 1920s are found scattered through the suburbia of the Los Feliz neighborhood as well as the homes constructed for the cartoonists at Walt Disney Studios.
[102] For example: The Mayan Theater, The Egyptian Theater, & The Chinese Theater.

convention is what allowed the Pan-American architectural landscape to grow, and for Neo-Prehispanic design to become popular within the region.

In addition to freedom of architectural expression, a number of other elements greatly contributed to the naissance of Southern California as a Pan-American landscape. One of the most visible elements, even well into the present day, is the intentional creation of 'tropicality' throughout the physical landscape of the region. While Southern California is routinely advertised historically and in the contemporary as a 'tropical' paradise, the true geological climate and topography of the area is desert valley.[103] And Southern California's most visibly recognizable symbol, the palm tree, is in fact an element of tropicality intentionally brought into the landscape, reaching its peak in the 1920s and 1930s.[104] Although there is one species of palm native to the Southern Californian landscape, the palm that is most frequently associated with the region is the Mexican Fan Palm, native to the Baja California peninsula in Mexico. The Mexican Fan Palm was planted prolifically throughout the region by the rail lines, the movie studios, and the organizers of the 1934 Los Angeles Olympic Games and populated the skylines of city streets.[105] [*Fig. 2.4*] Tall, thin, and visible for miles around, Mexican Fan Palms brought a feeling of tropicality and 'exoticism,' promoting the idea of Los Angeles/Southern California as a paradise.[106] Mexican Fan Palms were specifically chosen to blur the border of Mexico and the United States, creating elements of a Pan-American landscape, and supplying elements of 'tropicality' through utilizing Mexican imagery, but, again, in a re-interpreted Anglo context.

---

[103] Starr, Kevin, *Americans and the California Dream*.
[104] Cohoon, Sharon. "Palm Everlasting." *Sunset*, vol. 241, no. 5, 1 Nov. 2018, 80 - 87.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.

Another example of how Southern California became a Pan-American landscape is revealed in the details of the 1923 centennial celebration of the Monroe Doctrine.[107] The celebration was held in Exposition Park, Los Angeles, within the newly constructed Coliseum, a sports venue built for the University of Southern California.[108] This celebration was organized by the Hollywood film industry, and invited guests included Latin American dignitaries and film stars who spent the day watching films about George Washington, Native Americans, and the history of the Spanish Missions.[109] A coin released to commemorate the centennial featured a design that implied the Monroe Doctrine "had ensured peace in the Americas and fostered cordial relations and economic prosperity amongst nations of the Western Hemisphere."[110] [*Fig. 2.5*] This event was planned for Southern California due to the fact it appeared to be the greatest result of Pan-American affairs. In fact, one of the speakers at the celebration stated that California was particularly interested in the Monroe Doctrine because "it was through the Monroe Doctrine that California was annexed [from Spain]."[111] Thus, Pan-Americanism and the Monroe Doctrine were celebrated together in the created tropical landscape of the city of Los Angeles, the 'exotic, tropical' paradise of the Latin Americas on United States soil.

It is from this foundation of a Pan-American landscape that Neo-Prehispanic design would begin to grow prominently within the city of Los Angeles. While elements discussed in the previous chapter (the search for pure-American architecture for example) were essential components, a large reason as to why Neo-Prehispanic style became so prolific in Southern California is due to what this thesis will refer to as the 'Great Mexican-American Cultural

---

[107] Bryne, Alex. "After One Hundred Years of Service: Hegemony, Pan-Americanism, and the Monroe Doctrine Centennial Anniversary, 1923." *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, vol. 29, no. 4, 1 Dec. 2018. 565 - 589.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Kyson, C.H. (1923, June 29). Pueblo type of architecture furnished motif for Monroe Centennial Exposition. *Southwest Builder and Contractor*, 61, 34-36.
[110] Bryne, Alex, "After One Hundred Years of Service."
[111] Ibid.

Exchange.' While this cultural exchange reached its apex between 1920-1940, the cultural landscape of Southern California greatly intersected with Mexico from the moment that California became a state in 1850. Before this, the area that is now California belonged to the country of Mexico, and after 1850, the former Mexican people and their descendants who lived in the ranches surrounding Los Angeles through the 19th and early 20th century were commonly referred to as *Californios.*[112] As the true *Californios* – those born on the land before it became a state – died out and their descendants were referred to as simply Mexican-Americans, the term ceased to exist within the public imagination in this specific context.[113] However, as a result, for decades in Southern California the line between American and 'foreigner' was blurred. This precedent would inform the future Pan-American architectural landscape later in the 20th century.

As the population of Southern California grew within the city of Los Angeles in particular, newly built homes began to stray from the traditional styles that were more familiar in other parts of the country (Neo-Classical, Georgian Revival, Plantation, etc.).[114] Wanting to express a novel style of home that mirrored the newly created tropical landscape, architects began to look to the Spanish Missions that were prominent in Mexico and throughout California for inspiration. This style of building, the Mission Revival Style, was advertised across the country and quickly became synonymous with the easy, tropical, California lifestyle.[115] Usually utilized in small single family bungalows, the hallmarks of this style are a white adobe-esque exterior, red tiled roofs, arched doorways and entry ways, and, if permitting, a tiled patio.[116]

---

[112] Boone, Mary Elizabeth. *"The Spanish Element in Our Nationality": Spain and America at the World's Fairs and Centennial Celebrations, 1876-1915*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019.
[113] The term *Californio* still carries a variety of meanings into the present day and is dependent entirely on context. The early sources that are referenced here usually refers to *Californios* in this particular definition.
[114] Starr, Kevin. *Americans and the California Dream.*
[115] Ibid.
[116] McAlester, Virginia and McAlester, A. Lee (Arcie Lee). *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Knopf, 1984.

Designers and architects had deliberately sought to capture the 'romance' of lush foliage against white adobe walls, an image that was tied to the idea of Latin 'exoticism' and was described familiarly in the writings of various authors who had taken trips to Mexico.[117] [*Fig. 2.6*] While the architectural form described here cannot be considered truly Neo-Prehispanic because it did not come from legitimate indigenous form, it still reflects an attempt to represent familiar 'Mexican' form within the environment, particularly in the idea of a single-family bungalow, the quintessential American domestic living space.[118]

Within the context of this landscape, it is easy to see why Southern Californians fully embraced a 'Great Mexican-American Cultural Exchange.' For the reasons outlined within this chapter, along with a rising Pan-American general economic interest in the industries of Latin America, between 1920-1940 Californians specifically began to fixate on Mexican culture.[119] In 1923, Los Angeles was the first city in the United States to host an exhibition on Mexican art.[120] Titled *The Arts and Crafts of Mexico*, this exhibition was sponsored by the Mexican government and was hosted by the McDowell Club, a prestigious organization in downtown Los Angeles. Two years later, the new Los Angeles County Museum at Exposition Park inaugurated a new wing by showcasing an exhibition: *First Pan American Exhibition of Oil Painting*. This exhibition would prove to be a success, with 18,000 people in attendance on its opening day.[121] It was so popular that a decision was made to extend the exhibition an extra two months.[122] Out of

---

[117] Gebhard, David. "Wood Studs, Stucco, and Concrete." Essay. *In On the Edge of America: California Modernist Art, 1900-1950*, edited by Paul J. Karlstrom, 140-153. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. & Allen, Harris. "Arbiter Elegantiarum." *The Pacific Coast Architect,* May (1927) 9-48.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Delpar, Helen. *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican: Cultural Relations between the United States and Mexico, 1920-1935*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1992.
[120] Nieto, Margarita. "Mexican Art and Los Angeles." Essay. In *On the Edge of America: California Modernist Art, 1900-1950*, edited by Paul J. Karlstrom, 121–34. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1996.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.

the 230 Pan-American artists featured in the exhibition, 145 were from the Latin Americas, and Mexican artists were the most strongly represented.[123]

By 1930, the United States reached two important milestones. Amid the surging popularity of Mexican artists and art, the population of Mexican-Americans in the United States doubled to 1,422,533.[124] Simultaneously, the average United States citizen began to feel the economic effects of the great depression, leading to a disenchantment with the machine age and questions surrounding the benefits of capitalism.[125] These two elements converged and enhanced the already blooming Great Mexican-American Cultural Exchange as United States citizens were "drawn above all by the seemingly timeless elements of native culture" where the "apparent 'wantlessness' of the Mexican peasant…exerted an even greater appeal than before."[126] Amid the landscape of Los Angeles with created elements of tropicality, old Mexican ranches, *Californios,* and an ever increasing population of Mexican Americans, a "visual presence of Mexican art [that] went beyond exhibitions and lectures" became tangible within the city, mostly due to Mexican artists.[127] Empowered and supported by United States citizens who wished to capture the idealizations of Mexico amid the machine age, Mexican artists worked within the local culture to "[develop] an aesthetic suited to the time."[128] This aesthetic would be a distinct Pan-American Los Angeles aesthetic, somewhere between Mexico and the United States. It is the naissance of distinct local Neo-Prehispanic design.

---

[123] Ibid.
[124] Delpar, Helen, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican.*
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid, 90.
[127] Nieto, "Mexican Art and Los Angeles," 129.
[128] Ibid, 134.

Regionalism in Design & The Eastern-Columbia Building

By the late 1920s and early 1930s Neo-Prehispanic design and the new Art Deco/Moderne style became popular and heavily applied within the cityscape. The distinct local Neo-Prehispanic design that resulted from the Pan-American landscape and the Great Mexican American Cultural Exchange became the most important aspect of the subset of Art Deco utilized most frequently within Southern California, the Zig-Zag Moderne style. Together, local Neo-Prehispanic design symbols were used on Zig-Zag Moderne commercial buildings to create a specific Southern Californian regional design, understood best through the presence of Pan-Americanism.

As the population of Los Angeles grew steadily throughout the 1920s, so did its architectural landscape. Within this decade, 1.2 million people settled in Los Angeles County, and of this group, 661,274 settled within the city of Los Angeles.[129] The mass arrival of people within a short span of time (about 100,000 arrivals a year) necessitated the construction of new civic structures, commercial buildings, entertainment centers, suburban homes, urban apartment buildings, and public schools within the city and surrounding county. Between 1918 (the end of World War I) and 1923 (the peak year of the population boom) building permits increased by nearly 1,000%.[130] By 1929, Los Angeles was one of six American cities with more than 100 buildings over ten stories, and with a grand total of 135 buildings, Los Angeles placed third in the nation behind New York City and Chicago.[131] By 1930, Los Angeles could be considered a fully developed metropolitan center.

---

[129] Starr, Kevin. "Lotus Land--Los Angeles In the Twenties." *History Today*, vol. 40, no. 3, 1 Mar. 1990. 30 - 38.
[130] Ibid.; 1918 was about 6,000 new building permits. 1923 was 63,548.
[131] Korom, Joseph J. *The American Skyscraper, 1850-1940: A Celebration of Height*. Boston: Branden Books, 2008: 323

As this occurred in California, simultaneously the 1925 International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris, France led the architectural style of Art Deco to reach peak popularity internationally.[132] And due to the synchronous mass construction of commercial buildings in Los Angeles during this era, the city features an exorbitant amount of Art Deco examples within its cityscape. From the downtown district to the commercial hubs in the suburbs and surrounding county, even well into the present day Art Deco buildings carry a strong presence withing the architectural landscape of the city.[133] Among architectural history books or historic preservation lists, many of these Art Deco buildings are classified as a subset of the style, known as 'Zig-Zag Moderne.' Defined by "ornament, geometry, optimism, color, texture, light, and even at times symbolism," in Los Angeles this style is found predominately in monumental civic and commercial buildings.[134] Although these elements are found in Zig-Zag Moderne buildings across the country, the element of symbolism is the most important in the context of Los Angeles.

Already existing within a Pan-American landscape, and surrounded by other Neo-Prehispanic styles as discussed in the previous chapter, Neo-Prehispanic design symbols began to be imbued into the styles of Zig-Zag Moderne buildings. Architects of this period "altered or updated" aspects of the Neo-Prehispanic styles to "fit the taste" of the time, thus allowing Neo-Prehispanic design to become "a part of the extensive, eclectic art deco vocabulary."[135] This aligns with architectural historian Carla Breeze's research on regional architectural design. She argues that the symbols that are found on the Art Deco/Zig-Zag Moderne buildings shift

---

[132] Bayer, Patricia. *Art Deco Architecture: Design, Decoration, and Detail From the Twenties and Thirties*. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1992.
[133] Anecdotal evidence from the author.
[134] Bayer, *Art Deco Architecture,* 8.
[135] Ibid, 16.

depending on their geographic area, and are inspired by "regional flora and fauna, local history, and traditional building styles."[136] And in Southern California, a Pan-American landscape surrounded by existing Neo-Prehispanic elements in architecture, Neo-Prehispanic design became the leading design symbol within the Zig-Zag Moderne in Los Angeles buildings.

Thus, the visual vocabulary of Zig-Zag Moderne decoration in Southern California/Los Angeles was a transformed Neo-Prehispanic style. Pre-Columbian ruins commonly featured rectangular facades, with friezes running in long rectangles along the length of the ruin. These friezes were filled with geometric ornaments similar to the ones that the Zig-Zag Moderne is known and recognized for – it is how it gets its name. Authors like George Oakley Totten chose to represent these long rectangular friezes by isolating the decorations within and presenting the friezes as illustrated prints within publications. While the friezes on the ruins are textured and have sculptural elements, because they were consumed as 2D drawings, many of the Anglo re-creations are flat. Taking inspiration from the use of friezes, the geometric tendencies of the Mayan decoration, and supposition that all Pre-Columbian art and symbols can be represented by tropical imagery, Neo-Prehispanic influence was interpreted into Zig-Zag Moderne decoration through the heavy presence of tropical leaves, blooming flowers, sunbursts, and pyramids.[137] [*Fig. 2.7*] These symbols were placed in long rectangular friezes around many of the buildings in the Zig-Zag Moderne, thus emulating Neo-Prehispanic style through mirroring its appearance, and through utilizing familiar symbols of Neo-Prehispanic design.

The argument that there is regionalism in design is a familiar one, and Carla Breeze's book specifically remarks on California's "unique cultural and environmental

[136] Breeze, Carla. *American Art Deco: Architecture and Regionalism*. New York: Norton, 2003. 13.
[137] Breeze, *American Art Deco,* 223.

heritage…frequently encountered in the Art Deco Style."[138] However, Breeze does not seek to investigate *why* these symbols were utilized to such abundance at the time, nor does she discuss cultural heritage beyond a few allusions to the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exhibition in San Francisco and the presence of Spanish Mission Styles in domestic architecture. Similarly, architectural historian Patricia Bayer's book notes specific Neo-Prehispanic influence in California yet fails to elaborate on possible motivations beyond a passing reference to the Mexican Revolution of 1910.[139] These claims and the lack of context surrounding them fail to consider the entire cultural landscape that enabled buildings with Neo-Prehispanic design to not only exist, but to become a popular and integral part of the architectural landscape.

Thus, upon considering all preceding evidence and the establishment of Southern California as a Pan-American landscape, this section presents the needed and important context to understanding the abundance of Neo-Prehispanic design within Zig-Zag Moderne styles in Southern California. The Pan-American landscape is equally a physical, cultural, and political landscape that blurs the border between Southern California and the Latin Americas. Pan-Americanist attitudes led to an Anglo-American re-contextualization of Latin American culture, and Neo-Prehispanic symbols within Art Deco/Zig-Zag Moderne therefore can best be understood within this context. By establishing well-rounded picture of the cultural landscape, we can better understand the design decisions that occurred.

While there are many examples of Zig-Zag Moderne within Southern California, the finest and most cited example in scholarly work is the Eastern-Columbia Building, constructed in 1930 and designed by architect Claud Beelman. [*Fig. 2.8*] Located in downtown Los Angeles at

---

[138] Ibid.
[139] Bayer, Patricia. *Art Deco Architecture: Design, Decoration, and Detail From the Twenties and Thirties*. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1992.

the corner of 9th St. and Broadway, this building continues to hold a prominent place within the city skyline as one of the grandest buildings in downtown with a unique exterior color. Buildings in Los Angeles at this time were not permitted to rise higher than one hundred and fifty feet due to earthquake concerns, but some maneuvering within city building codes allowed the Eastern-Columbia tower to rise over the imposed limits, thus establishing itself as a monumental building within the cityscape.[140] In opposition to the earthen and cream tones of the buildings that surround it, the color of the Eastern-Columbia building was described on the day of its grand opening as a "melting turquoise blue," a result of glazed architectural terracotta coloring.[141] The turquoise that envelopes it is highlighted by trimmed gold leaf terracotta and complementary darker blue hues accented throughout the exterior.[142] The building is textured, with lines running vertically, and features a Neo-Prehispanic inspired frieze, also running vertically between the columns along the clock tower, the tallest and most visible section of the building.

The Eastern-Columbia building was originally constructed to be the flagship location for both the Eastern Outfitting and Columbia Outfitting department stores.[143] Both companies were owned by the same man, Adolph Sieroty, and the Eastern-Columbia building was a result of his vision to create a large, one-stop, flagship store where customers could purchase anything they may need under one roof.[144] Undoubtedly, Sieroty wished to use his building to make a statement. Sieroty's story of arriving in Los Angeles with only the clothes on his back and the money in his wallet is frequently alluded to within primary source descriptions of the building.[145]

---

[140] Records Set in Erection." *Los Angeles Times*, September 14, 1930.
[141] Gray, Olive. "New Building Open Today." *Los Angeles Times*, September 12, 1930
[142] "Records Set in Erection." *Los Angeles Times.*
[143]Gray, "New Building."; The Eastern Outfitting Company sold apparel and the Columbia Outfitting Company sold furniture.; In 2008, the Eastern-Columbia Building was converted to luxury lofts.
[144] *Eastern-Columbia Building - Downtown*. Huell Howser Archives, 2007. https://blogs.chapman.edu/huell-howser-archives/2007/09/11/eastern-columbia-building-downtown-108/.
[145] Ibid.

And after arriving in the city with basically nothing, he was eventually able to afford to construct one of the grandest buildings in the downtown area, cementing his achievements and wealth as a permanent part of the Los Angeles skyline. In the grand entrance, centered above the entry door to the lobby, customers would walk under his name, etched in gold leaf terra cotta: "Founded by Adolph Sieroty." [*Fig. 2.9*]

As could be expected based on the evidence supplied in this section, the Eastern-Columbia building (the finest example of Zig-Zag Moderne in Southern California) displays numerous Neo-Prehispanic symbols. The most visibly prominent is, of course, the building's turquoise glazed architectural terra cotta coloring. Glazed architectural terra cotta became popular during this era of California architecture, and beige, cream, and earthen colors were the most frequently used.[146] [*Fig. 2.10*] However, during the 1920s, architectural terra cotta suppliers had invented new chemical processes that allowed for a wider array of vibrant colors.[147] Turquoise blue was an option, and the Eastern Columbia Building would be one of three buildings constructed in Los Angeles to employ this color.[148]

Architectural historian Carla Breeze argues in her book that the blue turquoise color was used to symbolically reflect the waves and coloring of the nearby Pacific Ocean.[149] While entirely possible, this simplistic supposition negates the presence and importance of Neo-Prehispanic style. The color turquoise within architecture carries strong ties to Neo-Prehispanic design, specifically alluding to Aztec and Mayan art and artefacts while also alluding to age. While this color was previously reserved to small walls or areas of buildings, the ten-to-twelve

---

[146] Kurutz, Gary F. *Architectural Terra Cotta of Gladding, McBean.* Sausalito, Calif: Windgate Press, 1989.
[147] Ibid.
[148] The other two buildings are the Los Angeles Jewelry Center (Beelman) and the Wiltern Building Exterior (Morgan, Walls, & Clemons). The Eastern-Columbia is by far the tallest and grandest.
[149] Breeze, *American Art Deco.*

storied Eastern-Columbia Building is covered almost entirely by turquoise. Beelman, and possibly Sieroty, had no qualms over choosing this vibrant color due to the previously discussed regional differences between Northern and Southern California. Los Angeles architecture could be 'less serious' and therefore more playful, allowing Beelman to experiment with color in a landscape that would not regard a turquoise building as particularly obscene or off-putting.[150] Although the reasoning behind the choice of turquoise may never be certain, it is difficult to ignore this context, given the Neo-Prehispanic symbols found in the design of the building itself.

These Neo-Prehispanic symbols can be found visually along the exterior of the building, predominately the areas of the building that are gold leaf terra cotta. Along all four sides of the clock tower are friezes, two on either side of the center clock, that rise vertically toward the top of the clock tower. [*Fig. 2.11*] They are present above the main entry way as well. At the top of every window on the building itself is gold architectural terra cotta in a geometric form with a complimentary darker blue terra cotta accent. The most notable example is the frieze above main entryway into the lobby of the building. [*Figure 2.12*] This frieze is divided into three sections, is accented by darker blue on the lower registers and the ceiling, and is separated by turquoise columns. It displays a sunburst, with the same geometric visuals of the clocktower as the rays of the sun, and blooming flowers scattered among the rays. Seated on either side of the rising sun are two figures in profile, with arms stretched out.

Although the intended ethnicity of the figures is unclear, they feature a specific design element that alludes to non-Anglo features: they appear to be male with hair that appears to be textured and beyond shoulder length. With this in mind, the nature of the frieze transforms. Sunbursts, as mentioned earlier in this section, are a consistently used symbol in Neo-

[150] "The Treatment of Less Formal Buildings," *Pacific Coast Architect.*

Prehispanic styles. Combined with the blooming flowers and elements of what appears to be leaves, these symbols speak toward a certain 'tropicality' in design. The columns of gold terra cotta friezes on the exterior further justify this claim. They take the form of leaves or a stalk with branches, growing like a vine toward the sky. Because of the gold coloring, it almost looks like a wheat or a corn stalk, rising from the ground, and growing along the side of the building. With the ambiguity of whether the plant is wheat or corn, it could represent either Indigenous North Americans or Indigenous Latin Americans, or perhaps both. The general color scheme of turquoise and gold, however, carries associations to Pre-Columbian artefacts, and may be reflected in these designs.

Why were these symbols chosen, and how does this building fit into the Pan-American landscape beyond just existing within it? The answer lies in the name of the building itself. Sieroty immigrated to America in the 1890s and the names of his two companies reflect that history, with "Eastern" alluding to his roots from across the Atlantic and "Columbia" alluding to his current citizenship in America.[151] Together, these names reflect the ideals of the American dream: an immigrant who came to the country poor and who found great wealth and success. With this in mind, it must be noted that although the name of the building was decided upon even before construction, it is only the word "Eastern" that appears on all four sides of the clocktower.[152] "Columbia" is only one letter longer than "Eastern," and conceivably a decision could have been made to have "Columbia" on two sides and "Eastern" on the other two sides. Perhaps "Columbia" was already insinuated through the turquoise coloring, the gold trim, and the Neo-Prehispanic symbols found throughout the building.

---

[151] *Eastern-Columbia Building – Downtown*, Huell Howser Archives.
[152] Ibid.

Thus, the Eastern-Columbia Building exemplifies the way that Neo-Prehispanic styles were interpreted through Zig-Zag Moderne in design. This was possible due to the Southern Californian Pan-American cultural landscape that fostered the use of Neo-Prehispanic design in its architectural landscape. The Eastern-Columbia Building is quite often accredited as the finest example of Zig-Zag Moderne not just in Southern California, but in the entirety of North America, thus emphasizing how integral Neo-Prehispanic symbols are to the success of Zig-Zag Moderne design itself.[153]

The Miracle Mile: In the Beginning…

While the Eastern-Columbia building is a monumental example of Zig-Zag Moderne in Los Angeles, there are ample instances of smaller commercial Zig-Zag Moderne style architecture scattered throughout the entirety of the city and county. Requiring a comprehensive survey outside the scope of this thesis, instead this section will focus on the Zig-Zag Moderne towers that arose along the Miracle Mile in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The Miracle Mile witnessed rapid growth in the span of a decade, resulting in a cluster of Zig-Zag Moderne towers that featured Neo-Prehispanic design to reflect the ideals of novelty, luxury, and class.

The beginning of the Miracle Mile coincided with the de-centering of downtown Los Angeles as the main business and shopping district of the city and county. From the turn of the 20th century into the 1910s, Los Angeles was still a relatively small city, and the downtown district was essentially the only shopping center within the city proper.[154] The heavily utilized trolley car lines that ran throughout the city and county all passed through the downtown district,

[153] These credits come from simple online searches of the term Zig-Zag Moderne as well as research into this style of art deco, the Eastern-Columbia building is always referenced, highlighted, and discussed.
[154] Crump, Spencer. *Ride the Big Red Cars: How Trolleys Helped Build Southern California*. Los Angeles: Crest Publications, 1962.

where local department store headquarters were located.[155] However, as the population of the city increased in the 1920s causing the outer areas of the city to expand and the automobile to become more ubiquitous, it became increasingly inconvenient to travel downtown for shopping. A man named A.W. Ross took notice, and began to invest in land along an unincorporated section of Wilshire Boulevard that would later be known as the Miracle Mile.

In the late 1800s, a developer named Gaylord Wilshire donated six miles of land to the City of Los Angeles for the creation of the boulevard that would bear his name.[156] He imagined from the beginning the boulevard would be an elite residential area, and stipulated that no commercial property would be constructed and there would be no rail lines for street cars.[157] Beginning in downtown Los Angeles, the original iteration of the boulevard ran East/West, and would take motorists starting in downtown through the middle of MacArthur Park, over a bridge with a lake on either side, past the glamourous and luxurious Ambassador Hotel, and past the Gaylord Apartment Building, once called "one of the most pretentious apartment houses in the country."[158] After passing these landmark buildings, both sides of Wilshire Boulevard were populated with mansions sitting on large plots of land, housing the very wealthy and stylish of Los Angeles.[159] After about three and a half miles of homes, one would arrive at La Brea Avenue, a prominent North/South street, marking both the end of Wilshire Boulevard and the boundary of Los Angeles city limits. [*Fig. 2.13*] West of La Brea Ave. were the remnants of Rancho La Brea, one of the *Californio* ranches that Los Angeles had at one point in time been notable for, some sections of which were still used as dairy fields and farmland for barley

---

[155] Ibid.
[156] Hancock, Ralph. *Fabulous Boulevard*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1949.
[157] Ibid.
[158] The Gaylord and HMS Bounty." Los Angeles Conservancy. Accessed November 17, 2021. https://www.laconservancy.org/locations/gaylord-and-hms-bounty.
[159] Hancock, Ralph. *Fabulous Boulevard*.

crops.[160] Because this very glamorous boulevard ended quite suddenly with farmland, A.W. Ross chose to capitalize on potential growth in this area, just outside of the city limits.

Ross, a real estate developer, noted the population increase, the rising popularity of the automobile, but most importantly, where the wealthy people of the city settled in the 1920s. They began to move west, away from downtown, and eventually Ross noted a growing triangle of wealth. After mapping the wealthy neighborhoods of Hollywood, West Adams, and Westlake, A.W. Ross calculated that an area equidistant from these neighborhoods, closer than downtown Los Angeles, was the un-developed and un-incorporated farmland west of Wilshire Boulevard.[161] Seeking to capitalize on the already elegant nature of the boulevard, A.W. Ross purchased land from ranch owners on the southern side of Wilshire, for the purpose of creating a new luxurious commercial center.[162] To the surprise of nearly everyone around him, his investment sense was sharp. By 1925, the land value had increased by 744%, with the total made from property transactions around $2,000,000.[163]

Although A.W. Ross officially named the development Wilshire Center,[164] the almost unbelievably rapid growth and expansion of the boulevard led some of his friends to refer to the development as the Miracle Mile.[165] The name stuck, and to this day, the one mile stretch of Wilshire between La Brea Ave. and Fairfax Ave. is called the Miracle Mile. This rapid growth led the city of Los Angeles to almost immediately incorporate the land, resulting in the Miracle

---

[160] Ibid.
[161]Ibid. Hollywood housed the movie stars and the notable people in the film industry. West Adams housed the fashionable 'New Money' type of people who made their wealth in the West. Westlake is where the elite, 'Old Money' people who came from the East Coast settled.
[162] Schellin, Peter. "It Is Wilshire Boulevard Which Is Ugly Or Is It We." *Art Education*, vol. 26, no. 9, 1 Dec. 1973. 6-9.
[163] Hancock, *Fabulous Boulevard*.
[164] A name that this area is still called, in general, today.
[165] Hancock, *Fabulous Boulevard*.

Mile and the surrounding area to be zoned for residential use only.[166] City planners were threatened by the precedent of a commercial center outside of downtown Los Angeles, fearing that it would shift the economic center of the city. These concerns were valid, as by the end of the 1920s, the 108 retail shops and the one flagship department store along the Miracle Mile profited a total of $18,150,0000 in sales.[167] By 1950 the Miracle Mile was considered the "geographical center of purchasing power of Los Angeles" and was where the "decentralization of business started" as major department stores established their flagship stores, for the first time, outside of the downtown Los Angeles district.[168]

The architecture of the Miracle Mile was recognized then as exceedingly beautiful, elegant, and carefully planned. A.W. Ross promoted the Miracle Mile as the 5th Avenue of the West Coast,[169] and carefully curated its architecture. This was possible *because* city planners zoned the area for residential use. Unlike other districts of the city where a commercial strip was open for "uncontrolled business," A.W. Ross was forced to use spot zoning.[170] This meant that for every building constructed along this area of Wilshire Boulevard, complete plans and specifications of the building had to be submitted for approval for a zoning variance from the City Planning Commission. This policy of control over the types of buildings that were constructed along the boulevard is what led A.W. Ross as a developer to carefully curate and control the design of the structures to match the luxury he envisioned.

Thus, the Miracle Mile stretch of Wilshire can be seen as a time capsule of the type of architecture that was deemed to be the epitome of luxury and class amid the Southern California

---

[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Ibid, 164.
[169] Found in advertisements across the Los Angeles Times during the late 1920s.
[170] Hancock, *Fabulous Boulevard*.

equivalent of New York City's 5th Avenue. It was created specifically to attract the wealthy and fashionable, with no exterior detail unapproved.[171] The buildings discussed in this section were constructed between 1929 and 1930 in essentially the same form and with similar design styles. While notable downtown buildings like the Eastern-Columbia Building were constructed to reach (and at times exceed) the stipulations placed on height, these buildings only reached an approved ten stories. Less monumental within the city scape, and therefore less acknowledged and recognized in the present day, they still carry a certain elegance even as they are now dwarfed by taller commercial construction from the late 20th century.

While there are numerous existing examples along the Miracle Mile, the buildings that will be discussed in this section of the thesis are Wilshire Tower (1929), The Wilshire Professional Building (1929), and The Dominguez Wilshire Building (1930).[172] [*Figs. 2.14-2.16*] As a result of spot-zoning and the needed stamp of approval from the City Planning Commission, these three buildings were constructed in the same general type, what this thesis will refer to as "Tower Form." Designed for and around the automobile, this building type in the context of the Miracle Mile features a large rectangular two-storied base, occupying an entire city block along Wilshire Blvd., with a tower rising from its center. The two-storied base was designed for retail space, and therefore features floor-to-ceiling glass display windows, intended to capture the attention of passing automobiles. While technically one can consider the tower to be ten stories, visually the tower begins at the third story, sprouting from the two story base designed for commercial businesses on the first floor and offices on the second floor. The rest of the offices would be found in the eight story tower which sits in the center, with a width that

[171] Ibid.
[172] The names listed are the original names of the buildings as is recorded according to the Los Angeles Conservancy. For reference, the addresses are as follows: Wilshire Tower (5514 Wilshire Blvd), Wilshire Professional Building (3875 Wilshire Blvd.), The Dominguez Wilshire Building (5410 Wilshire Blvd.).

envelopes the grand entrance into the building, and stretches from the front of the building where the sidewalk ends to the rear of the building. "Tower Form" is utilized on the three buildings exemplified in this section, in others along the Miracle Mile, and generally across the landscape of the city.

The presence of Neo-Prehispanic design in 'Tower Form' can be seen in the treatment of the tips of the towers. Los Angeles City Hall (1926-1928) is an iteration of tower form on a grand scale and utilizes its height through a tower-tip that resembles a Pre-Columbian stepped pyramid. Because the Miracle Mile Towers are considerably smaller in size and could not portray the stepped pyramid tower tip to the same effect, the architecture mirrored a different aspect of Pre-Columbian pyramids. In books like George Oakley Totten's *Maya Architecture,* Robert Stacy-Judd's *Adventures in the Jungles of Yucatan*, or publications like *National Geographic,* a particular fascination and regard was held for the Mayan ruins of Uxmal in Mexico.[173] Unlike Egyptian pyramids that are depicted as geometrically accurate with a pointed tip, the pyramid at Uxmal is more stepped-like, with smaller trapezoid-like form sitting on top of the large pyramidic base, and a final smaller trapezoid shaped structure on the very top. Thus, the pyramid does not have a pointed tip, rather a flat plateau. Because the image of the pyramid at Uxmal was so heavily present within the consciousness of the American public, the connections that Zig-Zag Moderne/Art Deco inherently have to Neo-Prehispanic design, and the previously established Pan-American landscape, it is likely that these buildings sought to emulate the Uxmal pyramid tip in the tips of their towers. This is particularly prominent in Wilshire Tower, designed by notable California architect Gilbert Stanley Underwood. [*Fig. 2.17*] A close examination of Uxmal in relation to Wilshire Tower reveals a similar three-stepped trapezoidal shape leading to

[173] So much fascination surrounded Uxmal that it began to be excavated in 1929.

a plateaued tip, with Wilshire Tower continuing to reference the forms of Uxmal by featuring trapezoidal geometric shapes along the tip of the tower. Because Wilshire Tower was also the first building constructed along the Miracle Mile, this allusion to the Uxmal pyramid is the precedent for the following towers that were later constructed. And because each tower had to be approved by the City Planning Commission, coupled with the presence of Neo-Prehispanic-inspired design symbols placed within friezes throughout the exterior, these choices were very intentional.

The aforementioned friezes can be found running in registers by Wilshire Tower's top, accompanied by smaller geometric details of pyramids alongside blooming flowers. [*Fig. 2.18*] Wilshire Tower also features four square panels of geometric Neo-Prehispanic-inspired decoration on the sides of the base, two facing Wilshire Blvd. and two facing the side streets on its east and west side. Although difficult to discern from a distance, the two square panels facing the side streets tell a visual story. [*Fig. 2.19*] Two arms jut out from an indiscernible center object. This center object is flanked by two leaves on either side. Two hands hold the stalk of a plant, which bears a fruit or vegetable. Because this unknown plant appears to feature a grid of smaller squares, it may be corn, although it is difficult to determine. On the left is the profile of an eagle mid-flight, and on the right is a profile of a dragon. Underneath the leaf/tower object is a sunburst with a star in the center.

On the front exterior of the building facing Wilshire, flanking the tower, are two identical friezes in vertical rectangular register. [*Fig. 2.20*] They feature a bearded man, wearing a robe. In his left hand he holds a sheet of paper, and in his right hand he holds a protractor. His eyes appear to be closed, his hair is long and curled in the back, and he is crowned with what appears to be a pyramidic headdress. Flanking his head on either side are pyramids.

Finally, the most visible notable Neo-Prehispanic-inspired design on the exterior of Wilshire Tower is the frieze just above the main entrance, in the very center of the building. [*Fig. 2.21*] This nearly completely symmetrical frieze depicts a very interesting interpretation of an Adam and Eve scene. Divided into three panels, the center panel features two figures, a man and a woman, sitting back-to-back in profile. Elements of tropicality surround them: blooming flowers, banana leaves, and the textured fruit/vegetable/corn. The panels on either side of the center are duplicates of each other, and work as a continuation of the same background scenery, with banana leaves, blooming flowers, star bursts, the interesting fruit/vegetable/corn, and a sun burst contained within the outline of a pyramid. Both figures interact with a serpent. The woman on the left has a hand placed around the serpent's neck, and the serpent presents what appears to be a piece of fruit to her. The man on the right has his hands around the serpent's neck in what seems to be a tighter grip, and the snake's tongue hangs out in its death and/or defeat.

While perhaps not outright Neo-Prehispanic, these symbols and the way in which they are presented throughout the exterior are Neo-Prehispanic inspired. The design of these symbols, specifically the presence of serpents, arise from a Neo-Prehispanic point of reference, particularly the Uxmal pyramid. Here, through Pan-Americanism, these notable geometric styles and usage of symbols were re-contextualized and re-represented through an Anglo lens. Specifically, Gilbert Stanley Underwood was likely inspired by the Pre-Columbian stone carvings found among the ruins, and utilized this design style to speak to a specific Anglo history and specific Anglo symbolisms.

But *why* the Adam and Eve panel, the ancient mathematician, the eagle fighting the dragon? The tower offices were rented out to doctors and dentists, and the base was rented to a

men's department store.[174] However, these designs have no correlation because the offices and retail space were rented out after the building's design was finalized.[175] The answer may lie in the fact that Wilshire Tower was the first tower to be built along the Miracle Mile section of Wilshire Boulevard. Gilbert Stanley Underwood was very familiar with the use and interpretation of Pre-Columbian symbols throughout his architecture, and frequently referenced indigenous American designs and geometric shapes throughout the catalogue of his works.[176] Because, as has thoroughly been discussed earlier in this section, the Miracle Mile area was seen as the epitome of luxury, class, wealth, and future potential growth, perhaps these symbols take on new meaning with that context in mind. The Pan-American landscape led Underwood to utilize Neo-Prehispanic design to tell a tale of naissance. Uxmal (the first American tower), the bearded man (the first architect) and Adam and Eve (the first man and woman) are all beginnings that led to the creation of the building itself. The added detail of the eagle fighting a dragon, with what appears to be a Meso-American pyramid in the center, tells the story of American might. This building spoke to the past, the birth of American architecture, in order to speak toward its future. Knowing it would be taken seriously as the first tower building in what was destined to be the wealthiest area of the city, Wilshire Tower established itself among the surrounding physical and architectural landscape through Neo-Prehispanic design as both historical and forward thinking.

Thus, in the context of the Miracle Mile, Neo-Prehispanic design was utilized to great effect to represent themes such as luxury, naissance, and power. Because of its ties to 'Zig-Zag Moderne' as discussed in the previous section of this chapter, Neo-Prehispanic design offered

---

[174] Hancock, Ralph. *Fabulous Boulevard*.
[175] Los Angeles Conservancy, *Wilshire Tower*.
[176] Notable examples include the Ahwahnee Lodge in Yosemite and Union Station in Omaha, Nebraska. Both structures reference and re-interpret Native American symbolism and geometric shapes.

architects and designers like Gilbert Stanley Underwood who enjoyed utilizing symbolism to great effect the chance to present design choices that are simultaneously historic and highly fashionable. Wilshire Tower is considered by the Los Angeles Conservancy to be 'Zig-Zag Moderne,' as well as the other towers mentioned in this thesis. With only a handful of geometric registers, this designation comes from the four panels visible along the exterior of the building and the design of the tower and its tip. Again, Neo-Prehispanic is an integral part of the 'Zig-Zag Moderne' movement and is extensively usable within the design of buildings to represent the symbols and ideas of the United States, and therefore, Pan-Americanism.

Conclusion

Elements ranging from created tropicality, to economic histories, to a Great Mexican-American Cultural Exchange manifested in the creation of a specific Pan-American landscape and Neo-Prehispanic aesthetic unique to Southern California. This specific iteration of Neo-Prehispanic design was imbued into the popular Zig-Zag Moderne forms of the late 1920s and early 1930s, forever cementing the architectural landscape of Southern California with Neo-Prehispanic design and carving out a unique expression of Pan-Americanism within the region.

Chapter Three: Neo-Prehispanic Form and the Future of American Architecture

As the United States approached the end of the 1920s and skyscraper form dominated the architectural landscape, some architects offered postulations for their visions of what the future of United States skyscraper architecture could, or should, look like. While the previous sections revealed that Neo-Prehispanic style's design is largely re-interpreted Pre-Columbian hieroglyphs or geometrics that were found in friezes on the buildings of the ruins, little has been mentioned about Neo-Prehispanic architectural form, and the ways in which Pre-Columbian ruins may have inspired form in Southern California's Neo-Prehispanic architecture. Because of the city of Los Angeles' height restriction ordinance that prevents the building of skyscrapers like the ones in the metropolises of New York City or Chicago, the monumental buildings constructed in this period are of a unique form that embody elements of set-back skyscraper form and are inspired by Pre-Columbian pyramid architecture.

Skyscrapers as 'Native' American Architecture of the Future

By the turn of the 20th century, a new form of architecture maintained a strong presence within the architectural landscape of cities in the United States: the skyscraper.[177] From larger skyscrapers in the metropolises of the United States to smaller constructions in regional urban centers, by the end of the decade of the 1920s the skyscraper was a nearly ubiquitous aspect of United States architecture and construction.[178] From the introduction of skyscrapers into the landscapes of the United States in the 1880s, and well into the late 1920s and early 1930s in

[177] Revell, Keith D. "Law Makes Order: The Search for Ensemble in the Skyscraper City." Essay. In *The American Skyscraper: Cultural Histories*, edited by Roberta Moudry, 37–62. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
[178] Korom, Joseph J. *The American Skyscraper, 1850-1940: A Celebration of Height*. Boston: Branden Books, 2008. 16.

which this discussion is situated, debates occurred amid designers and architects over the various ways skyscraper form could be/should be interpreted.

To many, the form of the skyscraper, no matter the design style of skyscraper itself, held a specific symbolism within the growing United States post-industrial architectural landscape. R.W. Sexton, an author who included skyscrapers as a distinct form of architecture within a comprehensive catalogue of American commercial building forms, described skyscrapers in 1928 as manifestations of the United States' "strength, honesty, and sincerity," where they "stand as noble expression[s] of the high standards of American business."[179] A similar viewpoint came from some architects as well. Timothy Pflueger, a San Francisco based architect, admired the skyscraper as a physical manifestation of an architect's "imagination, creative faculty, and pure fancy," where an architect could utilize skyscraper form to be "expressive of America, her cities, people and the spirit that moves them to accomplishments."[180] Through Pflueger's perspective, skyscraper form was not only liberating to the architect through new creative potential, but could express the 'spirit of the United States' through form and design.

The skyscraper was, at this moment of time in any design iteration, seen as "emphatically, comprehensively…stridently American."[181] [*Figs. 3.1- 3.2*] The desire to connect skyscrapers to the United States and therefore its cultural values was strong. One author, David Nye, described in an essay about the cultural histories of skyscrapers that the general public of the United States viewed them as "symbols of America's financial and technological

---

[179] Sexton, R. W. *American Commercial Buildings of Today: Skyscrapers, Office Buildings, Banks, Private Business Buildings, Stores and Shops*. New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, Inc., 1928: 5.
Other books published of this catalogue: *American Apartment Houses, Hotels, and Apartment Hotels of Today* (1929), *Modern, City, and Suburban Apartment Houses of Today* (1926), *Schools* (1939).
[180] Pflueger, Timothy. "What of the Vertical in American Architecture?" *The Pacific Coast Architect*, February (1927): 83.
[181] Bossom, Alfred C. *Building to the Skies: The Romance of the Skyscraper*. London: The Studio, limited, 1934. 11.

superiority."[182] Alfred C. Bossom, an author who published a text called the *Romance of the Skyscraper* in 1934, claimed the soaring height of skyscrapers belonged only to the United States by calling them "as indigenous as the red Indian."[183] By establishing skyscraper and skyscraper form as purely an 'American' idea, skyscrapers are enabled to symbolize not only cultural values, but financial and political superiority over other countries as well, recalling the political ideologies of Pan-Americanism.

Due to the parallels of general Pan-Americanist desire for architecture that could be 'pure American' – architecture with no influence from outside the United States – some architects of this period began to publish postulates arguing for the integration of 'indigenous' design to accompany this 'indigenous' architectural form. The rising nationalism within the United States and its ensuing Pan-Americanist architectural trends led a small number of architects to argue against the continued use of European revival trends based that were based on European structures in United States architecture, particularly within the form of the skyscraper – the most 'American' architecture of them all.

In 1929 and 1933, architects Francisco Mujica and Alfred C. Bossom (respectively) published writings that favored the idea of true 'native to the Americas' form and design in skyscraper architecture. Their writings both include references to the Pre-Columbian pyramids that were uncovered in Mexico and Guatemala, and both authors label these pyramids as the first example of skyscraper form in the Americas. They both make similar arguments that skyscraper design should emulate the designs of the Mayan, Aztec, and/or other Pre-Columbian civilizations, and that skyscraper form should reflect that of the Pre-Columbian pyramids. They both specifically reference the 'set-back' form of skyscraper, a form that can be defined by its

[182] Korom, *The American Skyscraper,* 16.
[183] Bossom, *Building to the Skies,* 9.

step-like recession in the profile of a building as it rises into the skyline.[184] Mujica and Bossom both saw parallels between set-back towers with steps that thin as they reach their peak and the Pre-Columbian pyramids which could be described more accurately as stepped-pyramids [*Fig. 3.3*] Mujica and Bossom both argued that because the emergence of set-backs already mimicked the Pre-Columbian pyramids, it only made sense to continue to further emulate pyramid form into what would now be called Neo-Prehispanic style.

Francisco Mujica's book, *History of the Skyscraper*, was first published in 1929 and featured Mujica's philosophies on the skyscraper's role in the landscape of United States architecture and what its future iterations, according to Mujica, should look like.[185] Mujica was a Mexican born architect, and his views on United States architecture are Pan-Americanist in the sense that he sought to establish an architectural style that could be reflective of the entirety of the Americas. *History of the Skyscraper*, despite its title, is essentially a treatise for the use of what he referred to as "Neo-American" style architecture. This style is described as a "new creative work" that requires study of Pre-Columbian Latin American architecture and the "geometrical and mechanical elements of the regional nature."[186] By presenting an argument that contemporary skyscrapers already offered "a striking resemblance with many of our American pyramids," he postulated that through "a detailed and graphical study of the most important monuments and archeological centers," the United States/Americas could arrive at a renaissance where it would be "possible to resuscitate the primitive lines and adapt them to modern usage."[187] Essentially, Mujica's visions of a "Neo-American" architectural style is what we recognize today as Neo-Prehispanic. His argument that the surrounding regional flora and fauna

[184] Ibid.
[185] Mujica, *History of the Skyscraper.*
[186] Ibid, 20.
[187] Ibid, 18, 19.

should be put to use within skyscraper design was realized through the Zig-Zag Moderne, as discussed in the previous chapter. Mujica's *History of the Skyscraper* ends with 134 plates of sketches of Mayan architecture, relevant skyscraper design, and his visions of the future of American cities.

Of these many plates, four are particularly enlightening of Mujica's vision of "Neo-American" architecture and its Pre-Columbian roots. The first two are Mujica's imagined restoration of two Pre-Columbian pyramids, the pyramid of Tikal, Guatemala and the pyramid of Huatusco, Mexico. [*Figs. 3.4-3.5*] At the time of publication, neither of these pyramids were fully excavated, and Mujica's illustrations are his imaginings of what the pyramids would look like in their entirety.[188] While other architects, like Stacy-Judd or Wright or Beelman, focused on the geometries and textures of the Pre-Columbian hieroglyphs and friezes that surround the ruins, Mujica imagined these ruins with clean lines, an almost brick-like base, and proportional form. In this way they more closely resemble the popular set-back skyscrapers, and likely would have appeared to be less 'foreign' to the average United States reader. This is especially true of Mujica's rendering of an imagined Huatusco, which appears to have a more 'moderne' element than the pyramid would likely have in reality, if fully excavated.

Another enlightening illustration is plate CXXXI, where Mujica introduces the reader to the visual aspects of 'Neo-American' style and presents his sketch: "Perspective of a 68-story Office Building in Neo-American Style." [*Fig. 3.6*] It is immediately clear that "Neo-American" style is based on the form of Pre-Columbian ruins, specifically the two that Mujica sketched and exemplified. Unlike Wright or Stacy-Judd, Mujica chose to emulate Pre-Columbian architecture

[188] During the 1920s, many of these pyramids were dirt hills, surrounded by jungle vegetation, with only the tip of the pyramid sticking out. One could see the general form and shape of the pyramids, but the rest was hidden by a few hundred years' worth of soil. Huatsuco remains unexcavated into the present day.

through form alone, eliminating the exterior decorations that the other architects re-interpreted in their work. In this Plate of an imagined contemporary skyscraper, Mujica copies the form and shape of the temples, particularly the Huatusco temple, but replaces the front-facing stairs with vertical lines while keeping the trapezoidal tip. Therefore, "Neo-American" style is essentially an elongated, vertically oriented, Meso-American temple in skyscraper form. With a rising vertically oriented central tower, a rectangular base, and smaller trapezoidal blocks rising to the largest center, Mujica's vision of Neo-American architecture is primarily based on form and verticality.

The last sketch in his book, plate CXXXIV, is titled "The City of the Future: Hundred Story City in Neo-American Style." [*Fig.3.7*] In this vision of the future, Mujica's Neo-American tower occupies an entire city block. The building is divided laterally into two, his "Neo-American Office Building" at the top, and a large rectangular base at the bottom. He describes how city dwellers would live in the bottom sections, work in the top sections, and move through the city either by automobile on the lower street, or by the pedestrian walk-ways that bisect the Neo-American skyscraper buildings.

The ideas of commerce, office-work/capitalism, and city living are inherently tied to Mujica's vision of the future of architecture and his "Neo-American"/Neo-Prehispanic design. He specifically dreamed of and designed for a fruitful, capitalist, American future. He imagined a city where everyone both lived and worked within large, towering Neo-Prehispanic skyscraper buildings. Neo-Prehispanic form fully embodies the desires of the United States to re-interpret an architectural and cultural past, and within the context of Pan-Americanism, uses symbols of 'American' pre-history to present a specific image of what the imagined future of the country could be. Recalling the earlier discussions of how pyramids came to embody and define the

emergence of great civilizations, Neo-Prehispanic style skyscrapers are ways to bring pyramids out of ruins and into the present as symbols of the United States, its power, and its future leadership among the countries of the world.

Mujica's imaginings of the future of the United States and its present state reflected the then-prosperity of the United States. However, by 1934 when Alfred C. Bossom published *The Romance of the Skyscraper,* the country had already been engulfed by the throes of the Great Depression. Bossom's book similarly discusses skyscrapers, their origins, and their presence in the landscape of the United States, but because of the Great Depression, in the context of a reminder of the greatness of the history of the United States and the hope and optimism for a brighter future. Bossom's text begins by claiming that because history and character are written into the lasting architecture of the United States, it is "only natural" that the United States should be "the birthplace of the skyscraper."[189] One aspect of the character that Bossom refers to in his text is that of light and silhouette found in the architecture of the Pre-Columbian groups of the Americas. He argues that the formal design decisions of Pre-Columbian architecture come from the specific way the sun shines in the Western Hemisphere, "hard and white and [with] shadows uninteresting."[190] He adds that this led indigenous groups to evolve an architecture of "simple surface decorations with no cornices but with a strong emphasis on ornamented angles" which together would form "a towering silhouette."[191] This stance on the sunlight of the Western Hemisphere reveals similarities to Mujica in the rejection of the 1920s Neo-Prehispanic architectural ideal of Pre-Columbian ornamentation, emphasizing instead clean lines and highlighting geometric form.

---

[189] Bossom, *Building to the Skies,* 14.
[190] Ibid, 15.
[191] Ibid.

These elements are apparent in the first two illustrations found within Bossom's book: a two page spread featuring a Pre-Columbian pyramid and a contemporary skyscraper. The left illustration, titled "The First American Skyscraper" is an imagined fully excavated depiction of the Tikal pyramid. [*Fig. 3.8*] Unlike Mujica's sparce imagining of the Tikal pyramid, Bossom included figures in the foreground, therefore supplying perspective to the pyramid's actual height. The right illustration, "The 35 Story Building of Today," is Bossom's own imagining of a contemporary skyscraper. [*Fig. 3.9*] These two illustrations are placed side-by-side, and reveal Bossom's overt Pre-Columbian inspiration in his contemporary skyscraper designs. The trapezoidal tips of both structures are nearly identical in shape, and the stepped form of the skyscraper roughly mirrors that of Tikal, only the skyscraper is slightly more elongated. Bossom's imagined contemporary forms of skyscrapers originate entirely from Pre-Columbian pyramids, revealing his iteration of contemporary United States skyscrapers to be Neo-Prehispanic in form.

At the end of his text, Bossom imagines that skyscrapers will enter into every facet of life for the United States citizen (movie theaters, churches, clubs, hospitals, hotels, etc.), and that skyscrapers will "expand and reinforce" the spirit of the United States.[192] In the middle of the Great Depression, skyscrapers in this context become an embodiment of the resiliency of the spirit of the United States. By drawing upon Pre-Columbian form, resiliency and longevity are highlighted in a specific United States context. Neo-Prehispanic form is therefore utilized to reflect not only the past wealth and importance of the Americas, but its bright future in times of despair as well.

[192] Ibid, 91, 105.

Bossom and Mujica were two voices in a sea of architects and critics who held their own ideas and interpretations of skyscraper and skyscraper design. However, their work is analyzed here because they were writing in a Pan-Americanist context for a Pan-American landscape. Mujica specifically received awards for his Neo-American designs from the Pan-American Congress of Architects.[193] Their ideas, their sketched forms, and their postulates should all sound familiar, as they were utilized in different ways in nearly all the examples provided in this thesis thus far. Whether Southern Californian architects considered Mujica's postulates when designing and constructing buildings remains un-known. However, Southern California's Pan-Americanist landscape and its height restrictions on building construction led architects to lean into adapting Pre-Columbian form within monumental architecture, mirroring the postulations supplied by Bossom and Mujica, and allowing for the creation of a landscape that is largely reflective of the imagined architectural landscapes refenced in their text.[194]

Bullocks Wilshire: A Temple to Pan-America

One of the greatest examples of a Neo-Prehispanic skyscraper in the context of Southern California is 3050 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, constructed in 1929 by Los Angeles-based architect J.D. Parkinson. [*Fig. 3.10*] Located along the prestigious Wilshire Boulevard discussed in the past chapter, this building is considered to be a Los Angeles iteration of a skyscraper.[195] Although it is unable to compete with the height of skyscrapers in other parts of the country, it is

[193] Carranza, Luis E., Fernando Luiz Lara and Liernur,. *Modern Architecture In Latin America: Art, Technology, and Utopia*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2014.
[194] An interesting point to note: In the late 19th century, the original building of Los Angeles City Hall was a rising, tall, towered Gothic Revival building. After an earthquake caused irreparable structural damage, the city of Los Angeles decided to construct a new City Hall to reflect the growing population of Los Angeles in the 1920s. The chosen design was a Tower Form building, with references to pyramids, and in the 'Zig-Zag Moderne' Style. This choice reveals an intentional rejection of old skyscraper form, in favor of a form that could better represent the surrounding Los Angeles area.
[195] It achieves this designation in part by, although only featuring five stories, reaching 241 feet.

considered a Los Angeles skyscraper as it reaches and exceeds the maximum height allowed in the city while employing set-back skyscraper form.[196]

Originally constructed to operate as the flagship location for Bullocks Department Store, a luxury clothing company based in Southern California, today 3050 Wilshire Boulevard is owned by Southwestern Law School and is used as the school's library building.[197] With the exception of necessary interior renovations to accommodate its new function, the exterior of Bullocks Wilshire is largely the same now as it was when construction ceded in 1929. Due to the combination of Neo-Prehispanic style and set-back skyscraper style elements, the form of the building itself is at the intersection of a specifically 'American' past and present. The form of Pre-Columbian pyramids and allusions to their design recall the idea of an established ancient history, while the set-back form and its rising tower speaks to the contemporary image of skyscrapers as symbols of the future of the United States.

Bullocks Wilshire can be found on Wilshire Boulevard on the south side of the street, one block to the west of MacArthur Park. As explained in the previous chapter, Wilshire Boulevard begins in Downtown Los Angeles, crosses through MacArthur park, and proceeds west towards La Brea Avenue. Due to early city planning and the city of Los Angeles expanding in untraditional ways, the city-street grid of the downtown district is skewed diagonally, while the streets that surround downtown run in the traditional cardinal directions. [*Fig. 3.11*] As a result, as one leaves downtown Los Angeles and travels through the MacArthur Park community, eventually one would arrive at a strangely diagonal intersection marking this change in street direction. Along Wilshire Boulevard, however, this change is less noticeable because it occurs as

[196] Los Angeles was unable to have true skyscrapers due to its height limits on buildings. The one building to surpass this height limit, City Hall, similarly employs a pyramidic tip, "Tower Form," and a set-back silhouette.
[197] Davis, Margaret Leslie and John G. Bullock. *Bullocks Wilshire*. Los Angeles: Balcony Press, 1996.

one is passing through and by a park, where a rounded street seems to appeal more to a desired aesthetic rather than a necessity. And to motorists making this curve along the road, Bullocks Wilshire commands their attention as they were able to see the building from a distance, and then as the road curved, the entire front of the building would suddenly be revealed.[198] This allowed the building to catch the attention of motorists for commercial/shopping purposes, but also played into the appearance of monumentality of the building itself.

One aspect of this monumentality comes from the building's physical location in the geological landscape of the city. Around the turn of the 20th century, the location of what is now Bullocks Wilshire was part of a landscape that was known for its streams and rolling hills.[199] Once adjacent to farms, a natural hot spring, and rivers alongside gentle slopes, these elements of the city were paved over and developed during the population spike of the 1920s, and were essentially non-existent by the end of the 1930s.[200] Today, traveling along Wilshire Boulevard, the hill that Bullocks Wilshire sits atop of is not immediately apparent. However, one only has to travel down the north/south side streets that flank the building to gather a sense of the angle of the hill that once was. Due to these elements, the tower of Bullocks Wilshire soars well above the surrounding commercial structures, apartment houses, and single family residences.[201] It is highly visible in the horizon of the landscape within a one mile radius, even well into the present day. In the MacArthur Park community, especially by where MacArthur park is, the diagonals of the street align almost exactly with a view of the building, intentionally supplying park goers and residents with a view of the whole building, not just the tower, appearing to rise from the center of the street, above all else: truly like a temple.

---

[198] Hancock, *Fabulous Boulevard.*
[199] Ibid.
[200] Ibid.
[201] This claim comes directly from the author's familiarity with the area and from survey work done on site.

Another aspect of created monumentality can be found in the height and existence of the tower itself. [*Fig. 3.12*] The ever present threat of earthquakes led the city of Los Angeles to impose a height limit of one hundred and fifty feet on its buildings, but many Los Angeles architects of the 1920s and 1930s were able to exceed this limit through loopholes in building codes. The tower of Bullocks Wilshire reaches two hundred and forty one feet due to building codes that allow for six feet of roof construction, thirty-five feet of penthouse construction, and fifty feet of sign construction.[202] The tower itself is the embodiment all these separate roles, a result of a loophole that did not specify that each element had to be a separate construction. While the tower appeals to familiar Los Angeles 'Tower Form' and the desired aesthetics of the building, it also functions as signage space, a penthouse, and sign and roof construction, stacked on top of one another. Thus, while the tower does offer functional and usable space for offices in its penthouse, its existence is a result of a desire for monumentality, for occupying space within the skyline, and for the creation of a skyscraper despite local ordinances prohibiting it. Similar to the 'Tower Form' buildings found along the miracle mile, the plateaued and un-pointed tower tip bears similarities to the tips of the Pre-Columbian pyramids.

The design and inclusion of the tower was a defining moment in the building's history. It was not always planned. A preliminary sketch of Bullocks Wilshire before completion, found in R.W. Sexton's *American Commercial Buildings of Today,* reveals an entirely different iteration of the building.[203] Although it is unclear when this preliminary sketch was completed, Sexton's book was published in 1928, one year before Bullocks Wilshire held its grand opening in October 1929. [*Figure 3.13*] This sketch of the planned Bullocks Wilshire building reveals a structure that is rectangular, with two stories, no set-back skyscraper qualities, and with no

[202] "Bullocks Wilshire Boulevard Store - Los Angeles." *Architect and Engineer*, 3, 99 (December 1929): 45–49: 45
[203] Sexton, *American Commercial Buildings of Today*, 187.

tower. The building has large elongated windows that reveal high ceilings on the second floor, and protruding first floor display windows for the store-front on the street level. In this initial sketch, some half columns also protrude from the building. They rise between the first and second story windows, do not completely reach the top, and appear to have the same silhouette that the tower would eventually bear due to the way the lines within each of the columns unevenly reach their maximum height and plateau. It is unclear why a tower was added so late into the planning of the building.[204] However, the notable elements of Bullocks Wilshire such as its set-back form were conceived after the addition of the tower. This points to the fact that the tower carries a specific symbol or allusion that necessitated the change in general form and decoration once a decision was made to include it in the plans of the building.

The exterior decoration of Bullocks Wilshire features two main components. The first is the presence of architectural terra cotta, colored in a beige to resemble stone, meant to reflect the color of the soil that (at one time) surrounded it.[205] The second was the use and wide implementation of pre-oxidized copper panels, placed above all the windows of the building above the second story and occupying a prominent space on the tower of the building itself. [*Fig. 3.14*] The pre-oxidized patina color marks the sections between stories on both the building and the tower, and the tower tip is covered in pre-oxidized copper entirely. From a distance (the way in which Bullocks Wilshire was meant to be experienced), these details maintain their prominence and therefore are an integral part of the design, not simply just inconsequential added details.

---

[204] Uncited rumors on some websites and from within Davis' book claim that the owner of Bullocks and traveled to Paris and witnessed the remaining architecture of the 1925 World's Fair. Falling in love with the style, luxury, and monumentality that these art deco towers brought, he came back to the United States and insisted that a tower be incorporated into his new flagship store. While this is entirely possible, it cannot be confirmed, and therefore remains pure speculation.

[205] Breeze, *American Art Deco.*

Also reflecting the fact that this building was meant to be seen from a distance is Bullocks Wilshire's set-back form. Breaking the symmetry that is found in other set-back skyscrapers, Bullocks Wilshire offers a unique example of asymmetrical set-back form due to the height constrictions imposed by the city. When viewing the building's east side, as one would if driving along Wilshire Boulevard from downtown, one would see a series of rising and falling blocks, creating an emphasis of verticality on its east side-street-facing exterior that is mirrored again in its northern oriented tower, facing Wilshire Boulevard.[206] The asymmetry is also apparent in the fact that the east side of the building maintains this stepped form while the west side of the building is comparatively flatter, with only two to three stories compared to the west side's five to six stories. The descending slope of the hill on the building's west side is partly the reason for this asymmetry, as well as the fact that Bullocks Wilshire would be hidden to motorists by other commercial structures along the boulevard on its west side.

The intentional design of the building around the idea of the motorist is further compounded by the extremely modern (for the time) idea of a valet service for guests, with the grand entrance of the building in the rear instead of the street-facing front.[207] This allowed for a more cohesive aesthetic of the exterior that did not need to supply a grand entryway or lobby overhang. The owners of Bullocks purchased an entire city block for the building, imagining in the future they might expand and take over the entirety of the lot.[208] In the meantime, the rear of the building supplied ample parking for motorists, who would enter into the parking lot from the east side through beautifully decorated gates, drive under an overhang with a grand mural, and utilize the available valet service so they would not have to worry about parking themselves.[209]

---

[206] Please reference Fig. 3.14 and 3.10 for this specifically.
[207] Davis, Margaret Leslie and John G. Bullock. *Bullocks Wilshire*. Los Angeles: Balcony Press, 1996.
[208] Ibid.
[209] "Bullocks Wilshire Boulevard Store - Los Angeles," *Architect and Engineer*.

In the late 1920s, this was the peak of luxury and class. Upon exiting their vehicle, guests would look up to see a mural titled *Speed of Transportation* painted on the ceiling of the overhang, commissioned to celebrate the newest technologies and progress made in United States transportation.[210] [*Fig. 3.15*] A depiction of trains, planes, and automobiles are placed around a central figure of the Roman god Nike, who is surrounded by geometric shapes and sunbursts. Nike, the god of speed, symbolizes both the literal speed of the transportation machinery and also the speed of which these elements of transportation were developed in the first decades of the twentieth century. This mural very specifically calls attention to and looks toward the future, situating itself in Bullocks Wilshire's nexus of the past, present, and future of the United States. While the subject of transportation for the mural likely originated from its location as the ceiling of the valet overhang, its pointed optimistic view of the future of United States technology is reflective of both the time in which it was created and the forward-thinking futuristic elements of luxury that Bullocks Wilshire possessed at the time of its grand opening.

This very cross-roads of the past, present, and future of the United States is represented through Bullocks Wilshire in its design, as has been discussed. However, these ideas are also reflected in the decisions surrounding Bullocks Wilshire's form, a hybrid of 'Tower Form' and set-back skyscrapers. Although 'Tower Form' was introduced and defined in the previous chapter to describe the buildings along Wilshire Boulevard in the Miracle Mile district, Bullocks Wilshire is outside this definition due to its monumentality, its asymmetry, and its block structure leading up to the tower. Similarly, because of the height limits imposed on buildings in Los Angeles and Los Angeles County, Bullocks Wilshire varies from other set-back skyscrapers found in other parts of the country. Together, Bullocks Wilshire's exterior design decisions and

[210] Breeze, *American Art Deco*.

its stepped-back tower create a unique Los Angeles version of a skyscraper: a truly Neo-Prehispanic, and therefore Pan-American, skyscraper.

Again, architectural historian Carla Breeze's work becomes relevant, as she too claims that Bullocks Wilshire is a unique architectural expression of Southern Californian design in her book *American Art Deco*. Once again citing regionalism in design, she describes the pre-oxidized material and architectural terra cotta hues that were chosen for Bullocks Wilshire as "specifically selected to reflect the California atmosphere," although she gives no further detail of what atmosphere she specifically is referring to.[211] Perhaps Breeze struggled to articulate the specific 'California atmosphere' that one feels when viewing this building because she lacked a key context of California art deco: the presence of a Pan-American landscape in Southern California. This landscape allowed for a multitude of experimentation of forms and colors that are not commonly found in other parts of the country, and with the influence of the 'Great Mexican-American Cultural Exchange' and the cult of appreciation surrounding the Mayan ruins of Uxmal and Tikal, Neo-Prehispanic style architecture thrived and reflected the Pan-American cultural landscape. Carla Breeze is correct to state that Bullocks Wilshire reflects a specifically California landscape, but it is not only the physical/geographical landscape insinuated in her writing, rather a rich cultural landscape.

Thus, with its temple-esque appearance on the top of a hill, its pre-oxidized elements, its tower that resembles the tip of Mayan pyramids, and its set-back form leading to a large central tower, Bullocks Wilshire undoubtedly falls under the definition of Neo-Prehispanic. And because Francisco Mujica would likely consider Bullocks Wilshire to be 'Neo-American' due to the aforementioned elements, because the design of the building recalls an 'American' past while

[211] Ibid, 245.

promoting the gains and the future of luxury within the United States, and finally because the way in which Bullocks Wilshire embodies a rising temple in line with the idea of 'Greeks of the New World,' it is considered in this context to be a Pan-Americanist structure. Neo-Prehispanic design and Pan-Americanist design are welded together through these contexts within this building, particularly the idea of the Mayan as 'Greeks of the New World.' The United States first made this connection to create a narrative of United States pre-history. However, in the United States, the idea of 'Greeks' were also synonymous with the tenets of democracy, a connection solidified by the usage of Greco-Roman architecture in nearly all of the politically important buildings in Washington D.C., the capitol of the country. Greek-inspired United States architecture re-interpreted the temple to reflect the democratic ideals of the United States, and in Southern California's Pan-American landscape, Mayan-inspired United States architecture re-interpreted the Mayan temples (pyramids) to reflect the Pan-American ideals of the United States.

Placed on top of a hill, with pre-oxidized elements meant to signify age, visible within a mile radius, with soaring tower, and meant to be seen as one travels west: Bullocks Wilshire fully embraces a comparison to a temple, and thus it is the best example of Pan-American architecture in the Southern Californian region that has been examined within this thesis. Southern California architecture of this time period remains so distinct from other regions due to its influence from the Pan-American landscape, and Bullocks Wilshire remains a well-known and represented element of the Southern California architectural landscape *because* of the influence Pan-Americanism plays in its design, form, and material. Bullocks Wilshire, akin to Pan-Americanism, uses its temple appearance to suggest connections between the past, present, and future of the United States. Bullocks Wilshire, as a Pan-Americanist structure, attempts to

establish itself within the landscape of Southern California through the usage of Mayan inspired temple design to appear as if it always has been there, to give itself legitimacy, and to call attention to its prosperity and its future.

Conclusion

Because skyscrapers are so deeply connected to the ideals of the United States, it is unsurprising that some architects drafted postulates encouraging other architects to embody what they saw as the ultimate example of United States indigenous architecture, which seemed to mirror skyscraper form, thus embodying Neo-Prehispanic style. As skyscrapers became intertwined with the cultural histories of the United States, Southern California and its unique Pan-American landscape came to embody these ideals in its own way. In Los Angeles, where buildings could not actually rise to skyscraper height, architects appeared to embrace an iteration of skyscraper form that specifically recalls Pre-Columbian architecture. In a desire to create a structure that could exist as the cross-roads between the past, present, and future, Bullocks Wilshire leaned heavily into Pan-American values and ultimately exemplifies a Neo-Prehispanic, Pan-American skyscraper in the context of Los Angeles.

Conclusion

In 1932 David Alfaro Siqueiros, a Mexican artist living in California, painted a mural titled *América Tropical: Oprimida y Destrozada por los Imperialismos* (Tropical America: Oppressed and Destroyed by Imperialism) in the center of the oldest neighborhood of Los Angeles.[212] [*Fig. 4.1*] This mural depicted a brown native Latin American man, tied by rope to a cross, on top of which a bald eagle is perched. In the background, behind the cross, is a large, imposing, familiar reference to a Mayan/Aztec temple, with Mayan/Aztec warriors in groups on the wings of the upper right side. Playing a prominent role on either side of the temple are overgrown trees with branches that resemble snakes, stretching out, creeping toward, and overtaking the temple.

Siqueiros undoubtedly sought to portray the tensions that were present amid the great cultural prosperity that Mexican artists brought to Los Angeles all while the United States, fueled by the ideas of Pan-Americanism and imperialism, ravaged Latin American countries through military intervention and taking advantage of their resources. The prominence of the Pre-Columbian pyramid in the mural speaks to the role that this particular architecture plays in the surrounding cultural landscape of Los Angeles. Siqueiros was likely very familiar with Neo-Prehispanic style within the new architecture of the city, as well as the many Anglo archaeologists who had embarked on exploratory missions to Latin America. In this context the crucified native, compounded with the overgrown trees attempting to swallow both him and the temple, speaks to an oncoming threat of death. Siqueiros used this mural to allude to the death of Mayan/Aztec culture as a result of the imperialist Spanish conquistadors, and the second death of Mexican/Latin American culture as a result of imperialist United States policies. Anglo culture,

[212] Nieto, Margarita. "Mexican Art and Los Angeles."; Plaza Olvera is considered to be the oldest and most historic part of Los Angeles, with architecture dating back to the 18th century.

symbolized through the trees on the sides, have not only crucified actual Latin American people, but are greedily over taking their remaining cultural artifacts for their own reinterpretation. As Mexican people were repatriated out of the United States, yet Neo-Prehispanic styles and Mexican Arts and Crafts were considered the height of elegance and luxury, the architectural symbol of the Pre-Columbian temple in this mural signifies the history, strength, and resilience of Latin American people, particularly indigenous people, in the wake of being swallowed (yet again) by an imperialist Anglo presence.[213]

By 1933, this mural – upsetting to the owner of the building it was painted on – was whitewashed and forgotten about for several decades. However, by the 1960s amid a resurgence in popularity of murals and the blossoming Chicano Movement which emphasized Hispanic pride, the wall which contained the mural was saved and restored.[214] It was officially unveiled as a permanent fixture within the city in 2012, the 80th anniversary of the mural's creation.

The creation of *América Tropical*, its (literal) whitewashing, and its re-emergence in recent years is directly indicative of why studying the aspects surrounding the use of Neo-Prehispanic style in this very specific context of Pan-Americanism is so important. Nearly one hundred years have passed since the creation of the majority of the architecture discussed in this thesis, and we have now arrived at a time where the general public are eager to learn and are critical over the ways that the United States has treated its Latin American neighbors in the past. Although the phrase 'Pan-Americanism' and its nuances may not be familiar to the average United States citizen in the modern age, the ideas that fueled Pan-Americanism (such as United

[213] Repatriation efforts against Mexican immigrants living in the United States hit its peak in the mid-1930s. Fueled by similar-to-today fears about 'taking jobs from Americans' amid the onslaught of the Great Depression, millions of long-term Mexican and Mexican-American citizens were repatriated to Mexico.
[214] Discover Los Angeles. "América Tropical: The Story of an LA Icon." Discover Los Angeles, September 7, 2021. https://www.discoverlosangeles.com/things-to-do/am%C3%A9rica-tropical-the-story-of-an-la-icon.

States superiority and imperialist attitudes) have been routinely discussed, particularly in recent years. Art and architecture do not exist in a void; they are morphed and transformed by surrounding environmental elements whether it be political, societal, or cultural. Understanding the symbols of architecture is most impactful when these elements are presented together. This has unfortunately little been the case for Neo-Prehispanic style.

This thesis defined Pan-Americanism and Neo-Prehispanic style, proved they were inextricably connected, defined Southern California as a Pan-American landscape, and examined exactly how Pan-American ideals were expressed through both Neo-Prehispanic form and design. All of the architecture discussed within this thesis is still standing today, and with the exception of the Pan-American Union Building in Washington D.C., can be located in Southern California. This allowed for a scope that was fitting for a thesis of this length, and also allowed for documentation of empirical evidence in a time when access to in-person archives and documents were not reliable because of the ongoing pandemic.

The methodologies of visual and empirical evidence were used for the majority of the architecture discussed in this project because, with the exception of the more famous and important buildings, there is little record of the reasoning behind design decisions, or the thoughts of the architect or designer whilst creating the discussed building. But by examining the cultural landscape of the area, considering the political, social, and economic climate, decisions surrounding design and form can be analyzed in a new light.

While a number of Southern Californian Neo-Prehispanic structures were discussed within this thesis, there are many more that were not. Ranging from important landmark buildings to regular sized apartment buildings, Neo-Prehispanic style can be found throughout the landscape of Southern California. With connections between Pan-Americanism and Neo-

Prehispanic style proven, and a definition of Southern California as Pan-American landscape presented, future iterations of this study can use the research completed within this thesis as a starting point to further survey, document, and contextualize the remaining Neo-Prehispanic architecture within the area of Southern California. It could even be a preliminary work for an examination on a national scale.

Too often, Neo-Prehispanic style is categorized as part of the general revival movements of the early 20th century or under the 'Zig-Zag Moderne' classification of Art Deco. The research contained within this thesis will help in expanding the definition and the interpretation of Neo-Prehispanic style, and create a path where it could be studied not as a small part of larger architectural movements, but as a unique expression of United States culture during the early decades of the 20th century.

Previous discussions of Neo-Prehispanic style in the resources that seek to analyze its history lack a discussion of context within the social and political history of the United States and its relationship with the rest of the Americas. Similarly, discussions surrounding Pan-Americanism mostly fail to consider the resulting architecture or artistic movements that were made to express its political ideals. Because this thesis introduced the connections between Neo-Prehispanic style and Pan-Americanism, a broader and more cohesive study could be brought forth. This wider study could include other revival styles in the same context, such as the Pueblo Revival, and examine the ways in which Pan-Americanist values and United States imperialism affected the design decisions of the style and its lasting popularity in the country.

It is easy to interpret the use of Neo-Prehispanic style as solely an appreciation of Latin American culture. Recalling the idea of Pre-Columbian civilization as 'Greeks of the New World,' this comparison that seemingly came from appreciation was in fact based in a deeper

context, held ulterior motives, and created an avenue for the United States to reinterpret the cultural remnants of other countries while actively disparaging their descendants. The simplistic interpretation of Neo-Prehispanic style as solely appreciation negates the difficult history between the United States and Latin America, and therefore negates the lasting symbols and design elements that continue to speak to this difficult history. David Siequeros' mural is as relevant now as it was when it was created nearly one hundred years ago. From his perspective, the greedy tree branches of the United States crucified his people all while consuming the Pre-Columbian pyramids, presumably for United States culture's own re-interpretation.

Connecting Neo-Prehispanic style to Pan-Americanism not only contextualizes the history between the United States and Latin America, but also reveals the ways in which the United States has continuously utilized symbols and elements from other cultures to further its own self-importance and status among the world. This is a timely and important discussion to have as many United States citizens are presently coming to terms with the difficult history of their country, yet remain unaware that their surroundings can be lasting elements of imperialist mind sets and perceived Anglo superiority.

While the architecture discussed within this thesis is admittedly beautiful and important, it is also connected to this unsavory past mindset. By allowing for a fuller understanding of the history of these buildings and the ways they intersect with the history of the country in general, their artistry can continue to go appreciated, but within the correct context.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"A Study in Moulded Granite Facing for Buildings." *Southwest Contractor and Manufacture* May (1913): 11

Allen, Harris. "Arbiter Elegantiarum." *The Pacific Coast Architect,* May (1927) 9-48.

Allen, Harris. "Recent California Theaters." *The Pacific Coast Architect*, July (1927) 10-11.

"Americana" *The Pacific Coast Architect,* April (1928): 42.

"An Adaption of Mayan Architecture," *Architecture and Building* 58 (June 1926): 77

Barrett, John. "Practical Pan-Americanism." *The North American Review* (1915) 413–23.

Battu, Zoe A. "Interior Decorating: What is "Correct" In Decoration?" *The Pacific Coast Architect,* February (1927) 84-85.

Battu, Zoe A. "Ornamental Tile: Its History and Renaissance" *The Pacific Coast Architect*, May (1927) 49-50.

Bayer, Patricia. *Art Deco Architecture: Design, Decoration, and Detail From the Twenties and Thirties*. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1992.

Bolton, Herbert E. "The Epic of Greater America." *The American Historical Review* 38 (3): 448–474. 1933

Boone, Mary Elizabeth. *"The Spanish Element in Our Nationality": Spain and America at the World's Fairs and Centennial Celebrations, 1876-1915*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019.

Bossom, Alfred C. *Building to the Skies: The Romance of the Skyscraper*. London: The Studio, limited, 1934.

Bragdon, Claude Fayette. *Architecture and Democracy*. New York: 1918.

Braun, Barbara. *Pre-Columbian Art and the Post-Columbian World: Ancient American Sources of Modern Art*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993. Print.

Breeze, Carla. *American Art Deco: Architecture and Regionalism*. New York: Norton, 2003.

Breeze, Carla. *Pueblo Deco*. New York, NY: Rizzoli, 1990.

Brody, David. *Visualizing American Empire: Orientalism and Imperialism in the Philippines*. Chicago, United States: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Bryne, Alex. "After One Hundred Years of Service: Hegemony, Pan-Americanism, and the Monroe Doctrine Centennial Anniversary, 1923." *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, vol. 29, no. 4, 1 Dec. 2018, 565 - 589.

"Bullocks Wilshire Boulevard Store - Los Angeles." *Architect and Engineer*, 3, 99 (December 1929): 45–49.

Carranza, Luis E., Fernando Luiz Lara and Liernur,. *Modern Architecture In Latin America: Art, Technology, and Utopia*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2014.

Chase, Stuart and Chase, Marian Tyler (joint author). *Mexico: A Study of Two Americas*. New York: The Literary Guild, 1931.

Clarke, Michael Tavel. "Lessons from the Past: The Cliff Dwellers and New Historicism." *Western American Literature* 42, no. 4 (2008): 395–425.

Cohoon, Sharon. "Palm Everlasting." *Sunset*, vol. 241, no. 5, 1 Nov. 2018, 80 - 87.

Cornejo, Francisco. "Description of Architecture and Decorations of the Mayan Theater," *Pacific Coast Architect*, April 1928

Counter, B. "Los Angeles Theatres: Wiltern Theatre: Lobby Areas." *Los Angeles Theatres* (blog). Accessed January 25, 2021. https://losangelestheatres.blogspot.com/2017/03/wiltern-theatre-lobby.html.

Crump, Spencer. *Ride the Big Red Cars: How Trolleys Helped Build Southern California*. Los Angeles: Crest Publications, 1962.

Davis, Brian. "Wider Horizons of American Landscape." *Landscape Journal*, vol. 34, no. 1, 1 Jan. 2015, 79 - 95.

Davis, Margaret Leslie and John G. Bullock. *Bullocks Wilshire*. Los Angeles: Balcony Press, 1996.

Delpar, Helen. *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican: Cultural Relations Between the United States and Mexico, 1920-1935*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1992.

Discover Los Angeles, ed. "América Tropical: The Story of an LA Icon." Discover Los Angeles, September 7, 2021. https://www.discoverlosangeles.com/things-to-do/am%C3%A9rica-tropical-the-story-of-an-la-icon.

Doane, Ralph "The Story of American Architecture in the Philippines" *The Architectural Review* February (1919) 25-32

Eastern-Columbia Building - Downtown. Huell Howser Archives, 2007. https://blogs.chapman.edu/huell-howser-archives/2007/09/11/eastern-columbia-building-downtown-108/.

Eggener, Keith L. "Nationalism, Internationalism and the 'Naturalisation' of Modern Architecture In the United States, 1925–1940." *National Identities*, vol. 8, no. 3, 1 Sep. 2006, 243 - 258.

Gebhard, David. *Robert Stacy Judd: Maya Architecture, the Creation of a New Style*. Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1993.

Gebhard, David. "The Myth of Power and Place." Essay. In *Pueblo Style and Regional Architecture*, edited by Nicholas Markovich, Wolfgang Preiser, and Fred Sturm, 143–54. New York, NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1990.

Gebhard, David. "Wood Studs, Stucco, and Concrete." Essay. In *On the Edge of America: California Modernist Art, 1900-1950*, edited by Paul J. Karlstrom, 140-153. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

Goffe, Tao Leigh. "'Guano in Their Destiny:' Race, Geology, and a Philosophy of Indenture." *Amerasia Journal* 45, no. 1 (January 2, 2019): 27–49.

Gleye, Paul. *The Architecture of Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: 1981.

Golden Gate International Exposition (San Francisco, Calif.). *Pacific Cultures, Department of Fine Arts, Division of Pacific Cultures*. San Francisco: Golden Gate International Exposition, 1939.

Gonzalves, Theodore S. *The Day the Dancers Stayed: Performing in the Filipino/American Diaspora*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010.

Gonzalez, Robert Alexander. *Designing Pan-America: U.S. Architectural Visions for the Western Hemisphere*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2011.

Gray, Olive. "New Building Open Today." *Los Angeles Times*, September 12, 1930.

Hale, Annie Riley. "The Romance of the New Building's Location." *The Bulletin of the International Bureau of the American Republics* (May 1910): 704-713. Print.

Hancock, Ralph. *Fabulous Boulevard*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1949.

Hamlin, Talbot. *The American Spirit in Architecture: The Pageant of America*. New Haven: Yale University Press; 1926.

Hertzberg, Hazel W. *The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements*. 1st ed. Syracuse University Press, 1971.

Howard, John Galen. “The Future of Architecture on the Pacific Coast.” *The Pacific Coast Architect*, February (1927): 59–60.

Hudson, William Henry. *Idle Days in Patagonia*. 1883. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1917. Print.

Immerwahr, Daniel. *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019.

“Imperialism – A Dictionary of Modern Architecture.” Accessed February 25, 2021. https://voices.uchicago.edu/201504arth15709-01a2/2015/11/16/i/.

Ingle, Marjorie. *The Mayan Revival Style: Art Deco Mayan Fantasy*. Salt Lake City: G. M. Smith, 1984.

Jackson, Davina. “Contexts and Conclusions.” Essay. In *Pan-Pacific Modern Design and Architecture*, edited by Douglas Snelling, 229–43. Routeledge, 2016.

Johnson, Reginald D. “Trend of Architecture in California Residences.” *The Pacific Coast Architect*, February (1927) 75-76.

Kammen, Michael G.. *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition In American Culture.* New York: Knopf, 1991.

Kaplan, Amy and Donald E. Pease. *Cultures of United States Imperialism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993.

Karlstrom, Paul J. “Introduction.” Essay. In *On the Edge of America: California Modernist Art, 1900-1950*, edited by Paul J. Karlstrom, 1–22. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1996.

Korom, Joseph J. *The American Skyscraper, 1850-1940: A Celebration of Height*. Boston: Branden Books, 2008.

Krammer, Gerhardt T., “Maya Design,” *Architect and Engineer*, 122 (August, 1935): 21-35

Kurutz, Gary F. *Architectural Terra Cotta of Gladding, McBean.* Sausalito, Calif: Windgate Press, 1989.

Kyson, C.H. (1923, June 29). “Pueblo type of architecture furnished motif for Monroe Centennial Exposition.” *Southwest Builder and Contractor*, 61, 34-36.

“La Miniatura,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, D.C.: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1976), Section 8.

“Latin America in Pan-American Civilization.” *The Bulletin of the International Bureau of the American Republics* (Jan 1910): 207-213. Print.

Law, James Duff. *Here and There in Two Hemispheres*. United States: Home Publishing Company, 1903.

Lawrence, D. H. “America, Listen to Your Own.” *The New Republic* 15 Dec. 1920: 68–70. Print.

Leibowitz, Rachel. "The Million Dollar Playhouse: The Office of Indian Affairs and the Pueblo Revival In the Navajo Capital." *Buildings & Landscapes*, vol. 15, 15 Oct. 2008, 11 - 42.

Librarian, Metro Digital Resources. “Light Rail on Wilshire? Why, That Would Be Illegal!” *Metro's Primary Resources*, January 13, 2011. https://metroprimaryresources.info/light-rail-on-wilshire-why-that-would-be-illegal/314/.

Lisle, Forrest F. “Chicago’s ‘Century of Progress’ Exposition: The Moderne as Democratic, Popular Culture” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 31, no. 3 (1972): 221–37.

Lockey, Joseph Byrne. *Pan-Americanism: Its Beginnings*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920.

Lockwood, Charles. “‘L.A. Homes Mark Architect's Most Turbulent Period.” *Los Angeles Times*, January 30, 1983.

Los Angeles. *Historic-cultural Monuments: As Designated by the Cultural Heritage Board, City of Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: Printed by the City of Los Angeles Printing Division, 1980.

Marquis, Donald E. “Archaeological Aspects of the Mayan Theater of Los Angeles, California.” *Art and Archaeology* 29 (March 1930): 99–101.

McAlester, Virginia and McAlester, A. Lee (Arcie Lee). *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Knopf, 1984.

McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality In the Colonial Contest.* New York: Routledge, 1995.

McKenna, Rebecca Tinio. *American Imperial Pastoral: The Architecture of US Colonialism In the Philippines.* The University of Chicago Press, 2017.

Morley, Sylvanus. "The Foremost Intellectual Achievement of Ancient America," *National Geographic* Vol. 41 (1922), 109-131

Mujica, Francisco. *History of the Skyscraper*. New York: 1929 [Re-published by Da Capo Press, 1977].

Naylor, David. *Great American Movie Theaters*. Washington, D.C.: 1987.

Nieto, Margarita. “Mexican Art and Los Angeles.” Essay. In *On the Edge of America: California Modernist Art, 1900-1950*, edited by Paul J. Karlstrom, 121–34. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1996.

Neuhaus, Eugen. *The San Diego Garden Fair: Personal Impressions of the Architecture, Sculpture, Horticulture, Color Scheme & Other Aesthetic Aspects of the Panama California International Exposition.* San Francisco: P. Elder, 1916.

Nye, David E. “The Sublime and the Skyline: The New York Skyscraper.” Essay. In *The American Skyscraper: Cultural Histories*, edited by Roberta Moudry, 255–69. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Park, Edwin Avery. *New Backgrounds for a New Age.* New York: Harcourt Brace, 1927.

Park Stephen M. “Mesoamerican Modernism: William Carlos Williams and the Archaeological Imagination.” *Journal of Modern Literature* 34, no. 4 (2011)

Pflueger, Timothy. “What of the Vertical in American Architecture?” *The Pacific Coast Architect*, February (1927): 82–83.

Phillips, Ruth Anne and R. Sarah Richardson. "Stone, Water, and Mortarless Constructions: Frank Lloyd Wright and The Pre-Columbian Inca." *Latin Americanist*, vol. 57, no. 4, 1 Dec. 2013, 97 - 129.

Poletti, Therese, and Tom Paiva. *Art Deco San Francisco: The Architecture of Timothy Plueger*. New York: Princeton architectural Press, 2008.

Pool, Rachel. "The Misconceived Image in Society of American Art Deco Architecture and Design." *International Journal of the Image*, vol. 9, no. 2, 1 Jun. 2018, 37 - 53.

“Records Set in Erection.” *Los Angeles Times*, September 14, 1930.

Reilly, Lisa A. (editor), and Kevin D. (editor) Murphy. *Skyscraper Gothic*: *Medieval Style and Modernist Buildings*. London: University of Virginia Press, 2017.

Revell, Keith D. “Law Makes Order: The Search for Ensemble in the Skyscraper City.” Essay. In *The American Skyscraper: Cultural Histories*, edited by Roberta Moudry, 37–62. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Rydell, Robert W. *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire At American International Expositions*, 1876-1916. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.

“Reviving Mayan Architecture.” *New York Times*, January 30, 1927.

Sexton, R. W. *American Commercial Buildings of Today: Skyscrapers, Office Buildings, Banks, Private Business Buildings, Stores and Shops.* New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, inc, 1928.

Schellin, Peter. "Is It Wilshire Boulevard Which Is Ugly or Is It We." *Art Education*, vol. 26, no. 9, 1 Dec. 1973, 6 - 9.

Schwartzman, Arnold and Bevis Hillier. *Deco LAndmarks: Art Deco Gems of the City and County of Los Angeles*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2005

Stacy-Judd, Robert. "Maya Architecture." *Pacific Coast Architect*, November (1926): 30, 26-31, 53, 57.

Stacy-Judd, Robert. *The Ancient Mayas, Adventures in the Jungles of Yucatan*. Los Angeles: Haskell-Travers, Inc, 1934.

Starr, Kevin. "Lotus Land--Los Angeles In the Twenties." *History Today*, vol. 40, no. 3, 1 Mar. 1990, 30 - 38.

Starr, Kevin. *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

Strum, Fred. "Aesthetics of the Southwest." Essay. In *Pueblo Style and Regional Architecture*, edited by Nicholas Markovich and Wolfgang Preiser, 13–21. New York, NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1990.

Stone, Andrea Joyce. *Reading Maya Art: A Hieroglyphic Guide to Ancient Maya Painting and Sculpture*. New York, New York: Thames & Hudson, 2011.

Sutton, Ransom. "Architecture Upside Down." *Los Angeles Times*, March 29, 1931.

"The Dedication of the New Building." *The Bulletin of the International Bureau of the American Republics* (May 1910): 733-747. Print.

"The Gaylord and HMS Bounty." *Los Angeles Conservancy*. Accessed November 17, 2021. https://www.laconservancy.org/locations/gaylord-and-hms-bounty.

"The International Bureau and Its Building." *The Bulletin of the International Bureau of the American Republics* (May 1910): 714–30. Print

"The Treatment of Less Formal Buildings." *Pacific Coast Architect* xxxi, no. 6 (June 1927): 55–55.

Tomlinson, John. *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction*. Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.

Totten, George Oakley. *Maya Architecture*. Washington, D.C.: The Maya Press, 1926.

Turner, Frederick Jackson. *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*. Madison, Wis: Silver Buckle Press, 1984.

Van Slyck, Abigail A. "Mañana, Mañana: Racial Stereotypes and the Anglo Rediscovery of the Southwest's Vernacular Architecture, 1890-1920." *Perspectives In Vernacular Architecture,* vol. 5, 1 Jan. 1995, 95 - 108.

Weisburg, Gabriel. "Frank Lloyd Wright and Pre-Columbian Art—The Background for His Architecture." *Art Quarterly* 30 (1967): 41–51.

Whitman, Walt. *Specimen Days and Collect*. Hansebooks, 2017.

Zara, Janelle. "How Frank Lloyd Wright's Take on Mayan Temples Shaped Hollywood." Artsy, September 27, 2017. https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-frank-lloyd-wrights-mayan-temples-shaped-hollywood.

Figure 0.1: Plaster re-creation of a Mayan temple in ruins. Taken from the 1898 Columbian World's Fair, Chicago.

Figure 0.2: The Mayan Theater, Los Angeles, CA. Opened 1927, architect: Stiles O. Clements

Figure 1.1: The street-facing exterior of the Pan-American Union Building.

Figure 1.2: The Latin American Allegory Sculpture

Figure 1.3: The United States Allegory Sculpture

Figure 1.4: The Patio Area of the Pan-American Union Building

Figure 1.5: The Fountain in the Center of the Patio in the Pan-American Union Building. From left to right is a depiction of an Aztec, Zapotec, and Mayan figure.

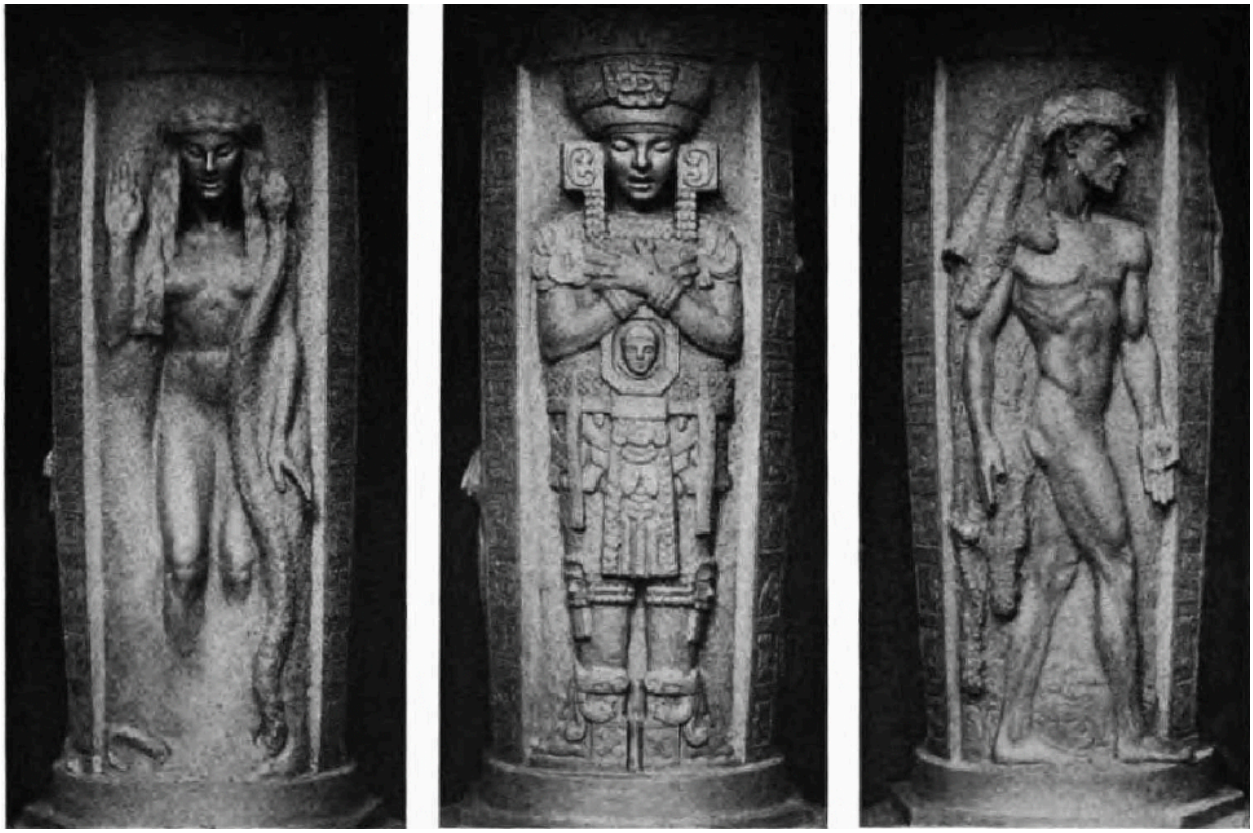
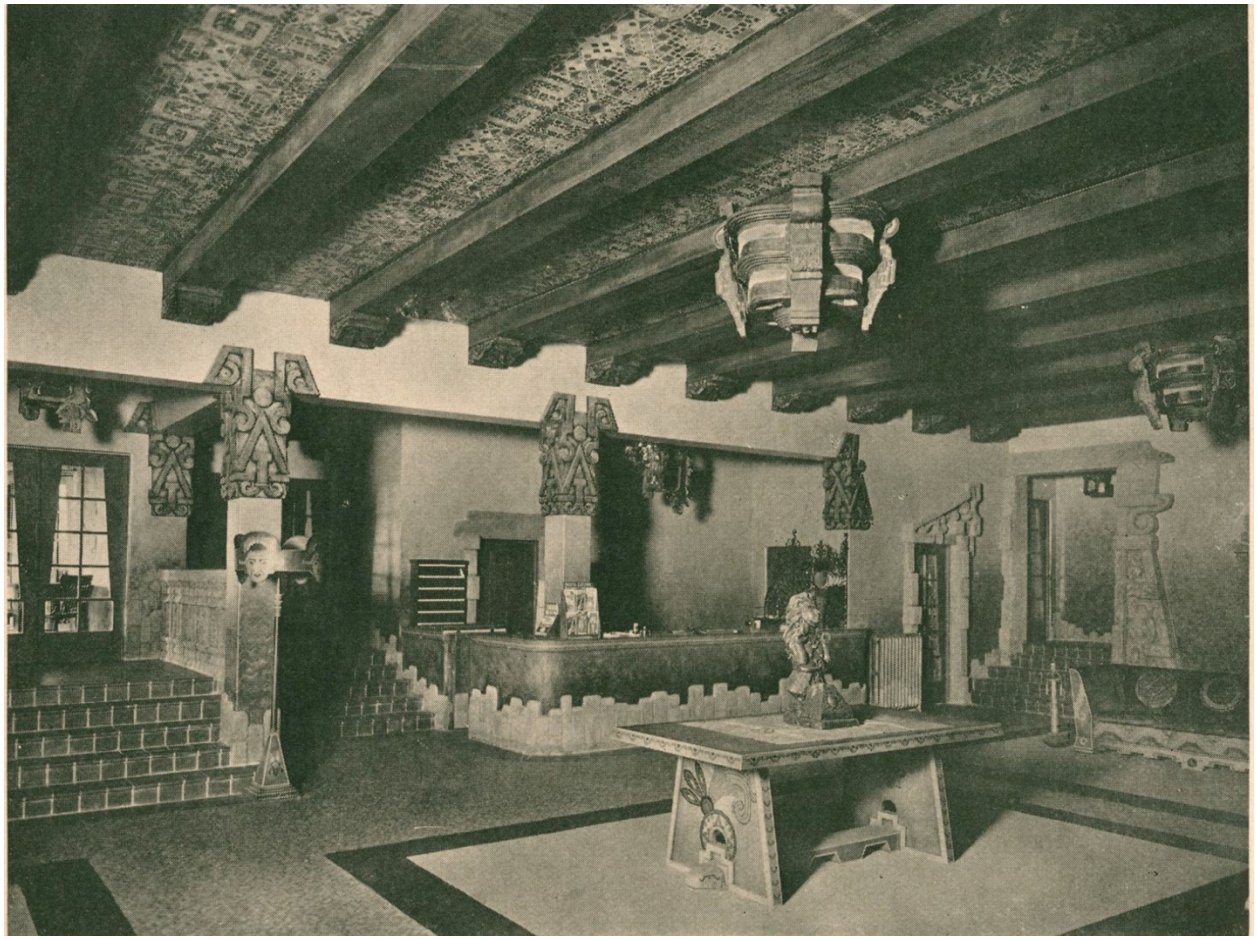
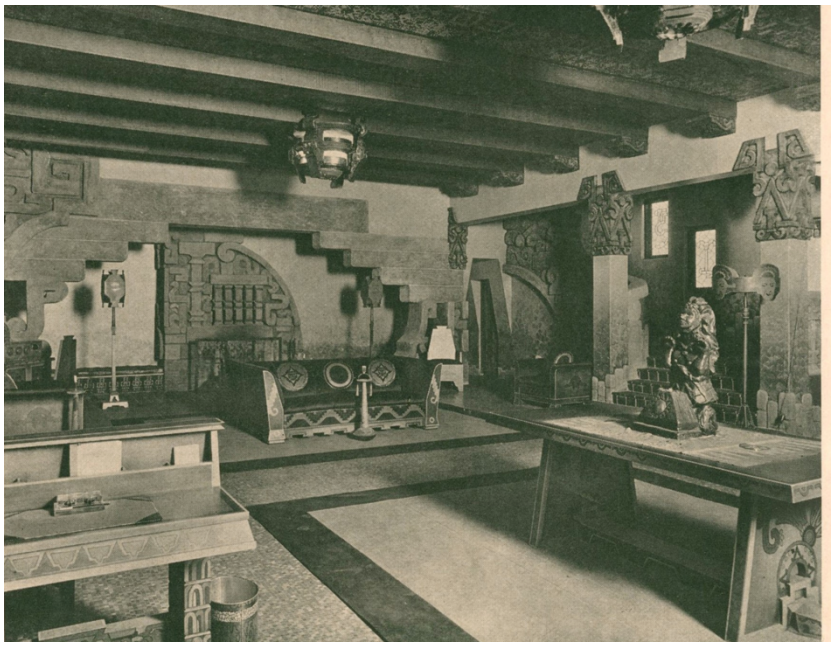


Figure 1.6: Detail of the Blue Aztec Garden, 1928 (above) and detail 2018 (below).

Figure 1.7: The Aztec Hotel, c.1920s

Figures 1.8: Lobby of the Aztec Hotel. Pics 1-3 taken c.1920s, pic 4 taken c.2010.





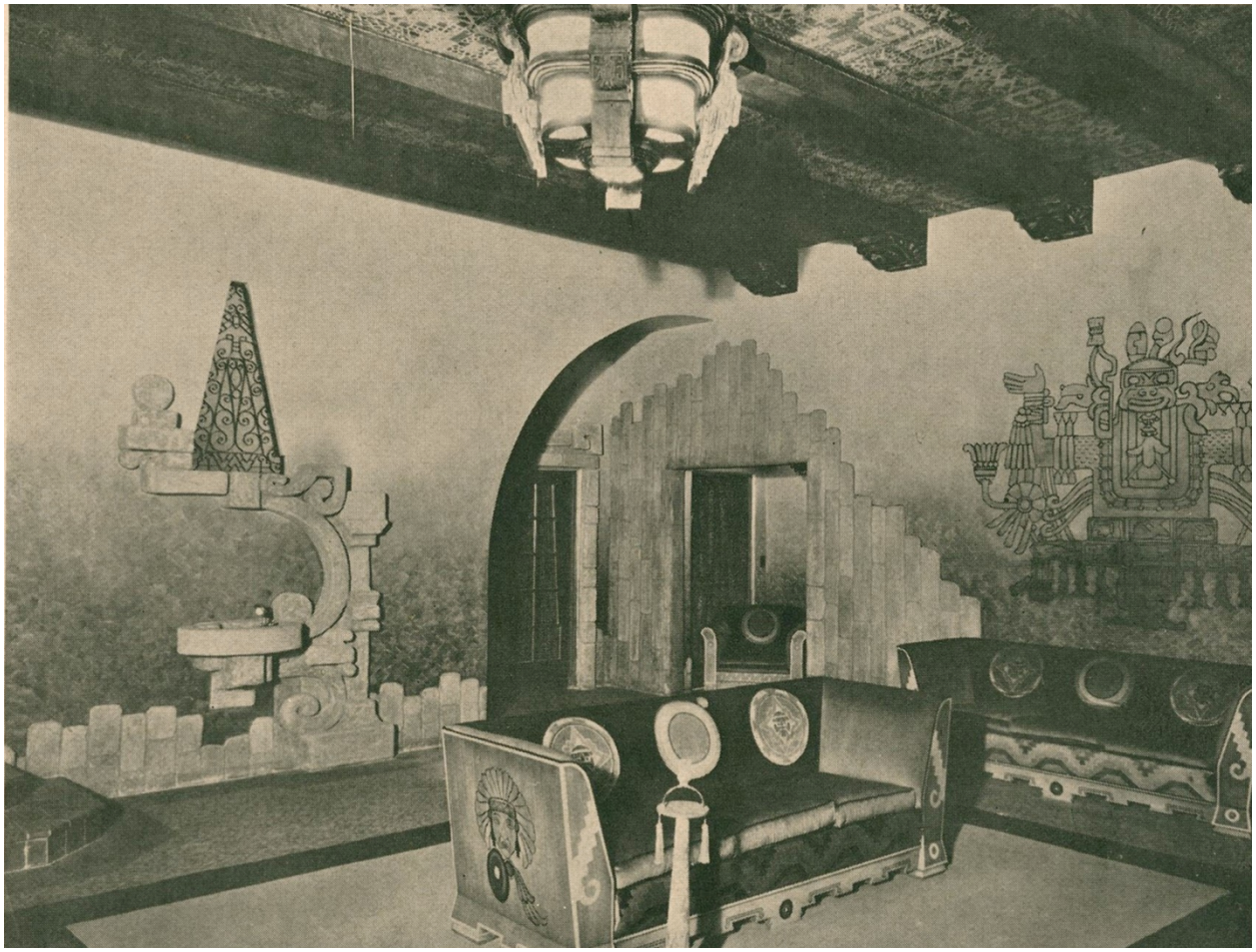


Figure 1.9: Architect Robert Stacy Judd dressed as a Mayan Priest in promotion for his work.

Figure 1.10: Detail of the exterior of the Aztec Hotel, ca.1920s.

Figure 1.11: Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House.

Figure 1.12: The Freeman House

Figure 1.13: The Millard House

Figure 1.14: The Storer House

Figure 1.15: The Ennis House

Figure 1.16: Detail of horizontal beams of the Freeman House.

Figure 1.17: Storer house detail of the blue tiles in the pool.

Figure 1.18: Detail of the Hollyhock House concrete block design.

Figure 2.1: Examples of Pro-Grammatic architecture in Los Angeles. The Tamale Café is in the shape of a Tamale, and Ben Hur Drip Café in the shape of a coffee pot.

Figure 2.2: Example of building in Los Angeles that experimented with color.

Figure 2.3: Example of fantastical design styles: A Storybook Home.

Figure 2.4: Mexican Fan Palm, in Los Angeles ca.1930s. Palm Drive, looking North from Adams Blvd.

Figure 2.5: Monroe Doctrine Coin, front and back. North and South America are depicted as woman allegories.

Figure 2.6: An example of a Spanish-Mission Style home: The 1928 Burns House, a Mediterranean Revival home built by Guy Worth Calkins.

Figure 2.7: Example of a Neo-Prehispanic style frieze on the exterior of a building. Wiltern Theater, Los Angeles.

Figure 2.8: The Eastern-Columbia Building.

Figure 2.9: “Founded by Adolph Sieroty”

Figure 2.10: The Eastern-Columbia Building and its color in context with the surrounding buildings.

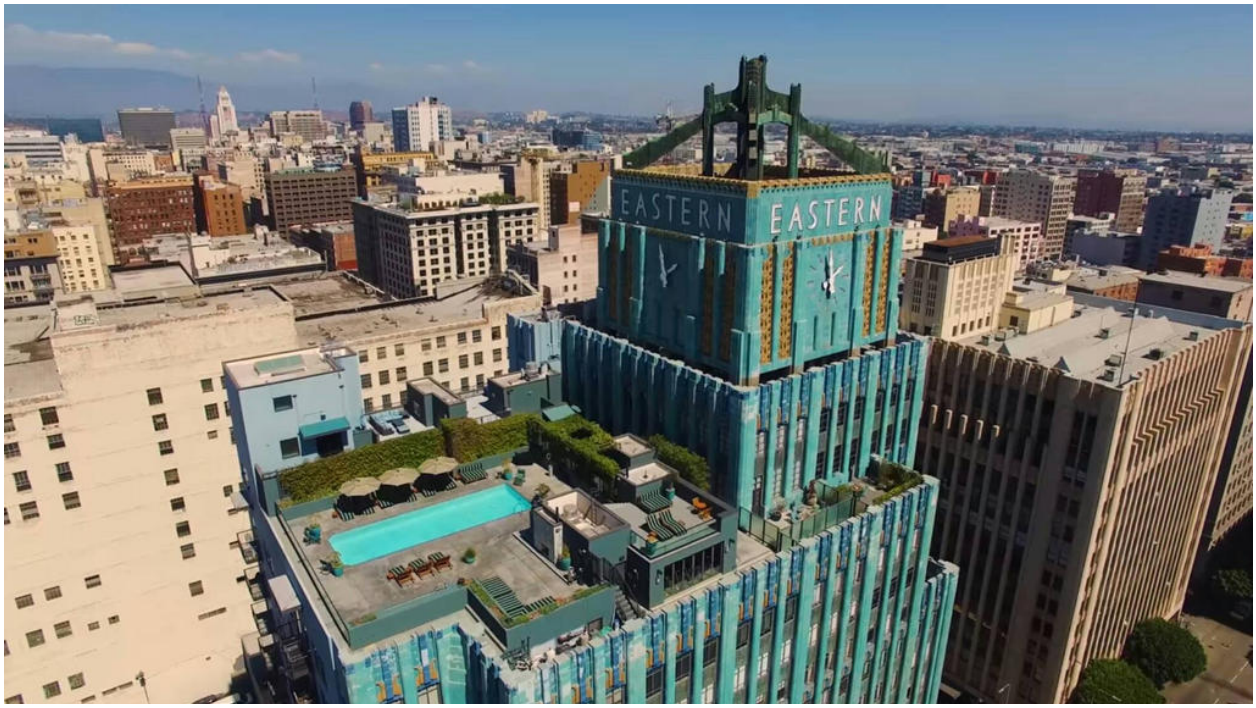


Figure 2.11: Clock Tower Friezes.

Figure 2.12: Lobby Entrance.

Figure 2.13: The Growth of the Miracle Mile.
Above: Corner of Wilshire/La Brea (intersection on the bottom right) and Wilshire Fairfax (intersection on the bottom left). Visible are oil derricks and farmland, with the suburbs of Hollywood above. 1922
Below: A Kodachrome photo of the Miracle Mile, ca. 1945.

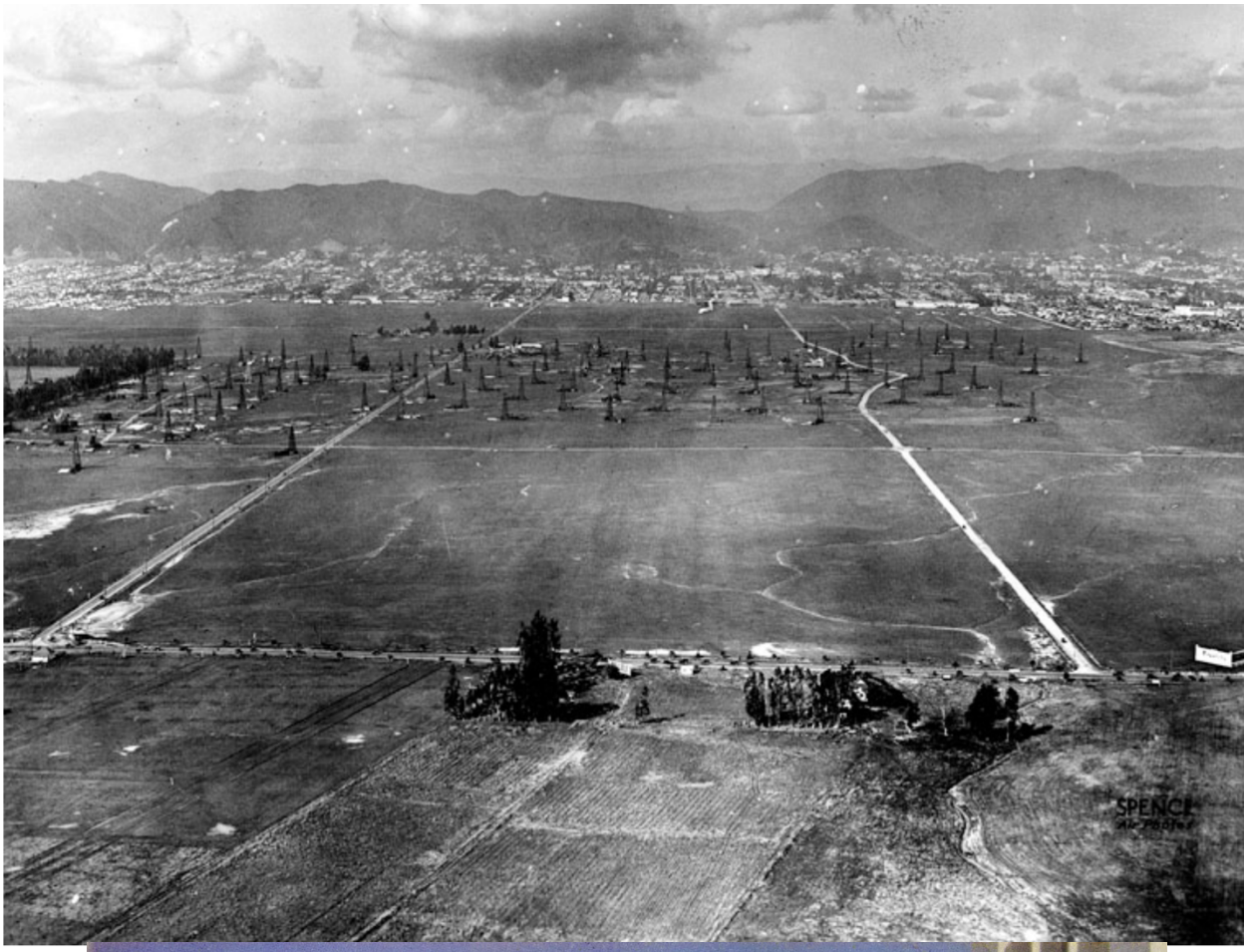


Figure 2.14: Wilshire Tower.

Figure 2.15: Wilshire Professional Building


Wilshire

Figure 2.16: The Dominguez Wilshire Building

Figure 2.17: Wilshire Tower, an abstracted form of Uxmal. Above: Wilshire Tower c.1936. Below: Uxmal.

Figure 2.18: Wilshire Tower: blooming tower frieze detail.

Figure 2.19: Side Street Frieze, pyramid center with extending hands and an eagle and dragon.

Figure 2.20: Street-facing Frieze, bearded man with protractor.

Figure 2.21: Adam and Eve Scene.

Figure 3.1:
Example of skyscraper in Neo-Classical Style.
Photograph from Francisco Mujica, *History of the Skyscraper*.

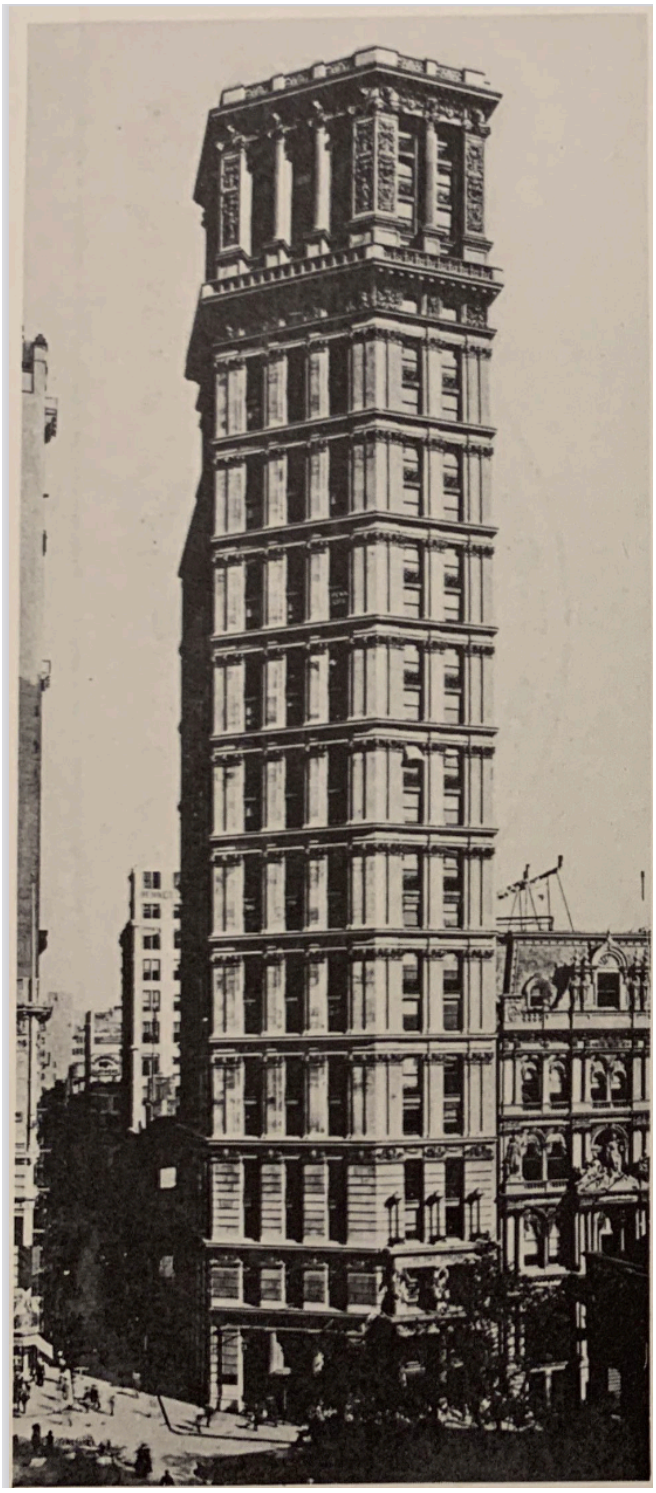


Figure 3.2:
Example of skyscraper in Gothic Style
Sketching from Francisco Mujica, *History of the Skyscraper*

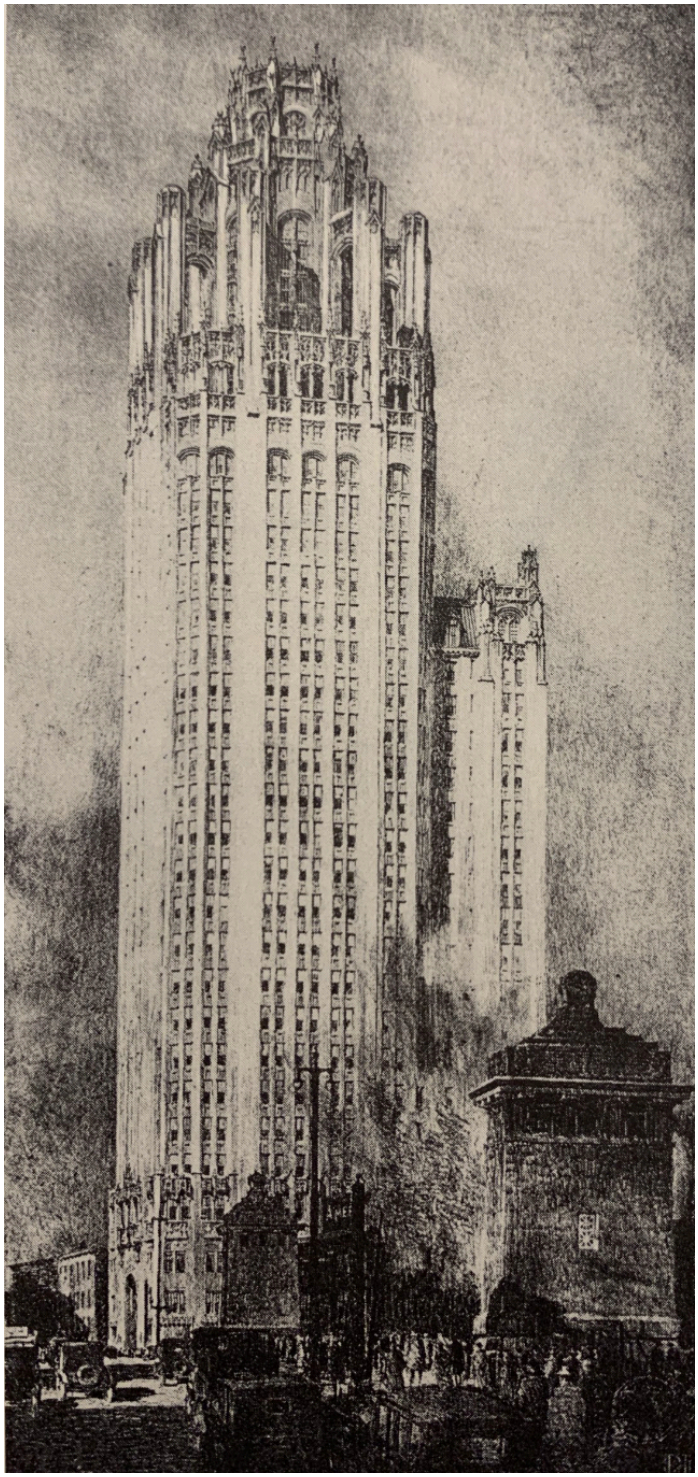
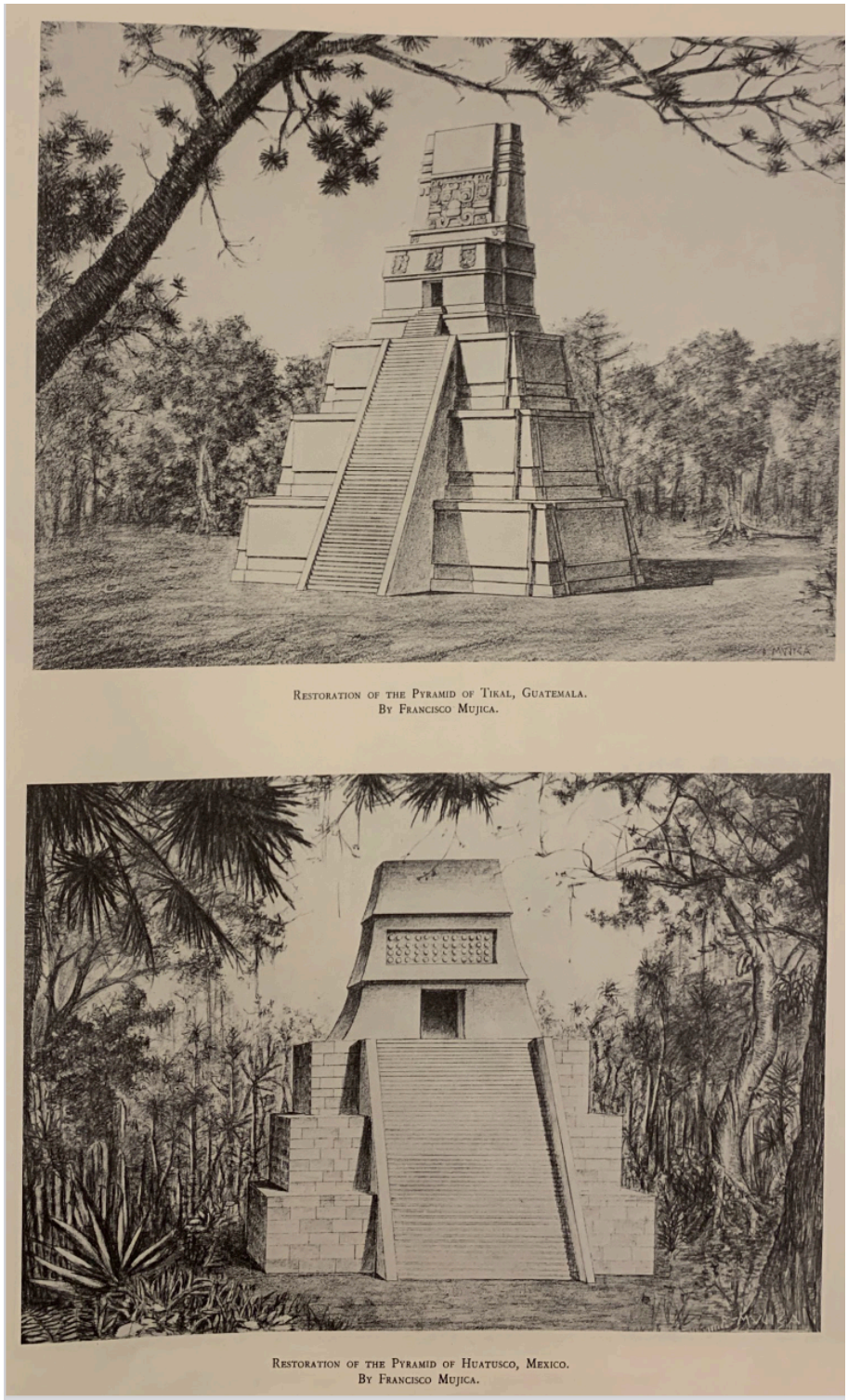


Figure 3.3:
Example of set-back skyscraper.
Sketching from Francisco Mujica, *History of the Skyscraper*

Figure 3.4-3.5
Sketchings of indigenous Mayan architecture. The imagined restoration of Tikal, Guatemala, and the imagined restoration of Huatusco, Mexico.
Sketching from Francisco Mujica, *History of the Skyscraper*



Restoration of the Pyramid of Tikal, Guatemala.
By Francisco Mujica.

Restoration of the Pyramid of Huatusco, Mexico.
By Francisco Mujica.

Figure 3.6:
Illustration of Francisco Mujica's vision of "Neo-American" skyscraper.
Sketching by Francisco Mujica, *History of the Skyscraper*

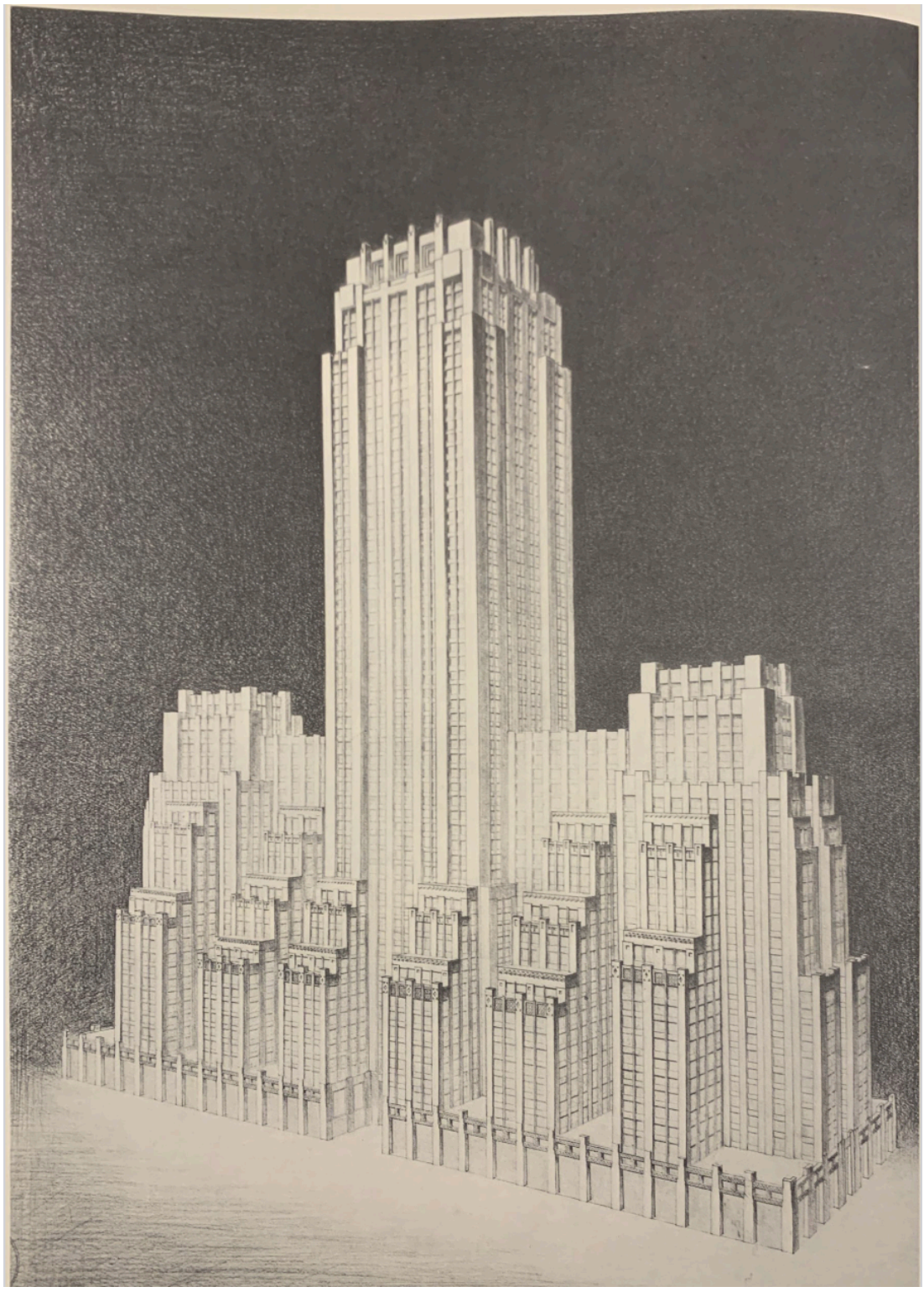


Figure 3.7:
Illustration of Francisco Mujica's "Neo-American" hundred story city of the future.
Sketching by Francisco Mujica, *History of the Skyscraper*

Figure 3.8:
Sketching of a pyramid in Tikal, Guatemala. Particularly interesting to note the inclusion of figures and other architectural elements in the foreground and background.
Sketching from Alfred Bossom, *Building to the Skies…*

Figure 3.9:
"The 35 Story Building of Today," the tip and general form is reflective of Bossom's imagined restoration of the Tikal pyramid
Sketching from Alfred Bossom, *Building to the Skies…*

Figure 3.10: Bullocks Wilshire, Los Angeles, CA

Figure 3.11:
Los Angeles Transit map, 1928.
Future site of Bullocks Wilshire seen in red square, drawn by author.

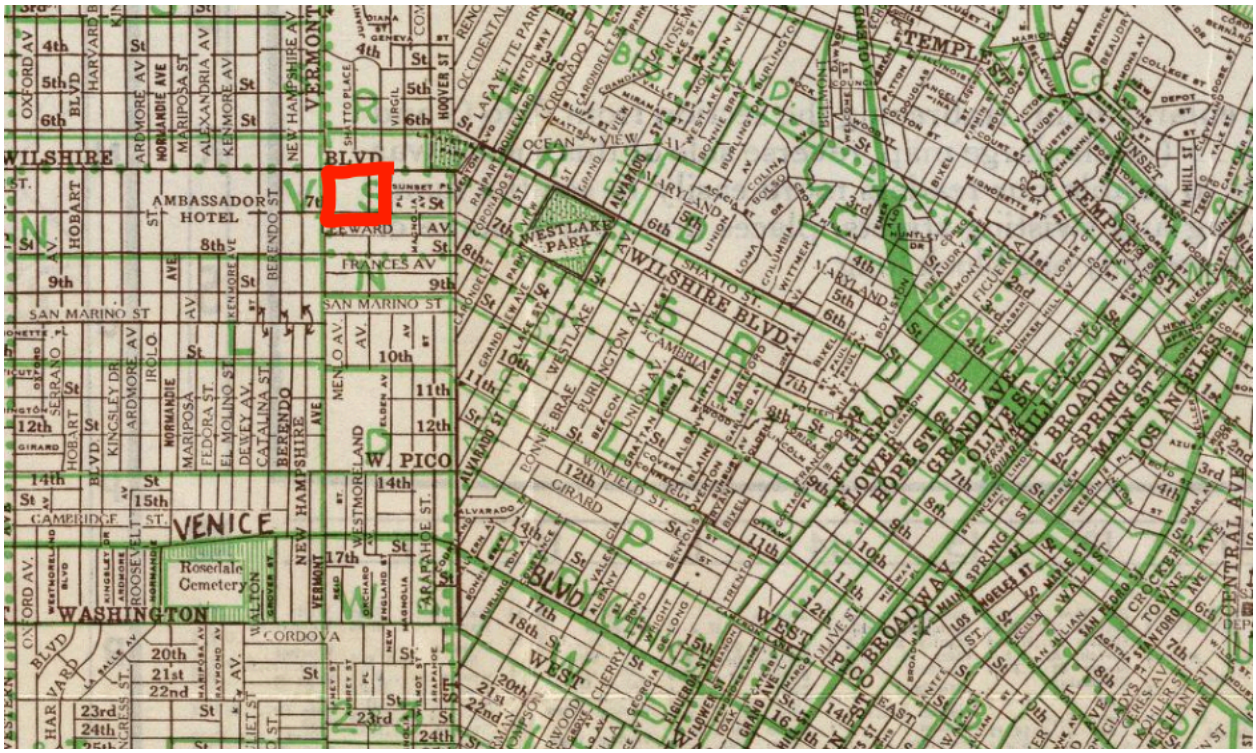


Figure 3.12:
Detail of Bullock's Wilshire Tower.

Figure 3.13: Preliminary sketch of Bullocks Wilshire
Published in Sexton, *American Commercial Buildings of Today…*

PRELIMINARY SKETCH, BULLOCK'S STORE,
LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

JOHN PARKINSON AND DONALD B. PARKINSON,
ARCHITECTS.

Figure 3.14: Close up of Patina Green detail on Wilshire Bullock's.

Figure 3.15:
Detail of mural, *Speed of Transportation*.
Created by Herman Sachs

4.1:
América Tropical, Mural. A close associate of David Siqueiros, Roberto Berdecio, posing with newly completed mural (above). The restored mural (below).