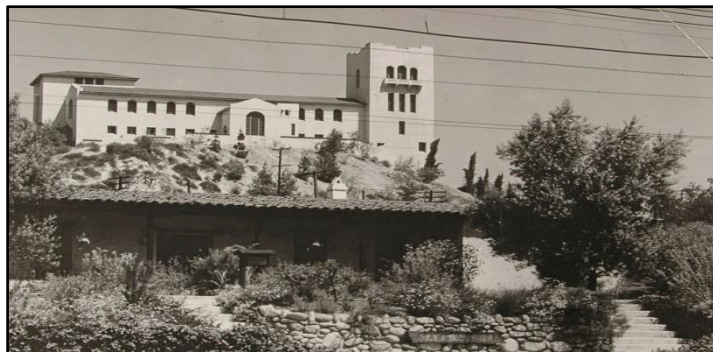


## The Southwest Museum Site National Treasure Summary

The first museum in Los Angeles, the Southwest Museum, was opened in 1914 by Charles Lummis, a visionary historian whose unparalleled collection of Native American art and artifacts is considered one of the most important and comprehensive of its kind. Throughout the 20th century the



historic museum building, sited prominently in Mt. Washington and designed by Sumner Hunt and his partner Silas Burns, welcomed visitors from around the world.

However, many years of financial challenges and declining attendance led the Southwest Museum to merge with the Autry Museum of the American West (Autry). At that time, the Autry assumed responsibility for the site's historic buildings, which includes the historic Southwest Museum of the American Indian and the 1917 Casa de Adobe, a large, hand-built adobe structure that was intended to be a replica of a historic early California rancho, its 12-acre campus, an archive, and a large and important collection of ethnographic and archaeological artifacts. While the Autry has completed the careful documentation, conservation, and preservation of the museum's vast collection of art and artifacts in their new Resources Center and stabilized the historic museum building to address earthquake damage, the Autry and the community were not able to reach consensus on the most viable, appropriate, and sustainable use for the historic buildings and grounds.

The [National Trust for Historic Preservation](#) and their Los Angeles Office announced the Southwest Museum Site as a [National Treasure](#) in January 2015, to a large and enthusiastic audience. With this designation the National Trust kicked off a complex, multi-phased planning process that included intensive stakeholder interviews; an online public survey of over 4,000 people; a year-long event series intended to test different uses and draw new audiences and communities to experience the site in new ways; the formation of a broad-based Steering Committee to advise our work; a detailed market assessment; and a feasibility study.

The end goal of the campaign is identification of appropriate, financially sustainable, long-term uses for the Southwest Museum site that will reactive the buildings and grounds and respond to community needs. Visit [TreasureSWM.org](http://TreasureSWM.org) for more information.

# The Southwest Museum Site National Treasure

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What is the National Trust doing for the Southwest Museum Site?**

**A:** The National Trust is serving as a neutral facilitator to manage a multi-phased planning process that includes interviews, online survey, and public outreach; the development of a market assessment; exploring options and conducting due diligence with potential partners; and preparing a Request for Interest (RFI) for the Southwest Museum Site. A [15-member Steering Committee](#) was created in late 2015 to help shape recommendations during each phase of the planning process, and the Steering Committee's recommendations at each stage are forwarded to the board of the Autry.

**Q: How is this planning process different from what's been tried before?**

**A:** This process is different because the National Trust engaged as an outside, neutral facilitator to convene stakeholders from the Autry, the surrounding community, and many other interested entities in Los Angeles to work collaboratively towards a shared vision for the Southwest Museum Site. While past efforts have focused primarily on the issue of whether or not continued use as a museum is viable at the site, our goal is to find ways to revitalize the site that balance numerous stakeholder desires and priorities with the pressing issues of financial feasibility and sustainable long-term stewardship.

**Q: Who will make the final decision about what happens at the Southwest Museum Site?**

**A:** As the owner of the building, the Board of Trustees of the Autry will make the final decision on recommendations emerging from our work. A representative from the Autry's board and two members of the Autry staff serve on the Steering Committee and will bring recommendations from the National Trust and the Steering Committee to the board of the Autry on a regular basis to ensure that they are fully informed and supportive of the options being explored.

**Q: How long will this planning process take?**

**A:** The National Trust announced the Southwest Museum Site as a National Treasure in January of 2015. Because this is very complex and challenging task, we expect that our work will take several years to complete. We encountered a few delays early in the process and have significantly expanded the scope of work in recent years to explore concepts and due diligence with a few potential partners, and to develop a Request for Interest to capture the increasing interest in the SWM campus and the Casa de Adobe. Depending on the nature of the responses to the RFI, we are now estimating that our work will conclude in 2019.

**Q: Is information about this planning effort available in both English and Spanish?**

**A:** While the Stakeholder Interview Summary Report is not available in Spanish, all sections of the National Treasure website offer options for Spanish translations. The new version of the [TreasureSWM.org](https://www.treasureswm.org) website now allows for the text to be translated into several languages of the readers choosing using Google translate.

**Q: How was the Steering Committee selected?**

**A:** The [15 members of the Steering Committee](#) includes 3 representatives from the Autry (two staff and one board member chosen by the Autry), 2 community representatives from the NE Los Angeles neighborhoods surrounding the site (nominated by the community), and 10 at-large representatives. At-large representatives include elected officials, representatives from academic institutions, and professionals with expertise in areas such as historic preservation, museums, philanthropy, arts and culture, cultural affairs, education and academics, economic development, Native American culture, Latino culture, parks and public lands, city planning, land use, business development and community development. Suggestions for at-large steering committee members were solicited during the stakeholder interviews and we reviewed nearly 80 candidates. At-large members were selected by the National Trust to ensure that the committee included a broad and high level of professional expertise in the areas listed above as well as including visionary and open-minded leaders who are consensus builders and strategic thinkers.

**Q: What is the role of the Steering Committee for this planning process?**

**A:** The Steering Committee plays a pivotal role in our work by critically assessing the data from the stakeholder interview report and many other sources, developing informed recommendations, and guiding the assessment of proposed concepts and potential partners. The National Trust's and Steering Committee's final recommendations will be presented to the Board of the Autry for the approval.

