

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

APPROVED

MAY 20 2011

NO. 11-129

DATE May 20, 2011

BOARD OF RECREATION  
and PARK COMMISSIONERS

C.D. 4

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: GRIFFITH PARK - AUTRY NATIONAL CENTER - RENOVATION OF EXISTING EXHIBIT SPACE AT THE MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN WEST

R. Adams \_\_\_\_\_  
H. Fujita \_\_\_\_\_  
V. Israel \_\_\_\_\_

K. Regan \_\_\_\_\_  
\*M. Shull \_\_\_\_\_  
N. Williams \_\_\_\_\_

  
General Manager

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_

Withdrawn \_\_\_\_\_

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Board grant approval of the proposed renovations of existing exhibit in the galleria, and outdoor area and restrooms at the Autry National Center's Museum of the American West, as described in the Summary of this Report and depicted in Exhibit A.

SUMMARY:

The Museum of the American West (Museum) is located at 4700 Western Heritage Way, within Griffith Park, and in the Hollywood community of the City. The Museum is operated by the Autry National Center (Autry) on land leased by the Autry from the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP).

On January 23, 1987, the City approved a fifty (50) year ground lease agreement (Lease) with the Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum (now known as the Autry National Center), a California non-profit organization, authorizing their occupancy of approximately 12.75 acres of land located in the northeast portion of Griffith Park for the construction and operation of the Museum. The approximately 143,000 square foot Museum was constructed and opened to the public in 1988. The mission statement of the Autry and the Museum is "The Autry brings together the stories of all peoples of the American West, connecting the past with the present to inspire our shared future."

Pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Lease, Autry is required to receive the approval of the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners (Board) prior to the construction of modifications to the Museum structure if the estimated costs of those modifications is in excess of either \$25,000, for internal modifications, or \$5,000, for external modifications.

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The Lease also specifies that the Autry is required to provide the City with a surety bond, or approved substitute, that shall not be for less than 100% of the construction price of any internal or external improvements. Furthermore, Autry is required to submit to the Board as-built drawings of any improvements, with the exception of those improvements related to the Museum security system.

### Proposition 84 Nature Education Facilities Grant Program

In March 2010, the State of California released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Proposition 84 Nature Education Facilities (NEF) Grant Program. The Proposition 84 NEF Grant Program will award a total of \$93 million in competitive grant funding for nature education and interpretation exhibits, research facilities, and equipment to non-profit organizations and public institutions including natural history museums, aquariums, research facilities and botanical gardens. The goal of the Proposition 84 NEF Grant Program is to support institutions that enable focused learning about the natural environment and increase public understanding and recognition of the need to sustain the environment for future generations.

In response to the RFP, Autry submitted a grant application for a renovation project at the Museum (Project) that proposed to construct two exhibit galleries, an outdoor teaching garden, and associated site improvements within the existing footprint of the Museum facility. On April 12, 2011, the State announced the award of 44 grants, totaling \$93 million, from the Proposition 84 NEF Grant Program. The grant application submitted by the Autry for the Project was among those successfully awarded funding. The Project received a grant award of \$6,593,463 from the Proposition 84 NEF Grant Program.

### Museum of the American West Renovation Project

The Project proposes a major re-visioning and redesign of approximately 18,000 square feet of the Museum's existing exhibition galleries and other public spaces. The Project will include the renovation and reconstruction of two exhibit galleries, the installation of long-term exhibits, the conversion of an existing outdoor area into an outdoor teaching garden, and associated improvements including the renovation of existing restrooms. Autry will employ sustainable design practices in the construction of the Project both to neutralize environmental impact and to encourage visitors in the use of sustainable practices.

The two exhibit galleries and the outdoor teaching garden will be devoted to the native people of California, their relationship to the natural environment, and the key resource stewardship practices they have employed in sustaining their traditions and customary manner of living. Through the exhibit galleries and the outdoor teaching garden, visitors to the Autry will learn about historical and contemporary ecological issues that impact and, in some cases, may threaten the way Californians live. The exhibit galleries and the outdoor teaching garden will impart how native communities

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developed systems and techniques dedicated to maintaining the plant and animal species upon which their people depended.

One of the renovated exhibit galleries will house a long-term exhibition called “First Californians.” “First Californians” will look at native communities and cultures through a thematic and bio-regional perspective and will show how nature is weaved into the customs and ceremonial traditions of native Californians. Three themes - “Singing to Our Ancestors,” “Dancing the World into Being,” and “Gathering for Tomorrow” - will lead Museum visitors through traditions and practices that are common to native Californians and are further defined by specific environments within the state.

The “First Californians” exhibition will feature distinctive immersive environments that are specific to each of the exhibit’s three themes. The “Singing to Our Ancestors” theme will feature a fabricated river willow ramada and will highlight bird songs and salt songs of interior California tribes, which are tied to the State’s southern deserts and habitats where natural-occurring water and food sources are scarce. The “Dancing the World into Being” theme will feature an authentic hand-split plank house set in the forested mountains of California’s northwest coast where native tribes engage in life renewal rituals but where logging and fishing industries, as well as dammed rivers, create challenges. The “Gathering for Tomorrow” theme will feature an oak tree canopy and acorn-grinding scene set in the temperate coastlands, valleys, foothills, and woodlands of the southern part of the State where ecosystems dependent on oak trees are important to the different native cultures of those areas.

The other renovated exhibit gallery will house a long-term exhibition called “Dreamers, Doctors, Basketweavers.” This gallery focuses on the foothills and coastal woodlands of the central part of the State and looks at Pomo Indian culture through the lives of two significant 20th-century Pomo women, Mabel McKay and Essie Parish. These women were both “doctors” and key community leaders who worked in traditional methods and helped to sustain the customs and traditions of the Pomo Indians. The exhibit is designed to demonstrate how contemporary Californians can benefit from an understanding of the practices, attitudes and ethics of these women.

The outdoor teaching garden will provide an opportunity for additional environmental education and will include plants native to California’s coniferous forests, mountain meadows, valley grasslands, woodlands, alluvial fans, and marshes. The outdoor teaching garden will showcase the various bio-regions and flora that will be depicted in the “First Californians” exhibition. A water feature will replicate the journey of a river from its mountain source to a pool that depicts riparian ecosystems in lower woodlands and coastal marshes. The water feature will serve as a medium for demonstrating how human activity at the upper reaches of a river can impact downstream ecosystems. Exhibit signage, interactive displays, and educator-led talks in the woodlands area will teach how native communities set controlled fires as a strategy for facilitating plant diversity and acorn cultivation. The outdoor teaching garden will also demonstrate the connection between the cultural objects

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displayed in the exhibit galleries and the living plants used to make those objects. A section of the garden devoted to medicinal plants will foreshadow the stories of Mabel McKay and Essie Parish in the “Dreamers, Doctors, Basketweavers” exhibit.

The “First Californians” and the “Dreamers, Doctors, Basketweavers” exhibition galleries will both feature an interplay of artifacts, labels, in-gallery media, sound, and computer kiosks. 500 objects, representing over 50 Native cultures, will be on display in these two exhibits. Almost all of these objects were made from natural materials endemic to the habitats in which California natives lived. Examples include baskets made from sedge root and quail feathers (Pomo Indians), dance regalia of ringtail fur (Hupa Indians) or eagle feathers (Luiseño Indians), and a fishing canoe of redwood (Yurok Indians).

The conceptual plan for the Project is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

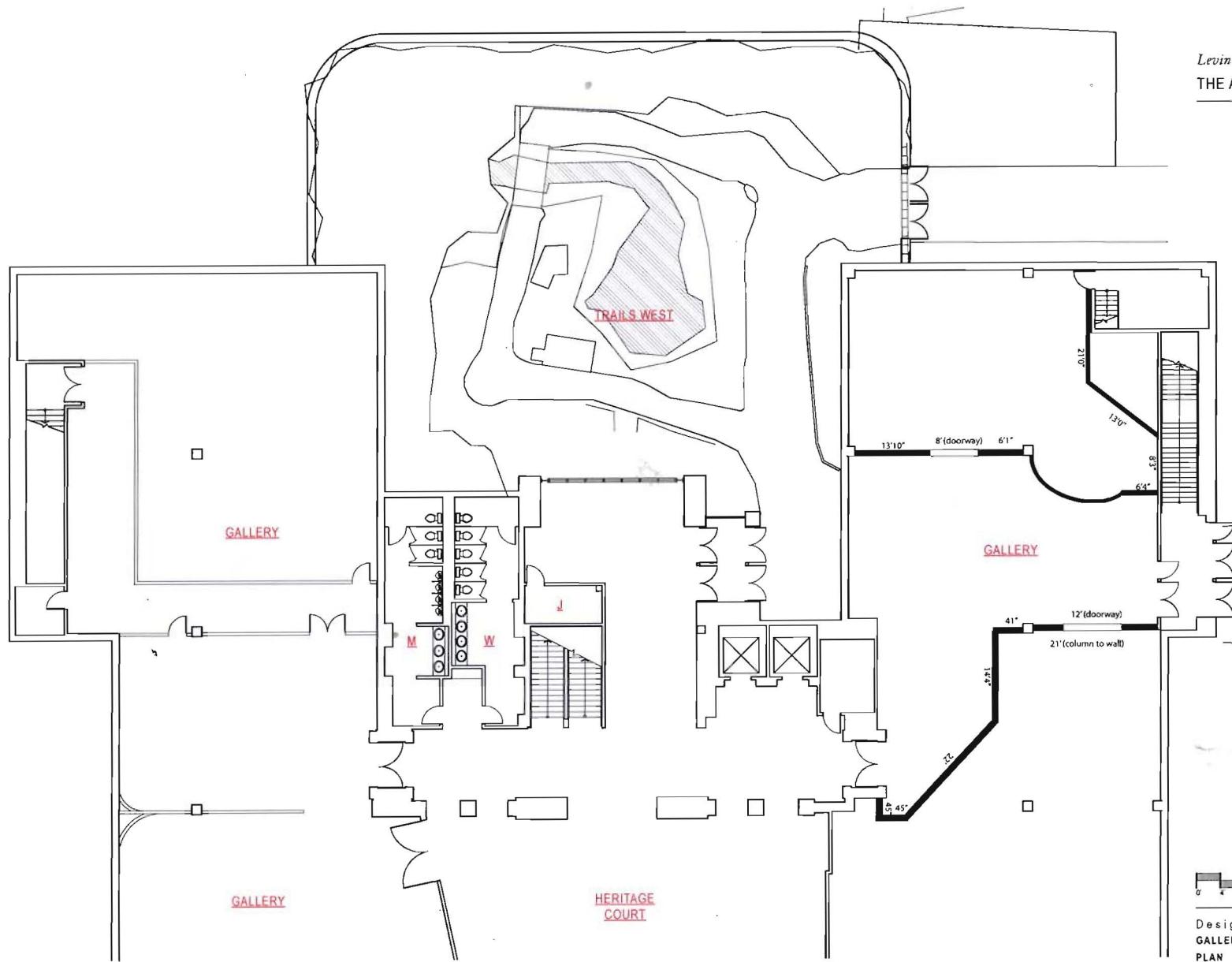
Staff has evaluated the subject project for environmental effects and determined that the project is exempt from the provisions of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Article III, Section 1, Class 1(1) and Class 1(13) of the City CEQA Guidelines. A Notice of Exemption for this project was filed with the Los Angeles City and County Clerks on June 25, 2010. No additional CEQA documentation is required for Board approval.

### FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

The approval of this project should not have any fiscal impact on the Department, as the costs of this project is anticipated to be funded by funding sources other than the Department’s General fund.

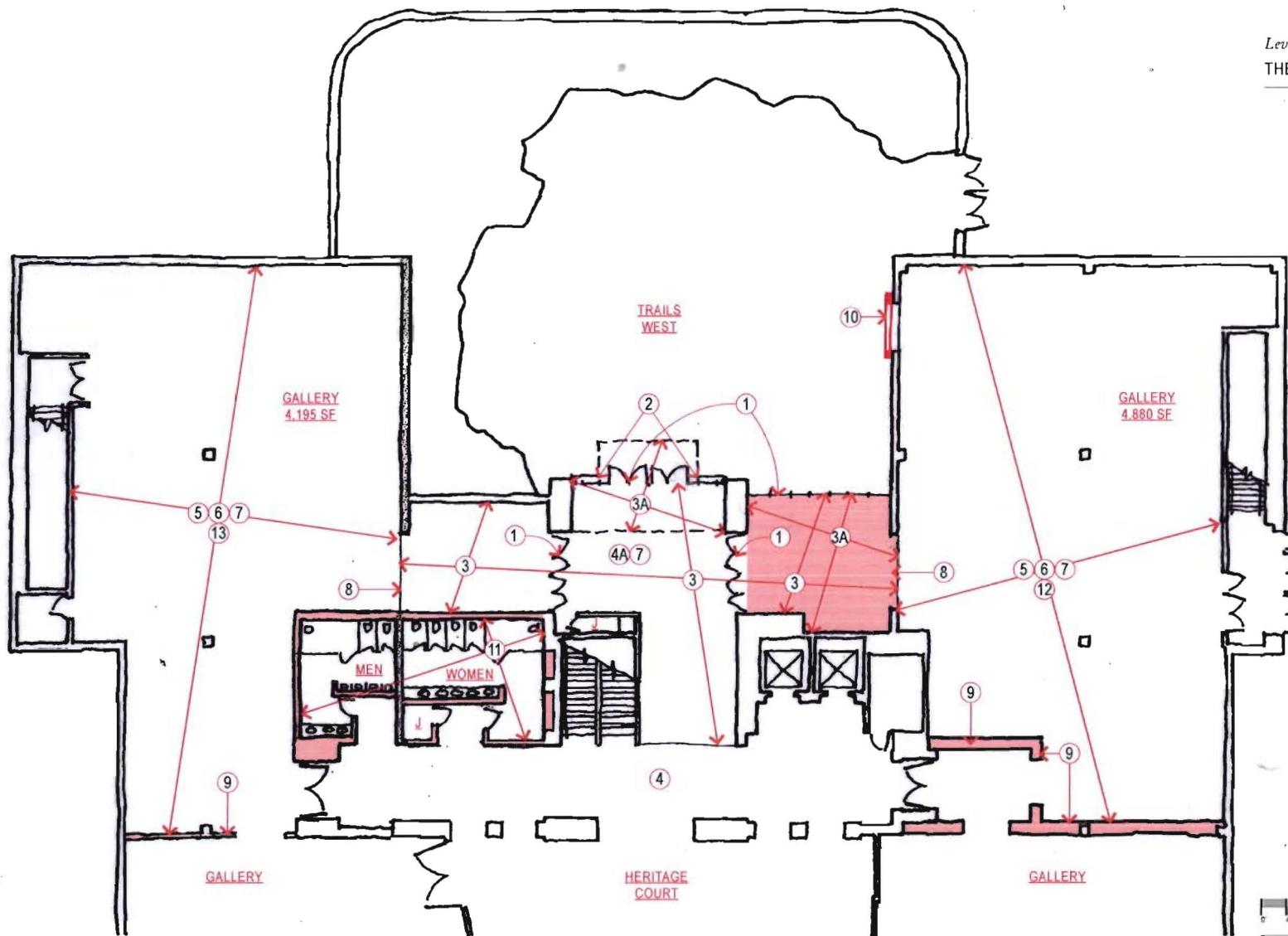
This report was prepared by Darryl Ford, Management Analyst II, Planning, Construction, and Maintenance Division.

Levin & Associates Architects  
THE AUTRY



EXISTING CONDITIONS  
**GTEC1**

Design Criteria Sheet  
GALLERY / TRAILS WEST GRANT  
PLAN  
May 13, 2010



KEYNOTES

- ① NEW STORE FRONT DUAL GLAZING W/ NEW DOORS
- ② NEW DECORATIVE CUT METAL PANELS AT PERIMETER OF EXISTING WINDOW AREA. SEE PROPOSED NORTH EXTERIOR ELEVATION
- ③ NEW STONE FLOOR
- ③A NEW ROOF ABOVE
- ④ EXISTING FLOOR TO REMAIN
- ④A NEW DRYWALL CEILING ABOVE W/ NEW LIGHTS & NEW LINEAR DIFFUSERS
- ⑤ EXISTING CEILING STRUCTURE PAINTED BLACK
- ⑥ NEW DUCT WORK OR EXISTING MODIFIED AS REQUIRED PAINTED BLACK
- ⑦ NEW LIGHTING EXHIBIT & GENERAL
- ⑧ NEW OPENING IN EXISTING WALL (6'-0" X 12'-0")
- ⑨ NEW DRYWALL WALL WITH CASED OPENING
- ⑩ NEW BAY WINDOW ( $\pm 8'-0" \times 12'-0"$ )
- ⑪ NEW FIXTURES & FINISHES THROUGHOUT.
- ⑫ NEW CARPET & LINOLEUM FLOOR
- ⑬ NEW WOOD FLOOR

NEW ENCLOSED AREA: 395 SF

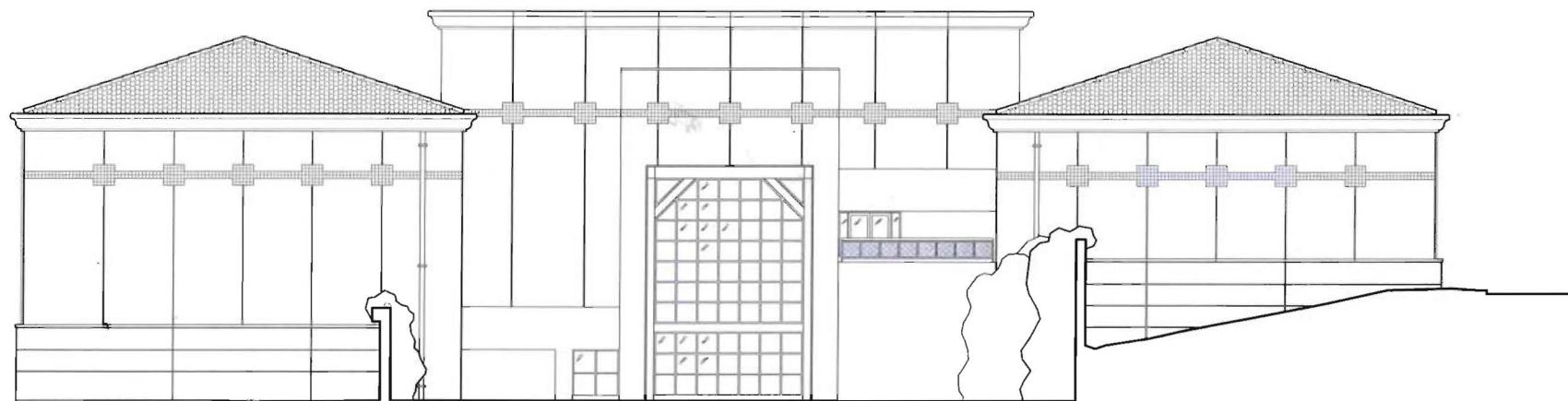


SCHEME B

Design Criteria Sheet  
GALLERY / TRAILS WEST GRANT  
PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN  
May 13, 2010

**GTB02**

*Levin & Associates Architects*  
THE AUTRY



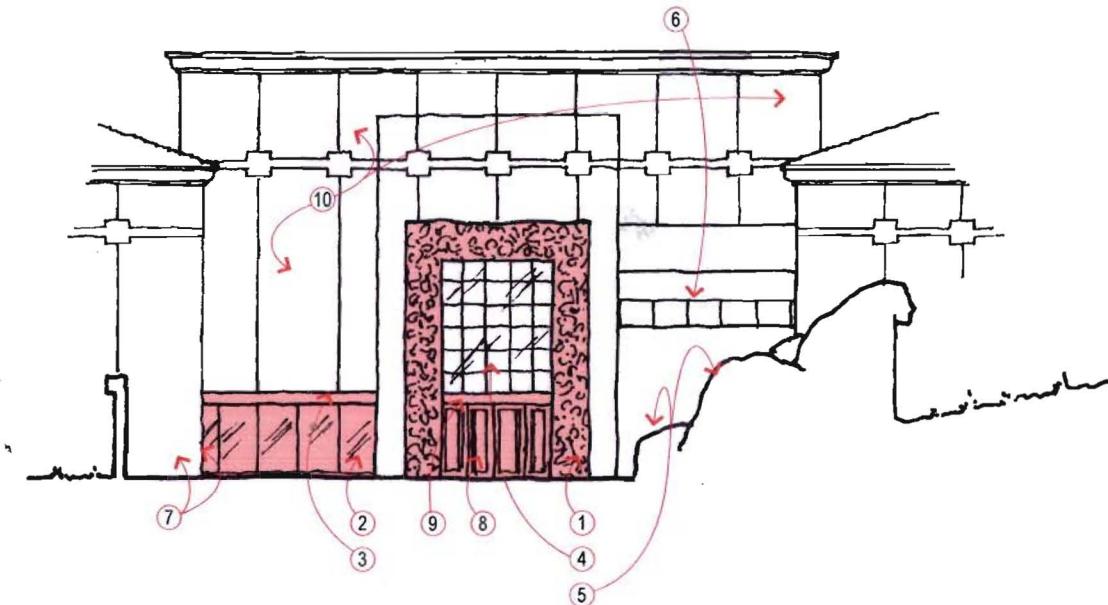
EXISTING CONDITIONS

Design Criteria Sheet  
GALLERY / TRAILS WEST GRANT  
NORTH ELEVATION  
May 13, 2010

GTEC2

KEYNOTES

- ① NEW DECORATIVE CUT METAL PANELS OVER EXISTING WINDOW, 2 SIDES
- ② NEW STORE FRONT
- ③ NEW ROOF
- ④ EXISTING WINDOW & STRUCTURE
- ⑤ EXISTING FAUX ROCKS TO REMAIN
- ⑥ EXISTING BALCONY TO REMAIN
- ⑦ REPAIR EXISTING WALL AT LOCATIONS OF REMOVAL OF FAUX ROCKS
- ⑧ NEW STOREFRONT DOORS, DUAL GLAZING
- ⑨ NEW OVERHANG AT EXISTING BEAM WITH ROOF AT INTERIOR
- ⑩ NEW PAINT

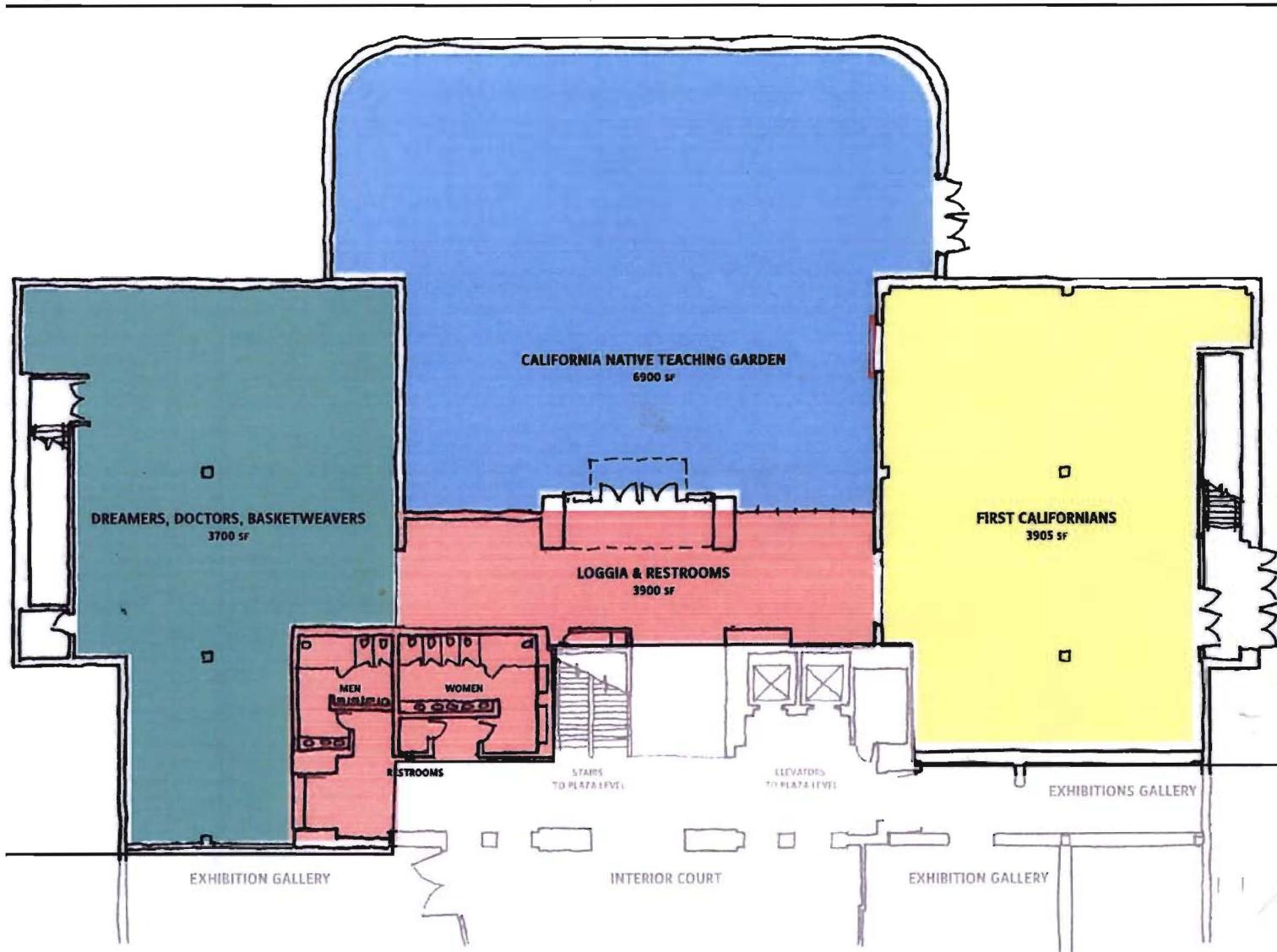


SCHEME B

Design Criteria Sheet  
GALLERY / TRAILS WEST GRANT  
NORTH EXTERIOR ELEVATION  
May 10, 2010

**GTB03**

**Concept Level Site Plan**  
**Autry National Center**



Nature Education Project Area  
18,405 total square footage of  
public spaces



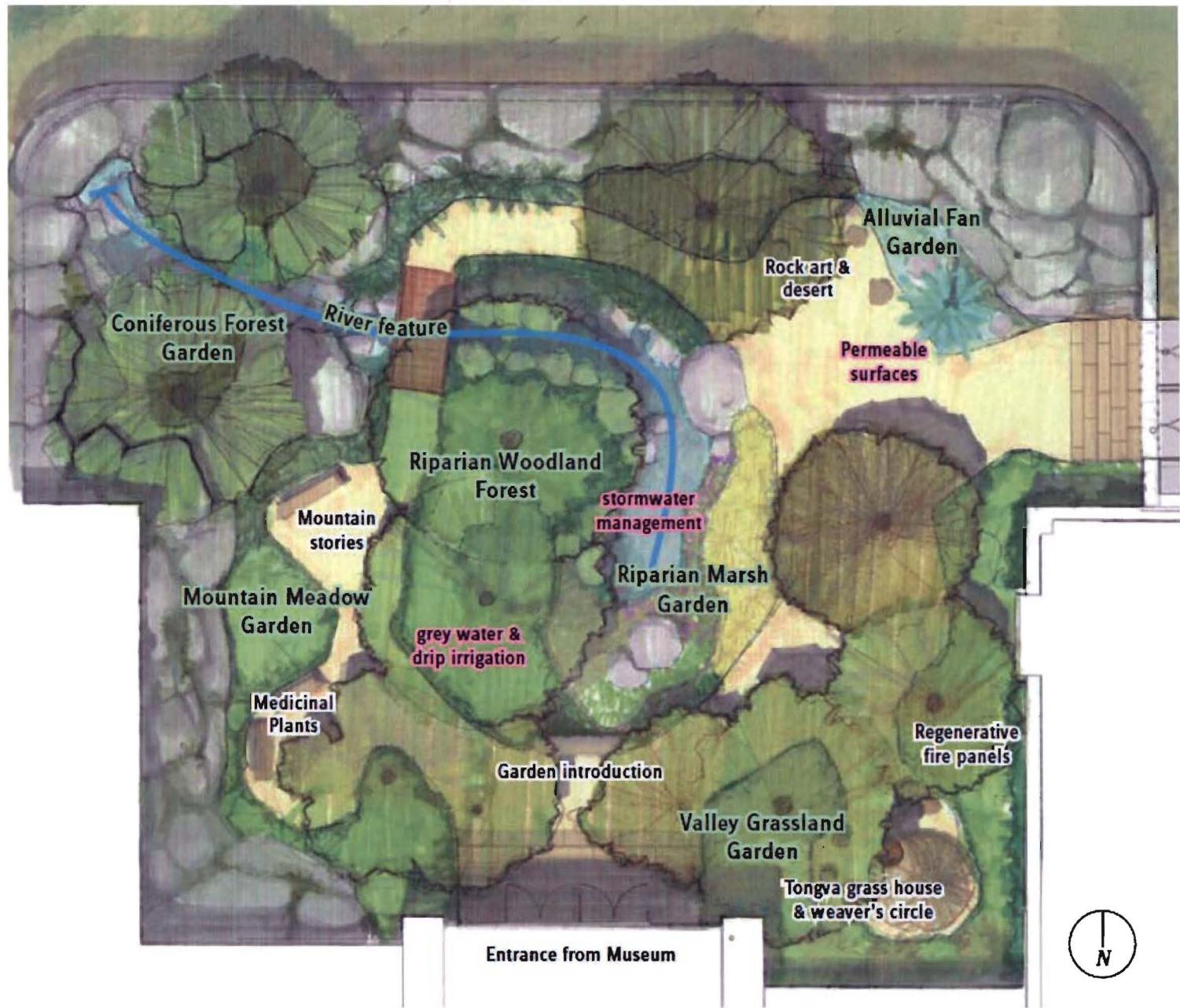
**AUTRY SITE PLAN**  
48,230 total square footage  
of public spaces

Levin & Associates Architects  
**THE AUTRY**

Design Criteria Sheet  
GALLERY / TRAILS WEST GRANT  
PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN  
May 10, 2010



## Site Plan for California Native Teaching Garden



**LEGEND**  
Bio-Regions & Plant Communities  
Interpretive Centers  
Sustainable Practices