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## **Via Electronic Mail**

March 27, 2025

Cultural Heritage Commission  
Los Angeles City Hall  
200 North Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Email: chc@lacity.org

**Re: The Hermoyne Apartments, 561-579 N. Rossmore Avenue  
Case No.: CHC-2024-6919-HCM, ENV-2024-6920-CE**

Dear President Milofsky and Members of the Cultural Heritage Commission:

This firm represents, Hermoyne Investments Inc., owner of the Hermoyne Apartments (the “**Building**”) located at 569 North Rossmore Avenue in the City of Los Angeles (the “**City**”). On October 10, 2024, Mr. James Dastoli filed an application to nominate the Building as a Historic-Cultural Monument (“**Monument**”) under the City’s Cultural Heritage Ordinance (the “**Ordinance**”), claiming that it qualifies under the third criterion pursuant to Los Angeles Administrative Code (“**LAAC**”) Division 22, Chapter 9, Article 1, Section 22.171.7. Following the Cultural Heritage Commission (the “**Commission**”) hearing on November 21, 2024, the Commission determined to schedule a full hearing to consider whether the Building is eligible as a Monument, which is scheduled for April 3, 2025. For the following reasons, we respectfully request that the Commission decline the nomination as recommended in the Staff Report prepared by the Los Angeles Department of City Planning (the “**City Staff Report**”) in connection with this matter.

## **I. INTRODUCTION.**

The Building does not qualify as a Monument under the City’s Ordinance. The Ordinance defines a Monument as “any site (including significant trees or other plant life located on the site), building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles,” which satisfies one of the following criteria:

1. Is identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community;

2. Is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history; or
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age. (LAAC, Div. 22, Ch. 9, Art. 1, Sec. 22.171.7.)

As set forth in greater detail below and described in the attached report prepared by the Architectural Resources Group (the “**ARG Report**”), given the features of the Building and the extensive changes to both the interior and the exterior of the Building, the Building does not meet any of the three criteria under the Ordinance and is therefore ineligible for designation as a Monument. Please find a copy of the ARG Report attached hereto as **Exhibit A**.

## **II. THE BUILDING DOES NOT MEET ANY OF THE THREE CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY AS A HISTORIC CULTURAL MONUMENT UNDER THE CITY’S ORDINANCE.**

### **A. The Building is Not Associated with Important Historical Events Nor Does it Exemplify Significant Historical Contributions.**

Under the City’s Ordinance, the first criterion that may qualify a building as a Monument is if it “[i]s identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community.” (*Id.*) As detailed in the ARG Report, this criterion is not met because the Building is not associated with any distinctive historical events and does not make any significant historical contributions. Rather, the Building is one of a substantial number of apartment buildings across the City constructed in the 1920s to accommodate the demand for housing, which resulted from the steady population growth during that period. Therefore, the Building does not meet the first criterion. (*See generally* Ex. A, pp. 5-6.)

### **B. The Building is Not Associated with the Lives of Historic Personages.**

The second criterion that may qualify a building as a Monument is if it “[i]s associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history.” (LAAC, Div. 22, Ch. 9, Art. 1, Sec. 22.171.7.) The nomination, which is attached hereto as **Exhibit B**, references that the Building was mentioned in the SurveyLA’s Jewish History Context Statement as a property where Al Jolson lived upon his arrival in the City in 1928. As detailed in the attached report, Jolson had a series of brief stays at various properties during that period, including a brief stay in the Building from 1932 to 1933. Based on guidance from *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, eligible properties under this criterion “are usually those associated with a person’s productive life, reflecting the time period when he or she achieved significance.” Further, in evaluating the significance of the association between the property and the

historic person, “each property...should be compared to other associated properties to identify those that best represent the person’s historic contributions.” His tenure at the Building was brief, and the association between the Building and Jolson is tenuous, particularly when compared to other properties with which Jolson is associated. Therefore, the Building does not meet the second criterion. (*See generally* Ex. A, pp. 6-7.)

**C. The Building Does Not Embody the Distinctive Characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival Style or the Apartment Tower Property Type.**

The third criterion that may qualify a building as a Monument is if it “[e]mbodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.” (LAAC, Div. 22, Ch. 9, Art. 1, Sec. 22.171.7.) The nomination filed by Mr. Dastoli claims that the Building meets this criterion “as an excellent example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style” and as “an excellent example of an apartment tower from the 1920’s.” (Ex. B, pp. 2.) This is not the case. The evidence set forth in the City Staff Report and ARG Report demonstrate that the Building fails to adequately embody the style and building type cited due to the extensive alterations completed over the last several decades and the lack of distinctive characteristics.

*1. The Exterior and Interior of the Building Have Been Extensively Altered.*

As detailed in the ARG Report and the City Staff Report, both the exterior and the interior of the Building have been extensively altered since its construction in 1929. Some notable alterations to the exterior include the replacement of the primary entrance door, the infill of exterior balcony openings with windows, the renovation of the street-facing courtyard, the conversion of an indoor swimming pool to residential units, and the addition of an outdoor swimming pool. There have also been extensive alterations to the lobby of the Building, including removal of an original faux fireplace, removal of the original notched ceiling beams, and installation of new decorative wall sconces. Additionally, the interior apartment units have undergone years of renovation, including replacement of the original hardwood floors with laminate flooring and the remodeling of the kitchens in some units, among other updates. (*See generally* Ex. A, p. 2.) Due to the scope and scale of these alternations, the Building no longer exists as an extant, and thus representative, example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style and the Apartment Tower property type.

*2. The Building Fails to Embody the Distinctive Characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival Architectural Style.*

The Building fails to fully embody the Spanish Colonial Revival Style, which was a popular architectural style in the City during the 1920s and 1930s. (*See generally* Ex. A, pp. 8-9.) When compared to the broader pool of Spanish Colonial Revival style buildings in the City, the Building presents as a relatively simple and chaste example of the style, lacking the level of detail and articulation that is important to an understanding of the style and its aesthetic values. A comparison

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of the Building to designated buildings that *did* embody the style, including, among others, the Villa Carlotta (HCM #315), the Andalusia Apartments (HCM #435), the Art A. Smith Courtyard Apartments (HCM #1230), the Villa Bonita (HCM #956), the El Royale Apartments (HCM #309), and the Los Altos Apartments (HCM #311), demonstrate that the necessary level of detail and articulation is lacking. (*See generally* Ex. A, pp. 7-9; *see* City Staff Report, pp. 5-6.)

3. *The Building Fails to Embody the Distinctive Characteristics of the Apartment Tower Property Type.*

The Building does not embody the defining features of the apartment tower property type. First, the Building is not oriented toward the street but faces an interior courtyard. Second, the Building lacks a rectangular plan and is L-shaped, and, third, the Building fails to maximize lot coverage. These facts demonstrate the building lacks the characteristics necessary to fully embody this property type. (*See generally* City Staff Report, p. 5-6.) Furthermore, given the lack of these key characteristics, and the extensive alterations, the Building is not an excellent example of the building type. Indeed, the comparison to other designated apartment towers completed in the City Staff Report, including the Ravenswood Apartments (HCM #768), the Bryson Apartments (HCM #653) and the Fontenoy (HCM #882) only underscores this point. (*See generally* Ex. A, pp. 7-9; *see* City Staff Report, pp. 5-6.)

**III. CONCLUSION.**

Given the analysis set forth above, we respectfully request that the Commission decline the nomination as recommended in the City Staff Report prepared in connection with this matter.

Very truly yours,

*Eoin D. McCarron*

Eoin McCarron

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## **EXHIBIT A**

### **Architectural Resources Group Report**



## Memorandum

**To:** Eoin D. McCarron  
Associate  
Allen Matkins  
865 South Figueroa Street, 28<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90017-2543  
[emccarron@allenmatkins.com](mailto:emccarron@allenmatkins.com)

**Project:** Hermoyne Apartments Historic Preservation Consulting

**Project No.:** 181105

**Date:** Mar. 21, 2025

**Via:** E-mail

### **RE: Hermoyne Apartments, Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) Nomination**

In October 2024, a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) nomination was submitted for the Hermoyne Apartments, a multi-family residential property at 569 N. Rossmore Avenue in the City of Los Angeles. Pursuant to your request, ARG reviewed the nomination and conducted supplemental research about the subject property to ascertain its eligibility for local designation as an HCM. This memorandum includes a discussion of ARG's analysis and conclusions to this end.

### Methodology

This assessment was completed using the following field and research methods:

- Reviewed the HCM nomination and supporting documentation
- Reviewed historic resource survey data, including SurveyLA findings for the Wilshire Community Plan Area and the State of California's Built Environment Resource Directory
- Reviewed applicable sections of the SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement
- Conducted a site visit in February 2025 to observe and document existing conditions
- Conducted supplemental research about the property, its construction history, and its owners/occupants

### Architectural Description

The subject property, which is known as the Hermoyne Apartments, is a seven-story apartment building on the west side of Rossmore Avenue, between Rosewood Avenue and Clinton Street, in

the Hancock Park neighborhood of Los Angeles. The building has an L-shaped footprint, stucco wall cladding, and a flat and gabled roof clad in clay tiles and rolled asphalt. The main entrance, which faces east toward Rossmore Avenue, consists of glazed metal doors with sidelights. Fenestration includes multi-light steel casement windows and sliding aluminum windows; one window on the primary façade has been replaced with vinyl. There are two stacks of oriel windows with corbels on the east façade. Integral fire escapes are incorporated into the building façades.

Details are generally confined to the area around the main entrance and include stucco that is scored to simulate cut stone, helical columns, arched openings and niches, and a fabric awning. Elsewhere, details include a stringcourse and frieze above the first story; a stringcourse above the sixth story; faux Juliet balconies on some windows overlooking the courtyard; and balconies at corner volumes, almost all of which have been infilled to accommodate additional interior space.

Other features of the property include a subterranean parking garage, accessed via a concrete driveway from Rossmore Avenue; a courtyard with a concrete wall and metal fence at the southwest corner of the property; and an inground swimming pool and deck in the north setback.

### Alterations<sup>1</sup>

The subject property has experienced a number of alterations between its original (1929) construction and the present-day. Key alterations include the following:

- The primary doors have been replaced, and the door opening has been resized
- Some windows on the primary/east façade have been partially infilled (incisions in the concrete walls demarcate the original window openings)
- One original window on the primary/east façade has been replaced with a vinyl window
- The courtyard facing Rossmore Avenue has been renovated and modified
- The building has been re-roofed
- The original indoor swimming pool/gym has been converted to additional residential units; a new outdoor pool was constructed in the north setback
- Some original features and finishes in the building's lobby have been altered, including removal of an original faux fireplace; removal of original notched ceiling beams and replacement with contemporary beams; and installation of new decorative wall sconces
- Interior apartment units have been updated and remodeled

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<sup>1</sup> A complete permit history for the property is included as an attachment to the HCM nomination.



### Property History

In 1929, property owner Herbert B. Squires commissioned the construction of a seven-story apartment building on the west side of Rossmore Avenue, near the Wilshire Country Club in the Hancock Park neighborhood. The contractor of record was H. Miller; the architect of record was Leonard Jones (1881-1947), a Minnesota native who came to Los Angeles in 1912 and pursued a career in architecture. Jones was reprimanded and fined by California regulators for practicing architecture without a license in 1915, but was subsequently granted a license by the State Board of Architecture in 1921.<sup>2</sup> A review of Jones's known works suggests that his practice was principally involved in designing mid-rise apartment buildings and other multi-family residences.

Construction was completed, and a Certificate of Occupancy issued, in 1930.<sup>3</sup> When it opened, the property – which was named the Hermoyne Apartments – operated as an apartment building, but typical of apartment buildings of its era it also included some amenities that were commonly found in commercial hotels, like elaborate common spaces and on-site food and laundry services.

As an apartment building, the subject property has been home to a succession of tenants, many of whom lived at the property for brief periods. The HCM nomination identifies one such tenant as Al Jolson (1886-1950), a well-known singer, actor, and vaudevillian. Born in Lithuania, Jolson immigrated to the United States in 1894 and pursued a career in entertainment, working as a stage performer on the Broadway theater circuit in New York. As a stage actor, Jolson took on a variety of roles but became well-known for his appearances in minstrel shows, often donning blackface makeup.<sup>4</sup> In the late 1920s, he began appearing in films and first came to Los Angeles in 1928. Jolson moved to Los Angeles permanently in 1932, where he continued to work as an entertainer up until his death in 1950.<sup>5</sup>

Jolson lived at the subject property for a brief period between 1932 and 1933. It was one of several Los Angeles properties that he lived at temporarily until he constructed a single-family house in the Tarzana community in 1935, where he lived intermittently until his death in 1950.<sup>6</sup> (That house, which is located at 4875 Louise Avenue, is extant).

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<sup>2</sup> "Architect, Sans License, Fined," *Los Angeles Times*, Jul. 25, 1915.

<sup>3</sup> Certificate of Occupancy, Permit No. 32503, Jan. 2, 1930.

<sup>4</sup> Ted Gioia, "A Megastar Long Buried Under a Layer of Blackface," *The New York Times*, Oct. 22, 2000.

<sup>5</sup> "Last Rites for Singer Tomorrow," *Valley Times*, Oct. 25, 1950.

<sup>6</sup> "HistoricPlacesLA, "Al Jolson Residence, 4875 N Louise Ave," online, accessed Mar. 2024.

The most substantial alterations to the property were completed after World War II.<sup>7</sup> The property originally featured a heated indoor swimming pool, which was decommissioned in 1946 and covered with a concrete floor plate to accommodate additional dwelling units. Permit records indicate that an original indoor gymnasium was also altered at that time. A new outdoor swimming pool was added to the north setback in 1950; the building's open balconies were enclosed with glazing to extend the interior square footage of corner units at an unknown date. In 2021, the courtyard facing Rossmore Avenue was extensively renovated, in 2022 the building was re-roofed, and in 2023 one of the original arched windows at street level was replaced with vinyl.

The property continues to be used as an apartment building.

#### Previous Evaluations

In 2001, the subject property was identified in the Hancock Park Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) survey as an Altered Contributor to the historic district.<sup>8</sup> However, following completion of the survey, it was recommended that the multi-family residential properties along Rossmore Avenue and the commercial properties on Melrose Avenue and Wilshire Boulevard be excluded from the adopted boundaries of the HPOZ. These properties (including the subject property) were excluded from the final boundaries of the HPOZ when it was adopted in 2006.

The subject property was not identified in SurveyLA. In 2015, as part of SurveyLA, a Historic Resources Survey Report was prepared for the Wilshire Community Plan Area (CPA), where the subject property is located. The subject property was not included in the list of eligible individual resources, historic districts, or non-parcel resources identified in that survey.

In 2016, also as part of SurveyLA, a historic context for Jewish history was prepared as a component of the Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement. The subject property was mentioned in the document as one of several known residences of singer, vaudevillian, and actor Al Jolson. Because of this, the property was assigned the status code of QQQ.<sup>9</sup> The QQQ status code, which is unique to SurveyLA, is not a determination of eligibility, but is used as a mechanism by which properties can be flagged for further study.

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<sup>7</sup> Gleaned from review of building permits, accessed Mar. 2025 via the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, <https://www.ladbs.org/services/check-status/online-building-records>.

<sup>8</sup> Altered contributors to a local HPOZ are defined by the City of Los Angeles as "structures that date from the period of significance, built in the same time period as Contributing Structures that have retained their historic character in spite of subsequent alterations or additions and are deemed reversible."

<sup>9</sup> SurveyLA defines the QQQ status code as follows: "May be eligible, additional research needed."

### Evaluation of Eligibility

The HCM nomination argues that the subject property meets local Criterion 3, “as an excellent example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style,” and as “an excellent example of an apartment tower from the 1920’s, an important multi-family sub-type which SurveyLA defined as being six or more stories in height, oriented towards the street, and designed to maximize lot coverage.”<sup>10</sup>

The HCM nomination also references the Jewish History context and suggests that the subject property may be eligible for its association with Al Jolson. However, it stops short of arriving at a conclusion to this end, stating that “more research outside of this nomination would be needed to identify if there is any significance with Al Jolson and Jewish history overall.”<sup>11</sup>

As noted, ARG reviewed the HCM nomination and its supporting documentation, reviewed applicable background materials, and conducted research about the subject property and its history. ARG’s professional opinion about the subject property’s eligibility for HCM designation is summarized as follows, and is discussed in more detail in the sections below.

- The property does not appear to be individually eligible for HCM designation. It is a representative – and not excellent – example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style and the apartment tower property type, and alterations have diminished its integrity.
- The property does not appear to be significant for its association with entertainer Al Jolson. Jolson was a historically significant individual who made contributions to the entertainment industry, but the association between Jolson’s productive life and the subject property is tenuous. The property is one of a multitude of rental properties within Los Angeles where Jolson briefly lived prior to the completion of his house in 1935.

Detailed evaluations against each of the HCM criteria are included in the sections below.

*Criterion 1. Is identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community.*

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<sup>10</sup> Historic-Cultural Monument for the Hermoyne Apartments, Oct. 10, 2024, 2.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

The subject property does not appear to meet this criterion. Built in 1929, it is but one of a substantial number of apartment buildings that were constructed in Los Angeles to accommodate a demand for housing in the 1920s, a period marked by steady population growth and a considerable expansion of the urban footprint. Research did not suggest that there is anything distinctive about the subject property, or that it is associated with these broad historical trends in a manner that is not equally expressed by other 1920s apartment buildings in Los Angeles, which are ubiquitous and are associated with the same broad historical trends as the subject property.

*Criterion 2. Is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, city, state or local history.*

The subject property does not appear to meet this criterion. By virtue of its continual use as an apartment house, it has been home to a substantial number of tenants between its 1929 construction and the present day. Research suggests that most of the building's tenants were employed in common vocations, and have not made contributions to history as per this criterion.

As noted, the subject property was mentioned in the SurveyLA Jewish History context as a property where Al Jolson lived upon first arriving to Los Angeles in 1928. Further research indicates that it was one of many properties that Jolson lived at in Los Angeles. Between 1928 and 1932, Jolson stayed at the Talmadge Apartments (3278 Wilshire Boulevard), though his primary residence continued to be in New York. When he moved to Los Angeles permanently, Jolson rented at a succession of properties including the subject property (1932-1933), an apartment building at 7357 Franklin Avenue in Hollywood (1933-1934), and a single-family house at 498 St. Pierre Road in Bel Air (1934), before constructing his own single-family house at 4875 Louise Avenue in Tarzana, where he lived from 1935-1939 and again from 1948 until his death in 1950.<sup>12</sup>

*National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* includes guidance on how to evaluate properties associated with historically significant individuals. Specifically, it states that eligible properties “are usually those associated with a person’s productive life, reflecting the time period when he or she achieved significance.” It further states that “each property associated with an important individual should be compared to other associated properties to identify those that best represent the person’s historic contributions.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> “The Jolson Tour,” online, accessed Mar. 2025, <https://forums.delphiforums.com/aljolson/messages/3567/1>.

<sup>13</sup> National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 1990, rev. 1997, 15.

Accordingly, the subject property was evaluated against other properties associated with Jolson to ascertain the strength of the association between the entertainer and this property. The conclusion from this evaluation is that any such association between Jolson and the subject property appears to be brief and tenuous. There is insufficient evidence demonstrating that Jolson's brief tenure at this property is important in conveying his significance as an entertainer.

*Criterion 3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.*

The subject property does not appear to meet this criterion. It is a typical – rather than a distinctive or significant – example of the apartment tower type and the Spanish Colonial Revival style, as discussed herein.

As noted in the HCM nomination, the subject property is best classified as an apartment tower, which is defined by SurveyLA as “a multi-family residential property that is six or more stories in height, is designed to maximize lot coverage, and is oriented toward the street.”<sup>14</sup> The Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement lists the following eligibility standards for apartment towers<sup>15</sup>:

- Is six or more stories in height
- Is an excellent example of the type
- Was constructed during the period of significance (1895-1970)
- Was originally constructed as an apartment tower

The subject property exhibits some characteristics of the apartment tower property type. However, merely being an example of a property type does not mean that a property is historically significant for that reason. While it is more than six stories tall and falls within the broad period of significance for apartment towers (1895-1970), there is nothing especially distinctive about this property that would render it a significant example of the property type. When compared against similar properties, it lacks the architectural detail that is a defining feature of other apartment towers, including the nearby El Royale at 450 N. Rossmore Avenue (1929, HCM #309) and the Ravenswood Apartments (1930, HCM #768). Both of those buildings exhibit an exceptional level of

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<sup>14</sup> SurveyLA Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, Context: “Architecture and Engineering: Mediterranean and Indigenous Revival Architecture, 1893-1948,” Nov. 2018, 31-32.

<sup>15</sup> SurveyLA Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, Context: “Residential Development and Suburbanization, 1880-1980; Theme: Multi-Family Residential Development, 1895-1970,” Dec. 2018, 15-16.

architectural detail and design features like highly embellished façades and rooftop signs emblazoned with the building's respective name.

The Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement discusses a multi-family residential development model known as the apartment boulevard, “where large-scale multi-family housing was seen as a suitable alternative to commercial development along certain major traffic corridors or neighborhood thoroughfares – areas which may be less desirable for single-family development, but still presented an attractive opportunity for residents who sought a more urban domestic setting.”<sup>16</sup> This model took form along major streets like Wilshire Boulevard, Los Feliz Boulevard, and Rossmore Avenue, each featuring a linear grouping of multi-family residential properties. Through this lens, the subject property may contribute to a potential district of multi-family residential properties along Rossmore Avenue, but as a typical example of its type and style, is lacking in the level of distinction that would render it individually eligible for designation.

The subject property is designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, which was a popular architectural style in Los Angeles in the 1920s and '30s. The Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement identifies the following as character-defining features of the style:

- Typically asymmetrical horizontal massing of building masses
- Stucco or plastered exterior walls
- Distinctively shaped and capped chimneys
- Low sloped clay tile roofs or roof trim
- Arched openings, individually serving doors and windows or arranged in arcades
- Towers used as vertical accents to horizontal assemblages
- Patios, courtyards, and loggias or covered porched and/or balconies
- Spare detailing making use of wrought iron, wood, cast stone, terra cotta, [and] polychromatic tile
- Grilles, or *rejas*, of cast iron or wood over windows and other wall openings
- Attic vents of clay tiles or pipe

The subject property exhibits some of these character-defining features – stucco exterior walls, clay tile roof trim, arched openings, and simulated cast stone details at the entrance – but when compared against the broader pool of Spanish Colonial Revival style buildings in Los Angeles, it

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<sup>16</sup> SurveyLA Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, Context: “Architecture and Engineering: Mediterranean and Indigenous Revival Architecture, 1893-1948,” Nov. 2018, 31-32.

presents as a relatively simple and chaste example of the style, lacking the level of detail and articulation that is important to an understanding of the style and its aesthetic values. The subject building, like many of the properties built in Los Angeles before World War II, exhibits some characteristics of the style that rendered it visually with the architectural preferences of the day, but does not possess characteristic of the style that are particularly innovative or distinctive.

There is insufficient evidence demonstrating that the property represents the notable work of a master. Its architect, Leonard Jones, designed several multi-family residential buildings in Los Angeles, but does not appear to have made important contributions to the profession in the spirit of this criterion. There is scant information available about contractor H. Miller.

In addition, the property has witnessed a number of alterations. Alterations, as noted above, include the replacement and resizing of the primary entrance doors; replacement of some original steel windows; partial infill of some windows; infill of most original balconies; updating of the original street-facing courtyard, and a multitude of interior alterations, both to the lobby and to the interiors of many individual apartment units. In conjunction, these alterations compromise the overall integrity of the building and its original design intent.

### Conclusion

In summary, ARG concludes that the subject property does not meet eligibility standards for individual designation as an HCM. The property does not meet the eligibility standards for designation as an HCM. Its integrity has also been compromised due to a succession of alterations.

## **EXHIBIT B**

### **Historic-Cultural Monument Nomination**





# HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

## 1. PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION

Proposed Monument Name: <b>Hermoyne Apartments</b>		Current name of property	
Other Associated Names:			
Street Address: <b>569 N. Rossmore Ave.</b>		Zip: <b>90004</b>	Council District: <b>5</b>
Range of Addresses on Property:		Community Name: <b>Wilshire</b>	
Assessor Parcel Number: <b>5523009036</b>	Tract: <b>TR 3345</b>	Block: <b>none</b>	Lot: <b>43</b>
Identification cont'd:			
Proposed Monument Property Type:	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Building	<input type="radio"/> Structure	<input type="radio"/> Object
		<input type="radio"/> Site/Open Space	<input type="radio"/> Natural Feature
Describe any additional resources located on the property to be included in the nomination, here:			

## 2. CONSTRUCTION HISTORY & CURRENT STATUS

Year built: <b>1929</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Factual <input type="radio"/> Estimated	Threatened? <b>None</b>
Architect/Designer: <b>Leonard Lymon Jones</b>	Contractor: <b>H. Miller</b>	
Original Use: <b>residential</b>	Present Use: <b>residential</b>	
Is the Proposed Monument on its Original Site?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No (explain in section 7) <input type="radio"/> Unknown (explain in section 7)

## 3. STYLE & MATERIALS

Architectural Style: <b>Spanish Colonial Revival</b>		Stories: <b>7</b>	Plan Shape: <b>L-shaped</b>
FEATURE	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	
CONSTRUCTION	Type: <b>Concrete poured/precast</b>	Type: <b>Select</b>	
CLADDING	Material: <b>Stucco, smooth</b>	Material: <b>Select</b>	
ROOF	Type: <b>Gable</b>	Type: <b>Flat</b>	
	Material: <b>Clay tile, rounded</b>	Material: <b>Select</b>	
WINDOWS	Type: <b>Casement</b>	Type:	
	Material: <b>Steel</b>	Material: <b>Select</b>	
ENTRY	Style: <b>Recessed</b>	Style:	
DOOR	Type: <b>Select</b>	Type: <b>Select</b>	



# HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

## 4. ALTERATION HISTORY

List date and write a brief description of any major alterations or additions. This section may also be completed on a separate document. Include copies of permits in the nomination packet. Make sure to list any major alterations for which there are no permits, as well.

	see attachments

## 5. EXISTING HISTORIC RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION (if known)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Listed in the National Register of Historic Places
<input type="checkbox"/>	Listed in the California Register of Historical Resources
<input type="checkbox"/>	Formally determined eligible for the National and/or California Registers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Located in an Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
<input type="radio"/>	Contributing feature
<input type="radio"/>	Non-contributing feature
<input type="checkbox"/>	Determined eligible for national, state, or local landmark status by an historic resources survey(s)
Survey Name(s):	
Other historical or cultural resource designations:	

## 6. APPLICABLE HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT CRITERIA

The proposed monument exemplifies the following Cultural Heritage Ordinance Criteria (Section 22.171.7):

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Is identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.



# HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

## 7. WRITTEN STATEMENTS

*This section allows you to discuss at length the significance of the proposed monument and why it should be designated an Historic-Cultural Monument. Type your response on separate documents and attach them to this form.*

**A. Proposed Monument Description** - Describe the proposed monument's physical characteristics and relationship to its surrounding environment. Expand on sections 2 and 3 with a more detailed description of the site. Expand on section 4 and discuss the construction/alteration history in detail if that is necessary to explain the proposed monument's current form. Identify and describe any character-defining elements, structures, interior spaces, or landscape features.

**B. Statement of Significance** - Address the proposed monument's historic, cultural, and/or architectural significance by discussing how it satisfies the HCM criteria you selected in Section 6. You must support your argument with substantial evidence and analysis. The Statement of Significance is your main argument for designation so it is important to substantiate any claims you make with supporting documentation and research.

## 8. CONTACT INFORMATION

### ***Applicant***

Name: James Dastoli		Company:	
Street Address: PO Box 1843		City: Los Angeles	State: CA
Zip: 90028	Phone Number:	Email: james.dastoli@gmail.com	

### ***Property Owner***

Is the owner in support of the nomination? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Unknown

Name: HERMOYNE INVESTMENTS INC		Company:	
Street Address: 12711 VENTURA BLVD 310		City: Studio City	State: CA
Zip: 91604	Phone Number:	Email:	

### ***Nomination Preparer/Applicant's Representative***

Name: James Dastoli		Company:	
Street Address: PO Box 1843		City: Los Angeles	State: CA
Zip: 90028	Phone Number:	Email: james.dastoli@gmail.com	



# HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

## 9. SUBMITTAL

When you have completed preparing your nomination, compile all materials in the order specified below. Although the entire packet must not exceed 100 pages, you may send additional material on a CD or flash drive.

### APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. ✓ Nomination Form  | 5. ✓ Copies of Primary/Secondary Documentation  |
| 2. ✓ Written Statements A and B   | 6. ✓ Copies of Building Permits for Major Alterations<br>(include first construction permits) |
| 3. ✓ Bibliography   | 7. ✓ Additional, Contemporary Photos  |
| 4. ✓ Two Primary Photos of Exterior/Main Facade<br>(8x10, the main photo of the proposed monument. Also<br>email a digital copy of the main photo to:<br>planning.ohr@lacity.org) | 8. ✓ Historical Photos  |
|   | 9. ✓ Zimas Parcel Report for all Nominated Parcels<br>(including map)                         |

## 10. RELEASE

Please read each statement and check the corresponding boxes to indicate that you agree with the statement, then sign below in the provided space. Either the applicant or preparer may sign.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I acknowledge that all documents submitted will become public records under the California Public Records Act, and understand that the documents will be made available upon request to members of the public for inspection and copying.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I acknowledge that all photographs and images submitted as part of this application will become the property of the City of Los Angeles, and understand that permission is granted for use of the photographs and images by the City without any expectation of compensation.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I acknowledge that I have the right to submit or have obtained the appropriate permission to submit all information contained in this application.

JAMES DASTON

10/10/2024

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Mail your Historic-Cultural Monument Submittal to the Office of Historic Resources.

Office of Historic Resources  
Department of City Planning  
221 N. Figueroa St., Ste. 1350  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Phone: 213-874-3679  
Website: [preservation.lacity.org](http://preservation.lacity.org)

## The Hermoyne Apartments

### Historic-Cultural Monument Nomination Continuation Sheet

#### A. Property Description

##### Site

Constructed in 1929, the Hermoyne Apartments are located at 569 N. Rossmore Ave, on the west side of the street between Rosewood Ave and Clinton St. The building takes up most of its rectangular parcel with some space reserved for parking, a courtyard, and a swimming pool. It is fronted by a sidewalk on the east elevation. The property abuts Chateau Rossmore on the south, the apartments at 585 N. Rossmore on the north, and the single family houses at 560, 564, 570, and 574 Lillian Way to the west.

##### Exterior

The building is L-shaped in plan, and rises to seven stories in height. It has a flat and gabled clay tile roof, and is clad in stucco. A simple course separates the 6th floor from the 7th floor, and a frieze band that is enriched with bas relief foliate motifs separates the 1st floor from the 2nd floor. The east elevation on the inside of the L is nine bays wide, with the four left bays covered by a gable. The fifth and sixth bays project forward forming two long oriels supported by brackets from the 2nd through 6th floors. The first leftmost bay on the corner has draped arched openings that have been partially screened in. The rest of the bays consist of different groupings of multi-lite steel casement windows, with some bays having smaller openings, and others having wider openings. The seventh floor above the oriels has two windows each. The first floor at this part of the building has arched openings with multi-light steel casement groupings under the second, third, fifth, sixth, eighth and ninth bays. The south elevation on the inside of the L is eight bays wide, with the three east-most bays covered by a gable. The bays consist of different groupings of multi-lite steel casement windows, with some bays having smaller openings, and others having wider openings. The corner bay under the gable features the same screened in draped arched openings as previously described. The west-most bay at the inside corner has small wrought iron balconies. The first floor on this elevation has four draped arched openings with scrolls above the drapes, supported by helical columns, that are irregularly spaced compared to upper floor bays. The opening in the inner corner houses one of the building's entrances. The second arched opening has been filled in. The third arched opening is glazed, but may have been open at one time. The east-most archway is not as wide, and is open to a covered patio at the main entrance. The east elevation on the end of the L is five bays wide, and symmetrical. The two corner bays contain the previously described partially screened in draped arched openings of the other corners of the building, but wider. The central bay has a fire escape set back within similar draped arched openings. The remaining bays have multi-lite steel casements. The first floor stucco on this part of the building is scored to appear like cut stone, and contains three of the aforementioned draped arched openings over a small patio. The central opening houses the recessed main entrance of the building, flanked by small arched alcoves. The south elevation on the end of the L is almost identical to the east end of the L, but with a utilitarian first floor. The north elevation is partially obscured from the street, and contains a mix of previously described elements. The west elevation is not visible from the street. The entrance to the subterranean garage is located on the southeast corner of the east elevation.

## **Interior**

Real estate listings suggest the presence of original decorative features in the lobby, including a tiled staircase and beam ceiling.

## **Alterations**

The Hermoyne Apartments has had minimal alterations since its construction. The entry doors have been altered. Corner bays have been partially screened in, but original openings remain.

## **B. Statement of Significance**

### **Summary**

The Hermoyne Apartments meets the following criteria for designation as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument:

*It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.*

Built in 1929, the property is the work of architect Leonard Lymon Jones. It meets criterion 3 by serving as an excellent example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, with its overall massing, materials, roofline, and ornamentation all being typical of the style's characteristics. It also meets criterion 3 by being an excellent example of an apartment tower from the 1920's, an important multi-family sub-type which SurveyLA defined as being six or more stories in height, oriented towards the street, and designed to maximize lot coverage.

This property was identified as an altered contributor to the Hancock Park HPOZ, but was ultimately not included within the adopted district boundaries. When taking into account conflicting property type and land use issues, decision makers determined that the properties on Rossmore Avenue north of Beverly, which include the Hermoyne, do not fall under the standard procedures for administering the HPOZ ordinance.

The property was also identified in SurveyLA for its association with Al Jolson under the Jewish History; Entertainment Industry - 1908-1980; Residential Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry; Residential; Multi-Family Residential theme. Jolson was a successful Jewish Hollywood star, and his name being associated with the building further strengthens the prestige of the apartment towers on Rossmore Avenue as a whole, but more research outside of this nomination would be needed to identify if there is any significance with Al Jolson's and Jewish history overall.



## The Hermoyne

Hollywood historian Mary Mallory described the building by saying, “Still as gorgeous and stately as when it opened in 1929, the Hermoyne Apartments at 569 N. Rossmore Ave. demonstrates the best in high-class apartment hotels built around Los Angeles in the late 1920s. Offering a touch of class in amenities as well as looks, the residence seems as luxurious as any movie pied a terre, located on a graceful curve of Rossmore Avenue.”<sup>1</sup>

Each of the towering chateaux of Rossmore Avenue are significant in their own right. Taken individually, the Hermoyne is an impressive monumental edifice. When looked at as a group, the luxurious apartment towers on Rossmore complement each other by presenting different architectural styles that are tied together through high quality materials and workmanship.

## Multi-family Residential Development in Los Angeles<sup>2</sup>

The reasons for the proliferation of multi-family housing in early twentieth century Los Angeles are manifold. Primary among them was simple demand. Multi-family residences played a critical role in meeting the widespread need for housing created by the city’s exponential population growth during this time. In 1900, the city had barely a hundred thousand residents; by 1930 that number had exploded to over 1.2 million. In the 1920s alone, the city’s population doubled as Los Angeles went from the nation’s tenth largest city to the fifth largest.

For many Angelenos a multi-family dwelling was a more desirable living situation than a detached single family house. Multi-family living was generally more affordable and located “further in” – close to urban amenities such as employment centers and shopping districts. By contrast, potential homeowners often had to be “courted and coaxed out to the urban edge, where they might or might not find paved streets or sewer connections, but where often-steep mortgage payments would be waiting regardless.” Unlike in other American cities, where apartment housing was associated with overcrowding and unhealthful living conditions for the urban poor, Los Angeles’ varied stock of rental units accommodated Angelenos with a wide range of economic means, from working-class fourplexes, to middle-class bungalow courts, to high-rent luxury apartment towers.

Apartment living also met the requirements of new Angelenos seeking readily available housing. Bungalow courts and courtyard apartments offered shared landscapes which “helped create community out of discrete dwellings, providing a spatial expression of common identity for residents recently arrived from elsewhere.” Apartment buildings with distinctive architectural detailing, perhaps with an illuminated rooftop sign declaring the building name, offered “instant community to a newly arriving population.” Individual units might come fully furnished and equipped with hundreds of household items, from towels and linens to kitchenware. In more luxurious buildings, rental fees might include daily bed making and cleaning, as well as laundry and linen services.

1 Mallory, Mary. "Mary Mallory / Hollywood Heights: Hermoyne Apartments, Regal Dowager on Rossmore Avenue." *The Daily Mirror*. <https://ladailymirror.com/2019/07/08/mary-mallory-hollywood-heights-hermoyne-apartments-regal-dowager-on-rossmore-avenue/>.

2 Excerpted and adapted from City of Los Angeles. "Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement Context: Residential Development and Suburbanization, 1880-1980 Theme: Multi-Family Residential Development, 1895-1970," ed. Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources, SurveyLA, 2018.

As the city's population rose in the early twentieth century, and the demand for affordable rental units kept pace, there were plenty of entrepreneurs happy to add to the supply of multi-family housing. Development of multi-family dwellings provided investment opportunities up and down the socioeconomic scale, "from lower middle-class white and minority single-lot owners on up to real estate tycoons and everywhere in between." Small-scale buildings were the earliest examples of this kind of income-producing residential development, due to the relative ease with which they could be constructed and with minimal up-front capital. Larger buildings did not appear in substantial numbers until the 1920s, when a combination of even more rapid population growth, a burgeoning tourism industry, and widespread availability of investment capital "drove an apartment construction boom in Los Angeles that dramatically altered parts of the city." Smaller buildings would then give way to larger apartment houses, towers, and ultimately expansive complexes which could offer a greater return on investment.

### **Apartment Towers**

SurveyLA considers an "Apartment Tower" to be a sub-type of an "Apartment House," defined as "a multi-family residential property that is six or more stories in height, is designed to maximize lot coverage, and is oriented toward the street." The Hermoyne is taller than six stories, with its main entrance oriented towards the street. Many of the lots on Rossmore Avenue are very large compared to other neighborhoods in central Los Angeles, and the Hermoyne does not take up all of its parcel. This indicates that it was not designed to maximize lot coverage, but its scale relative to Rossmore Avenue is proportional to the scales of smaller apartment towers to denser blocks within neighborhoods like Westlake and Wilshire Center. Therefore, The Hermoyne conveys a similar feeling as other SurveyLA identified apartment towers.

### **Apartment Houses<sup>3</sup>**

Apartment houses represent an important building type that proliferated throughout the city during most of the twentieth century and reflect trends in urban planning to accommodate a wide range of full and part time residents as well as tourists and other visitors. Many examples are also significant in the area of architecture as excellent examples of their respective architectural styles. Apartment houses range from modest duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes to mid- and high-rise apartment buildings. Due to their versatility, apartment houses are among the most common multi-family residential building types in Los Angeles, with examples constructed in nearly every part of the city. Early examples are becoming increasingly rare.

The apartment house can best be defined in contrast to the bungalow court and other forms of courtyard housing that were being constructed in the early twentieth century. Unlike courtyard housing, the apartment house is designed to maximize lot coverage, with little or no lot area land dedicated to useable open space. And unlike courtyard housing, which is typically oriented onto a central common space, apartment houses are oriented toward the street, with architectural detailing concentrated on the street-facing façade. Apartment houses vary widely in terms of density, from one-story duplexes to

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<sup>3</sup> Excerpted and adapted from City of Los Angeles. "Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement Context: Residential Development and Suburbanization, 1880-1980 Theme: Multi-Family Residential Development, 1895-1970," ed. Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources, SurveyLA, 2018.



high-rise luxury apartment towers. They can accommodate a variety of architectural styles, and therefore often reflect the dominant residential styles of the period in which they were constructed. Due to their versatility, apartment houses were built throughout the twentieth century and in nearly every part of Los Angeles.

Larger apartment houses from this early period could range anywhere from two to six stories in height, with four or more units. Early examples constructed during the 1910s were mostly modest vernacular structures constructed of brick or wood frame, while into the 1920s they began to take on more decorative, even fanciful, stylistic elements. Their comparative affordability and the ability to pack as many units onto a lot as possible made the two-story apartment building a particularly attractive investment for both novice and seasoned developers. As many as a dozen or more two- and three room units could be fit into this simple type, greatly increasing the potential rate of return relative to outlay for construction.

### **Development of Rossmore Avenue between Melrose Avenue and Beverly Boulevard**

The Tongva people are the original inhabitants of the land that later included most of Los Angeles, including the Wilshire area. The parcel where the subject property now sits was part of Rancho La Brea, granted in 1828 by Los Angeles mayor José Antonio Carrillo to Antonio José Rocha and named for the well-known tar pits within. Rocha's heirs deeded the land in its entirety to Los Angeles attorney and surveyor Henry Hancock in 1860.<sup>4</sup>

The decline of oil revenues and the increase in land prices as Los Angeles rapidly expanded led Henry Hancock's son, G. Allan Hancock, to shift attentions to developing real estate on Rancho La Brea in the 1910s and 1920s.<sup>5</sup> The Wilshire Country Club, located at Rossmore Avenue and Beverly Boulevard formally organized as a corporation in 1919, with the Los Angeles Tennis Club (two blocks west of Rossmore) following in 1920.<sup>6</sup> The earliest apartment building on Rossmore Avenue to rise above two stories was 649 N. Rossmore Avenue, built on the northern end of the district in 1924. Permits were issued John S. Holmes & Co. in 1926 for the construction of Country Club Manor on the southern end of the district, directly across from the Wilshire Country Club, with Leeland A. Bryant serving as architect. The six story Chateausque style building would set the tone for the luxurious apartment district. The Tudor Revival apartment building at 601 N. Rossmore Avenue followed in 1927. A photo found at <https://martinturnbull.com/2020/04/22/looking-north-from-the-corner-of-rossmore-and-rosewood-avenues-toward-hollywood-1925-2/> shows numerous two story buildings (both apartments and single family homes) between the two extant brick apartment buildings at 649 N. Rossmore Avenue and 601 N. Rossmore Avenue, as well as on the northeast corner of Rossmore Avenue and Rosewood Avenue. The last of these left standing was the 1922 apartment building at 617 N. Rossmore Avenue, which was demolished in 2022.

1928 saw the construction of the most prominent landmark in the district, the apartment tower that would eventually be known as the El Royale. Permits were granted to the Barco Investment Company with William Douglass Lee serving as architect. Actor and mob associate George Raft was a famous

4 Excerpted and adapted from National Register of Historic Places. Miracle Mile Apartments Historic District. Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California. SG100008438.

5 Curran, Brian. "Citrus Square: paradise planned next to Hancock Park." *Larchmont Chronicle*, 2 March 2023.

6 Brightwell, Eric. "Exploring Hancock Park," *California Fool's Gold*, <https://ericbrightwell.com/2015/05/28/california-fools-gold-exploring-hancock-park/>, 2015.

resident of one of the building's penthouses.<sup>7</sup> In 1929, architect Leonard Lymon Jones' Spanish Colonial Revival style Hermoyne Apartments opened on the west side of Rossmore Avenue. Financier Maurice Feigenbaum was issued permits in 1930 for the construction of the Ravenswood Apartments across the street from The Hermoyne, with Max Maltzman serving as architect. Hollywood star Clark Gable resided at the Ravenswood with his wife Ria Langham according to a 1931 Los Angeles Times article.<sup>8</sup> Paramount Pictures provided actress and sex symbol Mae West with accommodations at the Ravenswood in 1932, with the studio furnishing her apartment.<sup>9</sup>

Permits were issued to owner Harry Feigenbaum for the construction of an apartment tower at 410 N. Rossmore Avenue in 1930. Only four floors of Max Maltzman's design for what was known as the "Beverly-Rossmore" were completed, and the building was eventually completed as a simpler five story building in 1940 by the Army Corps of Engineers.<sup>10</sup>

In 1934, actor Jack Haley commissioned architect Milton J. Black, who had recently designed the Chateausque style Chateau Rossmore on the other side of the street, to design an apartment building at 520 N. Rossmore Avenue. It is likely that the Streamline Moderne building was named after the Cunard-White Star Line's *Mauretania*, which was under construction at the time.<sup>11</sup> 590 N. Rossmore Avenue from 1937 also makes use of the Streamline Moderne style. The 1930s and 1940s saw the construction of two story apartment buildings north and south of The Hermoyne. A hotel was built on the southwest corner of Rossmore Avenue and Rosewood Avenue in 1948. A postcard found at <https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/search/commonwealth:2n49tg886> refers to this as the Country Club Hotel. The description accompanying a 1950 photo from the Herald Examiner Collection found at <https://tessa2.lapl.org/digital/collection/photos/id/21355/rec/2> says that the hotel was ordered to be demolished due to building code violations, but satellite photography shows that it would not be demolished until the 21st century. Other names for the hotel included the Casablanca, and the Hollywood Algiers Hotel.<sup>12</sup>

The large empty lots on the northwest corner of Rossmore Avenue and Rosewood Avenue were developed with Rossmore Gardens in 1956, and the Majorca Apartments in 1960. The 1980s saw most of the remaining small apartment buildings and single family homes demolished to make way for larger development. In 1986, the rooftop sign of the El Royale was lit up again after being dark since the early 1970s. Writing for the Los Angeles Times, Zan Thompson described it like so: "...the sky lit up a mouth-watering pistachio green that could be seen for a radius of 10 miles and from the Santa Monica and Hollywood freeways."<sup>13</sup>

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7 Meares, Hadley. "The story of the El Royale, LA's most glamorous apartment building." *Curbed Los Angeles*, <https://la.curbed.com/2015/6/2/9954274/el-royale-apartments-history-celebrities>, 2 June 2015.

8 "Actor and Mrs. Gable Remarried." *Los Angeles Times*, 20 June 1931.

9 Mallory, Mary. "Mary Mallory / Hollywood Heights: Ravenswood Apartments Attract the Stylish." *The Daily Mirror*. <https://ladailymirror.com/2014/11/10/mary-mallory-hollywood-heights-ravenswood-apartments-attract-the-stylish/>.

10 Taylor, Billy. "Developer Buys Building with History of Design Changes," *Larchmont Chronicle*, February 2020.

11 Lombard, Patricia. "A Rossmore Treasure — The Mauretania Apartments at 520 – 522 N. Rossmore Avenue." *Larchmont Buzz*, 29 May 2022.

12 Harnisch, Larry. "Silk-Stocking Slayer." *The Daily Mirror*, [https://ladailymirror.com/2007/04/06/silkstocking\\_sl/](https://ladailymirror.com/2007/04/06/silkstocking_sl/), 6 April 2007.

13 Thompson, Zan. "Lights Go On Again All Over El Royale." *Los Angeles Times*, 24 August 1986.

## Development and History of the Hermoyne

Owner H.B. Squires was issued permits for the construction of the building on February 9, 1929, with Leonard Jones listed as architect, and H. Miller listed as contractor. At opening, the building featured an indoor heated swimming pool and a private gymnasium with sun-bath booths on the roof.<sup>14</sup> It is unknown whether the indoor pool still exists, but in 1950, an outdoor pool was built on the grounds. Permits were issued to fill-in the outdoor pool in 1983, but the work was not actually done. A classified ad from 1931 points out the maid service, garage, tennis court, swimming pool, and gymnasium.<sup>15</sup> Famous actor Al Jolson, who starred in *The Jazz Singer*, the first “talkie” from 1927, lived in the building in the 1930s.<sup>16</sup> Actress Estelle Taylor also lived at the Hermoyne during her separation from boxer Jack Dempsey in 1930.<sup>17</sup> The Hermoyne was one of the Pacific States Savings & Loan Co. (owners since at least 1932 according to permits) that was taken over by the State Building and Loan Commissioner in 1939.<sup>18</sup> The management of the company had been accused of freezing out depositors by injurious practices.<sup>19</sup> A permit from 1936 lists the owners Allied Properties. It is unknown if Allied was associated with Pacific States. Other names that appear on permits are J.L. Vitz (1947), Sequoia Invest Corp (1974), James Fineberg (1975), and William Graham (1982).

## Leonard Lymon Jones<sup>20</sup>

Leonard Lymon Jones, had been working in Los Angeles since 1912, when he came to Los Angeles from San Francisco. He and his wife, Gladys, were married in Blackfoot, Idaho on May 24, 1906, but the marriage ended in a rather colorful divorce almost eight years later. Jones himself was native of Meeker County, Minnesota, Born on October 24, 1881. In 1900, he was a 19 year old farm laborer in Buckhorn, Colorado, yet a decade later, he was an architect in San Francisco. After moving to Los Angeles, he was designing apartment buildings and hotels, but ran into another glitch when he was fined for practicing architecture without a license in 1915. After resolving that issue, he was to retain his architectural practice until his death on September 2, 1947 at the age of 66. His portfolio included several hotels and at least one small movie theater at West Adams Boulevard and Calais.

## Spanish Colonial Revival<sup>21</sup>

Influential in the spread of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture were the Spanish-style buildings at

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14 Mallory, Mary. "Mary Mallory / Hollywood Heights: Hermoyne Apartments, Regal Dowager on Rossmore Avenue." *The Daily Mirror*. <https://ladailymirror.com/2019/07/08/mary-mallory-hollywood-heights-hermoyne-apartments-regal-dowager-on-rossmore-avenue/>.

15 Advertisement for The Hermoyne. *Los Angeles Times*, 27 May 1931.

16 Famous actor Al Jolson, who starred in *The Jazz Singer*, the first “talkie” from 1927, lived in the building in the 1930s.

17 Mallory, Mary. "Mary Mallory / Hollywood Heights: Hermoyne Apartments, Regal Dowager on Rossmore Avenue." *The Daily Mirror*. <https://ladailymirror.com/2019/07/08/mary-mallory-hollywood-heights-hermoyne-apartments-regal-dowager-on-rossmore-avenue/>.

18 “Staffs of Hotels Here to Remain.” *Los Angeles Times*, 7 March 1939.

19 “Pacific States Operations Here to be Looked Into.” *Los Angeles Times*, 19 April 1939.

20 Excerpted from Fisher, Charles J. "Norton Flats Case No. CHC-2017-136-HCM." Edited by Los Angeles Department of City Planning. Los Angeles: City of Los Angeles, 2017.

21 Excerpted and adapted from City of Los Angeles. "Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement Context: Architecture and Engineering, 1850-1980 Theme: Mediterranean & Indigenous Revival Architecture, 1893-1948," ed. Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources, SurveyLA, 2018.

the 1915 Panama California Exposition in San Diego, designed by Bertram Goodhue and Carleton Winslow, Sr. Character defining features of the style include: asymmetrical horizontal assemblages of building masses, stucco exterior walls, low sloped clay tile roofs, distinctively shaped and capped chimneys, arched openings sometimes arranged in arcades, towers used as vertical accents, patios, courtyards, loggias, cast iron grilles over windows and other wall openings, clay tile attic vents.

Advancing the Spanish Colonial Revival were publications by architects who had studied the historic structures of Mexico and the Mediterranean, in particular that of Andalusia. Typical was *Architectural Details: Spain and the Mediterranean*, published in 1926 by Richard Requa. It stressed the appropriateness of Mediterranean form for a climate such as Southern California and called out the elements of the style. In addition to expanses of unbroken white or pastel-colored walls and low-sloped red tile roofs, Requa noted the importance of enclosed outdoor spaces and the need for details such as wrought iron for balconies and for rejas, or window grilles.

The Spanish Colonial became ubiquitous in 1920s Los Angeles. Most every building type made use of it, employing all forms of construction –wood frame, brick masonry, reinforced concrete, even adobe. Because of the stress on picturesquely assembled masses, the Spanish Colonial Revival was extremely flexible. It could vary in scale and use. Its only limitation was that it worked best in stand-alone buildings, where its three-dimensional nature could be shown. It was less successful as part of a dense streetscape, tight against neighboring buildings. For that it often employed a variation, the Churrigueresque style.

The Spanish Colonial Revival was useful for multi-family housing. Picturesquely assembled massing together with flexible stucco-on-wood-frame construction made it adaptable to a variety of sizes and site conditions. The style was popular for duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes as well as auto-oriented bungalow courts and traditional urban apartment houses. It also led to a new multi-family building type, the courtyard apartment building. An example of a large apartment house is the Villa Carlotta of 1926 (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 315). It is located at 5959 Franklin Avenue in Hollywood and was designed by Arthur E. Harvey. Construction is brick masonry with a stucco finish. Urban apartment buildings like the Villa Carlotta fit the Spanish Colonial Revival style less comfortably than smaller multi-family forms. By its nature the urban apartment house is a single, large undifferentiated block, with regular fenestration and a thick shape that best suited a parapeted flat roof. The Carlotta deals with this dilemma by treating the façade as several separate buildings, each with its own roof form and pattern of window openings.

The Hermoyne Apartments can be identified as an excellent example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style by looking at the low sloped clay tile roof, stucco cladding, and arched openings.

### **Period of Significance**

The period of significance for the Hermoyne Apartments is defined as 1929 for its significance as a Spanish Colonial Revival apartment building.

## **Integrity**

The Hermoyne Apartments retains a high degree of integrity, and is mostly unaltered.

**Location:** The subject property is in its original location and therefore retains this aspect of integrity.

**Design:** The subject property retains most of its character-defining features from its period of construction, including its stucco cladding, clay tile roof, and arched openings, and therefore is able to convey its historic significance as a Spanish Colonial Revival multi-family residential building. The building's overall massing, configuration, and character-defining decorative elements remain. Therefore, the building retains integrity of design.

**Setting:** The property is located in Hancock Park, and is surrounded by other residential buildings. While more recent development has occurred on the block, the prominence of the building in its original location remains. The building retains integrity of setting.

**Materials:** Minor alterations have minimally affected the building's integrity of materials. The property retains the majority of its materials from its initial construction, therefore this element of integrity remains intact.

**Workmanship:** The building's original workmanship is still evident through its overall construction methods and materials. The building retains this element of integrity.

**Feeling:** The original character-defining features still remain, presenting the same basic appearance from the street as when it was built. No major alterations have occurred. The building retains integrity of feeling.

**Association:** The property has been continuously used as a multi-family residence since its construction in 1929. It is just as recognizable today as a 1920's Spanish Colonial multi-family building that is directly linked with this period of development in Hancock Park. Therefore, it retains integrity of association.

## Bibliography

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## **PERMIT HISTORY**

1929 – arrange 2 apartments on 7 floor to one apartment of 5 rooms

1929 – automatic sprinkler system

1932 – recover sidewalk canopy

1936 – recover awnings

1938 – remove existing entrance doors, install new metal door in existing frame. Cover existing frame with metal and install glass block sidelights in existing sidelight openings. Raise height of basement [illegible] walls on outside of building 3' to prevent storm water from entering basement

1950 – swimming pool

1974 – fire safety ordinance corrective work

1975 – 1 hr. tee-bar suspended ceilings in corridors

1982 – solar heater

1983 – create 19 light housekeeping rooms

1983 – fill swimming pool for parking lot

1983 – engineering calculations for structural support of solar panels on flat roof

1986 – comply with dorothy mae ordinance

1986 – create 1 light housekeeping room

2004 – remove and replace existing cmu block wall

2018 – new one story 10'x20' detached patio trellis

2018 – replaster pool and re-locate pool equipment

2018 – install led retrofit kits in common areas floors 1-8

2018 – remove and replace steam heating boiler

2019 – repair and waterproof existing structural slab at courtyard of (e) apartment building

2021 – renovation to an (e) courtyard, new guard rails & planter walls



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2022 - reroof