

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CONTENTS OF THIS FILE


Submissions by the public in compliance with the Commission Rules and Operating Procedures (ROPs), Rule 4.3, are distributed to the Commission and uploaded online. Please note that “compliance” means that the submission complies with deadline, delivery method (hard copy and/or electronic) AND the number of copies. Please review the Commission ROPs to ensure that you meet the submission requirements. The ROPs can be accessed at <http://planning.lacity.org>, by selecting “Commissions & Hearings” and selecting the specific Commission.

All compliant submissions may be accessed as follows:

- **“Initial Submissions”**: Compliant submissions received no later than by 4:00 p.m. Thursday of the week prior to the meeting, which are not integrated by reference or exhibit in the Staff Report.
- **“Secondary Submissions”**: Compliant submissions received after the Initial Submission deadline up to 24-hours prior to the Commission meeting are contained in this file and bookmarked by the case number.
- **“Day of Hearing Submissions”**: Compliant submissions after the Secondary Submission deadline up to and including the day of the Commission meeting will be uploaded to this file within two business days after the Commission meeting.

Material which does not comply with the submission rules is not distributed to the Commission.

ENABLE BOOKMARKS ONLINE:

**If you are using Explorer, you will need to enable the Acrobat  toolbar to see the bookmarks on the left side of the screen.

If you are using Chrome, the bookmarks are on the upper right-side of the screen. If you do not want to use the bookmarks, simply scroll through the file.

If you have any questions, please contact the Commission Office at (213) 978-1300.


INITIAL SUBMISSIONS

The following submissions by the public are in compliance with the Commission Rules and Operating Procedures (ROPs), Rule 4.3a. Please note that “compliance” means that the submission complies with deadline, delivery method (hard copy and/or electronic) AND the number of copies. The Commission’s ROPs can be accessed at <http://planning.lacity.org>, by selecting “Commissions & Hearings” and selecting the specific Commission.

The following submissions are not integrated or addressed in the Staff Report but have been distributed to the Commission.

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If you have any questions, please contact the Commission Office at (213) 978-1300.



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Please save the Mellenthin Birdhouse apartments!

1 message

anna nereim <jnereim@yahoo.com>
Reply-To: anna nereim <jnereim@yahoo.com>
To: chc@lacity.org

Wed, Jan 29, 2025 at 9:50 PM

This is exactly the sort of housing we SHOULD be preserving and learning from!

J. Anna Nereim

"We must love one another or die." W. H. Auden

"it is not the mountain we conquer but ourselves." Edmund Hillary



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments - CH Rebuttal

1 message

Russell Gallaher <russellgallaher@aol.com>

Thu, Jan 30, 2025 at 2:30 PM

To: "chc@lacity.org" <chc@lacity.org>, "melissa.jones@lacity.org" <melissa.jones@lacity.org>, "andrez.parra@lacity.org" <andrez.parra@lacity.org>, "losangelesbassist@yahoo.com" <losangelesbassist@yahoo.com>

RE: CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments
Chronicle Heritage Letter dated October 11,2024

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

I am submitting this in rebuttal of some claims and statements in a letter from Carrie Chasteen of Chronicle Heritage dated October 11,2024 that was submitted to the Commission in opposition of the CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments, and to provide evidence that these claims are false, incorrect or misleading.

The letter stated "Mellenthin constructed his personal residence, located 6 miles from the subject property at 4949 Ethel Avenue, which also features a cupola and dove cote. The Ethel residence is more closely associated with the life and work of Mellenthin. 4949 Ethel better represents his life and work and is a better candidate for HCM designation."

The property at 4949 Ethel Avenue has had many alterations. In 2008 Permit # 08014-10000-01167 was issued for a One-Story Addition and Remodel, the corresponding Certificate of Occupancy was issued on 04/15/2009. In 2012, Permit # 12014-20000-04603 was issued for another One-Story Addition and Remodel to Laundry and Master Bedroom. In 2013, Permit # 12014-20002-04603 was issued for the Replacement of Seven Windows, and also, Permit # 12014-30001-04603 was issued for Revise Floor Plan and Remodel Existing Bathroom and Add Skylight, the corresponding Certificate of Occupancy for those three permits was issued 04/10/2013.

No Building Permit, Application To Erect A New Building, or Certificate of Occupancy was found, through an online search of building records on the LADBS website or from an In-Person Visit to the LADBS Records Department in Van Nuys, CA that provides evidence that William Mellenthin was the original builder. It also has dormer windows, which was NOT a common Mellenthin detail.

The letter stated "The HCM nomination presents a false construction history. The original permits were issued in March 1954. Albeit issued during the same year of construction. Permits nos. 1954VN77302 and 1954VN77303 were issued in June to alter the primary façades to allow for construction of the porches over the front steps."

Actually, the original permits were issued in April 1954 (1954VN77229 and 1954VN77231). Yes, permit #'s 1954VN77302 and 1954VN77303 were issued in June 1954 to "change the elevation with addition of porches over the front steps". This was NOT an "alteration" to an existing or already completed structure, but a permit for the builder (Mellenthin) to "ALTER" his original

PLANS during construction, they are signed by him. It is fairly common for Builders to alter plans during construction and this one makes perfect sense, as it was one of Mellenthin's distinctive features to have larger porch "overhangs". Also, only one Certificate of Occupancy (per building) was issued for the original building permit and the alteration permit combined, meaning that the builder's plans were altered (by him) during construction, NOT by someone else later "altering" his design.

The letter also stated "Additionally, permit was issued on July 20, 2000 to "construct additional storage between the garages."

There is no "additional storage" between the garages. There is a wooden gate to hide the trash bins.

No Certificate of Occupancy was ever issued that corresponds to the above-mentioned Application For Building Permit (08014-10000-01167) through an online search of building records on the LADBS website or an In-Person Visit to the LADBS Records Department in Van Nuys, CA.

Please see attached Application for Permits and Certificate of Occupancy(s).

Sincerely,

Russell Gallaher

 **CHC-2024-6156-HCM_Rebuttal-to-CH-Letter.pdf**
7594K



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

CHC-2024-6156-HCM Designating Six William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments: LA Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM)

1 message

Cindy Sanders <newse825@aol.com>

Thu, Jan 30, 2025 at 12:06 AM

To: chc@lacity.org

Cc: Cindy Sanders <newse825@aol.com>, LA conservancy <info@laconservancy.org>

CHC-2024-6156-HCM
CEQA: ENV-2024-6157-CE
WILLIAM MELLENTHIN BIRDHOUSE APARTMENTS
5922-5930 N. Buffalo Avenue
Van Nuys-North Sherman Oaks
COUNCIL District 2-Nazarian

As a fourth generation native Southern Californian, I see our city losing many of its architectural treasures. This is one more we need to save for its unique history, architecture and UNDER THE RENT STABILIZATION ORDINANCE. It is also one of the only multi-family residences designed by William Mellenthin with six units, well preserved and an example of LA's diverse treasures.

To preserve our unique yet dwindling architectural treasures, I request that you designate it as Historic Cultural Monument (HCM). It's so important to retain our older, RSO buildings not only for their charm and uniqueness, but also for a sense of community...something LA is losing daily.

Many thanks for your consideration to preserve this small piece of history!!

Cindy Sanders
4225 Mary Ellen Avenue #302
Studio City, CA 81604



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

CHC-2024-6156-HCM Designating Six William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments: LA Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM)

1 message

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Thu, Jan 30, 2025 at 12:06 AM

To: chc@lacity.org

Cc: Cindy Sanders <newse825@aol.com>, LA conservancy <info@laconservancy.org>

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Cindy Sanders
4225 Mary Ellen Avenue #302
Studio City, CA 81604



Millenthin Birdhouse Apartments -a treasure

1 message

Lanore Larson <lanorelaron@gmail.com>
To: "chc@lacity.org" <chc@lacity.org>

Wed, Jan 29, 2025 at 6:42 PM

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to preserve the Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments, an inspiring testament to the days when Los Angeles offered attractively designed affordable apartments. There is now no shortage of oversized grey featureless buildings with no greenery, no window trim or really decoration of any kind, let alone common outdoor spaces to interact with neighbors. Please do not replace affordable whimsy with market priced housing boxes.

The loss of these charming modest affordable apartments will displace current low income residents. Life is difficult enough without the city and developers stripping what little charm is left to living in Los Angeles. There is already an excess of plain homogenous buildings that give no indication of one's location-it could be Los Angeles, or Seoul or Moscow or Indianapolis or, well anywhere that cost cutting developers throw up nondescript dwelling units, pocketing profits and leaving residents with dispiriting sterile "neighborhoods".

Please preserve this tiny corner of joy.

Lanore Larson
Los Angeles, CA 90016



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Linda Devine <ls_devine@yahoo.com>

Thu, Jan 30, 2025 at 1:13 PM

To: "chc@lacity.org" <chc@lacity.org>

Cc: "melissa.jones@lacity.org" <melissa.jones@lacity.org>, "andrez.parra@lacity.org" <andrez.parra@lacity.org>

Dear Cultural Heritage Commission,

Please save the Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments that are being threatened to be demolished. Nobody needs another modern apartment building replacing something that is perfectly fine.

Regards,

Linda Devine

Valley Glen, CA



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Millenthin Birdhouse Apartments - Maycrest Bungalows

1 message

lynnmcleod@mac.com <lynnmcleod@mac.com>
To: chc@lacity.org

Thu, Jan 30, 2025 at 2:01 PM

I want to add my voice to those of the Los Angeles Conservancy, the apartment residents and other people requesting that you recognize the historic and cultural importance of these buildings. It is critical that Los Angeles' tradition of demolishing buildings not continue indefinitely, but acknowledge the significance of structural icons like these.

Thank you for your consideration,
Lynn McLeod



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Support for the Mellethon Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

m54wdavis <m54wdavis@gmail.com>
To: chc@lacity.org

Wed, Jan 29, 2025 at 7:41 PM

This iconic structure deserves special protection because of its firm place in the memories of so many Boomer Generation citizens of Los Angeles. This style goes right along with the heyday of LA aircraft boom, growing up in a time in LA where everyone wanted to live in LA, and became a symbol of "living the good life" in this vibrant city. We need to preserve the buildings that hold that place in our minds, educate our youngsters about what happened before, and insure that not all of LA becomes a drab cookie cutter McMansion infestation.

Sincerely,

Marianne Davis
4633 Noeline Avenue
Encino CA 91436

Sent from my Galaxy

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

I would like to share with you some interesting facts that may be relevant to the Historic Nomination of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments. I have often seen Realtors marketing their listing by bolstering their famous architects/builders such as Robert Byrd, Frank Lloyd Wright Jr., and A. Quincy Jones for example. I've done some research, and it appears that Realtors have been doing the same with William Mellenthin.

As far back as the early 1950's, Realtors were advertising "Birdhouse", "Mellenthin", "Mellenthin Built" and have continued to do so even today. One must remember that before the internet, Realtors relied on newspaper classifieds as their main source of public advertising. They had to pay for these ads, and they were limited by the number of characters. I believe they were allotted so many "main words" that would be ALL CAPS, and they chose "MELLENTHIN".

To me, that shows his name and craftsmanship were known and added value to a property, back in his day and present day. Below are some examples of LA Times Ads. The Triplex Ad below may well be one of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments, the ad was on 9/05/1955 and states 10 mos old, which makes it about the same age. Also added are some more recent sales from the local Multiple Listing Service. There is also a local Realtor, Alan Taylor, known as "the Mellenthin Man" for his niche of selling Mellenthin homes. He has a webpage and several YouTube videos.

NEW 3-BDRM. "BIRDHOUSE"
of USED BRICK & WOOD on dead-end str. nr. LA trans., schls. & shops. CENTER HALL PLAN, forced air ht., 1 1/2 tiled baths, birchwood 27' LR-DR w/cor. FIELDSTONE frplc. & GLASS WALL to garden. Natural wood & tiled kitch. w/displ. & BRKFST. AREA. MAHOGANY panel. 3rd bdrm. w/closet convt. to den. Lawns, sprkirs. \$18,250. Xlnt. terms.

Birdhouse Ad_LATimes_5-10-1953_pg152

brkfst. bar. Excellent financing.
STan. 75633 STate 97154.

★ **Lovely Ranch Moderne**
Nr. Fulton Av. So. of Ventura Bl.
2 BEDRMS., DEN, 5 YRS. OLD
"MELLENTHIN BUILT"
Natural wood cab. Rustic beamed ceilings. Forced air ht. Garbage disposal. Patio-porch. Big yard.
\$17,950. Loan \$11,000, \$83 mo.
McElhinney. STate 44839

SO VERY CHARMING and SPOT-

Mellenthin-Built_LATimes-Ad_12-19-1954_pg70

RUSTIC triplex. "Mellenthin" 10
mos. old. Beaut. landsc., fenced.
metal awning & patio. 2-1 & 1-2
Br. Good inc. \$7500 dn. PO-63708.

Mellenthin-Triplex_LATimes-Ad_9-05-1955_pg49

klers, lawns, fncd, \$43,500. ST.8-6263

★ **"Mellenthin" Miracle** ★
IMAGINE! A "MELLENTHIN" custom on CHOICE CORNER. Spac. 2 Bdrms. & den + FULL diningrm. 2 FRPLCS., 2 bas., w/w CPTG. & DRAPES. HUGE patio. FINEST SCHOOL district. The Miracle is that it's only \$22,950, \$3,950 dn.

HARRY CHAVIN
14450 MAGNOLIA BL. ST. 8-7272.

HTD. 40' POOL + 2000 SQ. FT.
3 BR. & den w/2 bas. on 186' deep lot nr. shops & schls. Frplc. in 22' L.R., sep. D.R. & brkfst. area in kitch., 25x25 panel. den off gard., huge M.B.R. & stall shwr. ba. Orchard, patio, lawns, fenced. \$4,500 down. \$28,950. ST. 8-6163.

MELLENTHIN CHARMER
2 & den, din. rm., 2 frplcs., F.A. ht., 1 1/2 bas. Spac. rms. Gracious interior. Striking prof. Idscp. 2 blocks to schls. & all shops. \$26,950. Terms. MALNICK. ST. 8-0820. TR. 3-3763

ALREADY MOVED!

Mellenthin-2ads_LATimes-Ad_9-25-1960_pg189

LORE! Don't miss. B.R. TR. 7-9767

**IT'S FABULOUS—WHY?
TOLUCA LAKE 2 & DEN
MELLENTHIN BUILT!**

Only 1 blk. from Lake & - Golf Course. Rustic Ranch, shake roof, 2 bas., sep. din. rm., modern blt-in kitch., 2 frpls., lovely landsc., rm. for pool. Submit \$10,000 down.

Woodward Rlty. PO. 3-4325

CLOSED SUN.—CALL US MON.

Mellenthin-Built_LATimes-Ad_10-08-1961_pg363

**MARVELOUS
MELLENTHIN IN A
PRIME SHERMAN OAKS
AREA**



Approx. 2,400 sq. ft. in sparkling move-in cond! 3 br. & Conv. den. Frml. dine 2 1/2 ba. Lrg. Kitch. w/eating area. Vacant!

\$209,950

Mellenthin_LATimes-Ad_11-03-1984_pg126

**★ BIG 2 BR. & DEN
"MELLENTHIN"—\$33,500
WOODMAN-BURBANK AREA
DON MEADE CO.**

PO. 9-2410 984-0380 TR. 7-3397

Just Reduced New \$51,950

Mellenthin_LATimes-Ad_5-22-1966_pg408

6857 MAMMOTH AVE \$299,000

Like new! Redone Mellenthin. 3BR, 2 tpic, pool + fam rm. (SC051) Rambo 505-9681

4883 KATHERINE AVE \$300,000

Mellenthin_LATimes-Ad_4-30-1989_pg587

ing the pool. 2.5 Baths, Formal Dining. GAIL S.

GATED MELLENTHIN \$269,900
Gated Mellenthin in great area of Sherman Oaks. 3 Beds, 1.75 Baths, Den, Dining Area, Spa, 2 Fppls, High wood ceiling. MONTY ICEMAN

LOVELY CUSTOM HOME \$247,000
Great house has 4 Bedrooms, 2.75 Baths, Den, Formal Dining, Pool, Spa, Sauna, Cathedral ceilings, Satellite dish, Fireplace. GENIA G.

SPANISH DUPLEX \$219,500
West Hollywood. Each unit has 2 Bedrooms & 1 Bath. Charming amenities include wood floors & arched ceilings. Priced to sell! ERIC VARON

CLASSIC MELLENTHIN \$179,500
Great pocket of VAN NUYS. 3 Bedrooms, 1.5 Baths, Formal Dining, Spa, Large enclosed Lanai, Hardwood Floors & more. GAIL S.

HOLLYWOOD HILLS CONDO \$169,000

Mellenthin_2-ads_LATimes-Ad_1-29-1995_pg123

JUST LISTED!

MELLENTHIN loaded w/charm in prime Sherman Oaks. Grant Milliken area. Country rustic appeal thruout. Lots of wood & brick, hardwood floors, 2 frpls., beams, heavy shake roof, custom shutters. 3 br's., conv. den, dine area & POOL. \$143,500. (V161) Ask for KAREN.....984-0808

Mellenthin_LATimes-Ad_12-04-1977_pg804

GORGEOUS MELLENTHIN \$149,950

Enticing 3 Bdrm., Family Rm., Dining Rm., on Pride of Ownership Street! Brick Fireplaces, Wine Cellar, Vaulted Beam Ceilings, Dark Hardwood Floors, Blt-ins, PLUS Sparkling POOL.

Mellenthin_LATimes-Ad_9-11-1983_pg672

14028 Runnymede St Closed • Single Family Residence • List / Sold: **\$899,999 / \$1,050,000** ↑



7 days on the market • Sold On 08/24/2023
3 beds, 2 baths • 1,705 sqft • 8,411 sqft lot • \$615.84/sqft • Built in 1954
BAC: 2.5%

Step back in time and live the suburban dream in this adorable 1954 Mellenthin home on one of the best streets in the area. This was the model home and the crown jewel of the neighborhood when it was built and is unusual in that it is larger than most of the original homes, has a larger lot, and a rear facing garage. This home boasts 3 generous bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and a cozy wood paneled den. There a... [More](#)

Van Nuys • [Map](#) ML# 23289439

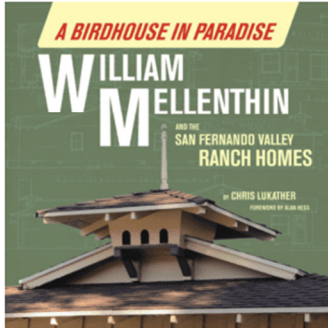
540 N Keystone St Closed • Single Family Residence • List / Sold: **\$1,299,000 / \$1,299,000**



10 days on the market • Sold On 11/17/2023
3 beds, 2 baths • 1,896 sqft • 6,655 sqft lot • \$685.13/sqft • Built in 1963
BAC: 2.5%

Welcome to 540 N Keystone and this classic William Mellenthin Mid Century Ranch Traditional home, oozing with charm! With the original cupola over the garage and impressive front elevation, you know you're about to see something different. Through the front door, a custom slate entry, vintage chandelier, and beautifully restored original oak hardwood floors, impress right from the start. To your right,... [More](#)

Burbank • [Map](#) ML# 23320991



Known as the "Mellenthin Man," Alan's experience with Mellenthin Ranch Homes is incomparable. His affinity for these noteworthy properties has led to features in acclaimed publications, articles, and even inclusion in the popular architectural book, A Birdhouse in Paradise – William Mellenthin and the San Fernando Valley Ranch Homes, written by Chris Lukather.



YouTube Search

1:45 / 5:06 • Front of Beautifully Crafted Home >

WHY EVERYONE LOVES A MELLENTHIN HOME

Alan Taylor Real Estate Group 1.9K subscribers [Subscribe](#)

4 [Share](#) [Download](#)

4.8K views 1 year ago
Alan Taylor Presents Why everyone loves a Mellenthin Home. If you're looking for a home that's sure to impress, you'll want to check

Sincerely,
Russell Gallaher

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

Although this may not be historically relevant to the Nomination of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments, I do feel this adds to its value. It shows that this property creates a community inviting for creators, artists and workers of the Film Industry that Los Angeles is known for. That a resident there could have the creative space to write, put together and direct a film with several famous actors with a small budget, and that his neighbors would offer up their apartments, common space and garages to the film crew.

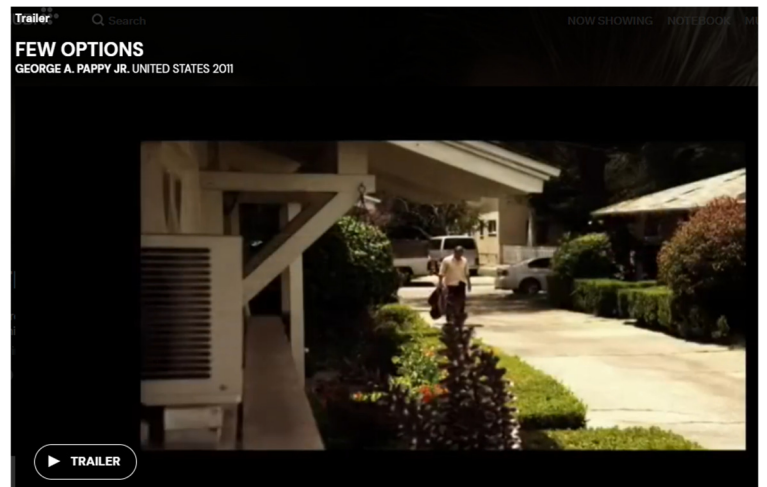
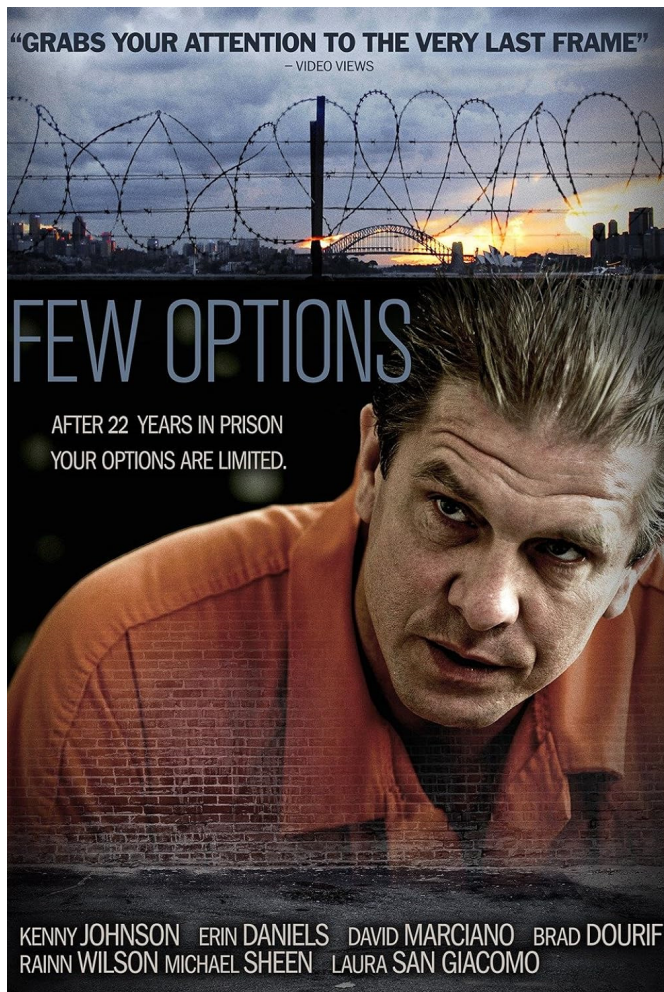
In 2011, George A. Pappy Jr. was a tenant at the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments where he wrote and directed the film "Few Options, All Bad" starring Kenny Johnson (SWAT, Saving Grace, The Shield) and featuring Rainn Wilson (The Office), Michael Sheen (Underworld), Laura San Giacomo (Just Shoot Me!) and others.

Several scenes were shot at the location with Kenny Johnson, Rainn Wilson and Cindy Baer; in the driveway, in an apartment, at a doorway, and in the garage. Please see the screen shots below.

I feel this example is another reason for saving historical properties like this one. The Los Angeles Film Industry has already lost a significant amount of business to other cities over the past several years and erasing our historic and cultural landscape will only worsen this.

Sincerely,

Russell Gallaher





Trailer® Search

NOW SHOWING NOTEBOOK

FEW OPTIONS

GEORGE A. PAPPY JR. UNITED STATES 2011

A person in a dark coat is standing in a garage, looking at a white garage door. The scene is dimly lit, with some light coming from the top of the frame.

▶ TRAILER





Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Support of Millenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

The Flapper Bassist <mikomello@gmail.com>
To: chc@lacity.org

Wed, Jan 29, 2025 at 6:18 PM

Hello, my name is Melody and I am in support of the preservation of the Millenthin Birdhouse Apartments. Thank you



CHC-2024-6156-HCM - Support for Historic Nomination

1 message

Amanda Bockman <amandabockman@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 3:22 PM

To: melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com, chc@lacity.org

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

My name is Amanda Bockman, and I am writing in strong support of preserving the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments, specifically 5922 Buffalo Ave. My husband and I were fortunate to call this place home from July 2011 to July 2013, and in those two years, we came to deeply appreciate its charm, history, and the sense of community it fostered.

As a Los Angeles native, I have always admired the unique character of our city's historical buildings, and this property is truly one of a kind. The architecture, with its signature birdhouse on the roof, the beautiful wood floors, the pocket doors, the mail slot—every detail adds to its warmth and authenticity. The landscaping and natural surroundings brought life to the space, with birds and wildlife creating a peaceful oasis in the middle of the city. It wasn't just an apartment; it was a home with a soul.

Losing a place like this would be an immeasurable loss to the community. Properties like these, built with craftsmanship and character, are becoming increasingly rare in Los Angeles. Tearing it down would erase a piece of our city's architectural history and diminish the charm that makes our neighborhoods special.

I sincerely hope that this unique property will be granted historic designation. It deserves to be preserved for future generations to experience and appreciate.

I fully support the historic designation of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments, and I urge you to do the same.

Sincerely,
Amanda Bockman



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Amy Atthajaron <amysulawan@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 8:03 AM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Amy Atthajaron, and I am contacting you about the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments Support for Historic Nomination. I have visited the property several times over the years to visit my friend that currently resides there. I myself live in Glendale where there are so many apartment complexes that fill the city like mini skyscrapers. I grew up in the suburbs as a child, so there were more houses than apartments. I have to say that I miss that feeling and the sights that come along with it. You feel like your surroundings are a part of your home. My apartment complex does not give me that sense of home. Especially my upstairs neighbors. I hear everything. It sounds like they're playing soccer and weightlifting with every footstep and every item dropped. Within my walls, yes I can create my home. But the moment I step outside, even just in the hallway, I lose the home-like feel immediately. Also, no sense of community. The only way I see my neighbor is if I walk to a mailbox and someone happens to be there. There are no areas to gather and commune.

When I first visited the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments, it felt like a community immediately. You can feel that sense of home just walking down the driveway. What makes it more special is that they're not stacked on top of each other. So no noisy upstairs neighbors. The architecture of these buildings were so thoughtful in creating a sense of community and home that you don't have with modern day buildings. And when you step outside your door, you're immediately in your community. You can see neighbors when they come outside, too. You can see the sky.

This place is so special because it takes me back to growing up in the suburbs where you grew up in a home. It doesn't feel like the shoebox apartment living quarters that I've lived in most of my adult life. This special little community is right by one of these big apartment complexes, and you can see the contrast of someone's home versus someone's living quarters. They don't look or feel the same. It's like stepping back in time where we could all have a home to go to. Don't take that away and add another behemoth building that you wouldn't even take a second look at.

I truly hope that this unique property will be granted a historic designation. I fully support the historic designation of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments. I am highly in favor of preserving the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments nomination as a historic designation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope you see and feel how special this place is like I and so many others have.

Sincerely,

Amy Atthajaron



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments, Van Nuys

1 message

k campbell <vendredi423@gmail.com>

Wed, Jan 29, 2025 at 10:19 AM

To: chc@lacity.org

Cc: melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org

I support the nomination of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments for Historic Cultural Landmark status. I understand that HCL is not a complete protection so I also support denying any attempt to demolish or "update" this property with, or without, permits.

Mellenthin homes are distinctive, identifiable properties that make the SFV the SFV. Los Angeles has lost so many historic & cultural properties this month, please don't allow this fabulous example of valley expansion be lost to profit.

Sincerely,

kathleen campbell



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Bradley Allen <bradley@fastlane.la>

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 3:38 PM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

I am a neighbor of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments and I fully support their historic designation. I have loved these very unique apartments since I first saw them. It is clear that they were designed and built to foster community for the people who live there, as well as everyone else on our street, Buffalo Avenue.

Although Mellenthin was a prolific developer of single-family homes in the San Fernando Valley, so many of these iconic homes have been completely destroyed or remodeled beyond recognition.

In the 1950s and 60s, my father grew up in a Mellenthin Home located at [12728 Milbank Street](#) in North Hollywood. He loved growing up in this special home. After his parents sold the house, the new buyer completely remodeled it to look modern. My father told me, "I was very disappointed when I saw how it had been changed. It does not look like the same house."

Mellenthin only built a few multi-family dwellings, and the proposed Historic site on Buffalo Avenue appears to be the only intact Mellenthin Single-Story Ranch-Style Multi-Family Apartments left standing. They still retain nearly all of their original features as built 70 years ago.

On behalf of my father and entire family, we truly hope that the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments on Buffalo Avenue will be granted a historic designation. It would be such an enormous loss to our community to tear down such a unique, peaceful and important multi-family residence.

Sincerely,
Bradley Allen

Attached Photo:

Before and After: 12728 Milbank Street in [North Hollywood](#).



12728-Milbank-St-original-and-remodel.jpg
372K



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Camille Murray <sicilycamille@gmail.com>

Sun, Jan 26, 2025 at 10:22 PM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

I am writing regarding the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments located at 5920-30 Buffalo Avenue. I have been informed that there are plans to tear down this property and build a 5-story apartment complex. I have friends who have lived in this complex for over twenty years, people who have become my family away from home. I love the architecture and the wonderful design features that were built to last. The beautiful attention to detail and craftsmanship are still recognized today and appreciated by all who live here.

I am in full support of preserving the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments nomination as a historic designation. With the recent fires in Los Angeles, a lot of people have been displaced and lost their homes because of a natural disaster. In the case of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments, allowing Angelenos to keep their homes and preserving the property can prevent displacement.

I truly hope that this unique property will be granted a historic designation.

Best,

S. Camille Murray



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

catherine miller <catherinemiller2003@yahoo.com>
To: chc@lacity.org

Wed, Jan 22, 2025 at 6:22 PM

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

I've been a regular visitor for over five years now, as I have friends who live there and my business is down the street.

I have never seen a cute apartment building like this around the area and to experience it firsthand has been amazing. I have made friends with a few of the tenants who come out to socialize with each others.

As an owner of a design firm nickelfishdesigns.com and a California native, I'm sad to see that this amazing property will no longer exist only to be replaced with a five story complex.

With the fires that just transpired in Altadena and surrounding communities we are now especially at the threat of losing our history and the unique architecture that is synonymous with Los Angeles and its history. Let alone the community vibe that has been going on for years at this special site.

I truly hope that this unique property will be granted a historic designation.

I am highly in favor of preserving the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments nomination as a historic designation.

Sincerely

Catherine L Miller

Sent from my iPhone

The Historical Significance of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Design

William Mellenthin's Birdhouse ranch homes in the San Fernando are an important part of the historical and architectural landscape of Los Angeles. They are revered for their outstanding build quality, durability and curbside appeal. No other builder in the San Fernando Valley had the impact and success of William Mellenthin. He built over 3,000 homes, apartments and commercial structures during a career that spanned from the 1920s to the 1960s. When a Mellenthin home goes on the real estate market today, it is proudly hailed as a Mellenthin Birdhouse. If you walk the neighborhoods of Sherman Oaks, Van Nuys, Valley Glen, Studio City, North Hollywood, Burbank and Encino, you will find countless imitators of the Mellenthin cupola/dovecote design. Some are cute and whimsical, but none live up to the design, build and quality of a true Mellenthin Birdhouse. Searching through newspaper and magazine articles published in Southern California over the last century, you will find a common theme when Mellenthin's name is mentioned. He was considered a master builder, a successful architect, and was very well liked in the community. His work ethic and status as a top builder were second to none. This property at 5922-5930 N. Buffalo Avenue is a prime example of Mellenthin's outstanding work as a home builder, designer and developer — and deserves to be saved and preserved.

— Chris Lukather, author of *A Birdhouse in Paradise: William Mellenthin and the San Fernando Valley Ranch Homes*



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Chris Nichols <nixols@yahoo.com>

Tue, Jan 28, 2025 at 8:23 PM

To: "chc@lacity.org" <chc@lacity.org>

Cc: "melissa.jones@lacity.org" <melissa.jones@lacity.org>, "andrez.parra@lacity.org" <andrez.parra@lacity.org>

Dear President Milofsky and Commissioners,

I am writing to support the nomination of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments at 5922-5930 N. Buffalo Avenue. These are a very rare and intact example of midcentury Ranch-style design applied to multi-family project by a developer known for popularizing the type.

Ranch-style homes allowed the new suburbanites of the 1950s to feel like they were getting away from the city. Elaborate apartments like these allow those who can not afford to buy a home to share in some of that casual elegance of California living. They exemplify the era of popular luxury that Los Angeles was at the center of during the 1950s. This is a part of L.A. history that I have been researching and writing about for many years.

I hope that you will designate the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments a City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.

Thank you.
Chris Nichols



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Cory Johnson <cory.johnson1@aol.com>

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 1:59 PM

To: melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com, chc@lacity.org

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

My first time visiting the property was seeing a good friend in 2006. In which I still to this day. This place and property felt like home right away. There is a peace and quiet about this place and property that is truly unique and special. There is a strong sense of community and friendships with each person and neighbors.

The architecture is detailed and beautiful with my favorite being the birdhouse on the roof. The birdwatching is some of the best memories. Being from Minnesota learning about wildlife in Los Angeles was inspiring. I love the wood flooring and pocket doors, mail slot, tile, landscaping, plants, everyones pets, and most of all the holiday decorations. The holiday is the best part of the year and there is always so much Christmas seasonal cheer.

I am highly in favor of preserving the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments nomination as a historic designation.

Best Regards,

Cory Johnson



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Damon Cisneros <damondeez@yahoo.com>

Tue, Jan 28, 2025 at 12:34 PM

To: "melissa.jones@lacity.org" <melissa.jones@lacity.org>, "chc@lacity.org" <chc@lacity.org>, "andrez.parra@lacity.org" <andrez.parra@lacity.org>, "losangelesbassist@yahoo.com" <losangelesbassist@yahoo.com>

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

I have many wonderful memories visiting friends who lived in the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments. I often came by for musical rehearsals and even to help with set design for a music video, and each time I was struck by the charm of the place.

The architectural design and landscaping of these apartments are truly special. The iconic birdhouses on the roof are such a unique touch, blending beautifully with the surrounding greenery and the lively presence of local birds. The overall atmosphere felt warm and welcoming, with a strong sense of community among the neighbors, who were always kind and friendly during my visits.

Inside, the apartment was just as inviting, with its lovely hardwood floors, spacious rooms, and the distinctive pocket doors that add a timeless quality to the space.

It would be a great loss to see such an important piece of architectural history disappear. I sincerely hope the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments will be granted historic designation and preserved for future generations to enjoy.

Sincerely,

Damon Cisneros

(760) 224-8107

damondeez@yahoo.com



CHC-2024-6156-HCM - Support for Historic Nomination

1 message

David Musial <djmusial@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 3:19 PM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

I am writing in support of the historic designation for the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments (the "Homes").

For over two decades, I have had the wonderful pleasure of visiting the Homes many times, visiting both family and friends. From the birdhouse on the roof, to the original wood floors, to the internal pocket doors, to mail slots on people's doors, these Homes not only demonstrate a level of character of yesteryear that people love about Los Angeles, character that we are losing to redevelopment, but these are also architectural design elements that are instrumental in creating a sense of community and help makes these homes a home. For this, I believe these Homes are an important piece of Los Angeles history that need to be preserved.

Beyond architectural significance, these Homes are literally peoples' homes. As a Los Angeles resident and an affordable housing finance professional for over 17 years, I know firsthand the demand and need for more affordable housing throughout the city. Demolishing these rent-stabilized units and exposing the tenants to current market-rate prices, at likely 2x or 3x their current rent, will only exacerbate the housing crisis we're facing in this city while also unending the lives of current residents with significantly increased financial burden.

The community that the existing residents have created has been visible whenever I have visited these Homes. The way residents say hello and look after one another; it is a sense of community that you don't see in large cookie cutter construction these days, and it's partly due to the architectural elements of the Homes. It would be sad to see these Homes demolished, as well as the community that lives in them.

I fully support the historic designation of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments.

Thank you,

David Musial



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

debq2001@gmail.com <debq2001@gmail.com>

Sun, Jan 26, 2025 at 1:42 PM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

I have been living in the Mellenthin Buffalo “Birdhouse” Triplex Apartments for 20 years, and I’m writing to share my full support for giving the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments a historic designation. To me, this property perfectly represents the charm and unique spirit of Los Angeles—and especially the San Fernando Valley.

When I moved to LA in the '90s from the Southern Appalachian region of Ohio, I was searching for a community that was both diverse and welcoming. The Valley’s low-profile, open architecture made it easy to transition from a rural upbringing without feeling overwhelmed by towering high-rises. The Mellenthin apartments, with their cozy courtyard layout, gave me more than just a place to live—they gave me a sense of home and a supportive community.

This place has so much character. From the individual porches to the large windows and thoughtful landscaping, it feels more like a single-family home than a typical apartment. The courtyard layout even lets me hear the beautiful sounds of neighbors playing instruments like the violin or singing—it’s like living in my own little community concert. I can sit on my porch watching the birds or open the pocket door to my pine cabinet kitchen that transports me to a comfortable time in history and feel like I’m living in my own little corner of peace, even in the middle of a busy city.

It’s so important to hold on to pieces of our history like this. They remind us who we are and where we’ve come from. William Mellenthin’s work reflects the creativity and determination that define the San Fernando Valley and its people. Preserving this property honors that legacy and ensures future generations can experience the same charm and community spirit.

I understand we’re facing a housing crisis, but I believe we can find ways to address it without losing our heritage. Buildings like this are part of what makes LA special. Let’s make sure we don’t erase the very things that give our neighborhoods their unique character.

Thank you for your time and for considering the historic designation of the Birdhouse Apartments. It means a lot to me and to so many others who call this place home.

Warmly,
Debra L Quarles

[5920 Buffalo Avenue](#)

[Valley Glen, California, 91401](#)



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Dylan Neuens <dneuens@gmail.com>

Sun, Jan 26, 2025 at 10:30 PM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

I first started visiting the [William Mellenthin Birdhouse apartments](#) in 2007 when I worked in a music group with one of the tenants that's still there, Jeff Musial. Compared to the other apartments and housing in the area, these always stood out to me and have a charm that harkens back to another era. They have a unique and quaint architecture next to a few buildings that lacked the same personality.

There are some areas in and around Los Angeles that still have that connection to the past and a charm that gives it a personality you want to be around, as opposed to cookie-cutter high rise apartment buildings. Although we're used to figuring out how to cram as many people into a property as we can, and I understand property is expensive, you often lose some of that historicity in the process. Besides, the units themselves are beautifully constructed, and I understand the last of famed builder William Mellenthin's birdhouse designs. Whereas some buildings get worn down by time, these have stood up remarkably well. You can tell the tenants also love and cherish their complex.

I spent quite a bit of time walking around that area over the years. It would be a shame and loss for the community. They are unique, well-kept, and hold a small piece of history in the area. Where some areas may benefit from tearing down rundown buildings and erecting new apartment complexes, these certainly aren't the ones to replace. Besides, it only ends up raising the cost of properties in the area in a time when living costs have continued to price people out of most areas.

I can only share my own feelings and experiences from my 20+ years of living in Southern California, that areas who maintain small parts of their history can benefit the entire community. There's definitely many places I think that could benefit from tearing down old rundown buildings and building new structures, but not this one. Things that are unique and beautiful should always have a place.

Best regards,

Dylan Neuens



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Elise Kane <kane.elise@gmail.com>

Tue, Jan 28, 2025 at 6:20 PM

To: chc@lacity.org

Cc: melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org

Hello,

I'm writing in support of making the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments in Van Nuys an Historic-Cultural Monument. These are special structures, emblematic of so many Valley homes and neighborhoods. It would be great that they stand testament to this iconic style of home.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,
Elise Kane



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Flavio Monopoli <flavio@monopolimusic.com>

Thu, Jan 16, 2025 at 5:17 PM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

I am writing in strong support of the historic designation for the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments located at 5920-30 Buffalo Avenue.

When I first visited this property, I was struck by its timeless charm and sense of community. The signature birdhouse details, iconic to William Mellenthin's work, immediately stood out, evoking an era of craftsmanship that feels increasingly rare today. Walking through the courtyard, I couldn't help but notice the thoughtful design—pocket doors, intricate wood flooring, and beautifully maintained landscaping, which not only fosters a connection among residents but also enhances the surrounding neighborhood.

This property is more than just a series of apartments; it is a living example of Los Angeles' mid-20th-century architectural legacy. Mellenthin's contributions to the city's history are well-documented, and this is one of the few remaining multi-family dwellings that encapsulates his unique vision. Losing it would not only erase a piece of LA's shared heritage but also disrupt a vibrant community where some residents have lived for decades.

I urge the Commission to grant the historic designation to preserve this rare gem. Its architectural significance and enduring contribution to the cultural fabric of the San Fernando Valley make it a vital candidate for protection.

Thank you for considering this nomination and for your commitment to safeguarding the historic sites that define Los Angeles.

Best regards,
Flavio Monopoli



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Gabriela Carrillo <gcarrillo1012@gmail.com>

Sun, Jan 26, 2025 at 8:44 PM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

I have visited this property multiple times as a valley resident who values the historic architecture of this city. These birdhouses are a testament to the nature that we as a community commit to keep. It would be a shame to tear down the homes of plenty of our animal inhabitants and historical architecture as we have little to keep at this point.

I am highly in favor of preserving the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments nomination as a historic designation.

Sincerely,

Gabriela Carrillo



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Gaby Weltman <gabyaweltman@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 8:51 PM

To: andrez.parra@lacity.org, chc@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com, melissa.jones@lacity.org

A Threat to History: The Case of [5930 Buffalo Avenue](#)

Among the many architectural treasures left by William Mellenthin, one stands out not only for its unique charm but also for the sense of community it has fostered: [5930 Buffalo Avenue](#) in Van Nuys. This beautiful building, nestled in a neighborhood of small structures and family homes, has been a haven for its residents, some of whom have lived there for over 20 years. Yet, this piece of history is now under threat.

Recently purchased, the building is slated for demolition to make way for new construction. While the goal of creating affordable housing is an admirable one, the planned development will reportedly lack garages or adequate parking spaces—an issue in a neighborhood where many families and seniors rely on their vehicles. The loss of this historic building also raises questions about how to balance the needs of the present with the preservation of the past.

This proposed change comes at a particularly precarious time for Los Angeles. Last few weeks, the city has faced devastating wildfires, leaving countless people displaced and homeless. Simultaneously, rental prices have skyrocketed, and moving away from one's neighborhood has become nearly impossible for many. Losing a home in such an environment doesn't just mean finding a new roof over one's head—it means losing proximity to friends, community networks, and often, jobs. For families who have built their lives here, the cost of relocation can be crippling, both financially and emotionally.

5930 Buffalo Avenue isn't just another structure; it's a testament to Mellenthin's vision of quality craftsmanship and family-oriented design. Its potential destruction symbolizes the erasure of a legacy that helped define the San Fernando Valley's architectural identity.

At the heart of this issue are the residents, many of whom have deep roots in the neighborhood. These are families who have lived here for generations, seniors who have called this place home for decades, and individuals who have created a close-knit community. What will happen to them when the wrecking ball arrives?

Preservation efforts could offer a compromise. Adaptive reuse—where the building is updated to meet modern needs while retaining its historical features—has proven successful in many similar cases. Could this be a way forward for 5930 Buffalo Avenue? This moment serves as a reminder of the importance of honoring the past while building for the future. It's not just about saving a building; it's about preserving the soul of a neighborhood and protecting the vulnerable in a city already struggling with housing insecurity.

That's a powerful and deeply resonant observation. What's happening at 5930 Buffalo Avenue mirrors a widespread and ongoing issue in Los Angeles and beyond: the displacement of long-time residents due to gentrification and redevelopment. These changes often prioritize profit over people, pushing out families and individuals who have been the backbone of these neighborhoods for decades.

The cycle is heartbreaking—residents are given buyouts that barely cover rising costs of living, forcing them to leave not just their homes but their communities, connections, and histories. It's a profound loss, not just for the people who are displaced, but for the city itself, which loses its character and soul as the communities that shaped it are driven away.

I wish I could do something to change what our society is doing with our community!

Gaby A Weltman
(818)877-3362



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

George Pappy <gpappyjr@yahoo.com>

Tue, Jan 14, 2025 at 11:09 PM

To: "chc@lacity.org" <chc@lacity.org>, "melissa.jones@lacity.org" <melissa.jones@lacity.org>, "andrez.parra@lacity.org" <andrez.parra@lacity.org>, "losangelesbassist@yahoo.com" <losangelesbassist@yahoo.com>

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

I was a tenant at the subject apartments for about 2.5 years between 2009 and 2011 (while I was a graduate film student at California State University Northridge). Having always been a huge fan of these old single-story triplexes built in the post-WWII era, I was thrilled to find a vacant unit posted on Craigslist, and after touring this extremely well-preserved gem, I immediately laid down a deposit. Having been raised in the San Fernando Valley of the 1960s - 1980s, I counted myself extremely lucky to have landed in one of the genuine Mellenthin Birdhouse buildings (I've been a fan of these for my entire life). I hadn't realized at the time how rare these are in the apartment (as opposed to single-family home) realm.

I found my time there to be immensely pleasant and enjoyable because of how quiet, spacious, well-crafted, lushly-landscaped and communal the place was (aided by the fact that we all had screen doors and nice outdoor porches). I knew all of my neighbors, and it was the kind of atmosphere where we looked out for each other (something I cannot say for any of the high-density rental experiences I've had elsewhere over the years - situations where I knew nobody despite having lived there for considerable periods of time). We even had some wonderful all-tenant barbecues.

In contrast to the constantly overcrowded street parking conditions created by the large apartment buildings on the same block, we were all able to park multiple vehicles (both our own and visitors') on the spacious grounds, and it was even possible to do hobby work in your own garage (a luxury typically reserved only for homeowners).

Because of the good relationship I had with all of the tenants, I was even able to shoot some significant portions of a feature film (which ran for several years on Showtime) at this location while living there. The film, "Few Options, All Bad," is listed on IMDB: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1721494/>. I'm also making it free to stream in case anyone reading this would like to see how we captured the property to get a sense of the place (it's the apartment complex where Rainn Wilson's character lives and where the main character sleeps in a garage for much of the film): <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/93828807>

In a time and place where the beautiful historic architecture of Los Angeles is systematically bought up, torn down and replaced with noise/traffic-generating high-density structures, I think it would be a tragic loss to see this rare and fantastic little complex disappear in the name of progress.

I sincerely hope that you will grant this truly unique William Mellenthin Birdhouse property a historic designation.

Yours Truly,

George A. Pappy Jr.
310.467.0111



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Holly Hawkins <hollyhawkins@sbcglobal.net>

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 1:37 PM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,:

I strongly recommend this historic apartment building be saved from destruction. We moved from NYC several years ago and have always been wishes that Los Angeles was more proactive in historic preservation. Mellenthin was a very unique architect whose work deserves preservation. Please do not tear down this marvellous apartment complex: it is a part of Los Angeles history, and should not be sacrificed to cookie-cutter condo developers.

If you are concerned about historic preservation for Los Angeles, please nominate this building for historic preservation.

I formerly worked for World Monuments Fund in NYC: this is exactly the kind of project they would take on.

Also, we are survivors of the Eaton Fire. Our home thank heavens still stands, but a whole swath of historic architecture in Altadena has been decimated. Developers are already planning to build a lot of condos. Heartbreaking that people are only interested in dollar

Thank you very much.

Holly Hawkins
Pasadena, CA

The William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments are a rare, and intact example of a courtyard apartment in the Traditional Ranch style in Valley Glen, CA. Located at [5920-30 Buffalo Avenue](#), it is composed of two parcels, each having a triplex and a detached 3-car garage with a center driveway.

William Mellenthin (1896–1979) was a builder and contractor in Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley. He is well known for his iconic “Birdhouse” ranch homes built in the Valley from the 1940s to the 1960s. He built small birdhouses, cupolas, or dove-cotes into the roofs.

Although William Mellenthin built thousands of single-family homes, there were only a few multi-family dwellings he developed, which most have been destroyed.

The proposed Historic site on Buffalo Avenue appears to be the only intact Mellenthin Single-Story Ranch-Style Multi-Family Apartments left standing, while retaining nearly all of its original features as built 70 years ago.

The Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments are important rent-stabilized units. The layout and landscaping create a community atmosphere for tenants, some who have lived there for over two decades.

The Los Angeles Conservancy strongly supports the nomination:

<https://www.laconservancy.org/learn/historic-places/william-mellenthin-birdhouse-apartments/>

Photos of The Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/losangelesbassist/albums/72177720319904087/>

Book, A Birdhouse in Paradise: William Mellenthin and the San Fernando Valley Ranch Homes featuring photos of The Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments:

<https://thecinderellahome.com/mellenthin-book>

Holly Hawkins

Recent:

SEAL TEAM

VICE w Christian Bale/Adam McKay, Dir <https://twitter.com/eOnefilms/status/1077940004020613121>

TO TELL THE TRUTH

<https://youtu.be/Z4H3KLYufpU>



CHC-2024-6156-HCM - Support for Historic Nomination

1 message

India Lee <dialeewallace@gmail.com>

Wed, Jan 22, 2025 at 12:36 PM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

I have lived in Los Angeles my entire life, almost 40 years, and have seen countless beautiful, historic buildings razed and replaced with generic, cheaply-made, multi-unit homes that disintegrate within a few short years. When I heard that yet another property has been slated for this sad demise, I was compelled to write to you and voice my support for preserving the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments as a historic designation.

I have had the privilege of visiting the Mellenthin homes on Buffalo Ave many times, and what has struck me most is the neighborly design of the complex. The homes all open out to a central driveway, where the neighbors see each other and interact, creating an immediate sense of community. On every visit, the people living in these homes have waved and smiled as I drive up. Each unit has a little porch and a screen door, reminiscent of a bygone era when people sat and talked to their neighbors. In a large, multistory, generic apartment complex, this sense of community is non-existent.

When my friend, a tenant, first showed me around, I was struck by the lovely hardwood floors and the simple but elegant paneling. There is real tile in the kitchen and bathrooms. The building feels solid, built to last with materials that were long ago replaced with cheaper, quicker alternatives in newer builds. These houses are a testament to and an example of craftsmanship and building techniques that have all but disappeared in the modern era.

Properties like this are vanishing at an alarming rate, especially with the recent fires in Los Angeles, which destroyed so many historic and invaluable homes. Now more than ever, historic homes like this are in danger, either from natural disaster or opportunistic developers. Allowing someone who has no connection to the property, its history, or its tenants (some of whom have lived there for decades) to demolish these homes will continue to diminish the last few outposts of neighborly connection and community left in Los Angeles.

Saving this property and its tenants will preserve something unique that made our city what it was: a collection of beautiful spaces with architecture that reflected the artistry and creativity of innovators like Mellenthin.

I truly hope your committee votes to designate this property as historic. It is worth preserving.

Sincerely,

India Wallace
Resident of South Pasadena, California



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

J.R. Williams <jrblu66@hotmail.com>

Tue, Jan 14, 2025 at 3:55 PM

To: "chc@lacity.org" <chc@lacity.org>, "melissa.jones@lacity.org" <melissa.jones@lacity.org>, "andrez.parra@lacity.org" <andrez.parra@lacity.org>, "losangelesbassist@yahoo.com" <losangelesbassist@yahoo.com>

Dear Commissioners,

It has come to my attention that the quaint and historic residential property at [5920-5930 Buffalo Ave](#) in Valley Glen is to be sold and redeveloped.

I have a couple of good friends that have lived there for 20+ years. It has also my understanding that this property is the last standing example of a William Mellenthin Birdhouse property.

I understand that L.A. is dealing with a housing shortage, but there are literally hundreds, if not thousands, of mid-century "dingbat" style properties that are in poor condition, and would be better candidates for redevelopment. Given the loss of various classic and unique architectural design structures in the ongoing wildfires, I think prematurely doing away with the last-standing birdhouse design is short-sighted and will only hasten the demise of L.A.'s architectural identity.

I truly hope the Commission reconsiders this action and preserves what's left of old L.A. heritage.

Sincerely,

John W. Roses Jr.



CHC-2024-6156-HCM - Support for Historic Nomination

1 message

Janet Grey <janetgrey27@gmail.com>

Sun, Jan 26, 2025 at 11:52 PM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Attention Commissioners:

Architectural preservation is always important to maintain the character and integrity of our precious Los Angeles neighborhoods. But it's never been more meaningful than now, in light of the tragic losses our city is now suffering due to the recent fires.

The William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments are a rare, and intact example of a courtyard apartment in the Traditional Ranch style in Valley Glen, CA. They represent the distinct charm of the San Fernando Valley residential architecture that is slowly yet steadily disappearing.

The apartments' details are unique and special, and bungalow court apartments create a wonderful sense of community that is not found in other apartment living situations - the residents take pride in their units and support one another - building a true sense of connection.

William Mellenthin was a prolific and significant architect/developer, erecting over 3,000 homes during his noteworthy 30+ year career. His work deserves to be cherished, protected and preserved for that reason alone.

FORT LA (Friends of Residential Treasures - Non-profit dedicated to the awareness and preservation of significant residential architecture) recently did a feature on the work of Mellenthin (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iJ1w2OwoKT9sEhfGbwgDxcOojT5IS1UU/view?usp=sharing>).

This property, a fine example of his unique, creative aesthetic, needs to be preserved. Our city cannot afford the loss of more historic residential architecture.

I fully support the historic designation of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments and hope with all my heart that this unique property will be granted a historic designation.

Thank you kindly for your attention to this urgent and crucial matter.

Sincerely,

Janet I Grey

Los Angeles Residential Architecture Content Creator (@housesofhollywood)

Nomination Application:

https://planning.lacity.gov/plndoc/Staff_Reports/2024/10-17-2024/CHC_2024_6156_HCM_William_Mellenthin_Birdhouse_Apartments_UC.pdf



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Jeff Musial <jeff@jeffmusial.com>

Sun, Jan 26, 2025 at 8:59 AM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

My name is Jeff Musial, and I have been a tenant at 5930 Buffalo Avenue for nearly 22 years. This property, designed by renowned Los Angeles architect William Mellenthin, is not just my home—it is a vital part of the city's architectural and cultural heritage.

When I first moved here in 2003, I was a young artist with big dreams, trying to make a life in Los Angeles. The moment I saw this property, I fell in love. Its timeless charm—hardwood floors, spacious rooms, and unique birdhouse details—was unlike anything else I'd seen. What struck me even more was the sense of community. This wasn't just a building; it was a neighborhood in miniature, where neighbors cared for one another and shared their lives.

Over the years, this home has been a sanctuary amid the bustle of Los Angeles. The tall trees, lush greenery, and thoughtful architecture create a peaceful retreat that feels miles away from the congestion of city life. The historic birdhouse design, a hallmark of Mellenthin's work, embodies a mid-century vision of harmony between urban living and nature—a vision that is increasingly rare in today's high-density developments.

This property is more than bricks and mortar; it has history. It is where I wrote and self-published books, collaborated with artists whose work reached global audiences, and even hosted creative projects that became part of Hollywood's legacy. It is a place that has fostered creativity, community, and resilience.

Beyond my personal story, this building serves as a rare example of Mellenthin's architectural contributions to Los Angeles. Its preservation is essential not only for its beauty but for its embodiment of a time when thoughtful design prioritized livability and connection over density and profit.

Losing this property to demolition would erase an irreplaceable piece of our shared history and displace a community that exemplifies the kind of connection we need more of today. Our annual pumpkin carvings, shared meals, and mutual support reflect a way of living that has become all too uncommon. Preserving this property is about more than saving a building—it's about saving a way of life.

I urge you to designate this property as a Historic-Cultural Monument. Doing so will honor its architectural significance, protect its rich history, and preserve the sense of community that makes it so special. Thank you for considering this heartfelt plea.

Sincerely,

Jeff Musial



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Jennifer Heeber <jenniferheber@yahoo.com>

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 5:54 AM

Reply-To: Jennifer Heeber <jenniferheber@yahoo.com>

To: "chc@lacity.org" <chc@lacity.org>, "melissa.jones@lacity.org" <melissa.jones@lacity.org>, "andrez.parra@lacity.org" <andrez.parra@lacity.org>, "losangelesbassist@yahoo.com" <losangelesbassist@yahoo.com>

Cc: Russell Gallaher <russellgallaher@aol.com>

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

My husband and I discovered 5926 Buffalo Ave. 15 years ago and were instantly captivated by its charm; original ranch-style front door, big picture front window flooding the apartment with natural light, original wood floors, and numerous thoughtful features

which are rarities in modern homes. The front of the property is lined with beautiful mature pine trees which perfectly frame the triplexes. When you look at the property from the street, each triplex has a cute birdhouse on top, which we later learned was a unique design feature of William Mellenthin.

Not only had we found our home, we also found a close community complete with front yard wildlife. On the weekends, we enjoy watching our local wildlife out the front windows. Sparrows, finches, and mourning doves regularly swoop in for their birdseed while the squirrels pick out the sunflower seeds and almonds that we distribute in the mornings. Potted vegetables are grown in the front yard, along with annuals and succulents. One house project, a refinished bench, lives on the front porch, where a person can relax and watch the hummingbirds zip across the driveway to drink from each neighbor's bird feeder.

The year we moved in, neighbors invited us to the Buffalo Thanksgiving dinner. A few years later we all started a fun tradition of group pumpkin carving to celebrate Halloween. Our next-door friend and neighbor, Jenny, absolutely loves Halloween, and each year her porch is decked out in spooky decorations while others' porches are more expressive in December with Christmas lights.

Speaking of the front porches... it's so special that each apartment has its own front porch, just like a standalone house. The

architect's mission to create a community is so evident and instills a sense of tenant pride usually reserved for homeowners. Every neighbor we've had over the years has taken great care of the property in lockstep with William Mellenthin's intention.

We hope you'll appreciate the amazing homes the architect built and value the importance of preserving this type of housing for Los Angeles residents. I fully support the historic designation of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Heeber



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Jennifer Sloatman <jenny.sloatman@gmail.com>

Sun, Jan 26, 2025 at 11:11 AM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org

Cc: Russell Gallaher <russellgallaher@aol.com>, "losangelesbassist@yahoo.com" <losangelesbassist@yahoo.com>

Dear Committee members,

My name is Jenny Sloatman and I have been a resident at the Mellenthin Birdhouse apartments for 3 and a half years now, having moved here in 2021. I have lived in LA for a combined 18 years, all in the San Fernando Valley. Those who live in and know the Valley, love it for how residential it is, with stretching walking paths and peaceful quiet evenings. I knew it was my neighborhood of choice when moving back to LA as an adult. Since then, I've lived in 7 different apartment buildings and I think with all of those previous moves I used to share a regretfully common sentiment with other Angelinos - we often don't know our neighbors as well as we should. But that changed dramatically when I found the Buffalo Birdhouse apartments.

I found the Buffalo Birdhouse apartments after my dear friend moved out of her unit at the property. I immediately submitted an application, having visited her quaint apartment and having heard wonderful things about her lovely neighbors. After my application was approved, I had the pleasure of meeting my new neighbors and realizing the true magic of the Buffalo Birdhouse community.

The first thing you'll notice when visiting the property are the wonderful small shared yards at the top of the street with huge mature trees. Frequently you can find a small gathering of neighbors - Buffalo Birdhouse residents and or residents of the neighboring homes and apartments - chatting, enjoying nice weather together, gardening, or wildlife watching - birds, yes, but also possums, raccoons, and occasional stray cats (turned Buffalo rescues). The property lends itself to a shared space, rather than sticking to your own area. Residents often meet in the driveway between our front doors to catch up, discuss, or carve pumpkins for Halloween. We share cookies and flowers and recommendations. We tend to each others' pets. I think the architecture of the property is a large reason why our units feel like shared living. I often describe them as feeling similar to bungalows, despite our units being connected, because they lend themselves to feeling like conjoined homes rather than apartments, and the tenants treat them as such. We have shared front and back porches and our front doors look out at one another. Some of the other things I adore the most about our apartments are the funky colored tile, the original wood floors, and the characteristic molding on the doors, windows, and interiors. All of these things remind me of the 50's home I grew up in. But top slot on my list of favorite things, is how the units are situated on the lot. The layout naturally lends itself to community which is invaluable anywhere but especially in LA.

I see the Mellenthin apartments as beyond deserving of preservation. Both because of its significance being a William Mellenthin multi-family (emphasis on family) home and because without these historic buildings in the Valley, how will this special slice of LA maintain its charming character? The Mellenthin Birdhouse apartments are indicative of Valley living and community living. If action isn't taken to save it now, we would surely regret the loss of a significant representation of Valley architecture. I hope one day I have the honor of sharing the legacy of this wonderful property with a new tenant if/when my journey ever has to move on. These buildings and the shared space they hug are too rare and special to demolish. I completely stand behind the historic designation of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments for the above reasons.

Thank you for your time and the important work you do in our city.

Sincerely,



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Kay Shin <kayrealestates@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 2:42 PM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Commissioners,

When I visited the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments, I thought how special and unique these cluster of homes were. The architecture created a sense of community and showed in the neighbors' relationship with each other. Such a thing is rare to see in LA and it would be a shame to tear it down to build more impersonal, high-density apartments.

I truly hope that this unique property will be granted a historic designation.

Sincerely,

Jean Robinson



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Kaylee Huey <hueykaylee@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 4:14 PM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

My name is Kaylee Huey, and I was a resident at the William Mellenthin Birdhouse apartments on Buffalo Avenue for over six years. I came across the property listing online and fell in love with it the moment I turned down the street. The noise and grime of the city seemed to disappear — only moments before, you are at an intersection facing the bus station; and seconds later, you are transported to a small neighborhood reminiscent of original Hollywood glamour.

Coming from a small town to the big city, this seemed like the perfect mix of suburban life meeting cottage living. Each apartment has its own unique charms, taking on the personality of its inhabitants. Likewise, each unit has characteristic features like pocket doors and original tilework not found in modern architecture.

During the Covid lockdown, I found myself feeling fortunate to be surrounded by such caring neighbors who rallied around each other — sharing provisions, decorating our porches to spread cheer, and meeting in the shared driveway for morning check-ins. One of my best friends lived in one of the apartments and we spent many days walking the neighborhood, enjoying the wildlife, and feeling comforted in uncertain times.

The architecture of these apartments stands out in Los Angeles; and every time I see the little birdhouses on the roofs, I know that I was a part of the history of the valley. Taking away this gem would demean the neighborhood and be a further loss to Los Angeles' history. I truly hope that this unique property can be preserved with a nomination as a historic landmark.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kaylee E. Huey
(209) 728-7356



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Linda Musial <calicofrg@gmail.com>
To: chc@lacity.org

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 4:21 PM

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners;

My name is Linda Musial and I am Jeff Musial's mom. When Jeff first moved into the birdhouse apartments over 20 years ago his dad and I went to see his new place. We were both impressed by the quality and beauty of the apartment. For me it was like going back to my childhood home where I grew up. Everything was so much nicer than anything built today. I refer to it as the jewel of the neighborhood. It would be a shame to see it gone. Nothing will ever be as nice or fit into the neighborhood. Houses of this quality would be too expensive, if not impossible, to build today. Please give this matter its due consideration before it is removed. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely, Linda Musial

Sent from my iPhone



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Lisa Fancher <frontier.records@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 4:44 PM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

William Mellenthin was a builder and contractor in LA county, well-known for his “Birdhouse” ranch homes built from 1940s to the 1960s. Although William Mellenthin built thousands of single-family homes, there are very few multi-family dwellings, most of which have long since been destroyed. The Buffalo Avenue Birdhouse apartments appear to be the **only** intact Mellenthin single-story, ranch-style, multi-family apartments left standing in the San Fernando Valley, retaining many of its original features as he built them.

Whenever I visited my good friend at his Birdhouse apartment, I did not realize that he lived in a real William Mellenthin. Most SFV apartments aren’t the least bit interesting, but the Birdhouse Apartments are not like any I’ve rented or seen around this area. The front apartment has a permanent birdhouse built onto the roof and each dwelling has manicured hedges dividing one from another, a white picket fence borders the driveway. Neighbors grow roses, succulents or vegetables in their front yards, and over it has a calm and quieting appearance. I can’t speak for every unit, but the original details of so many are intact -- hardwood floors, vintage butter yellow bathroom tile, Birdseye Maple kitchen cabinets and ranch-style windows and doors. There is a real sense of community in the Birdhouse apartments as many tenants have lived there for at least a decade, if not two decades or more.

It would be an incalculable loss to the neighborhood to destroy such beautiful and special apartments, it’s basically the last of its kind in the San Fernando Valley. Of course there's an urgent need for housing in Los Angeles but I can’t understand the necessity destroy a historically important location that is also rent controlled, and shoehorn 150+ automobiles into a neighborhood with nearly no parking. Each unit has its own parking, there is absolutely nowhere to park anywhere in the few surrounding blocks at Oxnard and Woodman. There are many large, empty lots and barely-leased malls in the area that would be far more appropriate for a project this massive in size.

The Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments are not only architecturally significant, they are rent-stabilized. This is no time to turn families out onto the street to compete with fire victims from Altadena and Pacific Palisades. The landlord has served the tenants eviction notices even though plans haven’t even been approved! I urge the cultural heritage commissioners to grant the Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments on Buffalo Avenue a historic designation (and protections thereof) and save it as it is the last of its kind in the valley. They are the very definition of cultural heritage.

Sincerely,

Lisa Fancher
12838 La Maida St
Valley Village CA 91607



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Matt Mincey <matthewmincey@gmail.com>

Fri, Jan 24, 2025 at 7:20 PM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

I am writing this email in support of maintaining the historic William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments on Buffalo Ave. I was shocked to hear that these beautiful homes, with their rich history and architectural significance, are at risk of being demolished. I've visited one of these homes on multiple occasions and always found the design to be a comforting slice of Americana in a world that is rapidly changing, often not for the better. There is beauty in older homes, and these are especially distinct in their design. I think we can all agree that they "just don't make them like they used to". The birdhouses built into the roofs alone make these homes unique, though there are many other elements that add to the charm of this little slice of history.

It would truly be a shame to see these homes destroyed. When it was brought to my attention just how singular these homes are, I researched the history of the builder. It seemed antithetical that they would not be granted a new lease on life given the fact that they are the last structures in this style from this builder. I urge you to reconsider allowing the destruction of these homes and hope you will support their protection as significant elements of southern California history.

Sincerely,

Matt Mincey



William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments Historical Monument

1 message

Mia A. <miapangelo@gmail.com>

Sun, Jan 26, 2025 at 4:52 PM

To: melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com, "chc@lacity.org" <chc@lacity.org>

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

I am writing to express my support for the historic designation of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments. During a visit to a close friend who resides in these apartments, I had the opportunity to experience the unique charm and historical essence they offer. The architecture exudes a sense of warmth and individuality, standing as a refreshing contrast to the many modern developments dominating the area. From the welcoming canopy of trees shading the grassy courtyards to the gentle hum of hummingbirds, the Birdhouse Apartments bring a special vitality to the neighborhood. Equally important, they foster a sense of community that is increasingly rare in today's world. It is deeply disheartening to learn that this remarkable property faces the possibility of demolition.

These apartments have not only provided long-standing homes for many residents, but also represent an important piece of architectural history that deserves preservation. Replacing such a unique and meaningful space with yet another cookie-cutter development focused solely on profit would be a loss to both the community and the cultural fabric of the neighborhood.

I urge you to grant the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments the historic designation they so rightly deserve. This designation would not only protect the architectural legacy of these apartments but also preserve the spirit of community they cultivate. Thank you for considering my perspective.

Sincerely,

Mia Angelo



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

michael catti <michaelcatti@hotmail.com>

Thu, Jan 16, 2025 at 8:16 PM

To: "chc@lacity.org" <chc@lacity.org>, "melissa.jones@lacity.org" <melissa.jones@lacity.org>, "andrez.parra@lacity.org" <andrez.parra@lacity.org>, "losangelesbassist@yahoo.com" <losangelesbassist@yahoo.com>

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

I have many fond memories of visiting my friends in the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments for musical rehearsals and the artistic endeavor of creating a set for a music video. I found the apartments architectural design and landscaping to be quite enchanting and welcoming. The birdhouses of the roof stood out as a charming feature and melded in well with the surrounding greenery and bird life. I felt and experienced the ambiance of a friendly and close knit community of neighbors that would greet me kindly during my visits. The interior of my friend's apartment was just as welcoming as the outside with it's pocket doors, hard wood floors, and spacious and attractive rooms.

It would be lamentable to tear down such a unique architectural and historical gem. I earnestly hope that this special property will be granted a historic designation.

Sincerely,
Michael James Catti



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

nick ciontea <nciontea78@gmail.com>

Sun, Jan 26, 2025 at 3:43 PM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

I have lived at 5926 Buffalo with my wife for 15 years. The moment we stepped inside, we instantly loved how it felt like a cozy little house all to itself.

The apartment boasts spacious porches lined with manicured bushes and framed with open ranch-style wood beams. As you approach the front door, you'll notice the charming ranch-style door with windows and a mail slot, reminiscent of homes from that era. The interior is equally impressive, with original wood flooring, plenty of windows, and a well-thought-out floor plan.

One of the standout features of the kitchen is the pocket door, which allows you to separate it from the living area when cooking or simply close it off to conserve energy during the summer or winter months to just cool or heat the living room.

The apartment also offers ample closet and storage space, which is quite rare in modern apartments.

But the real charm of these apartments lies in their exterior. They're lined with white Picket fences, front yards, and lush foliage, creating a picturesque scene that sets them apart from the street. Each triplex has its unique look, with metal awnings covering the front windows, birdhouses on the roof, and a plant ledge just under the front windows that line the front of the house. We later discovered these were thoughtful design elements of William Mellenthin, the architect behind these beautiful apartments.

One of the most delightful features of these apartments is the separate garages. Our apartment came with a one-car garage, which we use as a workspace and to store our weekend adventure toys. I love spending time in the garage, working on woodworking projects and enjoying the sunlight. The garages also foster a sense of community among the neighbors, who often come together to help with projects and socialize. With all the garages, we seem to have all the tools we need to complete any fun or household project.

Over the years, I've had the pleasure of working on many projects with my neighbors, and the sense of community these apartments create is truly rare. It allows neighbors to become friends, and we've formed some wonderful relationships with our neighbors.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly support the historic designation of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments. They're not just buildings; they're cherished memories and a testament to the architectural brilliance of William Mellenthin.

Sincerely,
Nick Ciontea



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Noah Cushman <noahrcushman@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 2:55 PM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Cc: Vanessa Villa <18villa@gmail.com>

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

My partner and I have been tenants at the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments for nearly two years, and we are deeply passionate about its historic significance.

As Burbank natives, we've grown up surrounded by homes from the 1940s and 1950s, but we had never encountered a place quite like this. When we first saw the listing, it had literally just been posted—"0 minutes ago." It felt like a sign. The moment we toured the units, we fell in love. It was as if the stars had finally aligned for us. The ranch-style architecture, the meticulous upkeep, and the charm of the space immediately felt like home. The spacious interior, the yard for our dogs, and the warmth of the unit made it clear that we had found our place. As two young people navigating life in this city. We had been searching for something like this for a long time. Every day, these units remind us how fortunate we are to live here.

From the moment we moved in, we felt welcomed. Our neighbors have gone above and beyond to make us feel cared for—whether it's looking after each other's pets or surprising one another with holiday-themed gift bags. The sense of community here is unparalleled. I never imagined we'd find a place where we truly felt we belonged, but the Birdhouse Apartments, with their mid-century charm and iconic birdhouses, have created a space where daily interactions with neighbors feel natural and meaningful. It's a place where you feel rooted, where you know you're exactly where you're supposed to be.

As someone who deeply appreciates mid-century architecture, William Mellenthin holds a special place in my heart. Being a Valley native myself, I feel a connection to his work and legacy. Even now, I find myself marveling at the little details in our unit—the cozy kitchen nook where we feed our cats, the ranch-style windows and doors that greet me every morning as I head to work. These small touches bring us joy daily and contribute to a sense of calm that's hard to find elsewhere. These apartments are a rare gem, representing one of Mellenthin's few remaining multi-family units.

To us, these units are more than just a place to live—they're a symbol of the Los Angeles we cherish. A Los Angeles that still values community, history, and preservation. My girlfriend and I believe this place is worth protecting, not just for its architectural significance but for the sense of belonging it fosters.

Thank you,
Noah Cushman and Vanessa Villa



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Paris fagundes <parisfagundes@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 9:48 PM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

I want to express my deep concern regarding the potential demolition of historic buildings, including the birdhouses designed by renowned architect William Mellenthin 5920-30 in Van Nuys. These homes, now under threat, represent not only a unique architectural legacy from the mid-20th century but also the spirit of community, innovation, and identity that shaped the development of our city.

When I visited my friend who lives there, the first thing I noticed was the strong sense of community, family and neighbors looking out for one another and taking pride in their surroundings. Places like this are rare these days. The homes are comfortable, cozy, and quiet, offering a warm, welcoming environment that feels like home to anyone who visits. It's more than just a collection of small houses; it's a special place that evokes memories of childhood and simpler times. The flowers, trees, birds, hummingbirds, and other wildlife add to the charm. The unique architectural features wood floors, pocket doors, a mail slot, and original tile are thoughtful details that reflect the era in which these homes were built. Even elements like the birdhouse on the roof contribute to the character that makes this community so special.

The architectural features stand out as well beautiful wood floors, charming mail slots, pocket doors, and, of course, the iconic birdhouses on the roofs. These elements are not just details; they are the soul of this property, reflecting the thoughtful design of William Mellenthin and the unique character of the mid-century modern style.

In recent years, Los Angeles has seen an alarming increase in the destruction of historically significant structures, often replaced by developments that lack the same thoughtfulness or connection to the community. The potential demolition

of William Merlin's homes is particularly troubling. These designs, blending mid-century modernist principles with the functional elegance of the 1940s, are not just buildings; they are living pieces of architectural history. Their loss would erase an essential part of Van Nuys' identity, as well as the city's cultural and architectural heritage.

To make matters worse, this month has seen fires destroy several historical buildings in Los Angeles, raising questions about how we've allowed these vulnerable structures to remain unprotected. With so few historic landmarks left, it is devastating to think we could lose even more of them. Too often, these tragedies become opportunities for developers to erase the city's history for profit, leaving us with neighborhoods devoid of the stories and charm that once defined them.

We need to ask ourselves: What are we losing when these architectural treasures vanish? Are we willing to let cultural and historical landmarks disappear for convenience or profit? In a time when sustainability and preservation are more important than ever, we must prioritize protecting the heritage that defines Los Angeles.

I truly hope that this unique property will be granted historic designation. I fully support the historic designation of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments and am highly in favor of preserving them as an irreplaceable part of our community and history.
I wish I could do more to help save this beautiful historic place.

Sincerely,
Dorinha Fagundes

Sent from my iPad



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

paris matic <parismatic.sent@gmail.com>

Wed, Jan 15, 2025 at 9:18 PM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Commissioners,

The Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments are home to a lovely community located in Van Nuys, California.

I have had the pleasure of visiting this space on multiple occasions, enjoying the company of friends and being warmly greeted by their neighbors. This property and the tenants have always welcomed me with a sense of serenity and comfort. In addition to the accented doors and matching awnings, the landscaping and foliage hold the dwellings together quite nicely. It would be a great loss for the community to lose such a charming, rare property.

I truly hope that this unique property will be granted a historic designation. Thank You for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Paris Matic



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

CHC-2024-6156-HCM - Support for Historic Nomination

1 message

peel.58shiatsu@icloud.com <peel.58shiatsu@icloud.com>
To: chc@lacity.org

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 9:14 PM

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

I visited my friend who lives at the Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments several times over the years. Immediately, the buildings stood out to me upon my first visit because they were unique. Hidden off of a main street, you are transported to a peaceful and idyllic environ that does not feel like a city in any way. The bungalow, or mini-style housing with bird houses in the roof, mimic a small neighborhood, with doors facing each other appearing to be purpose designed. It seemed to create a sense of neighborly community, while also creating a sense of individual residences. The buildings are cozy and defined, full of character. The landscaping is beautiful, trees shrouding the area with shrubs and plants in front of the units. It feels like a neighborhood out of the 1950's. The interior of the residence is just as charming and marked by time, noting the hardwood floors, the tile work in the kitchen, and the incredible use of creating a sense of large space in a small one.

It would be a loss to the community and a loss of valley architectural history to raze this iconic and rare example of the Mellenthin birdhouse apartments.

I fully support the historic designation of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments.

Sincerely,

Douglas Martin



13654 Victory Blvd., #136 Valley Glen, California 91401
www.greatervalleyglencouncil.org

Cultural Heritage Commission, City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring St. Los Angeles CA 90012

Sent Via email to:

Andrez Para: andrez.parra@lacity.org

January 22, 2025

RE: CHC-2024-6156-HCM

Community Impact Statement

Dear Andrez Parra,

The Greater Valley Glen Neighborhood Council during their regular board meeting on December 2, 2024 heard and discussed as part of their agenda a presentation brought before them about the Historical Cultural Monument nomination (HCM) of the 'William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments' (CHC-2024-6156-HCM). Upon conclusion of the presentation and a period of Q&A, the Council voted 13 to 1 in a motion of support for the HCM Nomination.

The proposed HCM of the 'William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments, located at 592jj0-30 Buffalo Avenue was formally taken under consideration by the Cultural Heritage Commission during their hearing on October 17.

A recommendation report was filed by CHC to warrant further investigation, and to adopt its findings.

A second meeting for the adoption of their investigation's findings has been scheduled for February 6, 2025.

Also, the Los Angeles Conservancy, upon conducting a site visit and reviewing the HCM application, officially endorsed the Nomination and listed the proposed monument on their official website.

Statement

Built in 1954 by notable architect and builder William Mellenthin, the site represents a rare and intact example of a 'Ranch-Style Courtyard Apartment' and appears to be the only remaining multi-family dwelling built by Mellenthin left standing. It is in of American house exceptional condition with no significant alterations made, as originally developed and built in 1954.



13654 Victory Blvd., #136 Valley Glen, California 91401
www.greatervalleyglencouncil.org

'Ranch' Houses were the primary housing type during a period of American national expansion and became one of the most widespread, successful and purposeful type of American housing—a shelter of choice for equally both movie stars, factory workers, and families heading out west in search of opportunities for a better life during the massive population expansion taking place in the post war era in the San Fernando Valley.

A mixture of historic designs preceding it, the Ranch" borrowed from several styles such as the Colonial, Spanish, French Country and 'Craftsman' Homes', fusing them into what became the most successfully modern architecture of them all.

Architects such as William Wurster, Cliff May, John Byers and Paul Williams rearranged and fused all of these preceding styles into a mass-produced consumer trend, catering to the need for housing during he post war population boom in the San Fernando Valley, with tens of thousands of people flocking to the "Valley" in the need of housing.

Amongst them, William Mellenthin became a leading force and influence, designing and building over 3,000 single family homes in the Los Angeles area. Gaining recognition as a wildly popular and respected developer, Mellenthin produced high quality and customizable homes, which were Commonly know as 'Birdhouses'. They were inspired by Mellenthin's childhood days growing up around farmhouses in Minnesota, and featured his trademark Birdhouse" dovecote cupolas, adorning the gabled end rooftops. To this day, these 'Birdhouses" are coveted real estate, sought after by buyers and real estate agent specializing in them equally.

The proposed HCM site of the Ranch Apartments at Buffalo Avenue represents an architecturally and historically relevant example of William Mellenthin's legacy. Very few of this type remain, making them a must save candidate for preservation. They display a historic model for densifying neighborhoods, while providing character and a sense of community for tenants, some of which have lived there for over two decades. Furthermore, they are rent stabilized under the RSO, providing affordable housing while supplying tenants with a wonderful living environment, otherwise only found in a single-family Mellenthin home.

The Greater Valley Glen Neighborhood Association's Board voted in favor of the Historical Cultural Monument nomination of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments #CHC-2024-6156-HCM, and urges the Los Angeles 'Second Council District to adopt the proposal and support the nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin Shafer".

Robin Shafer
vgcrbnshafer@gmail.com
Greater Valley Glen Neighborhood Council Treasurer



13654 Victory Blvd., #136 Valley Glen, California 91401
www.greatervalleyglencouncil.org



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Russell Brown <russ@fortla.org>
To: chc@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Wed, Jan 22, 2025 at 2:46 PM

Dear Members of the Cultural Heritage Commission,

On behalf of Friends of Residential Treasures: Los Angeles (FORT: LA), I am writing to express our strong support for the historic nomination of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments at [5920-30 Buffalo Avenue](#) in Valley Glen, CA. As an organization dedicated to celebrating and preserving Los Angeles' rich residential architectural heritage, FORT: LA works to educate and connect Angelenos through the dynamic stories of our homes and neighborhoods. You can read more about our organization at the bottom of this communication.

The Birdhouse Apartments represent a rare and intact example of a courtyard apartment in the Traditional Ranch style, a hallmark of William Mellenthin's contributions to mid-20th-century architecture. Mellenthin is best known for his "Birdhouse" ranch homes, characterized by their charming roof-integrated birdhouses, which became a signature feature of his designs. This 1954 property is believed to be the last remaining intact example of his single-story, ranch-style multi-family residences, making it a significant piece of Los Angeles history.

Beyond its architectural importance, the Birdhouse Apartments provide rent-stabilized housing and foster a strong sense of community among tenants, some of whom have lived there for over two decades. Its preservation is crucial not only for its historical value but also for maintaining affordable housing in Valley Glen.

We urge you to approve the historic designation of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments to protect this unique legacy for future generations. Thank you for your commitment to preserving Los Angeles' architectural and cultural heritage.

Warm regards,
Russell Brown
Board Chair, FORT: LA

ABOUT FORT: LA

Friends Of Residential Treasures: LA is an award-winning nonprofit dedicated to energizing, educating and connecting Angelenos through the dynamic stories of our homes, neighborhood, and architecture. Our organization has developed four interlocking programs in pursuit of our mission: An online mapping system for self-guided tours of the exteriors of architecturally significant homes developed by experts in the field (FORT Trails); a fellowship to foster new knowledge (FORT Fellowship); a series of virtual experiences to provide interior access and understanding (FORT Frames); and an ongoing series of live and virtual educational events (FORT Gatherings). We have been covered by the LA Times, KCRW, KCAL, NBC: LA, Spectrum News, NPR, Los Angeles Magazine, Time Out Los Angeles, American Way, and other outlets. We have partnered on events with the Los Angeles Public Library, the Hollyhock House, the City of West Hollywood, the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, the Gamble House, Village Green, Studio 111, Pasadena Heritage, the Pasadena Museum of History, soho.home.studio, the Barndsall Art Park, the Neutra Institute for Survival Through Design, the Society of Architectural Historians, the Wolford House and more. Our organization is the recipient of an LA Conservancy Preservation award and a California Preservation Foundation Design award. FORT's newsletter announcing its free monthly content reaches over 9,400 subscribers. Our website is www.fortla.org.



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Russell Gallaher <russellgallaher@aol.com>

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 1:11 PM

To: "chc@lacity.org" <chc@lacity.org>, "melissa.jones@lacity.org" <melissa.jones@lacity.org>, "andrez.parra@lacity.org" <andrez.parra@lacity.org>, "losangelesbassist@yahoo.com" <losangelesbassist@yahoo.com>

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

I've been a tenant at the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments for over 21 years, and I strongly support its historic designation.

When I first called the ad in The Recycler to schedule a showing, the man on the phone said, "Meet you in front, it has a birdhouse on the roof." I thought, "Okay, that's a little weird." Upon arriving, I was confused because it looked more like a house than an apartment building. Once I toured the unit, I fell in love! It had its own porch, a yard, hardwood floors, and windows where you could actually see grass, flowers, and trees. Oh, and a separate garage! I immediately wrote a check for the deposit on the hood of my car! I couldn't believe I'd found such a perfect home, right in the middle of Los Angeles.

From day one, I was welcomed by the other tenants and quickly realized I hadn't just found a great home - I'd found a community. I didn't just get neighbors; I gained friends. Many people have moved on over the years, but I'm still in contact with several. We all decorate for the holidays, and we have gatherings, including an annual pumpkin carving contest every Halloween.

Our community has had quite a creative collective over the years, with musicians, filmmakers, an artist, a writer, a PR manager, and even an audiobook narrator. We collaborate, there's always a project going on and always someone to bounce an idea off. It is truly a community of Angelinos that make this city what it's known for.

One of the most magical aspects of this property is its wildlife. We have dozens of bird species - hummingbirds, sparrows, finches, and more. Mourning doves build their haphazard nests under our porch eaves. A hawk roosts in the tall pine tree out front, and at night, you'll occasionally see the large owl fly over. There's a family of racoons that come for an occasional nighttime raid, possums visit to eat the snails under the bushes, and in the past few years we have had lizards!

As much as we love the wildlife here, I think our cats enjoy it the most. I even built them a Catio (a cat patio) in the front window, where they'll sit for hours watching the birds, butterflies, and squirrels. Even neighborhood cats recognize how special this place is - two of our cats were strays that just showed up at our door and decided to stay!

Several years ago, I noticed a man taking photos of the property. When I asked why, he told me he was writing a book about William Mellenthin, the builder of this property and others like it, he was known for the birdhouses on the roof. He also mentioned how rare our complex is, as Mellenthin built very few multi-family homes like ours, most of which have been altered or destroyed. I gave him my card, and when the book was published, he contacted me. I was so proud to see our beloved property featured! It was a moment to brag to my friends: I live in a William Mellenthin home! I was truly proud.

Learning about Mellenthin's legacy and influence on Los Angeles architecture has been a privilege. I think it quite admirable and shows his character that he would build a few of these courtyard apartments so renters could live in what feels like a home and enjoy the details of his craft. Whether or not he knew it at the time, I feel the layout may be the most important feature of this property, it creates a community and an oasis for its residents.

This nomination represents an opportunity to recognize one of L.A.'s master builders and preserve one of his last remaining multi-family creations. Historic designation will ensure future renters can experience the same charm and warmth I've enjoyed for over two decades. It will also serve as a monument to Mellenthin's legacy (not just some pictures in a book), hopefully inspiring future generations of architects and builders.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your ongoing commitment to historic preservation.

Sincerely,

Russell Gallaher

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

The William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments are deserving of historical designation.

I was lucky enough to live in unit 5922 of the Buffalo Avenue apartments from March of 2020 to January of 2023, when I reluctantly moved out of my cozy one bedroom after getting married. I moved in just one week before Los Angeles shut down for the COVID-19 pandemic, and I will be grateful for that timing the rest of my life.

My previous apartment was a 270 sq ft unit in a large multi-unit complex—an interesting old building, but redesigned and packed with too many people for the original footprint. Like most renters in LA, I was limited by my income and living in a tight niche carved out by the rule of maximum occupancy. When a friend told me about an open unit in Buffalo, the opportunity seemed miraculous. These Birdhouse apartments felt like something out of a fairytale—complete with whimsical tiling, pocket doors and hardwood floors. Affordable housing situations like the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartment are rare jewels in Los Angeles in this age of maximized resident capacity for maximum rent. But the Buffalo apartments conjure a bygone era when apartment living spaces were infused with a sense of *home* and prioritized community.

The Birdhouse apartments at Buffalo Avenue are unique. With their communal layout, quaint swinging screen doors, and shared stretches of courtyard behind each trio of units, they offer an intrinsic sense of ‘home’ to all fortunate enough to live there. The towering pines that front the cul-de-sac are home to hawks, crows, opossums, raccoons and the occasional owl, and give the impression of a sheltered oasis nestled in the LA valley sprawl. In the summers, hummingbirds flit from one feeder to the next along the front gardens, and mourning doves coo merrily from nests above the doorways.

When I moved to LA, I was warned: “It’s too spread out; no one talks to each other.” For the first two years I lived in three different parts of the city, but always found that warning to be true. I never knew my neighbors beyond a nod in passing. Newer and redesigned apartment buildings often have labyrinthine passages winding through an impersonal complex, and windows looking out on nothing but the brick wall of the next building. LA’s residential infrastructure doesn’t always leave room for neighborliness, but the Birdhouse apartments are different, and were *built* with these differences in mind.

Rather than cramming in as many small apartments as possible, where everyone ends up isolated in their own unit, the very design and layout of these Bird House apartments fosters community. Therein, I believe, lies the true value of this property. While each unit provides the coveted feeling of privacy—of being its own home—with the luxury of two doors to the outside, and its own little plot of grass, the units feel (and *are*) connected to the whole of Buffalo. Front doors face a shared driveway, and everyone knows who’s coming and going. The simple walk from the parking spaces to the front doors leads past friendly hellos and waves through the large front windows. Sitting areas at each ground-level front door encourage cheerful conversations and friendships. The wide shared driveway invites informal community gatherings for pumpkin carving, summer parties, or the simple joy of sharing the warm sunlight.

The people of Buffalo *know* one another and look out for each other. The space they call home provides the unique blend of independence and togetherness that enables a strong community, and this community extends into the wider neighborhood. Connection between Birdhouse neighbors contributes to overall safety and stability; it's a magic that is passed forward to passersby and surrounding houses, and helps anchor the small businesses that dot the corner of Buffalo and Oxnard.

The loss of this warm, vibrantly and uniquely community-oriented architecture that is The William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments would not only be a tragedy for current residents and deeply sadden those who have lived there. The loss of these low-profile homes would disrupt the architectural coherency of the entire neighborhood. Much of the value in preserving vernacular architecture lies not only in each individual building and the history of its architects, designers, or famous occupants, but rather in the living history of a neighborhood coherency that promotes the well being of its residents. The William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments shares the architectural aesthetic of the neighborhood, which includes many Mellenthin houses, and represents the immediate area's lone example of triple unit mirrored buildings on a cul-de-sac that is such an icon of early LA neighborhoods. Preserving these historic buildings is an opportunity to preserve this iconic architecture and the invaluable sense of community it fosters.

Sincerely,
Saveria I. Steinkamp



Fwd: CHC-2024-6156-HCM -Support for Historic Nomination

1 message

Melissa Jones <melissa.jones@lacity.org>
To: Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Tue, Jan 21, 2025 at 1:52 PM



LOS ANGELES
CITY PLANNING

Melissa Jones

Pronouns: She, Her, Hers

City Planner

Los Angeles City Planning

Office of Historic Resources

221 North Figueroa Street, Suite 1350

Los Angeles, CA 90012

T: (213) 847-3679 | Planning4LA.org



----- Forwarded message -----

From: **scott cassettari** <scottcassettari@yahoo.com>
Date: Sun, Jan 19, 2025 at 2:03 PM
Subject: CHC-2024-6156-HCM -Support for Historic Nomination
To: <melissa.jones@lacity.org>

Dear Commissioners -

This email is being sent to fully support the historic designation of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments, located at 5920-3 0 Buffalo Ave., in Van Nuys, California.

For over 15 years, I have had the pleasure of visiting this very unique and nostalgic property. Being a business owner in Sherman Oaks, I have seen many many buildings, such as this demolished and replaced. It is a real shame to see the history and unique architecture of this property removed for yet another massive multiunit property.

Little by little, I'm watching the valley slowly lose its charm and history.

I plead with you to take into consideration the preservation of this amazing property with it's charming birdhouses built into the roof and amazing apartments with its original charm and craftsmanship from that era.

I appreciate your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,
Scott Cassettari
Sent from my iPhone



Please preserve Los Angeles Landmark William Mellenthin "Bird House" building

1 message

Steve Freedland <sskkfree@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 1:00 PM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Ladies & Gentlemen,

I was the former owner of [5920 - 5930 Buffalo Ave., Van Nuys](#) - what is believed to be the very last example of a Single-Story, Ranch Style, Multi-Family Apartment Building built by the renown builder Mr. William Mellenthin. I was proud to own this historic building which was built in 1954, and painstakingly kept and restored the building to preserve all of its historical features - from the iconic Birdhouse cupola to the original cabinets, the tile, pocket doors, original flooring, down to the landscaping.

I was proud to own this building and felt a responsibility to protect and preserve this last example of Mellenthin's Blrdhouse, Single-Story, Ranch Style, Multi-Family building as a part of Los Angeles' cultural heritage. The tenants, my friends, who lived and still live in this building formed a very unique community and they, too, understood the historic significance and history of their homes. I had intended on owning this building forever but the expense of taking care of my mother and her medical bills necessitated that I sell. It was my explicit intention to sell the building to someone who valued and appreciated its history as much as I did, and not to a developer or someone intent on altering or destroying the building and its history. I thought I found the perfect buyer who would preserve the building and, for the last 18 years, that appeared to be the case. Now, as I understand, the building is at risk of being demolished by a developer.

I implore you to appropriately designate this historic building, the very last example of its kind, so that it be preserved, cherished, studied, and appreciated by future generations of Angelenos. I think you will agree that far too many culturally significant buildings in Los Angeles have been razed and replaced with cold, characterless structures for the pursuit of a quick buck. Let's not lose this 71 year old historic treasure to that same fate.

Thank you for your consideration,
Steve Freedland



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Steve Musial <sfmusial@hotmail.com>

Wed, Jan 22, 2025 at 6:25 PM

To: "chc@lacity.org" <chc@lacity.org>, "melissa.jones@lacity.org" <melissa.jones@lacity.org>, "andrez.parra@lacity.org" <andrez.parra@lacity.org>, "losangelesbassist@yahoo.com" <losangelesbassist@yahoo.com>

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

Having known multiple tenants of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments, I have had the opportunity to visit the Apartments many times over the years. It is in support of their preservation that I write this letter.

As has been well documented, the buildings are historic, well made, and combine utilitarianism with a welcoming and down-to-earth character. They are an important piece of history, as well as people's homes.

While not only Los Angeles, but indeed all of California, is experiencing the need for more affordable housing, demolishing these rent-stabilized units and exposing their tenants to current market-rate prices will only exacerbate the housing crisis while also erasing a piece of our cultural heritage.

The community of the Apartments is evident whenever I visit, including how clearly the tenants look after each other. It would be a shame to tear down these buildings and lose not only them, but the community that lives in them.

I truly hope that this unique property will be granted a historic designation.

Sincerely,
Steve Musial



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Steve Steinhart <bigbadwolf68@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 12:42 AM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

A close friend lives on the property at 5920 - 30 Buffalo Ave, the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments, it is a wonderful and truly unique space. A close knit community that allows each resident to have their own space and home while still being a part of a community. Everyone has their own little house and garage while neighbors are nearby, allowing for individuality and togetherness at the same time. This property is a gem of Los Angeles! Such models that allow individuality and community at the same time are a rarity to be treasured, we need more of these types of spaces, not less. To lose this mode of living would be a loss to the human experience in a large city. We are then left with a structure containing boxes to sleep in, not connection and shared lives. Quality over quantity is what is needed here, this apartment complex is truly unique and loved, it must be preserved.

I truly hope that this unique property will be granted a historic designation. I fully support the historic designation of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments.

I am highly in favor of preserving the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments nomination as a historic designation.

Sincerely,
Steve Steinhart



Fwd: CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Melissa Jones <melissa.jones@lacity.org>
To: Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Tue, Jan 21, 2025 at 1:14 PM



Melissa Jones

Pronouns: She, Her, Hers

City Planner

Los Angeles City Planning

Office of Historic Resources

221 North Figueroa Street, Suite 1350

Los Angeles, CA 90012

T: (213) 847-3679 | Planning4LA.org



----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Stuart Sollof** <ssollof@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Tue, Jan 21, 2025 at 9:45 AM
Subject: CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments
To: <melissa.jones@lacity.org>

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

My name is Stuart Sollof and I am writing this letter in support of preserving this very unique property as a historic designation.

This property has been lovingly maintained by its various owners through the years. I have had a personal association with this property for over 15 years starting in the late 1990's as property manager/leasing agent. Of particular significance to me is the sense of community that has existed over the years and because of that I have always tried to lease the units to tenants who were a good fit and who appreciated the special sense of community at this property.

The uniqueness of this property is accentuated by the birdhouse roof architecture, attractive landscaping and the charming apartments featuring beautiful wood flooring, tile, and pocket doors. The entire property exudes a general sense of peaceful well-being.

To this day I always take the time to drive by this property and even stop to speak with the tenants who always express their appreciation to be a part of this special community.

It would surely be a significant loss to the entire Valley Glen community to tear down such a lovely property. It is my sincere hope that this unique property will be granted a historic designation.

Sincerely,
Stuart Sollof
(818)383-7966

Sent from my iPhone



CHC-2024-6156-HCM - Support for Historic Nomination

1 message

susan sloatman <ssloatma@gmail.com>

Fri, Jan 24, 2025 at 1:38 PM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Commissioners,

I have visited the above referenced property several times, and have even stayed the night there. The first time I visited was nearly 4 years ago and I was charmed. The apartment complex itself has many unique features which you just won't find in other buildings. Inside I loved the pocket doors, the faux fireplace with granite base and wooden mantel, and all the wooden moldings. The separate kitchen with dining area and its own exit is wonderful. And the abundant storage includes multiple hall closets, all with built-in wooden shelving. Even the bathroom has a cool protruding basin, and tub with glass blocks.

But most of all I love the sense of community there. It's a mini neighborhood, where all vehicles pass all six units which face each other in two rows of three. This promotes interaction between the tenants and allows the neighbors to keep an eye on each other. Each unit has a small covered porch which makes them quite inviting and allows each tenant to decorate in their own way, and the front doors have cute little mail slots instead of a remote bank of mailboxes like more modern units. The little birdhouses on top which used to be so prevalent back in the day make the whole place look like a neighborhood. They definitely give this place a style.

I really hope you decide to preserve this little haven. It would be a real loss to the community if it gets torn down. I believe this place is both unique and valuable in terms of its architecture so I fully support the historic designation of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments.

Sincerely,
Susan Sloatman



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Sydney C. <thatnightmare@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 12:35 AM

To: chc@lacity.org, melissa.jones@lacity.org, andrez.parra@lacity.org, losangelesbassist@yahoo.com

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

A close friend lives on the property at 5920 - 30 Buffalo Ave, the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments, it is a wonderful and truly unique space. A close knit community that allows each resident to have their own space and home while still being a part of a community. Everyone has their own little house and garage while neighbors are nearby, allowing for individuality and togetherness at the same time. This property is a gem of Los Angeles! Such models that allow individuality and community at the same time are a rarity to be treasured, we need more of these types of spaces, not less. To lose this mode of living would be a loss to the human experience in a large city. We are then left with a structure containing boxes to sleep in, not connection and shared lives. Quality over quantity is what is needed here, this apartment complex is truly unique and loved, it must be preserved.

I truly hope that this unique property will be granted a historic designation. I fully support the historic designation of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments.

I am highly in favor of preserving the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments nomination as a historic designation.

Sincerely, Sydney Cassatta



Greater Toluca Lake Neighborhood Council



Resolution

Filed with the Offices of Mayor Karen Bass;
Councilmember Adrin Nazarian, Council District 2;
Cultural Heritage Commission;
Planning and Land Use Management Committee, Los Angeles City Council;
and Los Angeles City Planning Department

Passed at GTLNC Regular Board Meeting on Tuesday, January 21st, 2025

Position: SUPPORT

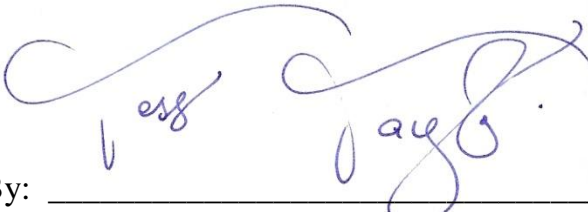
VOTE: 12 / 0 / 0

The Greater Toluca Lake Neighborhood Council (GTLNC) supports the Historic-Cultural Monument designation for William Mellenthin Apartments at 5922 Buffalo Avenue, Valley Glen, CA 91401 (CHC-2024-6156-HCM). GTLNC opposes over-densification of building development and population in our community and in our city, both of which are already fully built out and even over built out.

The Los Angeles County fires of this month have wiped out a quantifiable number of Los Angeles' irreplaceable historical treasures according to the LA Conservancy and so it's more important now than ever to preserve those which we can while there is still an opportunity to do so.

dated: Tuesday, January 21st, 2025

The Greater Toluca Lake Neighborhood Council

By: 

Tess Taylor
President



CHC-2024-6156-HCM William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Todd Markham <tmarkham13@hotmail.com>

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 1:10 PM

To: "chc@lacity.org" <chc@lacity.org>, "melissa.jones@lacity.org" <melissa.jones@lacity.org>, "andrez.parra@lacity.org" <andrez.parra@lacity.org>, "losangelesbassist@yahoo.com" <losangelesbassist@yahoo.com>

Dear Cultural Heritage Commissioners,

I was a previous tenant at the above-mentioned building, specifically at [5926 Buffalo Ave. Van Nuys, Ca., 91401](#). I lived there from October 1995 until October 2005 and have moved across the street to [5919 Buffalo Ave.](#) in October 2005 when my daughter came to live with me and I needed to accommodate her living requirements or I likely would have stayed at the 5926 location indefinitely. I discovered the location through a friend of mine who lived there at that time in 1995. I loved living there due to the community environment that was then and is now still present. The birdhouse element, hardwood floors, pocket doors and other amenities made living there a pleasure. The current tenants provide a unique sense of community not usually found in more modern buildings. The holiday decorations, landscaping and all together neighborly environment made it a pleasure to live there and still does as I live directly across the street. It would be a shame and profound loss to lose such a magnificent rare property with its architectural history to development.

I am highly in favor of preserving the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments nomination as a historic designation.

Sincerely,

Todd Markham



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments Buffalo Avenue

1 message

Tom OBRIEN <Tjo2030@outlook.com>
To: "chc@lacity.org" <chc@lacity.org>
Cc: "russellgallaher@aol.com" <russellgallaher@aol.com>

Fri, Jan 17, 2025 at 3:58 PM

I own property in Valley Glen, Ca. I walk the area and have always enjoyed the Birdhouse design on the Buffalo Avenue apartments at 5920-30. The courtyard and layout with the garage in back, nice landscaping and open layout create a peaceful alternative to the high-rise apartments found elsewhere. The "Birdhouse" ranch homes harken back to a simpler time in the valley's history. The fact that it is a multi-family dwelling makes it an even more exceptional find. Holiday decorations, diamond windows and friendly neighbors make it worth preserving. I fully support the historic designation of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse .

you for your consideration,

J. O'Brien

Thank

Thomas

SECONDARY SUBMISSIONS



CHC-2024-6156-HCM: William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apts., 5922-30 N. Buffalo Ave.

1 message

Adriene Biondo <adrienebiondo@gmail.com>

Fri, Jan 31, 2025 at 12:57 AM

To: chc@lacity.org

Cc: Mills Act Melissa Jones OHP <melissa.jones@lacity.org>, "andrez.parra@lacity.org" <andrez.parra@lacity.org>

Dear President Milofsky and Commissioners:

I am writing in enthusiastic support of the nomination for the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apts. at 5922-30 N. Buffalo Ave.

The Birdhouse Apts., built during the mid-century era, represent an extremely unusual, intact example of Ranch style design developed as a multi-family project. During the postwar years, the Ranch style was prevalent throughout the San Fernando Valley, and was a popular choice of movie stars and celebrities such as Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, who sought refuge from the hubbub of Hollywood.

Southern California became known for its relaxed suburban style, and apartments like the Mellenthin represented an economical alternative for folks who may not have had the means to own their own homes.

Today rare icons such as the beloved Birdhouse Apts. signify an important place and time in Los Angeles history, and are deserving of designation.

Author Chris Lukather, in his book "A Birdhouse in Paradise: William Mellenthin and the San Fernando Valley Ranch Homes," discusses the architect's pioneering style: "a housing variant marked by the decorate application of pitched-roofed dove-cote components, back-to-back fireplaces, board-and-batten siding, and other traditional stylings."

With his appealing and affordable semi-custom homes, Mellenthin revolutionized residential design in the San Fernando Valley

I hope to see the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments honored and protected as a City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.

Sincerely,

Adriene Biondo
Chair Emeritus
San Fernando Valley Historical Society



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Please Designate William Mellenthin Apartments An Historical-Cultural Monument

1 message

Amy Langdon <aglangdon@protonmail.com>

Sun, Feb 2, 2025 at 9:37 PM

To: "chc@lacity.org" <chc@lacity.org>

Hello,

Please designate the William Mellenthin Apartments an L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument. Now, more than ever, we need architecture that helps promote community! That these apartments were designed to engage residents in common areas and facilitate relationships is not only reason enough to preserve them for current residents but serves also as an example of the kind of architecture we need to encourage more of. Let's preserve what works for communities and discourage more boxy, ugly buildings that isolate neighbors and facilitate crime.

Sincerely,
Amy Langdon
Resident of Sherman Oaks



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

CHC-2024-6156-HCM WILLIAM MELLENTHIN BIRDHOUSE APARTMENTS

1 message

Ann Rubin <emailamr@aol.com>

Tue, Feb 4, 2025 at 6:32 PM

To: chc@lacity.org

Cc: Ken Bernstein <ken.bernstein@lacity.org>, Andrew Salimian <asalimian@laconservancy.org>

Dear Cultural Heritage Commission:

I support the nomination of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments for Historic Cultural Monument designation and urge you to approve.

Designed by the well-known builder and developer William Mellenthin, the six-unit courtyard apartment is a rare example of the Traditional Ranch style applied to multi-family housing. Whimsical yet modest, each apartment is a miniature version of Mellenthin's full-size single-family "Birdhouses." Mellenthin and architect Frank S. Hinksman designed the Birdhouse residential typology in the late 1930s, inspired by Mellenthin's childhood in Minnesota.

Residences like the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments demonstrate historic models for providing cost effective middle-class housing at a scale compatible with adjacent single-family homes. It's crucial that we minimize displacement when possible and protect older, rent stabilized buildings that make up a majority of L.A.'s remaining affordable housing.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ann Rubin
resident of Carthay Circle HPOZ
90048



Save the Millenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

D'Orsogna, Maria R <dorsogna@csun.edu>
To: "chc@lacity.org" <chc@lacity.org>

Sun, Feb 2, 2025 at 12:09 PM

Dear Cultural Heritage Commission of the city of Los Angeles,

my name is Maria R D'Orsogna, I am a physicist, and live, and love, Los Angeles. Please preserve the Millenthin Birdhouse Apartments in Van Nuys' Valley Glen as an L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM).

This is a six-unit courtyard apartment designed after World War II in the San Fernando Valley. It is an extremely rare building type for our area, with ample courtyard space that gives residents a sense of beauty and community.

As a historic example of older, rent stabilized dwellings, these apartments are a piece of our history, they help retain character, are made of high-quality materials and craftsmanship, and to this day house middle class residents.

On October 17th the Cultural Heritage Commission took the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments under consideration as a L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument. I urge you to follow through and save pieces of town for future generations.

We should not turn this town into a series of shabbily built big boxes, with no green space, cramping people into ugliness.

Sincerely,

Maria



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Katherine Tolford <katetsc@yahoo.com>
To: chc@lacity.org

Tue, Feb 4, 2025 at 10:01 PM

Please designate the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments as a historic cultural monument. Residences like the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments demonstrate historic models for providing cost effective middle-class housing at a scale compatible with adjacent single-family homes. It's crucial that we minimize displacement when possible and protect older, rent stabilized buildings that make up a majority of L.A.'s remaining affordable housing.

Thank you.
Katherine



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Please preserve the Millenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

nancy winters <newinters@hotmail.com>
To: "chc@lacity.org" <chc@lacity.org>

Thu, Jan 30, 2025 at 6:17 PM

Hello,

Please preserve the Millenthin Birdhouse Apartments. We need variety in housing, and why cause more construction?! Let's please save what we already have and re-use all existing housing. It makes environmental sense and cost sense!

Thank you!

Nancy Winters

Hermosa Beach, CA

Daniel F. Freedman
dff@jmbm.com

1900 Avenue of the Stars, 7th Floor
Los Angeles, California 90067-4308
(310) 203-8080 (310) 203-0567 Fax
www.jmbm.com

January 31, 2025

BY EMAIL ONLY

Cultural Heritage Commission
Attn: Denise Otero, Executive Assistant I
City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring Street
Rm. 1010, City Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90012
E-Mail: CHC@lacity.org

Re: **Case No.** CHC-2024-6156-HCM
Hearing Date: February 6, 2025, 10:00 am (Agenda Item: 4.)
Property Address: 5922-5930 N. Buffalo Avenue

Dear President Milofsky and Members of the Cultural Heritage Commission:

Our office represents the Mr. Roozbeh T. Alizadeh, the owner of 5922-5930 N. Buffalo Avenue (the "Property"), in connection with the above referenced pending nomination to designate his Property as a Historic-Cultural Monument ("HCM") pursuant to Los Angeles Administrative Code ("LAAC") Section 22.171.10. We submit this letter in strong opposition to this nomination on multiple grounds, and submit the attached analysis from the qualified architectural historian experts with Chronicle Heritage confirming that the property does not qualify for designation under any standard. (See **Attachment 1.**) We therefore urge the Cultural Heritage Commission ("Commission") to deny this nomination.

In addition to being substantively inadequate, we also object to this nomination on procedural grounds. As you may know, this particular property is the site of a proposed 100 percent affordable housing project being processed with the City pursuant to the Mayor's Executive Directive 1 program. The project seeks to improve the site with 104 units of housing, including 82 covenanted for low income and 21 moderate income. This nomination was filed by project opponents when it became known that this project was moving forward. Given this, it is not hyperbole to state the obvious: **this nomination is being advanced to kill affordable housing.** The Property has never been identified as a potential or eligible resource in the past, and this is notable given that it was certainly surveyed as it is one building over from a documented SurveyLA district. To use a historic nomination to kill a housing project is both inappropriate given our housing crisis, and also in conflict with Government Code Sec. 65913.10, which was adopted to curb this type of abuse.

The optics of this situation are particularly appalling when considering the circumstances. The City has never before deemed any of this particular builder's 3,000+ buildings – *including an entire residential subdivision he built*¹ - as a designated historic resource, and yet, the very first time it considers doing so just happens to be the time it undermines an affordable housing project. This is not a coincidence—it is a transparent and egregious attempt to derail housing. Moreover, the staff report's "recommendation" only magnifies the issue. Of the thousands of extant buildings that represent this builders work, the staff report fails to provide any comparative analysis necessary to explain where this particular building fits within this builders' timeline/history, whether it is an excellent and significant example of his work, or what other buildings are out there that might better represent his work. As the National Register Bulletin explains, it does not matter if a property is even "the only such property [of a type]; *it must be demonstrated to be significant as well.*"² There is no evidence to support a finding that this building is significant in any respect, and the Commission should take deep consideration before taking an action that would kill an affordable housing project and undermine the Mayor's efforts to address the housing crisis.

1. The Property is the Site of a 100% Affordable Housing Project Under Executive Directive 1 (ED1) and a Designation May Not Stop its Demolition.

The Property has a fully compliant development application under the Mayor's ED1 program, proposing a 100% affordable housing project with 104 units. The application is complete, and under California Government Code § 65913.10, the City cannot designate the Property as historic once a qualifying affordable housing project application has been deemed complete. Any attempt by the Commission to move forward with this designation would violate state law and expose the City to significant legal risk. The Housing Crisis Act and subsequent legislation were enacted specifically to prevent barriers to critically needed affordable housing.

2. The Staff Report Fails to Demonstrate the Property's Significance, a Necessary Requirement for HCM Designation.

The staff report fails to substantiate why the Property meets the threshold of "significance." While it claims the Property is associated with William Mellenthin and exemplifies the Traditional Ranch architectural style, it does not establish the required level of significance under both the Los Angeles Municipal Code and the National Register Bulletin. Simply stating that the Property has architectural features associated with a well-known builder does not make it historically significant. (See National Register Bulletin, Pg. 17, Criterion C: "applies to properties significant for their physical design...." LAMC 22.171.7 applies to a "building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles....") The nomination provides no substantive evidence of significance.

¹<https://historicplacesla.lacity.org/report/d825dbea-34d4-41f9-8067-faf200fe2d43>

² Pg. 18. https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15_web508.pdf

Additionally, the National Register Bulletin explicitly states that a property must “express a particular phase in the development of the master’s career, an aspect of his or her work, or a particular idea or theme in his or her craft.” The Chronicle Heritage report confirms that this Property holds no unique significance within Mellenthin’s broader body of work. Mellenthin built thousands of similar properties, and there is no evidence that this development represents a distinguished or rare example. Moreover, no evidence exists that Mellenthin himself viewed this site or project as significant.

3. The Property is Not an Excellent Example of a Building Type or Work of a Master Builder.

The nomination asserts that the Property represents an excellent example of a Mid-Century, one-story court in the Traditional Ranch architectural style and that it is a rare multi-family example of Mellenthin’s work. However, as the Chronicle Heritage Report details, the Property does not meet the threshold of excellence required for historic designation:

- The Property lacks defining features of the Traditional Ranch style beyond superficial elements such as the “birdhouse” ornamentation. SurveyLA has identified numerous better-preserved and more exemplary examples of this architectural style.
- The central driveway was a cost-saving measure, not an innovative design feature as argued by the nomination.
- Many original windows have been replaced with vinyl, further compromising any historic integrity.
- The National Register’s definition of a “master” requires a level of recognition and significance that Mellenthin, as a real estate developer rather than a licensed architect or craftsman, does not meet.

This proposed designation misapplies preservation standards by elevating an ordinary building type to a level of significance it does not merit. If this standard were applied broadly, virtually every Mellenthin-built structure in the Valley could be deemed historic, undermining the fundamental purpose of historic designation laws.

Conclusion

The City must reject this nomination for multiple compelling reasons: (1) it is unlawful to designate the Property as historic given its status as a 100% affordable housing project under state law; (2) the nomination fails to establish the required significance; and (3) the Property does not meet the criteria for designation under applicable historic preservation standards.

We respectfully urge the Commission to reject the staff recommendation and deny the Historic-Cultural Monument application. Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require additional information.

Sincerely,



DANIEL F. FREEDMAN of
Jeffer Mangels Butler & Mitchell LLP

Attachment

CC: Tiffany Zeytounian, CD 2 Planning Deputy (tiffany.zeytounian@lacity.org)
Lambert Giessinger, Senior Architect (Lambert.Giessinger@lacity.org)
Melissa Jones, City Planner (Melissa.Jones@lacity.org)
Andrez Parra, Planning Assistant (Andrez.Parra@lacity.org)
Alex Fisch, Special Assistant Attorney General (Alex.Fisch@doj.ca.gov)
Corey Smith, Housing Action Coalition (Corey@housingactioncoalition.org)
Shannan West, Housing Accountability Unit Chief, HCD (Shannan.West@hcd.ca.gov)
Jenny Delwood, Deputy Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office (Jenny.Delwood@lacity.org)
Nene Ogbechie, Executive Officer, Mayor's Office (Nene.Ogbechie@lacity.org)
Assemblymember Buffy Wicks (assemblymember.wicks@assembly.ca.gov)
Sonja Trauss, YIMBY Law Executive Director (sonja@yesinmybackyard.org)

ATTACHMENT 1



January 31, 2025

City of Los Angeles
Office of Historic Resources
201 N. Figueroa Street, 4th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Historic-Cultural Monument Application for 5922-5930 Buffalo Avenue

The subject property does not qualify for designation as a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) because it does not have a significant association with the developer, William Mellenthin and it is a common example of a Storybook, or Cinderella, Ranch.

The subject property consists of two parcels (APNs 2343-001-020; -021). Each parcel contains a triplex with a detached garage. The parcels were developed in 1954, and William Mellenthin is noted on the permits as the contractor.¹ No architect(s) is listed on the permits. The nomination asserts the property is significant for an association with William Mellenthin. Mellenthin was noted as very active in the San Fernando Valley and his buildings are known for their exaggerated dove cotes in SurveyLA.² No mention of Mellenthin or his company was found in common sources such as historic issues of the *Los Angeles Times* and *Los Angeles Sentinel*³ nor is he mentioned in Gebhard and Winter's *Los Angeles, An Architectural Guide*.⁴ Although briefly noted as a real estate developer in the SurveyLA Ranch House Neighborhoods historic context statement, there is no substantial evidence to support the claim that he can be considered a master builder whose individual genius influenced his age. According to the National Park Services *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* regarding evaluating the work of a master:

The property must express a **particular phase** in the development of the master's career, an aspect of his or her work, or particular idea or theme in his or her craft. A property is not eligible as the work of a master, however, simply because it was designed by a master architect. For example, not every building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright is eligible under this portion of Criterion C (emphasis added).⁵

¹ City of Los Angeles, Building Permit Nos. 1954VN7229, 1954VN2930, 1954NV2931, and 1954VN1932. Issued April 30, 1954.

² City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning. *SurveyLA: Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement: Context: Architecture and Engineering, Theme: The Ranch House, 1930-1975*. December 2015. Available at: https://planning.lacity.gov/odocument/1acefe03-5615-425f-9182-d58a79014901/The_Ranch_House%2C_1930-1975.pdf

³ ProQuest, lapl.org

⁴ Gebhard, David and Robert Winter. 1994. *Los Angeles, An Architectural Guide*. Gibbs Smith Publisher: Salt Lake City, Utah.

⁵ Secretary of the Interior, National Park Service. 1995. *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*.

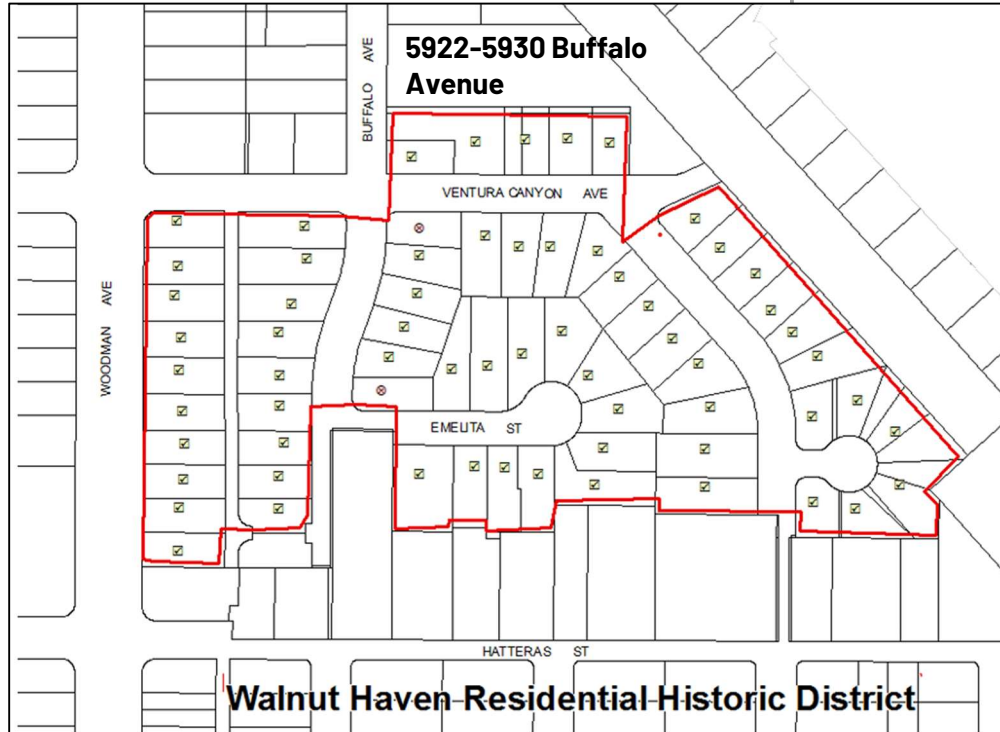


4522-4528 Laurel Canyon Boulevard, built 1941, were also developed by Mellenthin. The Laurel Canyon properties are also Cinderella Ranch with dove-cotes in the gables, exaggerated horizontal siding with corner boards, and wood shingle roofs. These buildings were constructed 13 years prior to the Buffalo properties but yet do not reflect an evolution of his career. The Buffalo properties do not reflect a particular phase or period of Mellenthin's development because his style and methods never evolved. He began and ended his career building the same variations of the Cinderella Ranch style as opposed to other architects such as Stiles O. Clements who have very defined periods of work. To the extent either property represents his evolution, the Laurel property is a significantly better property for that purpose considering it was constructed earlier in his career and shows variation in his Cinderella design not commonly seen on other properties.



4522 Laurel Canyon Boulevard. Zillow 2025

5922-5930 Buffalo Avenue abuts to the north the potential Walnut Haven Residential Historic District as defined in SurveyLA. The potential Walnut Haven Residential Historic District consists of single- and multi-family residences. As noted in SurveyLA, the potential historic district consists of Traditional Ranch, Minimal Ranch, and a few Cinderella Ranch residences. The potential Walnut Haven Residential Historic District does not have a uniform boundary and the 5922-5930 Buffalo Avenue property was intentionally excluded from this potential historic district.



Van Nuys – North Sherman Oaks Report: Historic Districts, Planning Districts, and Multi-Property Resources – 8/5/2015, Page 142

Although the potential Walnut Haven Residential Historic District was developed by Mellenthin’s competitor Julian Weinstock, several of the Cinderella buildings feature similar exaggerated dovecotes to the 5922–5930 Buffalo buildings. Mellenthin was not the only developer behind large tract developments often with Storybook Ranch units.



5847 Buffalo. Google Earth 2018



5843 Allot Avenue. Google Earth 2024

Mellenthin is noted for developing hundreds of parcels with variations of Cinderella style residential buildings throughout the San Fernando Valley. Other developers were also utilizing this style of architecture throughout the valley. The HCM nomination fails to explain why 5922-5930 Buffalo Avenue is a unique example of this style of architecture nor does it employ comparative analysis to demonstrate any such significance.

As noted in SurveyLA, the potential Ethel Avenue – Otsego Street Residential Historic District was identified as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as the notable work of Mellenthin. Development in this neighborhood occurred between 1933 to 1962; however the majority of the construction occurred between 1951 and 1954. The potential historic district is comprised of 99 properties, 85 of which were identified as contributors. In 1951, Mellenthin purchased the 12.5 acres Buck Jones Estate.⁶ Given the average urban lot is a tenth of an acre, the purchase of this estate resulted in approximately 125 parcels that were developed with variations of Mellenthin’s Storybook Ranch model. Numerous examples of his work exist within the City of Los Angeles. SurveyLA provides a comprehensive guide to what is architecturally significant, and 5922=5930 Buffalo Avenue was not identified as significant for an association with Mellenthin nor was it identified as a significant example of Storybook Ranch architecture.

Per the HCM nomination, Mellenthin began his career as a real estate developer in the 1930s. He passed away in 1979,⁷ so a reasonable assumption of when he retired would have been circa 1965, given he was born in 1896. All of the buildings highlighted in *Los Angeles Times* display advertisements were Ranch style, the majority of which were Storybook. The development of the Buffalo site does not reflect a particular phase of development of Mellenthin’s career.

Additionally, Merriam Webster defines a Master Builder as a one who has attained proficiency in one of the building crafts and is qualified or licensed to supervise building construction. Per the HCM nomination, Mellenthin had a degree in economics. None of the display advertisements and associated reference materials note Mellenthin as a mason, carpenter, or other tradesman.

⁶ *Los Angeles Times*. “Noted Valley Estate Bought.” April 15, 1951. Page E1.

⁷ California Death Index



Therefore, he did not possess proficiency in one of the building crafts. A portion of neighboring Van Nuys is a designated Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ). Per the Van Nuys HPOZ Preservation Plan, in 1925, 95 percent of the United States' lima bean were grown in this area.⁸ Following the end of World War II, the San Fernando Valley was rapidly converted from lima bean fields to single- and multi-family housing to accommodate the population boom at that time. Mellenthin does not have an architect or contractor license on file with the State of California.^{9,10} Per the HCM nomination, he graduated from college with a degree in Economics. Mellenthin was one of several developers who had a thriving business making money in the housing market following the end of World War II. Numerous examples of properties developed by Mellenthin are extant throughout the San Fernando Valley and the Buffalo property is not a unique example of his developments. While Mellenthin largely worked in the single-family market, other multi-family developments are attributed to him, such as one in neighboring Studio City, and reflects a dollar-to-dollar maximization related to unit counts allowed by zoning rather than a unique event. It should also be noted Mellenthin was active throughout the San Fernando Valley and there is no mention of him in the Van Nuys HPOZ Preservation Plan.

As stated in SurveyLA, Mellenthin is noted for constructing buildings with exaggerated dove cotes. The subject property is a typical example of his work and does not reflect a distinctive period of his work. The two parcels are of similar design laid out in a mirroring plan resulting in a central driveway. The central driveway was created as a cost saving measure as it is cheaper to build one than two separate driveways. Therefore, the central driveway is not a unique design feature, rather, it reflects an element of frugality on behalf of the developer. The HCM nomination misrepresents the site plan as a court because this is two separate parcels with buildings constructed to mirror each other to reduce construction costs.

"Birdhouse" is not an architectural style defined in SurveyLA,¹¹ Hess,¹² or McAlester.¹³ SurveyLA defines Cinderella Ranch as follows:

Cinderella Ranches resemble the Traditional Ranches from which they are derived, but they are distinguished by their highlighted and often exaggerated details. Common features include scalloped bargeboards, shutters and fascias reflecting Swiss Chalet details, and over-scaled turned columns or supports.¹⁴

The buildings on the property are Traditional Ranch with the exception of the dove cotes. The buildings possess little architectural detail and lack scalloped bargeboards, shutters, and fascias. As originally designed, the buildings are simple, rectangular forms, and many of the windows have been replaced with vinyl sliding units which detracts from the overall appearance of the buildings. Permits nos. 1954VN77302 and 1954VN77303 were issued in June 1954 to alter the primary façades to allow for construction of the porches over the front steps. The porches, many of which are diminutive in nature and do not function as porches with seating areas, were an afterthought and not part of the original design. The buildings are common examples of Ranch found throughout the

⁸ City of Los Angeles. Van Nuys HPOZ Preservation Plan. Adopted December 9, 2010. Available at: <https://planning.lacity.gov/odocument/9307b8bd-9ee5-45f8-8cbe-b624b3443168/Van%20Nuys%20PP.pdf>

⁹ <https://search.dca.ca.gov/>

¹⁰ <https://www2.cslb.ca.gov/onlineservices/checklicensell/checklicense.aspx>

¹¹ City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning.

¹² Hess, Alan. 2004. *The Ranch House*. Harry N. Abrams, Inc.: New York, New York.

¹³ McAlester, Virginia Savage. 2017. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. Alfred A. Knopf: New York, New York.

¹³ City of Los Angeles. Building Permit No. 00014-20000-03852. Issued July 20, 2000.

¹⁴ City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning.



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LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

55 E. Huntington Drive, Ste. 238

Arcadia, CA 91006

San Fernando Valley, Los Angeles, and southern California. Therefore, the buildings do not embody the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction.

As is common practice today, a developer, contractor, or architect typically buys or designs a catalogue of plans which can be deviated from. Mellenthin did not individually design each building attributed to his name. Rather, his company offered a basic plan with a few variations buyers could choose from which allowed for more affordable housing. For this reason, Mellenthin's buildings with prominent dovecotes can be found throughout the valley.

Based upon a site visit conducted by a fully qualified architectural historian on October 10, 2024, additional alterations include a secondary coating of stucco which decreases the separation of the wood surround of the windows from the wall. The replacement windows are not aluminum, which would be in keeping with 1950s Ranch-style architecture, they are vinyl with press-on muntins. Although the HCM ordinance does not take into consideration a property's integrity, the alterations noted in the HCM nomination and during the site visit diminish the architectural quality of the subject property.

For these reasons, the subject property does not qualify for designation as an HCM.

Sincerely,

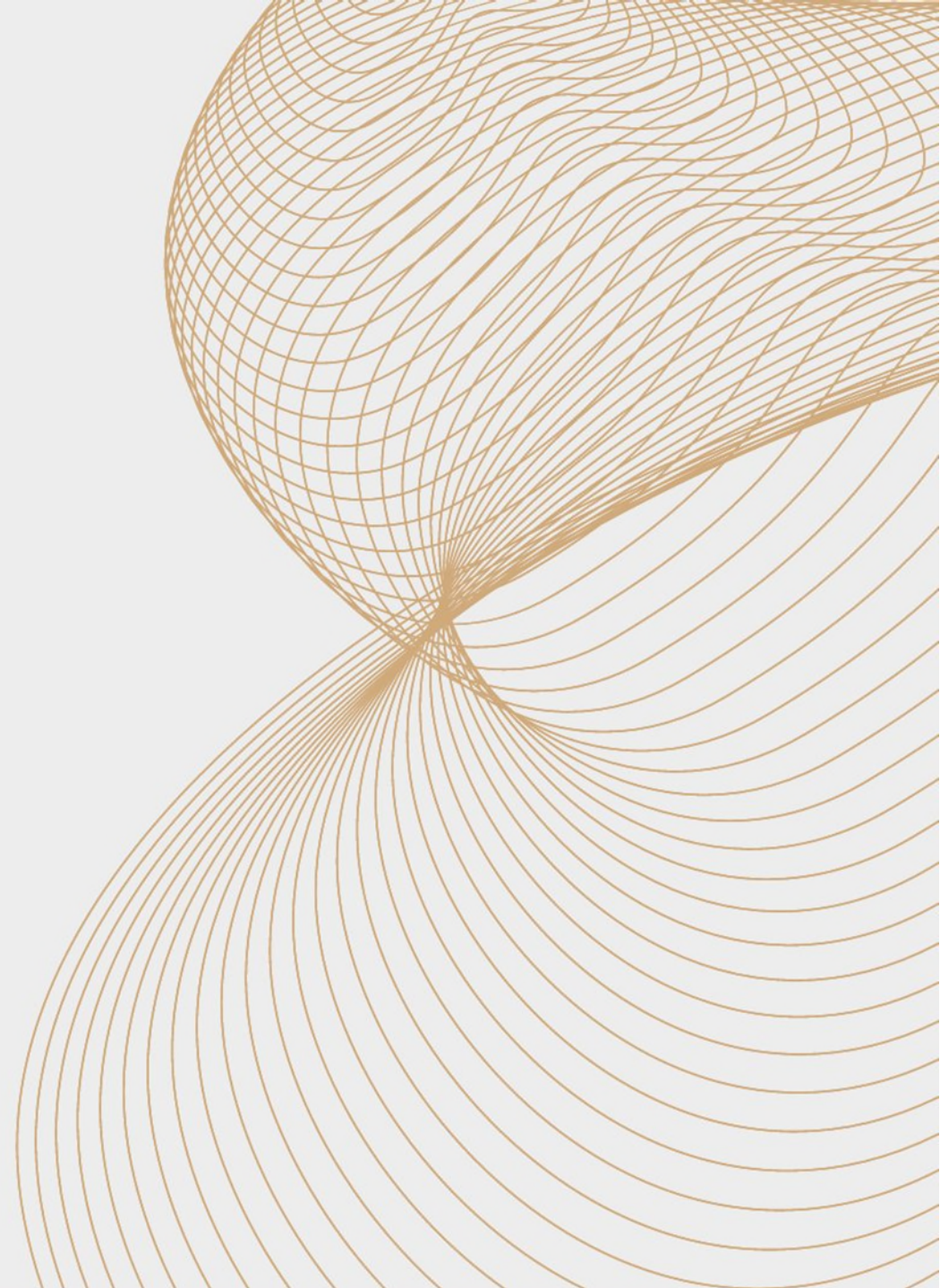
Carrie Chasteen, Senior Architectural Historian
Chronicle Heritage
55 E. Huntington Drive, Suite 238
Arcadia, CA 91006



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5922-5930 Buffalo Avenue

Carrie Chasteen
Senior Architectural Historian



National Register Eligibility Criterion C:

The property must express a **particular phase** in the development of the master's career, an aspect of his or her work, or particular idea or theme in his or her craft. A property is not eligible as the work of a master, however, simply because it was designed by a master architect. For example, not every building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright is eligible under this portion of Criterion C (emphasis added).

Source: Secretary of the Interior, National Park Service. 1995. *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*.

- *The style of the buildings William Mellenthin constructed never changed during his career*
 - *4522–4528 Laurel Canyon Boulevard (1941)*

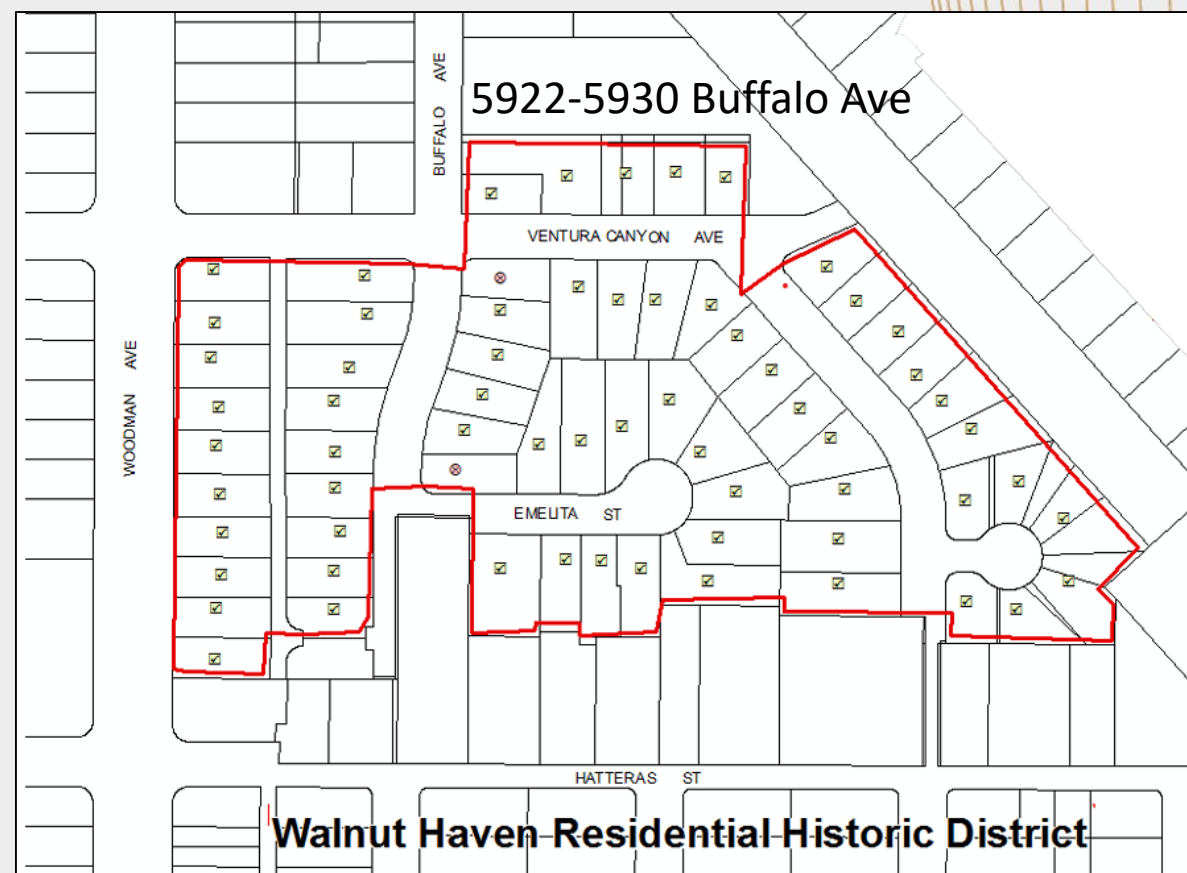


SurveyLA:

- Not identified as an individual resource
- Not identified as a contributor to the potential Walnut Haven Residential District
 - Developed by Julian Weinstock 1950-1957



5847 Buffalo Avenue



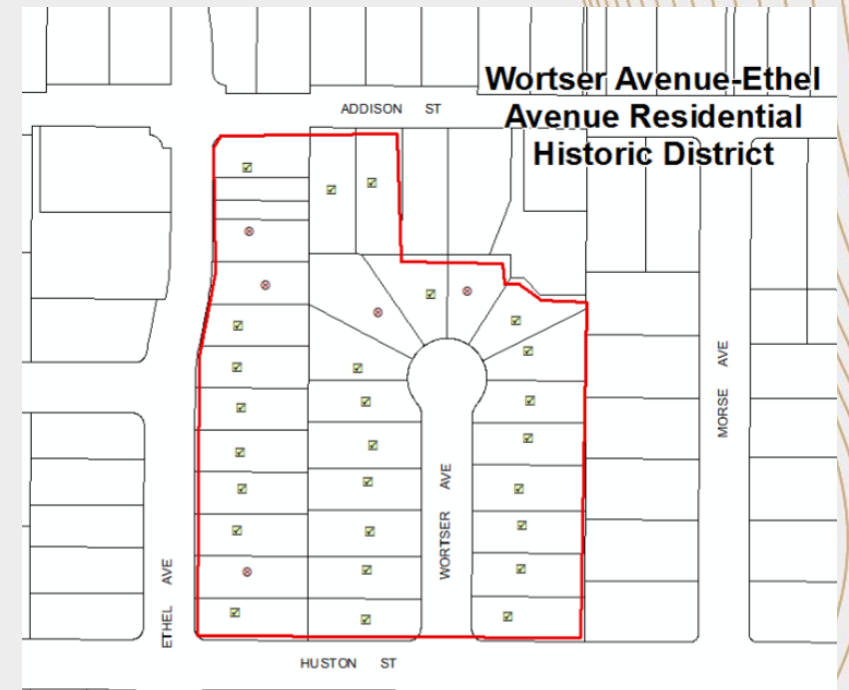
SurveyLA: Worster Avenue – Ethel Avenue Residential Historic District

- “The Wortser Avenue-Ethel Avenue Residential Historic District is significant as an excellent concentration of Ranch-style residences, as an excellent example of a post-World War II suburb, and as a 1950s subdivision developed by notable Valley developer William Mellenthin.”
- “The residential district is composed of four tracts, all owned and subdivided by William Mellenthin one by one between 1951 and 1954.”



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HERITAGE

4942 Ethel Avenue



Master Builder

- As stated in SurveyLA, Mellenthin is noted for constructing buildings with exaggerated dove cotes. The subject property is a typical example of his work and does not reflect a distinctive period of his work.
- The Buffalo properties do not reflect a particular phase or period of Mellenthin's development because his style and methods never evolved. He began and ended his career building the same variations of the Cinderella Ranch style as opposed to other architects such as Stiles O. Clements who have very defined periods of work.
- To the extent either property represents his evolution, the Laurel Canyon property is a significantly better property for that purpose considering it was constructed earlier in his career and shows variation in his Cinderella design not commonly seen on other properties.

“Court”

- The two parcels (APNs 2343-001-020; 021) are of similar design laid out in a mirroring plan resulting in a central driveway.
- The central driveway was created as a cost saving measure as it is cheaper to build one than two separate driveways. Therefore, the central driveway is not a unique design feature, rather, it reflects an element of frugality on behalf of the developer. The HCM nomination misrepresents the site plan as a court because this is two separate parcels with buildings constructed to mirror each other to reduce construction costs.



Conclusion

- The subject property is not the work of a master builder
- It is not the best and most closely associated property with Mellenthin
- It does not possess architectural distinction

Thank you!
Questions?



Planning CHC <chc@lacity.org>

Support for the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

1 message

Shelagh McFadden <shelaghmcf@gmail.com>
To: chc@lacity.org

Sun, Feb 2, 2025 at 4:16 PM

Please designate this rare apartment complex as an L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument so that future generations will have access to human-scale rent-stabilized housing, as well as the example it sets for how such housing can enhance our neighborhoods.

Shelagh McFadden
shelaghmcf@gmail.com



Save the Bird House Apartments

1 message

W G <seapink2@gmail.com>
To: chc@lacity.org

Fri, Jan 31, 2025 at 10:44 AM

Hello,

Please designate the **William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments** as a Historic Cultural Monument.

Residences like the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments demonstrate historic models for densifying our neighborhoods while retaining character and a sense of community. It's crucial that we protect older, rent stabilized buildings that make up a majority of L.A.'s remaining affordable housing.

Thank you,
W.G.
Glendale, CA

DAY OF HEARING SUBMISSIONS