

The Evolution of

Former Community Redevelopment Agency Principal Planner Yukio Kawaratani has spent the last few years assembling more than 600 documents, studies, reports and photos relating to the history of Bunker Hill. Parts of these have been turned into the Bunker Hill Historical Presentation, a series of nine poster-boards detailing distinct chapters in the evolution of the community. The L.A. Downtown News is running excerpts of the text and photo collection.

PART FOUR OF A NINE-PART SERIES

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THE STUDIES, 1945-1959

The passage of the California Community Redevelopment Law in 1945 and Title 1 of the Federal Housing Acts of 1946 and 1949 provided cities with legal and financial support for combating urban blight by the use of redevelopment. The Los Angeles City Council created the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles (CRA) in 1948. William T. Sesson, Jr., a businessman from a prominent family, became the first board chairman for 17 years. Surveys and early planning studies for the CRA were conducted by the City Planning, Health and Housing departments. They showed that Bunker Hill had many problems, as about 82 percent of the housing units were deteriorated, overcrowded, unhealthy and unsafe. The high cost of health, fire and police services far exceeded the taxes collected from Bunker Hill. The many low-income single men, transients and indigents who lived there attracted and created a Skid Row type of environment. In 1956-57, architects Pereira and Luckman and other consultants conducted studies and prepared reports, plans and sketches for the proposed Bunker Hill Redevelopment Plan. The federal government

PART FOUR Bunker Hill



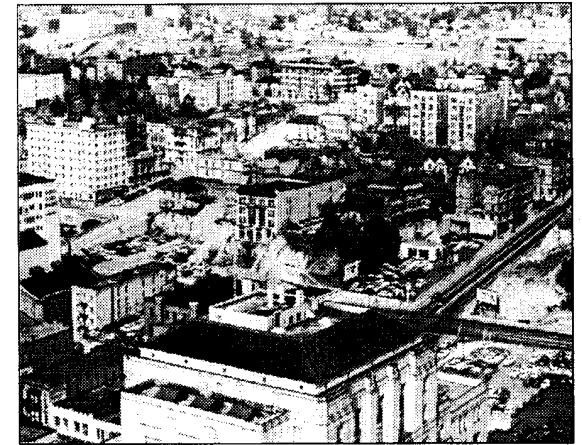
Mansions lining Grand Avenue.

photo by Leonard Nodel

then approved applications submitted for major loans and grants to help fund the redevelopment plan. After a year of many public hearings, the Bunker Hill Urban Renewal Project was approved by the City Council on March 31, 1959. Five lawsuits were immediately filed challenging the redevelopment plan, but, later, in 1964, after proceeding through the lower courts, the California Supreme Court upheld the plan.

To see previous installments of "The Evolution of Bunker Hill" visit the L.A. Downtown News website at www.LADowntownNews.com

Next week: The Start, 1960-1969



Bunker Hill viewed from City Hall.

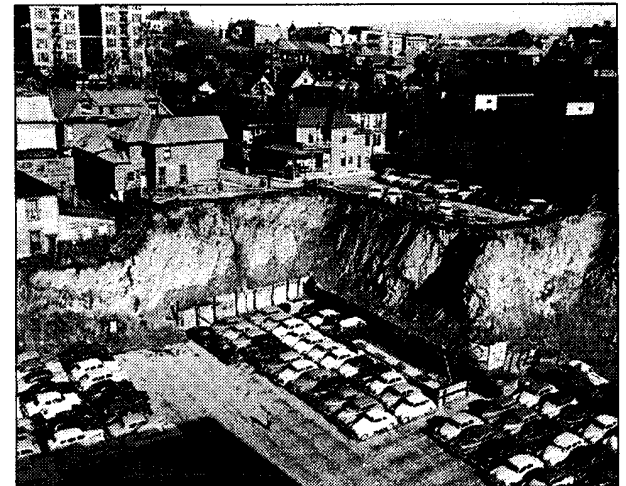


photo by Leonard Nodel

Topographic changes near Second and Hill streets.

