

State of California & The Resources Agency
 DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary #
 HRI #
 Trinomial
NRHP Status Code

Other
 Review Code

Reviewer

Date

Listings

Page 1 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) _____

*Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument

P1. Other Identifier: Montebello Genocide Memorial **DRAFT**

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

*a. County Los Angeles and (P2c, P2e, and P2b or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad Los Angeles Date 2022 T ; R ; of of Sec ; B.M.

c. Address 901 Via San Clemente City Montebello Zip 90640

UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone 11S, 395591.56 mE/ 3765892.70 mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, decimal degrees, etc., as appropriate)

Latitude/Longitude: 34.028437°, -118.130940° (see Continuation Sheet, p 14)

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

The Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument (Monument), also known as the Montebello Genocide Memorial, was planned, designed, and constructed between 1966 and 1968. It is located in Bicknell Park within the approximately 118-acre Montebello Golf Course in Montebello, California, which is owned by the City of Montebello (City). The Monument is situated at the top of a gently sloping hill with a manicured lawn and scattered trees surrounded by an asphalt-paved parking lot and driveway. A curvilinear walkway traverses the lawn diagonally from the southwest and northeast corners, providing pedestrian access to the Monument from the parking lot (see **Photo 1**). The broader environment consists of a public golf course with banquet facilities, hotel buildings, and golf related amenities to the north and east.

(See Continuation Sheet, page 14)

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP26. Monument/mural/gravestone

P5a. Photograph or Drawing (Photograph required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



*P4. Resources Present: Building
 Structure Object Site
 District Element of District
 Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5b. Description of Photo: (view, date, accession #)

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: Historic Prehistoric
 Both

*P7. Owner and Address:
Montebello City Park
1700 W. Victoria Avenue
Montebello, CA 90640

*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address) Audrey von Ahrens, GPA Consulting
617 Olive Street, Suite 910
Los Angeles, CA 90014

*P9. Date Recorded: 11/22/2024

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)
California Register

*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey

report and other sources, or enter "none.") None

*Attachments: NONE Location Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure, and Object Record
 Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record
 Artifact Record Photograph Record Other (List): _____

State of California & The Resources Agency Primary #
 DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION HRI#
BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument *NRHP Status Code _____
 Page 2 of 42

B1. Historic Name: Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument
 B2. Common Name: Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument
 B3. Original Use: Monument B4. Present Use: Monument

*B5. Architectural Style: Modern with Armenian Church Architecture influences

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)
 April 1967: Construction commenced; April 1968: last (8th) tower column erected; May 18, 1968: two khachkars (commemorative stones) installed at monument base during dedication; 2014-16: tree removed from monument base (north planter)¹; 2016-17: Scored concrete paving added at west entrance.²

*B7. Moved? No Yes Unknown Date: _____ Original Location: _____

*B8. Related Features: Public park

B9a. Architect: H. Hrant Agbabian b. Builder: Bedrosian-Zakarian Construction Co.

*B10. Significance: Theme Ethnic History (Armenian) Area California
 Period of Significance 1966-1968 Property Type Object Applicable Criteria 1,2

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

The Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) at the local and state levels of significance. It is significant under Criterion 1 within the context of Armenian American history as the first major Armenian Genocide memorial in the United States. It has an important association with the Armenian American community in Southern California, including the work of the Armenian Monuments Committee and a cultural revival in the 1960s that unified the Armenian diaspora and ultimately paved the way for broader recognition of the Armenian Genocide. The Monument is also eligible under Criterion 3 for its high artistic value as a modern, sculptural interpretation of traditional Armenian Church architecture designed by local Armenian American architect and artist, H. Hrant Agbabian. The period of significance is 1966 to 1968, encompassing the period when the Monument was planned, designed, and constructed.

(See Continuation Sheet, page 16)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) _____

*B12. References:

(See Continuation Sheet, page 26)

B13. Remarks:

*B14. Evaluator: Audrey von Ahrens, GPA Consulting *Date of Evaluation: 11/22/2024

¹ Street View Image, May 2014, September 2012, Courtesy of Google Maps,

² Street View Image, June 2016, April 2017, Courtesy of Google Maps.

Name of Property: Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument
City or Vicinity: Montebello
County: Los Angeles County
State: California
Name of Photographer: Audrey von Ahrens
Date of Photographs: April 2024, June 2024
No. of Photographs: 16

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating camera:

- 1 of 16 Monument and surrounding hillside; camera facing northeast.
- 2 of 16 Monument tower and west access stair; camera facing east.
- 3 of 16 Monument tower, west access stair, south planter with urn, and south access ramp; camera facing northeast.
- 4 of 16 Monument tower, south planter with urn, and south access ramp; camera facing north.
- 5 of 16 Monument tower, south access ramp, south planter with urn, and east wall of base; camera facing west.
- 6 of 16 Monument tower, north access stairs, and north planter; camera facing south.
- 7 of 16 Detail view of monument tower showing confluence of angled columns and opening at apex; camera facing southeast.
- 8 of 16 Detail view of monument base and plinth beneath tower; camera facing northeast.
- 9 of 16 Detail view of monument base stacked and basketweave bond brick pavers; camera facing northeast.
- 10 of 16 Detail view of monument base with stacked bond brick pavers and integrated concrete benches; camera facing southwest.
- 11 of 16 Detail view of south planter with urn, integrated concrete benches, and south access ramp; camera facing south.
- 12 of 16 Plaques on top face of north wall of west stair, inscribed with monument Architect and Contractor; camera facing north.
- 13 of 16 Plaque on east face of west column listing original Armenian Monument Committee members; camera facing northwest.
- 14 of 16 Detail view of monument plinth and plaque; camera facing southeast.
- 15 of 16 Detail view of *khachkar* on north face of monument plinth; camera facing south.
- 16 of 16 Detail view of *khachkar* on south face of monument plinth; camera facing north.

Photo 1. Monument and surrounding hillside; camera facing northeast.



Photo 2. Monument tower and west access stair; camera facing east.



Photo 3. Monument tower, west access stair, south planter with urn, and south access ramp; camera facing northeast.



Photo 4. Monument tower, south planter with urn, and south access ramp; camera facing north.



Photo 5. Monument tower, south access ramp, south planter with urn, and east wall of base; camera facing west.



Photo 6. Monument tower, north access stairs, and north planter; camera facing south.



Photo 7. Detail view of monument tower showing confluence of angled columns and opening at apex; camera facing southeast.



Photo 8. Detail view of monument base and plinth beneath tower; camera facing northeast.



Photo 9. Detail view of monument base stacked and basketweave bond brick pavers; camera facing northeast.



Photo 10. Detail view of monument base with stacked bond brick pavers and integrated concrete benches; camera facing southwest.



Photo 11. Detail view of south planter with urn, integrated concrete benches, and south access ramp; camera facing south.



Photo 12. Plaques on top face of north wall of west stair, inscribed with monument Architect and Contractor; camera facing north.



Photo 13. Plaque on east face of west column listing original Armenian Monument Committee members; camera facing northwest.



Photo 14. Detail view of monument plinth and plaque; camera facing southeast.

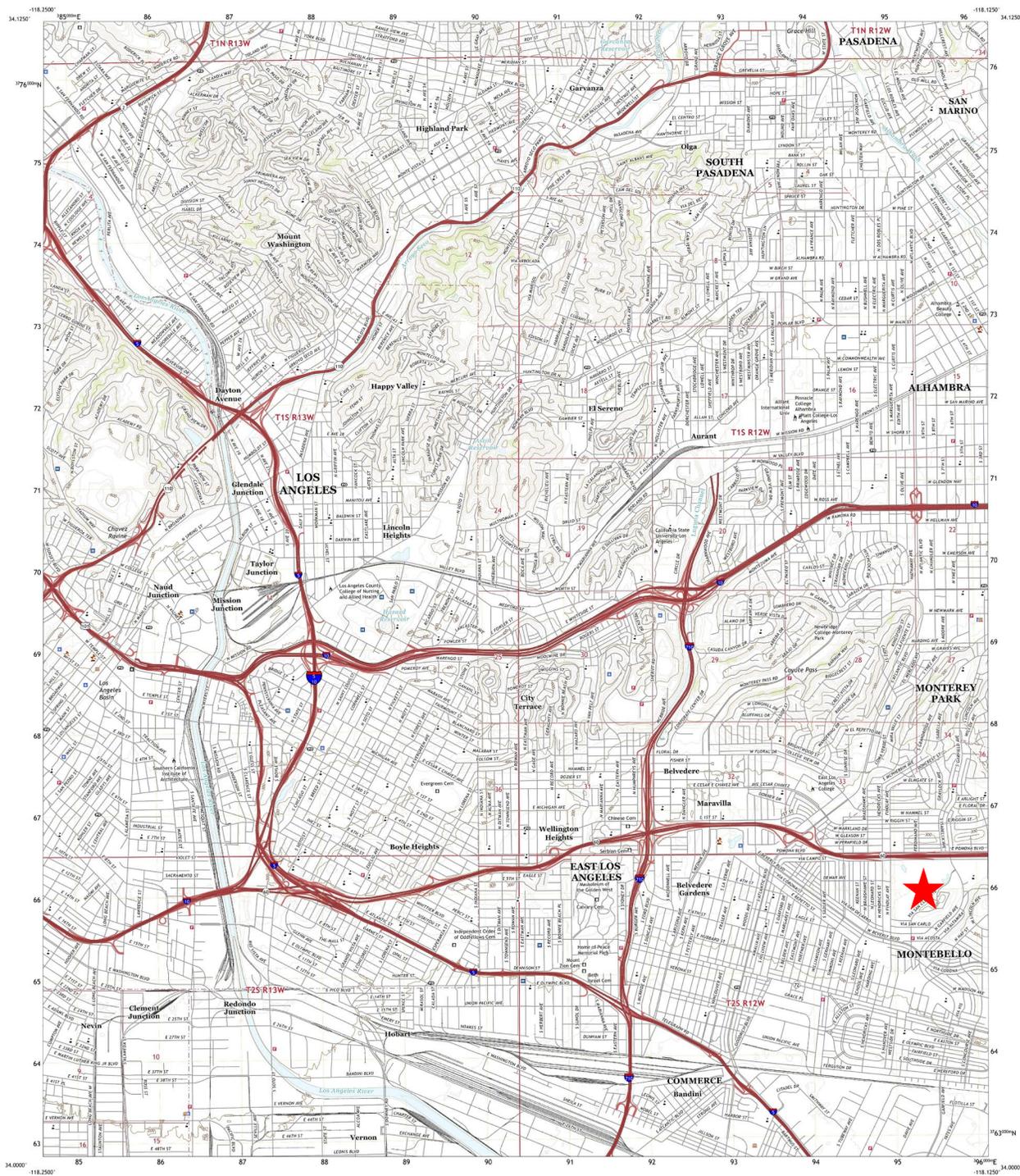


Photo 15. Detail view of *khachkar* on north face of monument plinth; camera facing south.



Photo 16. Detail view of khachkar on south face of monument plinth; camera facing north.







Page 14 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument

*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024

Continuation Update

*P2e. Other Locational Data (Continued from page 1):



*P3a. Description (Continued from page 1):

The Monument stands over 60 feet high and is composed of an elevated base with tower (see **Photo 2** through **Photo 6**). Primary building materials include concrete and stone. The tower is made up of eight tall, narrow concrete columns arranged in a circle. The tops of the columns are tapered to points and angled inward to meet at the center, forming a ring (see **Photo 7**). Cast-concrete arches span between pairs of columns and taper near the top, forming a conical canopy.³ The elevated base is roughly T-shaped in plan, consisting of a rectangular concrete pad directly beneath the tower and narrow, elevated planter beds extending to the north and south. The surface of the concrete pad is laid with brick pavers in stacked and basket weave bond patterns (see **Photo 8** through **Photo 11**). The rectangular pad and planters are enclosed by perimeter walls clad in stone veneer with breaks at three asymmetrically arranged entry points to the platform. The entry points are articulated by exaggerated wing walls, also clad in stone veneer. Concrete steps provide access to the platform from the west (see **Photo 2**) and north (see **Photo 6**), and a concrete ramp provides access from the south (see **Photo 4**). On the interior face of the perimeter wall, there are cast concrete benches. A wide, shallow cast-concrete urn adorns the south end of the southern planter bed (see **Photo 11**).

³ "Overview of the Monument," Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument, 2010, accessed March 2024, <http://armenianmonument.org/monument-overview.html>. "Monument to 1915 Martyrs Rising in Park," *Los Angeles Times*, February 11, 1968, 150, Newspapers.com, accessed March 2024, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/382495529>.

Page 15 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument

*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024

Continuation Update

Beneath the north edge of the tower there is a polygonal concrete plinth clad in stacked-bond brick veneer (see **Photo 8**). The plinth projects from the brick-paved base of the tower at an angle and is topped with a plaque facing west (see **Photo 14**). The inscription on the plaque reads:

ARMENIAN MARTYRS MEMORIAL MONUMENT

Հայ Նահատակաց Հոլշարձան

THIS MONUMENT,
ERECTED BY AMERICANS
OF ARMENIAN DESCENT,
IS DEDICATED TO THE
1,500,000 ARMENIAN VICTIMS
OF THE GENOCIDE PERPETRATED
BY THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT,
1915-1921, AND TO THE MEN OF ALL
NATIONS WHO HAVE FALLEN
VICTIM TO CRIMES AGAINST
HUMANITY.
APRIL 21, 1968

Two *khachkars* (see page 6 for detailed description of *khachkars*), are on the north (see **Photo 15**) and south (see **Photo 16**) face of the plinth. They are carved with a geometric floral motif and inscriptions in Armenian, which are translated in quotations below.

North-facing *khachkar*:

Օրհնութիւն Հայ Նահատակաց

“Bless the Armenian Martyrs”

South-facing *khachkar*:

Սուրբ Էջմիածին

“Holy Etchmiadzin”⁴

Affixed to the inner face of the westernmost column is a bronze plaque (see **Photo 13**) inscribed as follows:

ARMENIAN MONUMENT COUNCIL, INC.
MEMBERS

HAGOP ABDULIAN	GEORGE K. MANDOSSIAN
H. HRANT AGBABIAN	HAGOP MANJIKIAN
KRIKOR AIVAZIAN	MICHAEL MINASIAN
HAGOP ARSHAGOUNI	VASKEN MINASIAN
MARILYN ARSHAGOUNI	BOB MOVEL
VARTAN FUNDUKIAN	VAROUGAN MOVSESIAN
HARMIK HACOBIAN	HAGOP NAZARIAN
RICHARD G. HOVANNISIAN	MISAK SEVACHERIAN
OSHEEN KESHISHIAN	JIVAN TABIBIAN

Two separate bronze plaques identifying the architect and contractor are located on the top face of the north stone perimeter wall at the west stairs (see **Photo 12**). The top plaque identifies the name of the architect:

H. HRANT AGBABIAN A.I.A.
ARCHITECT
1968

The bottom plaque identifies the name of the contractor:

⁴ Holy Etchmiadzin refers to the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, “the spiritual and administrative headquarters of the worldwide Armenian Church,” located near the capital of Yerevan in the Republic of Armenia. “Mother See of the Holy Etchmiadzin,” The Armenian Church, accessed May 2024, <https://www.armenianchurch.org/index.jsp?sid=1&id=4&pid=1>.

Page 16 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument

*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024

Continuation Update

BEDROSIAN-ZAKARIAN
CONSTRUCTION CO. - GENERAL CONTRACTORS

Alterations

The monument remains largely unaltered from when it was initially completed in 1968. Known alterations are limited to the removal of two trees that were in the north and south planters of the tower base, and the addition of paved concrete in front of the west entrance stairs (circa 2014-2016). Since construction of the monument was completed, a relic from the Martyrs Museum in Beirut, Lebanon, has been embedded into the monument⁵ and the wording on the plaque was changed to reflect the inscription initially proposed by the Armenian Monuments Committee (date unknown).

****B10. Significance (Continued from page 2):**

The Monument is a property that was primarily commemorative in intent; however, it has its own historical significance as a precedent-setting project that represents the efforts of Armenian American activists and governmental support for the Armenian diaspora. The history of the Monument itself has become the subject of extensive scholarly study, and the Monument continues to play an important role in the cultural traditions of the Armenian American community today.

Background

The following overview is not intended to be a comprehensive history of the events surrounding the Armenian Genocide. Rather, it is intended to provide context and understanding for the history of the Monument itself.

As one of many distinct ethnic groups living throughout the Ottoman Empire (consisting of present-day Turkey and portions of eastern Europe, western Asia, and northern Africa), Armenian Christians and other minority communities had been persecuted by those in power for generations. By the turn of the twentieth century, the Ottoman Empire was in tumultuous decline as various groups jockeyed for power or fought for their right to autonomy. In 1913, a group collectively known as the Young Turks seized power from the sultanate. While the Young Turks movement originated as a diverse group united against the leadership of Sultan Abdulhamid II, it quickly veered toward radical Turkish nationalism that would escalate through the collapse of the empire in the 1920s.⁶

After the Ottoman Empire entered World War I allied with the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Bulgaria), Armenian resistance was used as pretext for enacting harsh punishments. On April 25, 1915, at least 240 Armenian leaders and intellectuals were arrested by the Ottoman government and ultimately executed, marking the beginning of what is known today as the Armenian Genocide. The Armenian population was decimated by systematic violence including mass execution, death marches, holding camps, and forced labor and assimilation.⁷ In the years leading up to World War I, there had been approximately 2 million Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire. By 1922, fewer than 400,000 remained.⁸

The Armenian Genocide predated the origin of the term “genocide.” The term was coined in 1944 by lawyer Raphael Lemkin in his book, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, to describe atrocities carried out by the Nazis during World War II. After learning of the Armenian catastrophe as a young law student, Lemkin had dedicated his career to legal protection against destruction for religious, ethnic, and social groups.⁹ His efforts resulted in the adoption of the United Nations’ Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide on December 9, 1948, in which genocide was first codified as a crime.¹⁰ In order to receive backing for the adoption of the convention from member countries of the United Nations, the legal definition of the crime of genocide was negotiated and narrowed to “acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such.”¹¹

Historically, the Turkish government has challenged the assertion that the events constituted a genocide, citing the legal definition of the term—denying that the actions were carried out with intent to destroy the Armenians—and evoking the wider, turbulent context of World War I. It has long been a geo- and socio-politically sensitive issue, entwined with the series of events that led to the

⁵ Richard Hovannisian, interview by Karen Jungblut, USC Shoah Foundation, July 12, 2017, accessed March 2024, <https://vha.usc.edu/testimony/56863?from=search&mm=sub>.

⁶ “Young Turks and the Armenian Genocide,” Armenian National Institute, accessed May 2024, https://www.armenian-genocide.org/young_turks.html; “The Young Turks,” Harvard Divinity School: Religion and Public Life, accessed May 2024, <https://rpl.hds.harvard.edu/faq/young-turks>.

⁷ “The Armenian Genocide (1915-1916): In-Depth,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed May 2024, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-armenian-genocide-1915-16-in-depth>; “The Young Turks,” Harvard Divinity School.

⁸ John Kifner, “Times Topics: Armenian Genocide of 1915: An Overview,” *New York Times*, accessed May 2024, https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/ref/timestopics/topics_armeniangenocide.html?onwardjourney=584162_v1.

⁹ “Coining a Word and Championing a Cause: The Story of Raphael Lemkin,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed May 2024, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/coining-a-word-and-championing-a-cause-the-story-of-raphael-lemkin>.

¹⁰ “Ratification of the Genocide Convention,” United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, accessed May 2024, <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide-convention.shtml>.

¹¹ William A. Schabas, “The ‘Odious Scourge’: Evolving Interpretations of the Crime of Genocide,” *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 1, no. 2, (September 2006): 93, <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1241&context=gsp>; “Ratification of Genocide Convention,” United Nations.

Page 17 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument

*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024

Continuation Update

establishment of present-day Turkey, broad association of the term “genocide” with the Jewish Holocaust perpetrated by the Nazis during World War II, and diplomatic relationships between allied countries during the Cold War and beyond.¹²

Montebello’s Armenian American Community

Montebello, California has one of oldest Armenian communities in the United States, dating back to the late 1940s, and was home to the first Armenian neighborhood in Southern California.¹³ An Armenian American restaurateur, George Mardikian, is credited for bringing the Armenian community to Montebello.¹⁴ During World War II, Armenians were among the millions of displaced persons (DPs) throughout Europe. After the war, Allied nations created temporary shelter for DPs in public buildings, hotels, castles, private homes, and former military barracks. Residents in these DP camps were generally consolidated by nationality or country of origin, for the purposes of repatriation— returning people to their home country.¹⁵ As time went on, DPs would establish vibrant communities within the camps, complete with schools, churches, social clubs, and more.¹⁶ One such camp in Stuttgart, Germany, called Funkerkaserne, was assigned to Armenians with no home to return to. As word spread, more Armenians came to Funkerkaserne, which had a population of well over 2,000 Armenians by 1946 and became known in the area as “Little Armenia.”¹⁷ For some populations, repatriation was not a quick or simple effort, and required securing a country of emigration. Mardikian established the American National Committee to Aid Homeless Armenians (ANCHA) to organize a relocation program for the Armenians at Funkerkaserne. Many of the Armenians who came to the United States settled in Montebello thanks to Mardikian’s efforts.¹⁸

The Armenians in Montebello fashioned their community much like the one at Funkerkaserne and started building churches, schools, and Armenian centers, paving the way for future Armenian communities throughout Southern California and a reawakening of the shared ancestral identity among second-generation Armenian Americans.

The Armenian American Cultural Revival of the 1950s and 1960s

During the 1950s and 1960s, Armenian communities in the United States were undergoing a cultural revival. Through efforts such as church building and establishing classes on Armenian language and culture, many young Armenian Americans were reclaiming their Armenian identity, including the struggle for recognition of the Armenian Genocide.¹⁹ Many of these young, primarily second-generation Armenian Americans were highly successful and influential in political and social spheres, as well as their respective fields and communities, which aided their efforts to mobilize and call attention to the issue of the Armenian Genocide.²⁰

Prior to the 1960s, commemorative plaques and memorials for victims of the 1915 Armenian Genocide tended to be carvings for individuals or displays in Armenian churches.²¹ They were small in scale and erected on private land (see page 21 for more information on Armenian Genocide memorials and monuments in California). In the 1960s, however, larger monuments started going up in locations around the world, including the 1967 Tsitsernakaberd Monument in Yerevan in what was then Soviet Armenia, followed by the 1969 Armenian Genocide Monument in Bikfaya, Lebanon.²² As the fiftieth anniversary of the catastrophe approached, Armenian American political and intellectual circles recognized the importance of marking the somber anniversary, bringing global awareness to the event, and unifying the Armenian diaspora. Dozens of events were held across the United States in tandem with similar events worldwide, including in Yerevan, the capital of present-day Armenia. Commemorations and demonstrations such as

¹² Eldad Ben Aharon, *PRIF Report: How Do We Remember the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust? A Global View of an Integrated Memory of Perpetrators, Victims and Third-Party Countries* (Frankfurt: Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, June 2020), accessed May 2024, https://www.prif.org/fileadmin/HSFK/hsfk_publicationen/PRIF0620.pdf; Thomas de Waal, “The G-Word: The Armenian Massacre and Politics of Genocide,” *Foreign Affairs* 94, no. 1 (January/February 2015): 141-148, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24483226>.

¹³ Mike Sonksen, “History & Society, On Location: Montebello,” PBS SoCal, May 22, 2015, accessed April 2024, <https://www.pbssocal.org/history-society/on-location-montebello>.

¹⁴ “SOAR - Montebello Chapter,” Montebello - Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR), accessed March 2024, <https://www.soar-us.org/montebello/>.

¹⁵ Jan-Hinnerk Antons, “Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany: Parallel Societies in a Hostile Environment,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 49, no. 1 (January 2014): 95, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43697290?seq=4>.

¹⁶ “Displaced Persons Documentation Project,” USC Dornsife Institute of Armenian Studies, accessed May 2024, <https://armenian.usc.edu/displaced-persons-documentation-project/>.

¹⁷ “Displaced Person Strengthening Communities; The Story of The Montebello DPS,” Armenian Youth Federation West United States, accessed April 2024, <https://ayfwest.org/news/displaced-person-strengthening-communities/>.

¹⁸ “Displaced Person Strengthening Communities.” “SOAR - Montebello Chapter.” Sonksen.

¹⁹ Julien Zarifian, *The United States and the Armenian Genocide: History, Memory, Politics* (Rutgers University Press, May 17, 2024), Google Books e-Books, https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_United_States_and_the_Armenian_Genoc/oT8DEQAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0.

²⁰ Zarifian, “Tsitsernakaberd Memorial,” CIPDH International Center for the Promotion of Human Rights, 2024, accessed April 2024, <https://www.cipdh.gob.ar/memorias-situadas/en/lugar-de-memoria/en-memorial-tsitsernakaberd-al-genocidio-armenio/>.

²¹ Laura Robson, “Memorialization and Assimilation: Armenian Genocide Memorials in North America,” *Mashriq & Mahjar* 4, no. 1 (2017), 71, Project Muse, accessed March 2024, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/778422/pdf>.

²² “Oh Where, Oh Where...,” *Armenian International Magazine*, June 1998, 8, Issue.com, accessed May 2024, <https://issuu.com/armenianinternationalmagazine/docs/june1998>.

Page 18 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument

*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024

Continuation Update

those in Boston, New York, and Los Angeles were notable for their size and visibility to the general American public. In Los Angeles, thousands of Armenians marched in solidarity and remembrance.²³

The Armenian American population of Southern California, one of the largest outside Armenia, was poised to mount a political fight for Genocide recognition that may not have been possible even a few years earlier. In the 1960s, two Armenian Americans from Southern California—George Deukmejian and Walter Karabian—had won seats in the California legislature, supported in large part by the votes and donations of the Armenian community in Montebello.

The events would become a catalyst for unprecedented legislation passed in places like California, Illinois, and Massachusetts in 1965, recognizing and remembering the Armenian Genocide,²⁴ as well as the inspiration for a public monument memorializing the tragedy and lives lost.

Armenian Monument Committee

Eighteen young professional Armenian Americans—most of them second-generation—formed the Armenian Monument Committee (later the Armenian Monument Council, Inc.) to “join the entire Armenian community together in an endeavor to build the first public Armenian Genocide memorial on public property in the United States.”²⁵ The Committee was formed as a nonprofit, nonpolitical, nonsectarian organization representing a cross-section of Armenians of different religious and political backgrounds, brought together by the enduring frustration, pain, and anger of the Genocide.²⁶ (A list of all eighteen Committee members is included on page 3). The Committee, building on the momentum surrounding the fiftieth anniversary, worked side-by-side to garner support for a monument from the community and local government.

Michael Minasian, Jack Arakelian, John A. Gabriel, and Vartan Fundukian, Armenian residents of Montebello and members of the Committee, led the effort to secure the land for the monument.²⁷ Together, they earned the support of the local government, including the Montebello Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, and City Council, who commended the Committee’s efforts and expressed favor for the proposed site and symbolism of the monument.²⁸ On February 9, 1966, the Parks and Recreation Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of Bicknell Park as the site of the monument.²⁹ On April 4, 1966, in another unanimous vote, City Council approved Resolution No. 8362, “setting aside a site in Bicknell Park for the erection of a monument to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Armenian massacre of 1915.”³⁰

However, public opposition from Turkish officials and outspoken members of the Montebello community launched a subsequent series of City Council hearings. Representatives of the Turkish government had met with the US Department of State (State Department), urging them to block construction of the monument.³¹ In turn, the State Department contacted Montebello’s City Council, pressuring them to shut down the project, or at least modify the language on the proposed plaque.³² The Committee’s proposed language for the memorial plaque read, “Dedicated to the more than 1,500,000 Armenians, nearly one-half of the nation, who were massacred in 1915 in the premeditated act of genocide by the Ottoman Turkish Government.” The State Department also enlisted a local congressman to provide local updates as to whether the Montebello city officials were being swayed, and the Turkish government called on high-ranking members of the Armenian Church in Istanbul and Los Angeles to help in their efforts to revise the language of the plaque.³³ Montebello’s City Council debates were one of the first times in history that Turkish representatives mobilized in the United States against a memorial monument.³⁴ With the intensity of the Turkish opposition, some feared that construction of the Committee’s proposed monument would not move forward.³⁵

In short, the Committee wanted the inscription on the monument’s plaque to read as they had initially proposed, the Turkish government wanted revised wording, or no monument at all, and although the City Council and Parks and Recreation Commission

²³ Hovannisian. Michael Bobelian, *Children of Armenia: A Forgotten Genocide and the Century-Long Struggle for Justice* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2009), 128.

²⁴ Zarifian.

²⁵ Hovannisian. Bobelian, 128.

²⁶ “Oh Where, Oh Where...,” *Armenian International Magazine*. Hovannisian.

²⁷ “Armenian Memorial Gift for Montebello,” *Montebello Messenger*, February 24, 1966, Armenian Genocide Martyrs Memorial Monument, accessed April 2024, <http://armenianmonument.org/blog/news-paper-articles-press-releases-editorials-from-1968-about-the-monument/>.

²⁸ “Armenian Memorial Slated for Site in Bicknell Park,” *Montebello News*, April 17, 1966, Armenian Genocide Martyrs Memorial Monument, accessed April 2024, <http://armenianmonument.org/blog/news-paper-articles-press-releases-editorials-from-1968-about-the-monument/>.

²⁹ City of Montebello, City Files, 02.09.1966.

³⁰ City of Montebello, Resolution No. 8362, April 19, 1966.

³¹ Bobelian, 129.

³² Bobelian, 129.

³³ Bobelian, 131.

³⁴ Turkey had unsuccessfully tried to shut down a much smaller monument on private property in New Jersey but the Monument in Montebello was to be built on public land, making the stakes much higher. Zarifian; Bobelian, 129.

³⁵ Bobelian, 131.

Page 19 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument

*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024

Continuation Update

were in favor of the monument, they were under pressure from both opposing community members as well as the federal government to, at the very least, revise the wording proposed of the plaque.³⁶

A hearing on January 9, 1967, attracted partisans from all over California. Myron Goldsmith, a retired Army major and honorary consul for Turkey, spoke out strongly against the monument at the hearing and argued that its construction would be "...an affront to a friendly nation and a valuable military ally."³⁷ In an effort to find a middle ground, a councilmember suggested removing the reference to Turkey from the commemorative plaque, to which Minasian responded, "Just because July 4th may offend the British, does that mean we should we should eliminate that American observance? No, we can't rewrite history."³⁸ After an hours-long debate, City Council voted 4-1 in favor of the monument, pending another upcoming hearing on the wording of the plaque.³⁹

Martin Freeman, an attorney representing the Turkish American Friendship Club and accompanied by an official from the Turkish embassy in Washington, reiterated Goldsmith's points at a subsequent hearing. Freeman stated that the wording and even the monument itself would be considered an affront by the Turkish government, and that because Turkey was a "friend and military ally" of the United States, it would be unfriendly and un-American for Montebello City Council to accept the monument.⁴⁰ The Committee countered that the monument was not intended to be critical of the present Turkish government, but was instead meant as a reminder to all Americans of the "crime against humanity" that had occurred, with the hope that history would not be repeated.⁴¹ Ultimately, City Council proposed the inscription, "This monument erected by Americans of Armenian decent in dedication to the men of all nations who have fallen victim to crimes against humanity."⁴² With no mention of the word genocide or reference to the Ottoman Empire, City Council approved the monument with this inscription.⁴³ The plaque was later replaced with the existing wording (see page 15), reflecting the original proposed by the Committee; however, research did not reveal evidence of the exact date the change occurred.

Design and Construction of the Monument

After reviewing several design submissions by various artists and architects (see **Figure 1**),⁴⁴ the Committee chose the tower designed H. Hrant Agbabian, an Armenian American architect, musician, and artist based in the Los Angeles area (see **Figure 2**). Agbabian was the son of a pastor in the Armenian Church, and had traveled with his wife to Turkey and the surrounding region to study the design and construction of Armenian churches and religious structures.⁴⁵ Agbabian drew from his knowledge and deep understanding of traditional Armenian Church architecture to conceive the design for the Monument.

Believed to be the one of the earliest distinct regional variations of Christian architecture, Armenian Church architecture was well established by the sixth or seventh century and likely predates more well-known regional styles, such as Byzantine, Gothic, Ethiopian, and Scandinavian churches. The distinguishing features of Armenian Church architecture are stone construction, the use of *khachkar*, arched openings, and conical roofs with central openings (for light and air). Known as "the land of rocks," volcanic tufa and basalt were abundant in medieval Armenia, whereas wood was scarce. As a result, Armenian churches were almost exclusively built from stone. This required the skillful use of concrete to ensure structural stability, especially for the vaulted stone roofs, in an area with high volcanic and seismic activity.⁴⁶ *Khachkars*, roughly translated to "cross-stones," are hand-carved stone steles or slabs made by Armenian craftspeople. They feature crosses, symbols, geometric motifs, and iconography, and no two *khachkar* are alike. They are most commonly used as memorial stones, for worship, or as a relic to provide protection. The *khachkars* throughout Armenia are recognized by UNESCO as an element of Intangible Cultural Heritage.⁴⁷

The Monument is a sculptural interpretation of traditional Armenian Church design, featuring eight concrete columns with arches, a stylized conical dome with an opening at the top, two *khachkars*, and a stone base. The Monument also mirrors early Armenian

³⁶ Steven C. Smith, "Martyr's Monument: Montebello tower Leans to Controversy," *Los Angeles Times*, June 6, 1971, 216, Newspapers.com, accessed April 2024, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/384818002>.

³⁷ Bobelian, 129.

³⁸ Bobelian, 129.

³⁹ Smith

⁴⁰ Smith

⁴¹ Smith.

⁴² Smith.

⁴³ Bobelian, 132.

⁴⁴ "Armenian Memorial Gift for Montebello."

⁴⁵ Los Angeles Department of City Planning, "Cultural Heritage Commission Case No. CHC-2014-3199-HCM ENV-2014-3200-CE," *Los Angeles Department of City Planning Recommendation Report* (Los Angeles, CA: October 2, 2024), accessed March 2024, <https://planning.lacity.gov/StaffRpt/CHC/10-02-14/CHC-2014-3199.pdf>.

⁴⁶ "Arts of Armenia-Architecture," Fresno State Armenian Studies Program, accessed April 2024, <https://cah.fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies/resources/artsofarmenia/architecture.html>.

⁴⁷ "Armenian Cross-Stones Art. Symbolism and Craftsmanship of Khachkars," UNESCO Intangible Heritage, accessed May 2024, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/armenian-cross-stones-art-symbolism-and-craftsmanship-of-khachkars-00434>.

Page 20 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument

*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024

Continuation Update

craftsmanship, as each of the eight columns would be pre-cast on site by the contractor, Bedrosian-Zakarian Construction Co, using special concrete intended to withstand seismic forces.

After selecting the final design for the Monument, fundraising campaigns by the Committee had successfully raised \$125,000, and on April 23, 1967, the day before Armenian Community National Martyr's Day, ground broke for the construction of the monument. The eighth and last column was set in place almost exactly a year later,⁴⁸ and the Monument was unveiled on Sunday, April 21, 1968. Thousands of Armenian Americans were in attendance to hear speakers including State Senator George Deukmejian and State Assemblyman Walter Karabian, as well as written statements from then-Governor of California Ronald Reagan and Vice President of the United States, Hubert Humphrey (see **Figure 11**). On May 18, 1968, two *khachkars* brought by His Holiness Vasken I, from Etchmiadzin, the spiritual capital of the Armenian Church, were installed at the base of the monument during another ceremony (see **Figure 12**).⁴⁹

H. Hrant Agbabian, AIA

Architect H. Hrant Agbabian was born in Larnaca, Cyprus, on March 29, 1929. At the age of two, his family moved to Aleppo, Syria, where his father was a pastor in the Armenian Church. Agbabian went on to earn an engineering degree from Aleppo College⁵⁰ and emigrated to the United States at the age of 19 in early 1949.⁵¹ He went on to study architecture at the University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley) then transferred the University of Southern California (USC) and completed his architecture degree with a minor in music in 1957.⁵²

Agbabian began his architecture career as a draftsman at Quinton Engineers and later worked as a senior designer at Albert C. Martin & Associates.⁵³ He established his own firm, H. Hrant Agbabian, AIA, Architect, in 1960.⁵⁴ One of his first projects was the design and construction of a Mid-Century Modern single-family residence for his sister and her husband, Lucinda and Harmon Hubbard, at 12144 Travis Street, Los Angeles in 1960.⁵⁵

His early work was recognized in an April 1964 exhibit at the Los Angeles Building Center at Third Street and Fairfax Avenue previewing future trends in architectural design. The exhibit featured Agbabian's work alongside seven other architects. Known examples of his earliest works include the 1962 Tevrizian Apartments at 1117-1121 S. Bronson Avenue in Los Angeles and a 1966 single-family residence at 2185 Robles Avenue in San Marino.⁵⁶ Over the course of his career, Agbabian's signature style emerged as quintessentially Mid-Century Modern with Armenian influences.

In 1966, he won a competition among artists and architects for a sculptural commission to commemorate the 1915 Armenian Genocide and went on to develop the winning design for the Monument, which was completed in 1968. His design for the Monument embraced his Armenian heritage, influence of his pastor father, and knowledge of traditional Armenian Church design. In 1971, Agbabian incorporated traditional features of the Armenian Church in an octagonal design for the St. James Armenian Apostolic Church of Los Angeles at 4950 W. Slauson Avenue.⁵⁷ His work was featured in a solo exhibition in 1973 in the Architectural Gallery at the Building Exhibition Center in Los Angeles.⁵⁸

Other known works include:

- Grand-Nash Building, El Segundo (1972)⁵⁹

⁴⁸ "Armenian Monument," *Los Angeles Evening Citizen News*, April 24, 1968, 125, Newspapers.com, accessed April 2024, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/684621532/>.

⁴⁹ "Armenian Pontiff Blesses Monument," *Anaheim Bulletin*, May 25, 1968, 14, Newspapers.com, accessed April 2024, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/967838582>.

⁵⁰ "H. Hrant Agbabian," *Los Angeles Times*, accessed March 2024, <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/latimes/name/h-agbabian-obituary?id=54511248>.

⁵¹ "H. Hrant Agbabian," *Los Angeles Times*.

⁵² "H. Hrant Agbabian," The AIA Historical Directory of American Architects, accessed May 2025, <https://aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/AHDAA/pages/37390057/ahd1000280>.

⁵³ "H. Hrant Agbabian," The AIA Historical Directory of American Architects.

⁵⁴ "H. Hrant Agbabian," The AIA Historical Directory of American Architects.

⁵⁵ "Lucinda Agbabian-Hubbard," *Los Angeles Times*, August 30, 2015, 13, Newspapers.com, accessed May 2024, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/203688884>.

⁵⁶ Los Angeles Department of City Planning; "Preliminary List of Properties to be Surveyed," *San Marino Historical Resources Survey*, City of San Marino, November 15, 2019, accessed March 2024, https://sanmarinoca.gov/news_detail_T34_R12.php.

⁵⁷ "Church Plans Blessing of Foundation Stone," *The Los Angeles Times*, February 8, 1970, Newspapers.com, accessed April 2024, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/385575919>.

⁵⁸ "Designer Exhibits Creations," *Westchester-Ladera Observer*, August 23, 1973, 9, Newspapers.com, accessed April 2024, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/734628764>.

⁵⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, March 5, 1972, Newspapers.com, accessed May 2024, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/385474529>.

Page 21 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument

*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024

Continuation Update

- 1819 Gramercy Place, Los Angeles (1973)⁶⁰
- 2285 N. Hobart Boulevard, Los Angeles (1976)
- Continental-Grand Company office building, El Segundo (1979)⁶¹
- Marina Plaza office and restaurant complex, Huntington Beach (1979)⁶²
- Magnolia Professional Building, Valley Village (1983)⁶³

In addition to his work as an architect, Agbabian was a talented musician and sculptor, and was deeply involved in the Armenian community, participating in a number of organizations in varying capacities, such as the Armenian Applied Arts Association, the Armenian Monuments Committee, the Western Region District of the Armenian General Benevolent Union, and the Armenian Missionary Association of America. With his music background, he was the choral conductor of several churches, including Armenian Gethsemane Congregational Church and the United Armenian Congregational Church. He also created and directed the Pro-Komitas Choral Society of Los Angeles, named for prominent Armenian musician Komitas Cardapet.⁶⁴

At age 85, Agbabian retired and dissolved his firm, H. Hrant Agbabian & Associates before he passed away in January 2024 at the age of 94.

Armenian Genocide Memorials and Monuments in California

As of 2024, the Armenian National Institute lists seventy-five Armenian Genocide memorials in the United States, twenty-two of which are in California.⁶⁵ The majority of these memorials were constructed after 1980, with an even greater number of them constructed after 2000.⁶⁶ The earliest memorials tended to be small in scale and erected on private land, such as commemorative plaques or sculptures for individuals displayed on Armenian church grounds.⁶⁷ In California, one of the earliest memorials listed by the Armenian National Institute are plaques and small monuments located within the Ararat Cemetery at 1925 W. Belmont Avenue in Fresno, California. The cemetery was founded in 1885 for the first Armenian settlers in that area.⁶⁸ Within the cemetery are the remains of an unknown martyr that were brought from the deserts of Der Zor—the endpoint of death marches and site of mass executions during the Armenian Genocide—by Reverend Manasseh G. Papazian in 1930. In 1968, an Armenian Genocide monument was erected in the cemetery symbolizing all the lives lost (see **Figure 13**).⁶⁹

It was not until the 1960s that larger public monuments were constructed in locations around the world.⁷⁰ When it was completed in 1965, the Montebello Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument was the first monument of its size and scale memorializing the victims of the 1915 Armenian Genocide, and the first constructed on public land in California. It was not until the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide in 2015 that a greater number of memorials and monuments were constructed.

The following table lists known eighteen known monuments and memorials in California as compared to the Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument in Montebello. It includes those monuments that memorialize all victims of the Armenian Genocide, including the monument in Montebello, but it does not include more private memorials that commemorate or are dedicated to specific individuals. *The purpose of the table is to demonstrate the achievement and statewide significance of the Montebello monument in terms of its size, scale, date of construction, and location. It is not intended to suggest that any of the monuments listed are any less symbolic or meaningful to the Armenian community.*

⁶⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, October 14, 1972, 152, N ewspapers.com, accessed May 2024, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/381859045>.

⁶¹ "Offices Being Built in El Segundo," *Los Angeles Times*, Aug 26, 1979, 163, Newspapers.com, accessed April 2024, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/387462331>.

⁶² "It's Full Speed Ahead for Marina Plaza Project," *Los Angeles Times*, November 11, 1979, 166, Newspapers.com, accessed April 2024, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/385294290>.

⁶³ Los Angeles Department of City Planning.

⁶⁴ "LA Choral Group Plans Concert of Armenian Music," *The Fresno Bee*, December 4, 1965, 17, Newspapers.com, accessed April 2024, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/702989312>; "Church Will Mark Turkish Massacre," *The Fresno Bee*, November 25, 1965, 37, Newspapers.com, accessed April 2024, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/702988871>.

⁶⁵ Armenian National Institute, "Memorials to the Armenian Genocide," Armenian-Genocide.org, 2024, accessed November 2024, <https://www.armenian-genocide.org/memorials.html>.

⁶⁶ Laura Robson, "Memorialization and Assimilation: Armenian Genocide Memorials in North America," *Mashriq & Mahjar* 4, no. 1 (2017), 62, Project Muse, accessed March 2024, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/778422/pdf>.

⁶⁷ Robson, 71.

⁶⁸ Armenian Museum of Fresno, "Monuments Tour," armof.org, 2024, accessed November 2024, <http://www.armof.org/tours/monuments-tour/>.

⁶⁹ Armenian Museum of Fresno; Aram Arkun, "US Armenian Cemetery Operations Impacted by COVID-19," *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, June 18, 2020, accessed November 2024, <https://mirrorspectator.com/2020/06/18/us-armenian-cemetery-operations-impacted-by-covid-19/>.

⁷⁰ "Oh Where, Oh Where..." *Armenian International Magazine*, June 1998, 8, Issue.com, accessed May 2024, <https://issuu.com/armenianinternationalmagazine/docs/june1998>.

Page 22 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument

*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024

Continuation Update

LIST OF ARMENIAN MEMORIALS AND MONUMENTS IN CALIFORNIA⁷¹

Name	Location	Built	Designer	Description/Comparison
Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument	Bicknell Park 901 Via San Clemente Montebello, CA	1965	H. Hrant Agbabian	Subject property.
Grave of the Unknown Martyr from Der Zor	Ararat Cemetery 1925 W. Belmont Ave. Fresno, CA	1968	Unknown	This monument serves as a grave for the body of one unknown victim of the Genocide recovered in the Der El Zor desert and symbolizes all the lives lost. ⁷² See Figure 13 . This monument post-dates the Montebello monument, is smaller in size, and located in a private cemetery.
Armenian Martyrs' Monument	St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church 14395 Avenue 384 Yetterm, CA 93670	1984 ⁷³	Unknown	This monument was gifted to St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church by the St. Mary Ladies Society in 1984. See Figure 14 . It post-dates the Montebello monument, is smaller in size, and is located on private church grounds.
Armenian Genocide Monument	Forty Martyrs Armenian Apostolic Church of Orange County 5315 W. McFadden Ave. Santa Ana, CA	1993 ⁷⁴	N/A	The 16-foot monument stands at the southwestern corner of Gugasian Hall, across from the Forty Martyrs Armenian Apostolic Church of Orange County. See Figure 15 . This monument post-dates the Montebello monument, is smaller in size, and is located on private church grounds.
Mt. Davidson Cross	Mt. Davidson Park 125 Dalewood Way San Francisco, CA	1933/ 1998	George Kelham	This 103-foot concrete cross is situated on the crest of a hill in San Francisco's Mt. Davidson Park. ⁷⁵ Although constructed in 1933, the Mt. Davidson Cross was not dedicated as an Armenian Genocide memorial until April 24, 1998. See Figure 16 and Figure 17 . Although larger in size and located on public land, its dedication as an Armenian Genocide memorial post-dates the Montebello monument.
Armenian Genocide Memorial	Glendale Civic Auditorium 1401 N Verdugo Rd. Glendale, CA	c. 2000	Unknown	This memorial is a concrete plinth with plaque. See Figure 18 . It is located on public land but post-dates the Montebello memorial and is smaller in size.

⁷¹ Unless otherwise indicated in footnotes, the information presented in this table is derived from Armenian National Institute, "Armenian Genocide Memorials -- United States," accessed November 2024, https://www.armenian-genocide.org/current_category.75/offset.30/memorials_list.html.

⁷² Armenian Museum of Fresno.

⁷³ Rev. Fr. Vartan Archpriest Kasparian, "St. Mary, Yetterm, 1986-2011," 2011, accessed November 2024, <https://nebula.wsimg.com/6a7b7864a33d6c11e320746982c957b0?AccessKeyId=95B3305A87D64E9BDB15&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>.

⁷⁴ Armenian National Institute.

⁷⁵ Jacqueline Proctor, "Mount Davidson Cross," MtDavidson.org, accessed November 2024, <https://mtdavidson.org/mount-davidson-cross/>.

State of California - The Resources Agency
 DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____
 HRI # _____
 Trinomial _____

Page 23 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument

*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024

Continuation Update

Armenian Genocide Memorial <i>Khachkar</i>	St. Mary's Armenian Apostolic Church 500 S. Central Ave. Glendale, CA	2000	Karpoosh Gaspar Qaribian	This roughly 15-feet-high monument sculpture is constructed of tufa stone. See Figure 19 . It post-dates the Montebello monument, is smaller in size, and is located on private church grounds.
Armenian Genocide Memorial <i>Khachkars</i>	St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Apostolic Church 2215 E Colorado Blvd. Pasadena, CA	2008	Unknown	These two <i>khachkars</i> flank the main entrance stairs of St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Apostolic Church. See Figure 20 . They post-date the Montebello monument, are smaller in size, and are located on private church grounds.
Memorial <i>Khachkar</i> at St. James Armenian Apostolic Church	St. James Armenian Apostolic Church 3300 Business Dr. Sacramento, CA	2014	Unknown	This memorial <i>khachkar</i> is located adjacent to St. James Armenian Apostolic Church. See Figure 21 . It post-dates the Montebello monument, is smaller in size, and is located on private church grounds.
Armenian Genocide Memorial	St. Leon Armenian Cathedral 3325 N Glenoaks Blvd Burbank, CA	2015	Uknown	This sculpture is located on the grounds of the St. Leon Armenian Cathedral. It post-dates the Montebello monument, is smaller in size, and is located on private church grounds. See Figure 22 .
Armenian Genocide Memorial Monument	St. Mary Armenian Church of Costa Mesa 148 22 nd St. Costa Mesa, CA	2015 ⁷⁶	Harout Joulahian	A monument sculpture featuring a fountain, flame, black granite, two white pillars, and a cross. The fountain, flame, and black granite represent the memory of Armenia's tragic past and symbolize the lives lost. The two white pillars represent the new generation of Armenians and their bright future, and the cross symbolizes Christian faith and belief. ⁷⁷ See Figure 23 . This monument post-dates the Montebello monument, is smaller in size, and is located on private church grounds.

⁷⁶ "Armenian Genocide memorial to be erected in Costa Mesa," *Armenpress*, March 6, 2015, accessed November 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/796695>.

⁷⁷ "Armenian Genocide memorial to be erected in Costa Mesa."

CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____

HRI # _____

Trinomial _____

Page 24 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument

*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens

*Date: 11/22/2024

Continuation Update

Armenian Genocide Monument	Maple Mall Fresno State Campus Fresno, CA	2015	Paul Halajian	<p>A monument sculpture modeled after Dzidzernagapert, the 1965 Armenian Genocide memorial in Yerevan, Armenia.</p> <p>Nine pillars face inwards representing the six provinces of Historic Armenia, the region of Cilicia, the Republic of Armenia, and the Armenian Diaspora, crowned by a broken halo that symbolizes the violence and division of the Genocide. It is the first of its kind to be constructed on any college campus in the United States.⁷⁸ See Figure 24.</p> <p>This monument post-dates the Montebello monument and is smaller in size.</p>
Armenian Genocide Centennial Plaque and Tree	Los Angeles City Hall 200 N. Spring St. Los Angeles, CA	2015	N/A	<p>In April 2015, Los Angeles City Councilmember Paul Krekorian planted the first pomegranate tree on City Hall's lawn and launched the Armenian Genocide Memorial Tree Project, which planted 100 pomegranate trees in parks in each of the City's fifteen Council Districts. An official plaque of the LA City Hall pomegranate tree was installed on February 13, 2015 to mark the commemoration of the Centennial anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.⁷⁹</p> <p>Although located on public land, this memorial post-dates the Montebello monument and is smaller in size.</p>
Armenian Genocide Monument and Memorial Garden	Ararat Home of Los Angeles 15105 Mission Hills Rd. Mission Hills, CA	2015	Unknown	<p>This monument sculpture and surrounding garden was dedicated to the centennial of the Armenian Genocide. See Figure 25.</p> <p>It post-dates the Montebello monument, is smaller in size and scale, and is located on private land.</p>
Armenian Genocide Memorial	Memorial Park 30 N. Raymond Ave. Pasadena, CA	2015	Catherine Menard	<p>A public monument sculpture of a giant abstraction of the gallows that were used to put leaders, artists and intellectuals to death at the onset of the Genocide.⁸⁰ See Figure 26.</p> <p>Although located on public land, this memorial post-dates the Montebello monument and is smaller in size.</p>

⁷⁸ Armenian Museum of Fresno.

⁷⁹ Asbarez, "Armenian Genocide Centennial Plaque Unveiled at LA City Hall," Armenian National Committee of America, accessed November 2024, <https://anca.org/armenian-genocide-centennial-plaque-unveiled-at-la-city-hall/>.

⁸⁰ Catherine Menard, "Spatial Design: Pasadena Armenian Genocide Memorial," accessed November 2024, <https://www.catherinememard.design/work/spatialdesign>.

Page 25 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument

*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024

Continuation Update

Armenian Genocide Monument	Grand Park 200 N. Grand Ave. Los Angeles, CA	2016	Vahagn Thomasian, Levon Parian, and Ara Oshagan	Low-lying, public monument sculpture made of black volcanic tufa rock imported from the Ararat Valley of Armenia. It is split in two, symbolizing the spiritual and physical rupture of the Armenian Genocide and sculpted at 4, 24, 19, 15 degrees symbolizing the date of April 24, 1915. ⁸¹ See Figure 27 . Although located on public land, this monument post-dates the Montebello monument and is smaller in size.
Armenian Genocide Memorial Khachkar	Ararat Home of Los Angeles 15105 Mission Hills Rd. Mission Hills, CA	N/A	Unknown	<i>Khachkar</i> located on the grounds of the Ararat Home of Los Angeles. Although the date of construction is unknown, this memorial <i>khachkar</i> is substantially smaller in size than the Montebello monument and is located on church grounds.
Khachkar at St. John Armenian Apostolic Church	St. John Armenian Apostolic Church 275 Olympia Way, San Francisco, CA	N/A	Unknown	Although the date of construction is unknown, this memorial <i>khachkar</i> is substantially smaller in size than the Montebello monument and is located on church grounds.

Integrity:

The Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument retains integrity from its period of construction. The Monument has not been moved or extensively altered since its completion in 1968. As a result, its integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association are all intact to convey the Monument’s significance under Criteria 1 and 3.

Conclusion:

The Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument in Montebello is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources under Criteria 1 and 3. It was the first major monument dedicated to the Armenian Genocide in the United States, and the first of any Armenian monument to be constructed on public land. The efforts of the Armenian American community, particularly the Armenian Monuments Committee, made construction of the Monument possible. The Monument quickly became a symbol of ethnic pride for the Armenian diaspora, particularly those living in California, and continues to play a key role in important events and observances by the community. It represents fifty years of reflection on the events of the Armenian Genocide and the cultural shift that made broader recognition an urgent priority for subsequent generations of survivors. The success and visibility of the Monument influenced the construction of similar public monuments throughout the United States, and there are dozens across the nation today.

The Monument is also significant for its high artistic value as architect and artist H. Hrant Agabian’s modern, sculptural interpretation of traditional Armenian Church architecture, a distinctive and early regional variation of Christian ecclesiastical design dating back as early as the sixth century.

Although the Monument is primarily commemorative in nature, it is significant in its own right for its design and continued cultural and symbolic value to the Armenian American community.

⁸¹ Asbarez, “Armenian Genocide Memorial Unveiled in Los Angeles Park,” Armenian National Committee of America, accessed November 2024, <https://anca.org/armenian-genocide-memorial-unveiled-in-los-angeles-park/>.

State of California - The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____

HRI # _____

Trinomial _____

Page 26 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument

*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens

*Date: 11/22/2024

Continuation Update

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State of California - The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____

HRI # _____

Trinomial _____

Page 27 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument

*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens

*Date: 11/22/2024

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Trinomial _____

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Page 29 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument
*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024
 Continuation Update

Figure 1. Proposed monument design submittals, 1966. Source: Armenian Genocide Martyrs Memorial Monument, accessed April 2024, <http://armenianmonument.org/blog/news-paper-articles-press-releases-editorials-from-1968-about-the-monument/>.



Figure 2. H. Hrant Agbabian and City officials display chosen monument design, 1967. Source: Courtesy of Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument, March 31, 2018, Facebook, accessed June 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/114574571942019/photos/pb.100064783024195.-2207520000/1721537447912382/?type=3>.



Page 30 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument
*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024
 Continuation Update

Figure 3. H. Hrant Agbalian, Michael Minasian and other members of the Armenian Monuments Committee review plans during onsite construction of the tower columns, 1967. Source: "Construction of Monument Album," Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument, accessed June 2024, <http://armenianmonument.org/gallery/album/construction-of-monument-3>.



Figure 4. Steel framing being crane lifted into mold during on-site construction of concrete columns, 1967. Source: "Construction of Monument Album," Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument, accessed June 2024, <http://armenianmonument.org/gallery/album/construction-of-monument-3>.



Page 31 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument
*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024
 Continuation Update

Figure 5. Contractors pouring concrete into mold during on-site construction of tower columns, 1967. Source: "Construction of Monument Album," Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument, accessed June 2024, <http://armenianmonument.org/gallery/album/construction-of-monument-3>.



Figure 6. Michael Minasian overseeing erection of first concrete column, 1967. Source: "Construction of Monument Album," Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument, accessed June 2024, <http://armenianmonument.org/gallery/album/construction-of-monument-3>.



Page 32 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument
*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024
 Continuation Update

Figure 7. Michael Minasian, other Committee members and City officials during erection of first concrete column, 1967. Source: "Construction of Monument Album," Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument, accessed June 2024, <http://armenianmonument.org/gallery/album/construction-of-monument-3>.



Figure 8. In-progress construction of tower showing adjacent framework and mold for forming conical concrete tower toppers, 1967. Source: "Construction of Monument Album," Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument, accessed June 2024, <http://armenianmonument.org/gallery/album/construction-of-monument-3>.



Page 33 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument
*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024
 Continuation Update

Figure 9. Crane lifting conical concrete forms onto top of tower, 1967. Source: "Construction of Monument Album," Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument, accessed June 2024, <http://armenianmonument.org/gallery/album/construction-of-monument-3>.

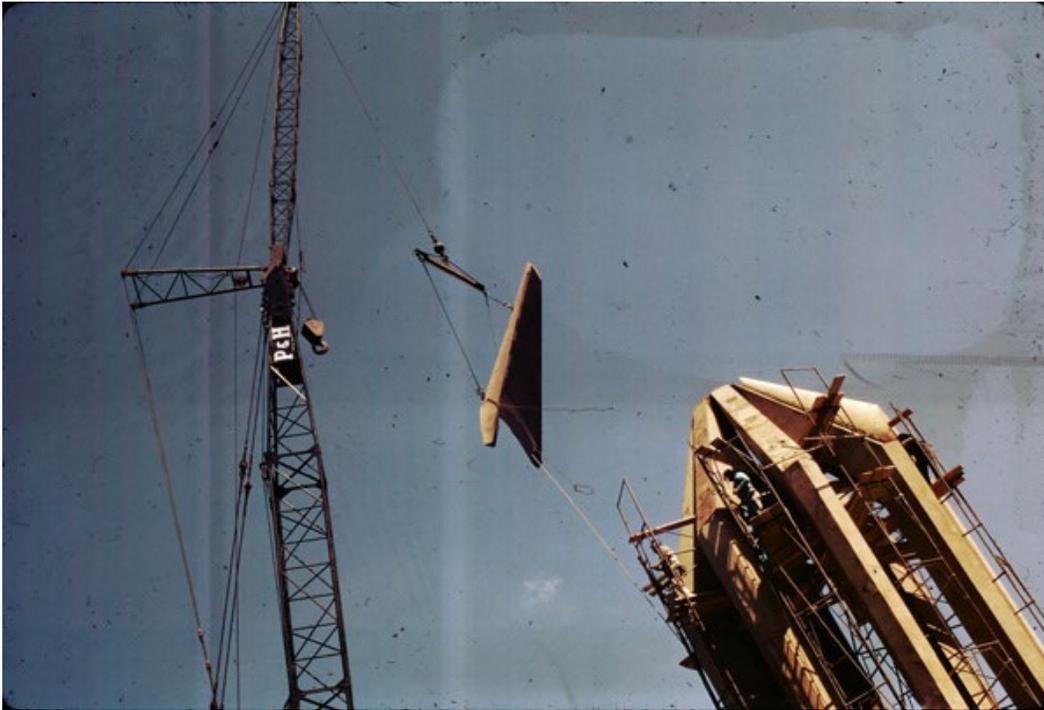


Figure 10. Detail view of concrete urn during on-site construction, 1967. Source: "Construction of Monument Album," Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument, accessed June 2024, <http://armenianmonument.org/gallery/album/construction-of-monument-3>.



Page 34 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument
*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024
 Continuation Update

Figure 11. Marine Corps Band playing at the opening ceremony, Sunday, April 21, 1968. Source: Courtesy of Tamar Manjikian Mashigian, October 22, 2019, Facebook, accessed June 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/tamar.mashigian/posts/pfbid02xfCwzamUKBZsn2Vvrrw7UajU8etzV9so2de6GJpYJySkoZbCBZoVRNRuNzYGuAGoHI>.



Figure 12. The Venerable Catholicos Vazken I and original plaque on monument plinth, May 18, 1968. Source: "The Martyrs' Monument in Montebello: The Truth Prevails." April 20, 2018, Western Diocese of the Armenian Church, accessed July 2024, <https://www.wdacna.com/news/1134/The-Martyrs%E2%80%99-Monument-in-Montebello:-The-Truth-Prevails>.

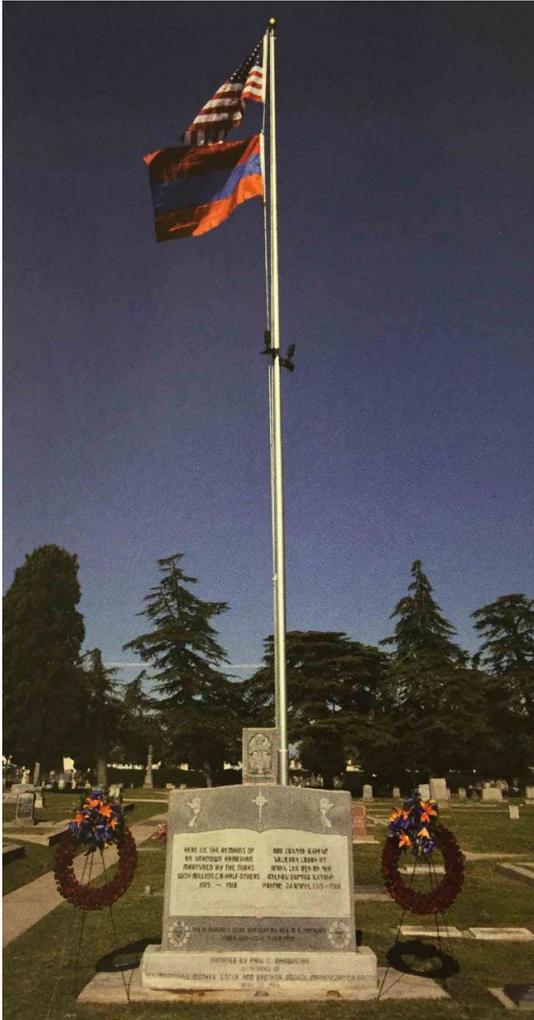


Page 35 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument

*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024

Continuation Update

Figure 13. Grave of the Unknown Martyr from Der Zor, Ararat Cemetery, 1925 W. Belmont Avenue, Fresno, CA, n.d. Source: Armenian Museum of Fresno, "Monuments Tour," armof.org, 2024, accessed November 2024, <http://www.armof.org/tours/monuments-tour/>.



Page 36 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument
*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024
 Continuation Update

Figure 14. Armenian Martyrs' Monument at St. Mary Armenian Church, Yettam, CA, n.d. Source: Armenian National Institute, "Yettam, California, Genocide Monument at St. Mary Armenian Church," Armenian-Genocide.org, 2024, accessed November 2024, https://www.armenian-genocide.org/Memorial.194/current_category.75/offset.60/memorials_detail.html.



Figure 15. Armenian Genocide Monument at Forty Martyrs Armenian Apostolic Church of Orange County, Santa Ana, CA, n.d. Source: Armenian National Institute, "Santa Ana, California, Armenian Genocide Monument," Armenian-Genocide.org, 2024, accessed November 2024, https://www.armenian-genocide.org/Memorial.120/current_category.75/offset.60/memorials_detail.html.



Page 37 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument
*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024
 Continuation Update

Figure 16. The Mt. Davidson Memorial Cross, San Francisco, CA, n.d. Source: CAAONC, "Mt. Davidson Cross," Mt. Davidson Cross Armenian Council, accessed November 2024, <https://ranunculus-lemon.squarespace.com/>.



Figure 17. The first official plaque dedicating the Mt. Davidson Memorial Cross to the victims of the Armenian Genocide, n.d. Source: Council of Armenian American Organizations of Northern California (CAAONC), "Cross Council," Mt. Davidson Cross Armenian Council, accessed November 2024, <https://ranunculus-lemon.squarespace.com/cross-council>.



Page 38 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument
*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024
 Continuation Update

Figure 18. Armenian Genocide Memorial, Glendale Civic Auditorium, Glendale, CA, n.d. Source: Armenian National Institute, "Glendale, California, Armenian Genocide Memorial," accessed November 2024, https://www.armenian-genocide.org/Memorial.196/current_category.75/memorials_detail.html.



Figure 19. Armenian Genocide Memorial *Khachkar*, St. Mary's Armenian Apostolic Church, Glendale, CA, n.d. Source: United Armenian Council of Los Angeles, "Armenian Genocide Memorial Monuments Worldwide," accessed November 2024, <http://www.ucla.com/armenian-genocide-memorial-monuments.html>.



Page 39 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument
 *Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024
 Continuation Update

Figure 20. Armenian Genocide Memorial *Khachkars* at St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Apostolic Church, Pasadena, CA, n.d. Source: Armenian National Institute, "Pasadena, California, Armenian Genocide Memorial Khachkar," accessed November 2024, https://www.armenian-genocide.org/Memorial.236/current_category.75/offset.30/memorials_detail.html.



Figure 21. Memorial *Khachkar* at St. James Armenian Apostolic Church, Sacramento, CA, n.d. Source: Armenian National Institute, "Sacramento, California, Memorial Khachkar at St. James Armenian Apostolic Church," accessed November 2024, https://www.armenian-genocide.org/Memorial.219/current_category.75/offset.30/memorials_detail.html.



Page 40 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument
*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024
 Continuation Update

Figure 22. Armenian Genocide Memorial at St. Leon Armenian Cathedral, Burbank, CA, n.d. Source: Armenian National Institute, "Burbank, California, Armenian Genocide Memorial," accessed November 2024, https://www.armenian-genocide.org/Memorial.229/current_category.75/memorials_detail.html.



Figure 23. Armenian Genocide Memorial Monument, St. Mary Armenian Church of Costa Mesa, Costa Mesa, CA, n.d. Source: "Costa Mesa, California, Armenian Genocide Memorial Monument," Armenian National Institute, accessed November 2024, https://www.armenian-genocide.org/Memorial.215/current_category.75/memorials_detail.html.



Page 41 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument
*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024
 Continuation Update

Figure 24. Armenian Genocide Monument, Maple Mall, Fresno State campus, Fresno, CA, n.d. Source: Jeff and Jason Ahronian, "Armenian Genocide Monument," Friends of the Fresno Fair Armenian Exhibit, accessed November 2024, <https://www.armeniansfresno.com/genocide-monument.php>.



Figure 25. Armenian Genocide Monument and Memorial Garden, Los Angeles, CA, n.d. Source: Armenian National Institute, "Los Angeles, California, Armenian Genocide Memorial," accessed November 2024, https://www.armenian-genocide.org/Memorial.334/current_category.75/offset.30/memorials_detail.html.



Page 42 of 42 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument
*Recorded By: Audrey von Ahrens *Date: 11/22/2024
 Continuation Update

Figure 26. Armenian Genocide Memorial in Memorial Park, Pasadena, CA, n.d. Source: Catherine Menard, "Spatial Design: Pasadena Armenian Genocide Memorial," accessed November 2024, <https://www.catherinememard.design/work/spatialdesign/>.



Figure 27. Armenian Genocide Monument in Grand Park, Los Angeles, CA, n.d. Source: "Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day," County of Los Angeles, accessed November 2024, <https://lacounty.gov/2024/04/24/armenian-genocide-remembrance-day/>.

