

Appendix D

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Historic Resources Report



# HISTORICAL RESOURCES TECHNICAL REPORT

## Wyvernwood Apartments



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this technical report is to determine if historic resources as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) are located within the Wyvernwood property and, if so, to identify potential impacts to historic resources caused by the proposed Boyle Heights Mixed Use project (“the Project”). This report is intended to inform environmental review of the proposed Project.

Under CEQA the potential impacts of a project on historic resources must be considered. The purpose of CEQA is to evaluate whether a proposed project may have a significant adverse effect on the environment and, if so, if that effect can be reduced or eliminated by pursuing an alternative course of action or through mitigation measures.

The impacts of a project on an historic resource may be considered an environmental impact. To wit:

*A project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historic resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment.<sup>1</sup>*

Thus, an evaluation of project impacts under CEQA requires a two-part inquiry: (1) a determination of whether the project site contains or is adjacent to a historically significant resource or resources, and if so, (2) a determination of whether the proposed project will result in a “substantial adverse change” in the significance of the resource or resources. This report investigates the proposed Project Site to determine if historic resources exist either within or adjacent to its boundaries and analyzes project impacts for any adverse change in the significance of such resources.

This report contains:

- A review of the existing conditions on the Project site.
- A review of the history of the Project site and its physical development.
- A review of previous evaluation of historic resources on the Project site as well as previous designation as an historic resource.
- Review of the required consideration of historic resources under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- Analysis of potential adverse effects of the proposed Project to historic resources.

This report was prepared using primary and secondary sources related to the Project site’s development history and status as an historic resource. Sources included the Los Angeles Public Library Online California Index and Photo Database, the California Office of Historic Preservation, the City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources, and the Historic Resources Group Archives and Library. Materials included previous environmental reviews, documentation of historic status, photographs, and maps. Published sources focusing on urban history and planning theory were also consulted, as well as materials relating to federal, state, and local historic preservation designations.

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<sup>1</sup> California PRC, Section 21084.1.

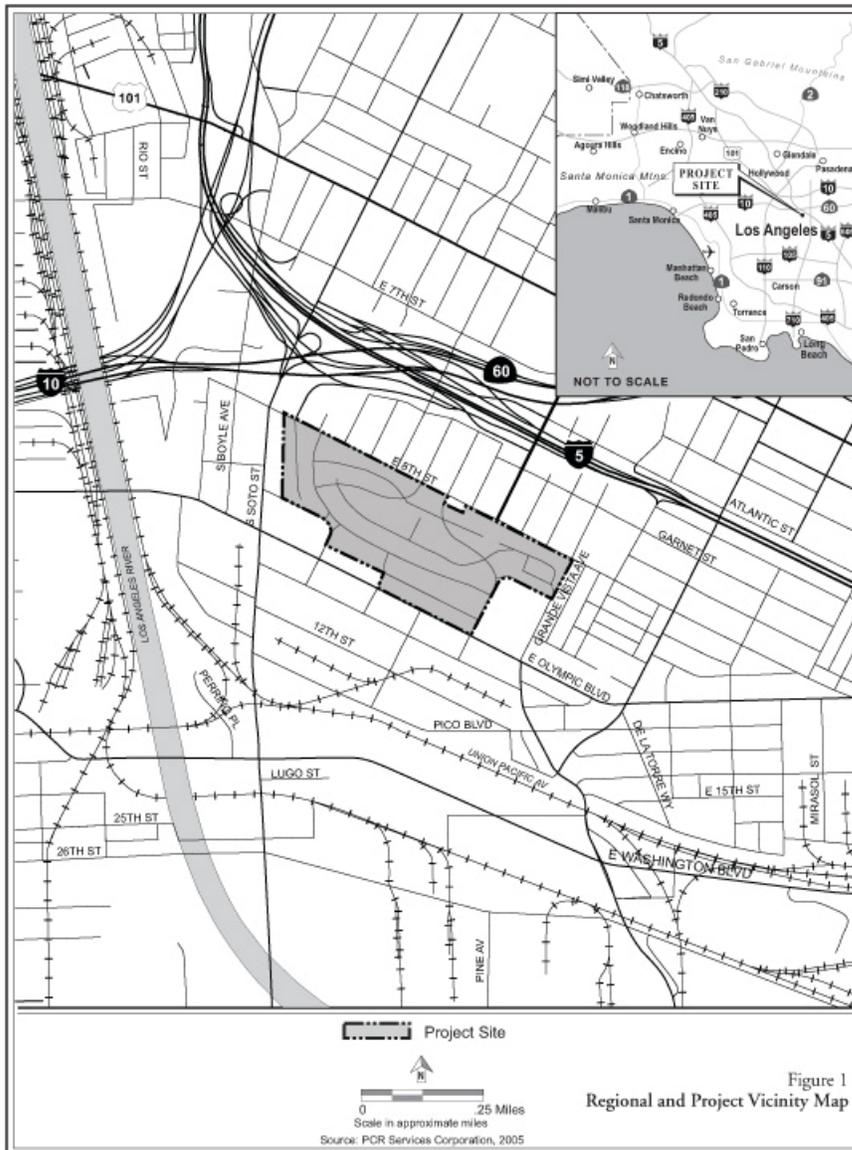
The research listed above informed the development of a historic context statement summarizing the site's development history, important people and events, and significant physical changes to the property. Field inspections of the Project site were conducted to understand the existing condition of the site and assess the integrity of historic buildings and landscapes. Analysis focuses on the spatial organization, community spaces, landscape characteristics, and exterior architectural features, of the Wyvernwood Apartment complex.

Research, field inspection, and analysis were performed by Christy Johnson McAvoy, Principal; Alison Rose Jefferson, Historian; Paul Travis, Senior Preservation Planner, and Stephanie Frank, Associate Historian. All four are qualified professionals who meet or exceed the *Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards*.

## 2.0 PROPOSED PROJECT

### 2.1 Project Location

The project site is located on a 68.8-acre tract of land near the intersection of Olympic Boulevard and Soto Street two miles east of downtown Los Angeles. The tract extends north from Olympic Boulevard to 8th Street and East from Soto Street to Grande Vista Street. The gridiron street pattern of the surrounding neighborhood comes to a halt at these borders, with access to the interior of the project limited to three points on the north and south and one on the east. Circulation within the project is provided by an internal system of streets, alleys, and pedestrian lanes. The Project site does not include the commercial properties on Soto Street or Olympic Boulevard or the municipal playground and elementary school on Grande Vista.



**Figure 1: Project Site Location**  
Provided by PCR Associates

The Project site is currently developed with apartment units, accessory structures, and landscaped common spaces referred to as the Wyvernwood Garden Apartments. The site also includes a 12-unit apartment building that was not part of the original Wyvernwood complex. The project site contains 256 buildings in total that provide 1,187 dwelling units and spaces for garage, laundry, and other related uses. Buildings are arranged along an internal network of streets and pedestrian paths.

Approximately nine (9) acres of the site are dedicated to open space areas that include lawns and mature trees, with the largest open space area located within central portion of the site. An open grassy drainage channel also runs across the central portion of the site in a generally east to west direction. The topography of the site is generally flat, with a gradual slope of 65 feet from the northwestern corner to the southeastern edge of the site.

### **2.3 Project Description<sup>2</sup>**

The proposed project would replace existing development with considerable new housing that would include rental units and increased homeownership opportunities, complemented by neighborhood-serving retail and office space, civic uses, green/open space, and amenities. Specifically, the project would include up to 4,400 residential units comprised of no less than 1,200 rental units and up to 3,200 condominium units, and 325,000 square feet of neighborhood-serving retail, office, and civic uses. Table 1 below illustrates the breakdown of the proposed project.

Upon completion of the project, there would be no net loss of rental housing units within the project site as compared to current conditions. In addition, the project would include a civic plaza, an expansive central park, active parks, neighborhood greens, neighborhood playgrounds, and landscaped courtyards and pathways. The green space and recreational amenities would include approximately 10 acres of privately maintained, publicly available, common useable open space and parks. The courtyards, plazas, and open spaces accessible to project residents would comprise an additional 11 acres of open space amenities. Overall, the project is intended to provide a walkable, community appealing to a wide variety of residents, with modern amenities and a high-quality design that promotes sustainability.

As shown in the Conceptual Site Plan (Figure 2), new buildings would be sited around landscaped courtyards and open space areas that would form a strong organizing feature for the site. Landscaped pathways creating linkages between the buildings on-site would be provided throughout the property to integrate the various project elements and foster a pedestrian-friendly environment. A series of parks and tree-lined streets would also create physical and visual continuity throughout the site.

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<sup>2</sup> This project description has been excerpted from material provided by Fifteen Group Land & Development, LLC on September 16, 2009 .

**Table 1**  
**Proposed Project Development**

Land Use	Floor Area/Units
<b>Residential Uses</b>	
For Sale Units	Up to 3,200 Units
Rental Units	No less than 1,200 Units
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>4,400 units</b>
Maximum Building Area	5,800,000 sq. ft.
<b>Office/Retail Uses</b>	
Office	0 – 150,000 sq. ft.
Medical Office	0 – 25,000 sq. ft. <sup>a</sup>
Neighborhood Retail	0 – 200,000 sq. ft.
<b>Maximum Aggregate Total</b>	<b>300,000 sq. ft.</b>
<b>Civic Uses</b>	
Total Maximum Space	25,000 sq. ft.
<b>Total Project Development</b>	<b>6,125,000 sq. ft.</b>

<sup>a</sup> As a component of the maximum 150,000 square feet of office space.

Source: Fifteen Group Land and Development, 2009.

The majority of the new buildings would range in height from two to seven stories (approximately 24 feet to 75 feet). In addition, up to three buildings could be as tall as 18 stories (approximately 200 feet), and up to three buildings could be as tall as 24 stories (approximately 260 feet). Per the Specific Plan and associated zone change proposed as part of the project (discussed further below), new height districts would be created to limit building heights along the northern and northeastern edges of the project site, closest to adjacent low density residential uses. These transitional height zones would consist of a 45-foot height limit (Height District 1VL) along the site perimeter and extending a distance of 70 feet into the site interior, with an adjoining 75-foot height zone (Height District 1L) extending an additional 65 feet into the site interior (i.e., from 70 feet to 135 feet, as measured from the site boundary). Unlimited building heights (Height District 1) would be permitted throughout the remainder of the site. The creation of these transitional height zones would maintain low- and mid-rise buildings in the northern and northeastern areas of the site and concentrate the tallest structures furthest from nearby low-rise residences, resulting in a sensitive project design that promotes visual compatibility with off-site uses.

## 3.0 REGULATORY REVIEW

### 3.1 Historical Resources under CEQA

A resource is considered historically significant, and therefore an “historical resource” under CEQA, if it falls into one of the three following categories as defined by Section 21084.1 of the California Public Resources Code:

- *Mandatory historical resources* are resources “listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources.”
- *Presumptive historical resources* are resources “included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in subdivision (k) of Section 5020.1, or deemed significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (g) of Section 5024.1” of the Public Resources Code, unless the preponderance of the evidence demonstrates that the resource is not historically or culturally significant.
- *Discretionary historical resources* are those resources that are not listed but determined to be eligible under the criteria for the California Register of Historical Resources.<sup>3</sup>

The fact that a resource is not listed in, or determined eligible for listing in, the California Register, not included in a local register of historical resources, or not deemed significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (g) of Section 5024.1, does not preclude a lead agency from determining that the resource may be an “historical resource” for purposes of CEQA.

Properties formally determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) are automatically listed in the California Register.<sup>4</sup> Properties designated by local municipalities can also be considered historical resources. A review of properties that are potentially affected by a project for historic eligibility is also required under CEQA.

### 3.2 Historic Designations

A property may be designated as historic by National, State, and local authorities. In order for a building to qualify for listing in the National Register or the California Register, it must meet one or more identified criteria of significance. The property must also retain sufficient integrity to continue to evoke the sense of place and time with which it is historically associated.

#### ***National Register of Historic Places***

The National Register is “an authoritative guide to be used by Federal, State, and local governments, private groups and citizens to identify the Nation's cultural resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment.”<sup>5</sup> The National Park Service administers the National

<sup>3</sup> California PRC, Section 21084.1.

<sup>4</sup> California PRC, Section 5024.1(c).

<sup>5</sup> 36 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 60.2.

Register program. Listing in the National Register assists in preservation of historic properties in several ways including: recognition that a property is of significance to the nation, the state, or the community; consideration in the planning for federal or federally assisted projects; eligibility for federal tax benefits; and qualification for Federal assistance for historic preservation, when funds are available.

To be eligible for listing and/or be listed in the National Register, a resource must possess significance in American history and culture, architecture, or archaeology. Listing in the National Register is primarily honorary and does not in and of itself provide protection of an historical resource. The primary effect of listing in the National Register on private owners of historic buildings is the availability of financial and tax incentives. In addition, for projects that receive Federal funding, a review process must be completed in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Furthermore, state and local regulations may apply to properties listed in the National Register.

The criteria for listing in the National Register follow established guidelines for determining the significance of properties. The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects:

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to meeting any or all of the criteria listed above, properties nominated must also possess historic *integrity*. Historic integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance and is defined as the “authenticity of a property’s historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property’s... historic period.”<sup>7</sup> The National Park Service defines seven aspects of integrity: *location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association*.

### ***Period of Significance***

The National Park Service defines the period of significance as “the length of time when a property was associated with important events, activities or persons, or attained the characteristics which qualify it for... listing” in National, State or local registers. A period of significance can be “as brief as a single year... [or] span many years.” It is based on “specific events directly related to the significance of the

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<sup>6</sup> 36 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 60.4.

<sup>7</sup> *National Register Bulletin 16. How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*. Washington D.C.: National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior, 1997. p. 4.

property," for example the date of construction, years of ownership, or length of operation as a particular entity.<sup>8</sup>

### ***Historic Districts***

Standard preservation practice evaluates collections of buildings from similar time periods and historic contexts as historic *districts*. The National Park Service defines an historic district as "a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development."<sup>9</sup>

An historic district derives its significance as a single unified entity. The National Park Service guidelines continue:

*"The identity of a district results from the interrelationship of its resources, which can convey a visual sense of the overall historic environment or be an arrangement of historically or functionally related properties".<sup>10</sup>*

Resources that have been found to contribute to the historic identity of a district are referred to as *district contributors*. Properties located within the district boundaries that do not contribute to its significance are identified as *non-contributors*.

### ***California Register of Historical Resources***

The California Register is an authoritative guide used by State and local agencies, private groups, and citizens to identify the State's historical resources and to indicate what properties are to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse change.<sup>11</sup>

The criteria for eligibility for listing in the California Register are based upon National Register criteria. These criteria are:

1. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.
2. Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history.
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values.
4. Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

The California Register consists of resources that are listed automatically and those that must be nominated through an application and public hearing process. The California Register includes the following:

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<sup>8</sup> *National Register Bulletin 16A. How to Complete the National Register Registration Form.* Washington D.C.: National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior, 1997. p. 42.

<sup>9</sup> *National Register Bulletin 15. How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.* Washington D.C.: National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior, 1997. p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> California PRC, Section 5024.1(a).

- California properties formally determined eligible for, or listed in, the National Register.
- State Historical Landmarks No. 770 and all consecutively numbered state historical landmarks following No. 770. For State Historical Landmarks preceding No. 770, the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) shall review their eligibility for the California Register in accordance with procedures to be adopted by the State Historical Resources Commission (Commission).
- Points of Historical Interest which have been reviewed by the OHP and recommended for listing by the Commission for inclusion in the California Register in accordance with criteria adopted by the Commission.<sup>12</sup>

Other resources which may be nominated for listing in the California Register include:

- Individual historical resources.
- Historical resources contributing to the significance of an historic district under criteria adopted by the Commission.
- Historical resources identified as significant in historical resources surveys, if the survey meets the criteria listed in subdivision (g).
- Historical resources and historic districts designated or listed as city or county landmarks or historic properties or districts pursuant to any city or county ordinance, if the criteria for designation or listing under the ordinance have been determined by the office to be consistent with California Register criteria.
- Local landmarks or historic properties designated under any municipal or county ordinance.<sup>13</sup>

### **Historic Resources Inventory: OHP Survey**

Previously evaluated resources are numerically categorized in a system developed by the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). The evaluation instructions and classification system are proscribed by OHP in its *Instructions for Recording Historical Resources* and provides a three-digit evaluation code for use in classifying potential historic resources. In 2003, the codes were revised to address the California Register. The first digit indicates the general category of evaluation. The second digit is a letter code to indicate whether the resource is separately eligible (S), eligible as part of a district (D), or both (B). The third digit is a number, which is coded to describe some of the circumstances or conditions of the evaluation. The general evaluation categories are as follows:

1. Listed in the National Register or the California Register.
2. Determined eligible for listing in the National Register or the California Register.

<sup>12</sup> California PRC, Section 5024.1(d).

<sup>13</sup> California PRC, Section 5024.1(e).

3. Appears eligible for listing in the National Register or the California Register through survey evaluation.
4. Appears eligible for listing in the National Register or the California Register through other evaluation.
5. Recognized as historically significant by local government.
6. Not eligible for listing or designation as specified.
7. Not evaluated or needs reevaluation.

### ***Local Designation Programs***

The Los Angeles City Council designates Historic-Cultural Monuments on the recommendation of the City's Cultural Heritage Commission. Section 22.171.7 of the City of Los Angeles Administrative Code defines an historical or cultural monument as:

*"[A]ny 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, including historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified; or which is identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history; or which embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period, style or method of construction; or a notable work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age."*

Designation recognizes the unique historical, cultural, or architectural value of certain structures and helps to protect their distinctive qualities. Any interested individual or group may submit nominations for Historic-Cultural Monument status. Buildings may be eligible for historical cultural monument status if they meet the criteria in the Cultural Heritage Ordinance and retain their historic design characteristics and materials.

## 4.0 HISTORIC CONTEXT

### 4.1 Large-Scale Garden Apartment Communities

The Wyvernwood Apartment complex is an early example of a large-scale Garden Apartment community. Employing urban planning and design concepts from the British and American Garden City movements, European Modernism, and New Deal Era social concerns, large-scale Garden Apartments represent a radical innovation in the development of American multi-family housing and urban planning that has remained influential to the present day.

Garden Apartments can be understood as a product of the social and design theories that developed in response to the density, crowding, and pollution associated with large industrial cities and the plight of the working class forced to live in those conditions. Predicated on the belief that access to fresh air, abundant light, and natural open space was essential to human health and well-being, the Garden Apartment was designed as a clean and healthy oasis removed from the filth and chaos of urban congestion.

In the Los Angeles area, Garden Apartments were developed by both public and private entities and varied in acreage, the number of dwelling units, and site plan designs. Although they vary in size and individual design characteristics, all-large scale Garden Apartment complexes share several common characteristics. Land parcels were assembled into large superblocks that were disassociated from the surrounding urban fabric to create a sense of enclosure and privacy. Internal circulation systems intentionally broke with the urban street pattern, limiting automobile traffic and further reinforcing the separation from the city. Design plans incorporated multi-family living arrangements with reduced building coverage of the site providing every resident with easy access to green park-like spaces. Common space was emphasized over private space in order to foster social interaction among the residents. Other innovations existed in the site planning. By eliminating the street grid and the traditional lot pattern, architects could arrange the buildings in these complexes in new ways. The designs often featured U-shaped or L-shaped plans and arrangements that created interior courtyards and oriented the buildings away from the street.

#### ***The Radburn Plan***

American city planning, which grew out of municipal reform efforts at the end of the nineteenth century, was still a newly developing field when construction began on the community of Radburn, New Jersey in 1928. Meticulously planned by members of the influential Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA), Radburn would become a powerful model for the design and planning of new American communities.<sup>14</sup>

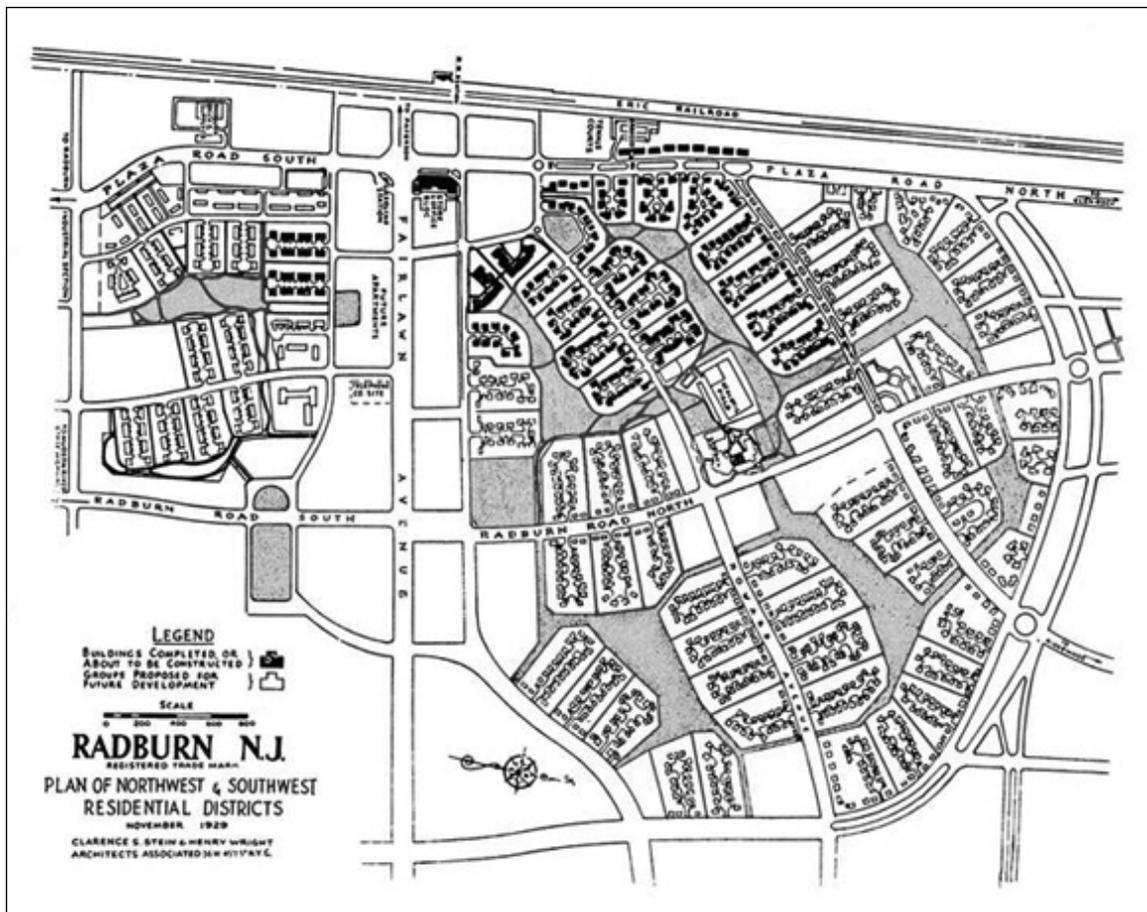
Located in Bergen County New Jersey, Radburn was envisioned as a self-sustaining community organized around park-like public green spaces and the complete separation of auto and pedestrian traffic. The Radburn plan was developed by a

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<sup>14</sup> Eugenie Ladner Birch, "Radburn and the American Planning Movement: The Persistence of an Idea," in *City and Regional Planning Departmental Papers* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1980), 123. Online at <[http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1030&context=cplan\\_papers](http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1030&context=cplan_papers)>.

multi-disciplinary team of architects, engineers, economists and sociologists, reflecting the membership of the RPAA which was founded in 1923. Architects Clarence Stein and Henry Wright, and landscape architect Marjorie Sewell Cautley, are credited with its design. At Radburn the RPAA hoped to illustrate the benefits of a team-oriented approach, particularly the benefits of applying social-scientific research to questions of physical design.

The Radburn plan imposed a strict hierarchy of arterial roads, through streets, and pedestrian pathways. Rather than subdividing a large area of vacant land using a traditional grid street pattern, Radburn introduced the concept of the residential "superblock" whereby curvilinear streets form large, irregularly shaped blocks not traversed by through streets. Radburn is also credited with incorporating some of the earliest cul-de-sacs in the United States. The plan placed great emphasis on common areas and an extensive interior park system, reducing the need for larger parcels of individual private land.



**Figure 2: Radburn Plan 1929**  
Radburn Community Website

Radburn ultimately included single-family homes, duplexes, town homes, semi-attached houses, a 93-unit apartment building, a commercial center, and an elementary school. Planned as a self-contained "new town," Radburn was only partially built—with housing for 3,000 instead of 30,000—and did not realize all of its

founders' goals.<sup>15</sup> Instead, Radburn came to be regarded as a demonstration project, an example of how new ideas in land use planning, neighborhood theory, and transportation could be put into practice.

Members of the RPAA such as Clarence Stein, Henry Wright, Lewis Mumford, Catherine Bauer, Charles Ascher, Edith Elmer Wood, Russell Van Nest Black, Harold Buttenheim, and Thomas Adams promoted Radburn extensively. As a result, Radburn was highly regarded and often cited as a model application of new, modern concepts in community planning and design. As such, the development of Radburn came at what has been described by planning academic Eugenie L. Birch as a "critical juncture in the history of American city planning." Birch explains

*The American planning movement experienced a deep change in the thirties. The focus of its activity changed from local to national as New Deal programs undertook slum clearance, new town and public housing construction, mortgage insurance, and national planning. Also, an increased number of planners were employed directly by the public sector rather than indirectly as consultants. Along with these changes, by the end of the decade, the Radburn imprint would be on most federal housing activities. However, because of the nature of the movement's organizational developments, only parts of the Radburn plan, not the totality, would be transferred to the American landscape.<sup>16</sup>*

Thus, Radburn came to be accepted as a new model in the emerging field of urban planning. As the Great Depression worsened and the role of the federal government in the economy grew, the ideas of the RPAA were adopted by federal agencies and promulgated widely through federal regulation.

### ***The Influence of the Garden City and Modern Movements***

The concepts employed at Radburn stemmed from a variety of theoretical sources including the Garden City movement in England, its Americanization in the United States, and the development of Modern architecture in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. As a response to rapid urbanization and uncontrolled growth, the RPAA advocated the development of so called "garden cities" based on conscious, rational planning. During this period, American architects and housing activists, including several influential RPAA members, visited Europe to investigate and interpret new housing developments, many of which were planned to replace housing destroyed during World War I. As a result, the ideas of the Garden City and Modern Movements were adapted and applied to the American context.

The British theorist credited with the concept of the "garden city" is Ebenezer Howard. RPAA members Clarence Stein and Henry Wright based their plans for Radburn on many of his ideas. Howard argued in *Garden Cities of To-Morrow* in 1902 (originally published under the title *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* in 1898) that the problems of the town and the country could be overcome by the development of a new kind of settlement, "Town-Country" or the "garden city." In Howard's vision, groups of people would come together to found a garden city by establishing a limited-dividend company and buying agricultural land at the farthest

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<sup>15</sup> Birch, 128.

<sup>16</sup> Birch, 128-129.

edges of cities. Planned for 1,000 acres of land and designed to reach a size of approximately 32,000 people, the new city would be surrounded by a permanent greenbelt. When a garden city reached its limit, a new garden city would be planned a short distance away.<sup>17</sup>

In practice, Howard's ideas about the physical form of new settlements were far more influential than his ideas about economic and social reform. Although Howard himself was actively involved in the development of the garden city at Letchworth, it was Howard followers Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker who adapted his ideas and spread the Garden City movement. At New Earswick on the northern edge of York in 1902, Unwin and Parker developed a village of cottages grouped together around communal greens and pedestrian paths. They also later developed the use of the cul-de-sac and irregular curving through streets with the goal of reducing the total area devoted to streets and maximizing the area available for gardens and open space. Stein and Wright, as well as other RPAA members, studied these developments and brought Garden City concepts to the United States.

A second powerful influence on the RPAA was European Modernism and its theories regarding architectural design and housing. The RPAA focused much of their efforts in creating new kinds of settlements that offered a higher quality of life. Among RPAA members, Catherine Bauer took the lead on housing issues. Gail Radford explains that Bauer was strongly influenced by a trip to Europe in 1930:

*The trip turned out to be a pivotal experience. "What I saw in Europe in 1930 was so exciting that it transformed me from an aesthete into a housing reformer," she wrote shortly before her death over thirty years later. Architectural modernism, later reduced to simply a "style," was initially, as she encountered it, a broad idealistic movement aimed at "improving human environment in modern industrial society." The new tendencies in architecture were linked to movements to improve living standards for the whole population.*<sup>18</sup>

During her trip, Bauer spent several days in Frankfurt learning about the work of Ernst May, the city's building director. May had previously worked with Unwin on the garden city Hampstead. He adapted the garden city concepts as building director, overseeing the production of 15,000 public housing units between 1925 and 1933. He differed from Unwin, however, in his embrace of Modern architectural forms.<sup>19</sup>

After publishing an article in *Fortune* magazine about the Modernism and European housing trends, Bauer returned to Europe in 1932, studying housing development for four months. In 1934 she authored *Modern Housing*, in which she argued that European housing programs had produced not only a completely different type of shelter but a new framework for producing it. The European programs were developed primarily by non-profit organizations or the government and master-planned as component parts of larger neighborhoods, an approach that Bauer defined as the essence of "modern housing." She advocated the development of similar projects in the United States.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1988), 87-93.

<sup>18</sup> Gail Radford, *Modern Housing for America: Policy Struggles in the New Deal Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 69-70.

<sup>19</sup> Radford, 70-71.

<sup>20</sup> Radford, 75-83.

Housing reformers believed that the physical form of these communities would allow for new social forms. Children's play spaces and community buildings would allow for social and recreational activities. New social arrangements would allow for group child care. Modern technology would allow for less household work and more collective ways of living.

Housing reformers were also interested in the Modern architectural character of the new European housing developments. In the geometric forms, industrial materials, and spatial character of Modern architecture, Bauer saw the symbolic expression of a break with traditional building forms and methods. Bauer and other housing reformers were especially interested in the emphasis on light and air circulation in the new designs, a dramatic contrast with the worst tenement housing which did not allow much of either into the units. Light and air, together with hot and cold running water, an inside toilet, and a shower or small bathtub in each unit, would provide for a much healthier way of living.

Together the Garden City and Modern movements would strongly influence the development of multi-family housing in the United States, specifically the emergence of the large garden apartment complex as a property type. The primary characteristics of this property type are the unified development of the site as a superblock, segregation of automobile and pedestrian traffic, low to medium density and building coverage, a maximum of three stories in height, standardization of building types, and an emphasis on open space.

### ***Multi-Family Rental Housing in Los Angeles***

The City of Los Angeles, founded in 1781, was a relatively small village for much of its early history. Late in the nineteenth century, however, the city began a period of exponential population growth that transformed the city. The population of Los Angeles grew from 11,090 to 102,479 during the twenty-year period between 1880 and 1900. By the 1920s, the city population was approximately 576,000, making it the fifth-largest city in the United States at that time.

As the city grew, new housing forms appeared to meet the need of an increasing population. By the 1920s, a variety of multi-family rental housing types could be found in the city, including hotels and apartment hotels, duplexes and quadruplexes, subdivided houses, boarding houses, tenements, and, unique to Southern California, courtyard apartments. With perhaps the exception of the courtyard apartments, rental housing in Los Angeles followed the forms found in most other American cities.

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, however, a new form of multi-family rental housing began to emerge. Based on the principles espoused by the RPAA, and grounded in the theories of the Garden City and Modern Movements, these new developments, eventually named Garden Apartments, changed the character of multi-family residential development in Los Angeles.

Many of the early Garden Apartment developments in the Los Angeles area were funded with loan guarantees made by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The FHA was created in 1934 to insure small loans for home modernization and improvement mortgages for homes and rental housing projects. Like other housing measures of the time, the FHA was designed to stimulate the construction industry and relieve unemployment. The FHA operated like a private business. Loans were

guaranteed only when they met certain financial criteria. Houses in run-down areas and applications without sufficient funds were considered poor risks. Consequently, FHA assistance went overwhelmingly to new housing developments in the suburbs. In addition, FHA followed accepted real estate practices by refusing to insure mortgages in racially integrated neighborhoods and even warned against racial mixing.

As such, these projects funded by the FHA loan program were required to meet the rental policies of the FHA. Under Title II of the United States Housing Act and in conformity to the regulations of the FHA, the cost of renting a unit at residential developments funded by this program had to be sufficiently low to be occupied by families with “moderate” incomes. From the standpoint of occupancy at the end of the Depression and World War II, residents then described as middle class needed the assistance of the federal government to obtain affordable housing.

In addition to proscribing rental rates, the FHA required that the projects it insured meet its minimum design guidelines. The design guidelines adopted by the FHA during this period were heavily influenced by the RPAA and its advocacy of Garden City and European design precedents. FHA approved site plans called for a segregation of pedestrian and auto traffic, buildings situated around courtyards, and common open space. The existing city grid plan was replaced so that an internal curvilinear pattern could be created.

### ***Los Angeles Area Examples of Multi-Family Housing Developments***

In the Los Angeles area, Garden Apartments were developed by both public and private entities. In addition to Wyvernwood, some examples of well-known Garden Apartments properties in Los Angeles include Village Green in Baldwin Hills, Park La Brea in the Miracle Mile area, Chase Knolls in Sherman Oaks, and Lincoln Place in Venice. Development histories of these properties are briefly examined below.<sup>21</sup>

#### *Baldwin Hills Village*

Constructed in 1942, Baldwin Hills Village, today known as the Village Green, consists of ninety-four (94) buildings containing six hundred and twenty-nine (629) dwelling units on sixty-four (64) landscaped acres. The property is located just west of La Brea Avenue at Rodeo Road in the Baldwin Hills area of Los Angeles.

Prominent Los Angeles architect Reginald Johnson (1882–1952), working in association with the firm of Lewis Wilson, Edwin Merrill, and Robert Alexander were the project architects. The influential author, planner, and architect Clarence Stein (1882-1975), whose ground-breaking community design for Radburn, New Jersey epitomized American Garden City ideals, was prominently credited as a consulting architect.<sup>22</sup>

Developed as a super block, with complete segregation of autos and pedestrians, the central feature of Baldwin Hills Village is a series of three open greens. The absence of through streets allows the three large greens to dominate the central axis,

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<sup>21</sup> A detailed discussion of the Wyvernwood Garden Apartments property appears in Section 4.2, Site History: Wyvernwood.

<sup>22</sup> Dorothy Fue Wong, “Summary to the Application,” *National Historic Landmark Application for Baldwin Hills Village (Village Green)*, August 1999, 1.

creating an expansive green oasis for residents. As originally conceived, Baldwin Hills Village would provide all the important elements of daily life although child care centers, community kitchens, and the entire second phase of the project were never completed.



**Baldwin Hills Village 1941**  
*Los Angeles Public Library Collection*

In 1944, the complex was selected by the Museum of Modern Art as one of the twelve communities featured in the exhibit “Looking at Your Neighborhood.” The exhibit traveled across the country between 1944 and 1949. Also in 1944, an article about Baldwin Hills Village written by Lewis Mumford and Catherine Bauer was published in the magazine *Pencil Points*, praising the complex as a model of modern housing development.<sup>23</sup>

Baldwin Hills Village (Village Green) has been designated a National Historic Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

#### *Park La Brea*

Located in the Miracle Mile section of Los Angeles, Park La Brea opened in 1944 and is one of seven large multi-family garden apartment complexes built by Metropolitan Life Insurance (MetLife) between 1948 and 1952.<sup>24</sup> The site plan for Park LaBrea is strongly oriented to automobiles with streets running throughout the complex.

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<sup>23</sup> Wong, 15.

<sup>24</sup> Other MetLife apartment complexes that survive today include Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village in Manhattan, Parkchester in the Bronx, Parkfairfax in Alexandria, Virginia, and Park Merced in San Francisco.

Breaking with the grid pattern of the surrounding area, Park La Brea is defined by diagonal streets and traffic circles that form a series of wedge or pie-shaped blocks.



**Park La Brea c. 1950**  
*Dick Whittington photographer*  
*University of Southern California Collection*

Designed by Los Angeles architects Gordon Kaufman and J.E. Stanton, Park La Brea was originally designed as two-story townhouse blocks arranged around common green spaces. Metropolitan Life modified its plans in 1948, deciding instead to build 18 high-rise towers on the eastern half of the site. The x-shaped towers, inspired by the planning and design theories of Swiss architect Le Corbusier, were completed in 1952.

#### *Chase Knolls*

Located in Sherman Oaks, the Chase Knolls Apartment complex includes 260 dwelling units sited on 15 landscaped acres. It was developed in 1949 by John Chase on the site of the Chase family's dairy farm, and was intended to provide reasonably priced housing for returning World War II veterans.

Chase Knolls was designed by the architects Heth Wharton (1892-1958) and Ralph Vaughn (1907-2000). Ralph Vaughn is better known as an African-American designer who worked with famed architect Paul Williams on a number of important projects,

including the MCA Building, Saks Fifth Avenue in Beverly Hills, and residences for many Hollywood celebrities. Vaughn also worked as a senior set designer for MGM, working directly under Academy Award winning production designer Cedric Gibbons.

Chase Knolls was designated as a City of Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument in 2000, and is eligible for listing in the National Register at the local level of significance as an example of multi-family rental housing developed in Los Angeles.

### *Lincoln Place*

Another Wharton and Vaughn-designed project for returning World War II veterans, Lincoln Place was built between 1949 and 1951. Located in the beach community of Venice, it was originally composed of 52 apartment buildings arranged within a park-like setting on 39 acres of land. By 1951, Lincoln Place contained a total of 795 apartments.

Lincoln Place is distinguished by the special design attention given to the buildings which combine elements of Streamline Moderne and International Style architecture and create more variation among buildings than is typical of developments for lower-income residents. Lincoln Place also takes advantage of the "indoor-outdoor" design principles associated with post-War Southern California by including balconies and patios overlooking its subtropical landscaping.

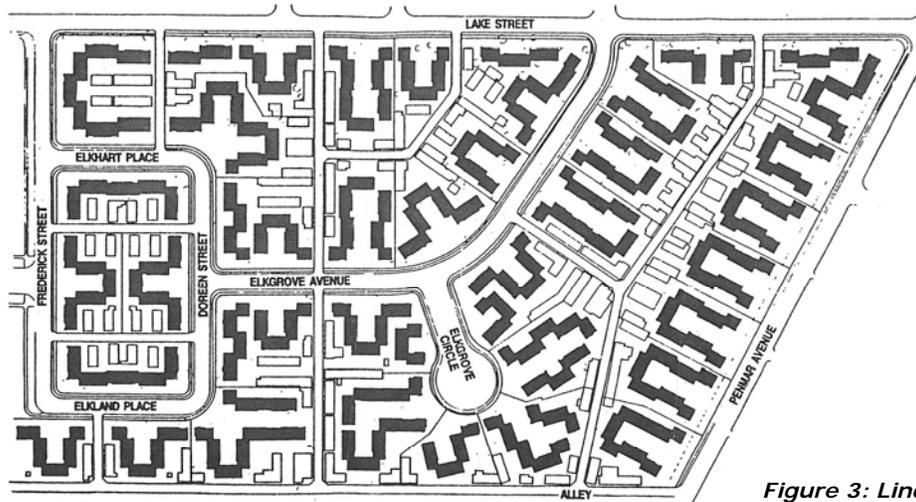


Figure 3: Lincoln Place Plan c. 1950

**LINCOLN PLACE**



In 2006, the California State Historical Resources Commission determined that Lincoln Place met California Register criteria as an enduring example of both the "garden apartment" property type and of Modernist architecture. It also found Lincoln Place to be a major and intact example of the low- and moderate-income rental housing built in Los Angeles to alleviate the severe housing shortage after World War II.

## 4.2 The Wyvernwood Garden Apartments

### *Development Background*

First among the Garden Apartment developments in Los Angeles was Wyvernwood, located in East Los Angeles and constructed from 1938 to 1941. Generally bounded by 8<sup>th</sup> Street on the north, Olympic Boulevard on the south, Grande Vista on the east, and Soto Street on the west, the property included 1,102 apartment units on approximately sixty-eight (68) acres. (Nine new buildings were added in the 1960s for a total of 1,175 units.) In addition, there are over 100 enclosed garage buildings, two single-story laundry buildings, a recreation room, a two-story leasing office, a security dispatch office, a maintenance storage room, and two maintenance workshops.

Wyvernwood was developed by the Estate of D. Herbert Hostetter. According to tax assessor records from 1909, Hostetter owned a large tract of land which included the entire block north from Olympic Boulevard to 8th Street and east from Soto Street to Grande Vista Street. The Los Angeles Unified School District acquired the parcels on the east side of the block and constructed the Dacotah Street School in 1925. Hostetter died leaving the remainder of the property undeveloped. In 1938 his estate, with Miriam G. Hostetter and Helene H. Griffith as trustees, began to plan a large multifamily housing project for the site. Witmer & Watson Architects were retained to design the project. With a \$3 million dollar loan from Bank of America, which was insured by the FHA, construction commenced in 1938. At the time, this was reportedly the largest single loan guarantee made by the FHA.<sup>25</sup>

As a result, the project was required to meet the rental policies of the FHA. Under Title II of the United States Housing Act and in conformity to the regulations of the FHA, the cost of renting a unit at Wyvernwood had to be sufficiently low to be occupied by families with incomes from \$125 to \$200 per month. The rental schedule ranged from \$30 to \$50 per month.<sup>26</sup> Articles written about the project during the period consistently described it as "low cost," however, the original promotional brochure for the project describes the rental rates as "moderate." It went on to state that "from the standpoint of occupancy, Wyvernwood is similar to any of the other better residential districts of Los Angeles... Residents include doctors, lawyers, executives in all lines of business, public officials..."<sup>27</sup> This was apparently an effort to promote a more positive image of the project. Moreover, it reveals that due to the ravages of the Great Depression, even residents who would normally be categorized as middle class needed the assistance of the federal government to provide affordable housing.

In addition, FHA followed accepted real estate practices by refusing to insure mortgages in racially integrated neighborhoods and even warned against racial mixing. The location of Wyvernwood, two miles east of downtown Los Angeles, in a traditionally ethnic neighborhood of eastern European Jewish immigrants and Mexican Americans makes it an unusual FHA project for the period.

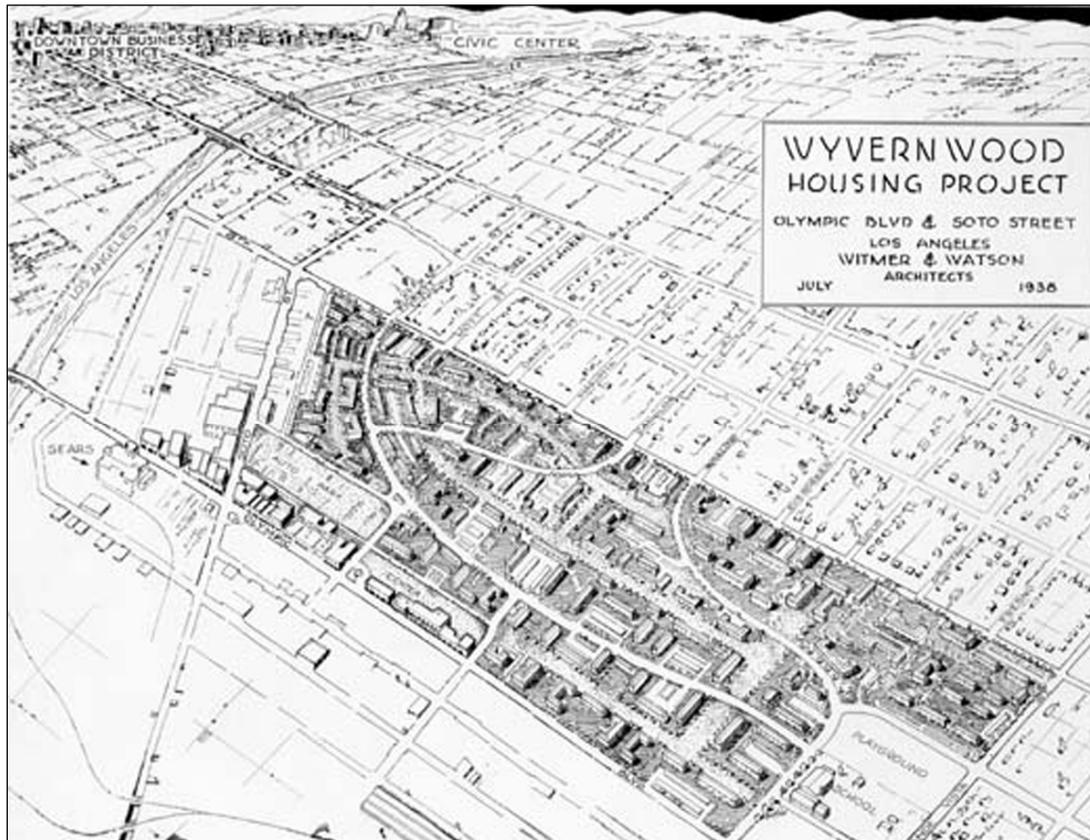
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<sup>25</sup> Harry Bennett, "Wyvernwood and Its Rental Policies," *Insured Mortgage Portfolio* vol. 4, no. 8 (1940): 8.

<sup>26</sup> "Great Housing Project Organized For Mass Construction by Builders," *Southwest Builder and Contractor*, 14 July 1939, 10.

<sup>27</sup> "Life in Wyvernwood" promotional brochure.

Some reformers were quick to point out these deficiencies of the FHA and to call for government construction of low-income housing units. Their efforts found additional public support during the Depression and resulted in the construction of some public housing projects under the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the passage of the Housing Act of 1937, which created the United States Housing Authority (USHA) and committed the federal government to public housing on a permanent basis. Early examples of public housing in Los Angeles include Ramona Gardens (1938-40), Estrada Courts (1939-1941), and Pueblo Del Rio (1941-42).



**Wyvernwood Site Plan Illustration 1938**  
*Los Angeles Public Library Collection*

No sooner had the housing industry begun to rebound from the Depression, than World War II broke out, and construction was curtailed once again. The major focus of federal housing policy shifted to providing housing for workers who migrated to cities such as Los Angeles, Oakland, Atlanta, Portland, and Dallas to obtain jobs in the defense industry. The Lanham Act of 1940 provided the first funds for war housing and allocated money for other home related services. Channel Heights (1941-43), Banning Homes (1942), and Dana Strand Village (1942) are among the housing projects constructed under the Lanham Act in Los Angeles.

### ***Physical Development***

In addition to proscribing rental rates, the FHA enforced its minimum design guidelines, directly influenced by the Garden City and Modernist design precedents advocated by the RPAA. In keeping with these concepts, Wyvernwood was designed

as an integrated community with landscaped park areas, children's playgrounds, recreational facilities, and over 1,000 units of multi-family housing. A small commercial district and elementary school, though developed separately, were immediately adjacent. The project required the City of Los Angeles to pass an ordinance vacating a number of existing streets so that a new, internal street pattern could be created.<sup>28</sup>



**Wyvernwood Garden Apartments c. 1940**  
*Los Angeles Public Library Collection*

The approximately sixty-eight acre Wyvernwood tract was laid out with a series of curvilinear streets following the natural contours of the land. Only three streets actually traverse the property's interior. These are Glenn Avenue which crosses the southern portion of the property from east to west before curving northward to meet Eighth Street; Camulos Place which begins at Eighth Street and runs south and curves to the west; and Rosalind Place which also begins at Eighth Street and runs south and curves to the east. This serpentine internal pattern deviates completely from the rectangular block pattern of the surrounding area. Outside automobile access is limited to three entries at the northern border from Eighth Street (Glenn Avenue, Camulos Place, and Rosalind Place), two entries on the southern border off of Olympic Boulevard (Orne Avenue and Camulos Street); two entries from the east (Glen Avenue, Rosalind Place); and one from the west (Hostetter Street). The limited outside access clearly separates Wyvernwood as a place apart.

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<sup>28</sup> "Vacation of Streets Clears Way for Large-Scale Private Housing Project, Wyvernwood," *Southwest Builder and Contractor*, 30 Dec. 1938, 20.

Wyvernwood's most distinctive features, widely praised at the time of its construction, were the large expanses of park-like common spaces distributed within the complex's interior. The largest of these was the central Mall running east to west across the property following a natural ravine that served as the property's primary drainage channel. The Mall contained a continuous grassy lawn bordered and crossed with pedestrian footpaths. Shade trees, shrubs, and flower beds were planted to create an informal, park-like atmosphere. Recreation areas and children's playgrounds were distributed throughout the landscape. Similar park-like expanses were located across the northern portion of the property (Wynwood Lane); running north to south within the sloping western portion of the property (Wynglen Lane); and oriented east to west within the southern portion of the property (Sussex Lane). These larger common areas were linked to smaller greens, tree-lined footpaths, and landscaped courtyards to create a continuous greenbelt that would define the Wyvernwood property.



*Wyvernwood Garden Apartments c. 1940*  
*Los Angeles Public Library Collection*

The majority of buildings at Wyvernwood were oriented inward to face the expanses of landscape areas rather than outward toward the street. Buildings were designed in a stripped-down architectural style popularly referred to as "Minimal Traditional." The Minimal Traditional style is defined by simple exterior forms and a restrained use of traditional architectural detailing. The style had its origins in the principles of the Modern movement and the requirements of the FHA and other federal programs of the 1930s, which promoted the fundamental characteristics and benefits of the "minimum house." In keeping with their late 1930s provenance, Wyvernwood buildings also incorporated subtle Streamline Moderne stylistic details.

Nine types of apartment buildings were constructed at Wyvernwood. Each type contained two stories but differed in plan and the number and arrangement of rooms. The apartment buildings were situated into U-, L-, and T-shaped arrangements to create courtyards approached by pedestrian lanes. All of the buildings were wood-framed on concrete foundations with stucco exteriors and hipped roofs fit with shingles. Each apartment included a kitchen, a living/dining room, a bathroom, and one, two, or three bedrooms. The majority apartments occupied one level, although some of the three-bedroom units were on two levels. Many of the units included front and back doors with front doors located off the front building façade and opening into the living room, while the back doors were accessed from the rear building façade and opened into the kitchen. The original nine apartment types are described below.

1. 12-Unit, U-shaped Plan A

Twenty-eight, twelve-unit apartment buildings with a U-shaped plan were constructed at Wyvernwood. This apartment type included interior stairwells located in the corners of the “U” leading to a canted second-story balcony wrapping around the interior of the “U” and stopping just short of the ends. Rear facades featured a central volume that steps forward slightly, dividing the facade into three distinct bays.

2. 12-unit, U-shaped Plan B

Eight, twelve-unit apartment buildings with a U-shaped plan were constructed at Wyvernwood. Very similar to the buildings described above, this apartment type included an inset balcony that only extends across the back of the “U.”

3. Eight-unit, U-shaped Plan A

Seven, eight-unit apartment buildings with a shallow U-shaped plan were constructed at Wyvernwood. This apartment type was composed of five distinct volumes which step up sloping sites.

4. Eight-unit, U-shaped Plan B

Eighteen, eight-unit apartment buildings with shallow U-shaped plans were constructed at Wyvernwood. This apartment type featured a front facade organized into five bays.

5. Eight-unit, Rectangular Plan

Sixteen, eight-unit apartment buildings with rectangular plans were constructed at Wyvernwood. This apartment type was composed of four distinct volumes which step up sloping sites, with the front façade correspondingly divided into four bays.

6. Six-unit, Rectangular Plan

Twenty-six, six-unit apartment buildings with a rectangular plan were constructed at Wyvernwood. This apartment type was composed of three distinct volumes which step up sloping sites, with the front facade accordingly divided into three bays.

7. Six-unit, U-shaped Plan

Thirteen, six-unit apartment buildings with shallow U-shaped plans were constructed at Wyvernwood with the front facade of the building organized into five bays.

8. *Four-unit, Rectangular Plan*

Twenty-two, four-unit apartment buildings with rectangular plans were constructed at Wyvernwood.

9. *Four-unit, Modified Rectangular Plan*

Five, four-unit apartment buildings with a modified rectangular plan were constructed at Wyvernwood. This apartment type is distinguished by a front facade divided into three bays with the central bay stepped forward slightly from the main mass of the building.

Wyvernwood also included a masonry leasing office located facing Olympic Boulevard. It was composed of one two-story volume flanked by two single-story volumes forming a U-shaped plan. The two-story mass included a hipped roof fit with composition shingle. The main entrance featured a semi-circular columned portico with four columns, fluted pilasters, a plain entablature, and pediment. Rectangular garage buildings contained groupings of single garage spaces with wooden doors. These were located directly off the main streets at the perimeter of the blocks. Utilitarian service buildings included laundry buildings, a recreation room, maintenance storage rooms, and two maintenance workshops.



*Wyvernwood Garden Apartments c. 1940*  
*Los Angeles Public Library*

Wyvernwood embodies the social engineering ideas of Depression Era architects and planners who believed that many of society's problems could be solved through better housing and community planning. The concern over housing was part of a larger trend toward viewing poverty from an environmental perspective. The creation of superblocks separated Wyvernwood from its surroundings and set it off on park-like grounds. The site planning around courtyards was expected to give children a safe place to play and to promote community spirit and cooperative activities among the residents. Buildings were laid out carefully to provide maximum sunshine and fresh air.

The project was well-publicized in architectural journals with articles appearing in *Southwest Builder and Contractor* (December 1938, July 1939), *Architect and Engineer* (March 1939), *Architectural Record* (Sept. 1939), *Architectural Forum* (May 1940), and *California Arts and Architecture* (September 1940).

In the 1960s, nine new buildings were constructed, similar in plan and scale to the original buildings. One was located on Glenn Avenue and eight within the open space of Sussex Lane. In 2003 a laundry room was constructed at the eastern end of the Mall.

### ***Architects Witmer and Watson***

Wyvernwood was designed by the Los Angeles architecture firm of Witmer and Watson. David Julius Witmer, born in Los Angeles in 1888, came from a locally prominent family—the Witmers of Crown Hill. The Witmers were a pioneering banking and real estate development family who owned a significant amount of property in Los Angeles and the surrounding suburbs. After graduating from Harvard's school of architecture, Witmer moved back to Los Angeles in 1915.<sup>29</sup> Two years later, he served in World War I. He and Loyall F. Watson formed their firm in 1925, and went on to become known for designing single-family residences and apartment buildings in Southern California.

Shortly after the completion of Wyvernwood, World War II broke out, and Witmer once again joined the armed forces. Between 1941 and 1943, he served as Chief Architect for the United States War Department. During this period the Pentagon was designed, for which he is credited as the Chief Architect. Also in the early 1940s, he designed The Estrada Courts, a public housing project located just east of Wyvernwood and the first unit of 485 homes in what later became the city of Lakewood, California. In the 1950s and 1960s, the firm of Witmer, Watson, and Pidgeon constructed many schools and commercial buildings in Southern California. Throughout his life, Witmer was involved with local organizations such as the AIA (serving as President of the Southern California Chapter) and Allied Arts of Los Angeles. He died in 1973 at the age of 84.<sup>30</sup>



***Wyvernwood Garden Apartments 1939***

From "L.A. in the Thirties" by Gebhard and Von Bretton

<sup>29</sup> Virginia Linden Comer, *In Victorian Los Angeles, The Witmers of Crown Hill* (Los Angeles: Talbot Press, 1988), 77.

<sup>30</sup> "Rites for Architect David Witmer Set," *Los Angeles Times*, 8 May 1973, C1+.

## 5.0 EVALUATION AS A HISTORIC RESOURCE

### 5.1 Significance

The Wyvernwood Apartments site was formally determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as an historic district through Section 106 review by the Los Angeles Department of Housing and Community Development.<sup>31</sup> Because it was formally determined eligible for listing on the National Register, Wyvernwood is also listed on the California Register of Historical Resources. District boundaries are contiguous with the legal boundaries of the Wyvernwood Apartments property.

The Wyvernwood Apartments property is historically significant as a rare intact example of a Depression-era Garden Apartment housing community in Los Angeles, whose site plan and design reflects the urban planning and community design theories that developed out of the Garden City Movement, European Modernism, and Depression Era social concerns. Wyvernwood was the first large-scale Garden Apartment complex in Los Angeles that was backed by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and is one of two existing large-scale Garden Apartment complexes in Los Angeles that were constructed prior to World War II.

The site plan, design, and landscape of the Wyvernwood Apartments complex exemplify the design and social theories that defined Depression-era planning. The period of significance for the Wyvernwood Apartments extends from 1938 through 1941 when construction on the site was completed.<sup>32</sup>

#### *Contributing Features*

The Wyvernwood Apartments historic district is defined first and foremost by its distinctive site plan which arranges groupings of two-story apartment buildings in a landscaped park-like setting of courtyards and common green spaces. Key elements of the Wyvernwood site plan design include the pattern of “superblocks” set off from the surrounding street grid; the internal circulation pattern carefully segregating automobile and pedestrian traffic; the arrangement of landscape and open spaces to create a park-like setting; and the number of buildings constructed during the period of significance configured to delineate smaller courtyards and intimate outdoor spaces.

The Wyvernwood historic district contains one (1) two-story leasing office building, one-hundred and thirty-seven (137) residential apartment buildings, over one hundred (100) garages, two (2) single-story laundry buildings, one (1) recreation room, one (1) maintenance storage room, and two (2) maintenance workshops that contribute to its historic significance. The district also contains contributing landscaped common areas, and circulation elements including internal streets, alleys and pedestrian pathways. Contributing buildings to the historic district are listed in Table 1 below.

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<sup>31</sup> A Historic Resources Inventory form (DPR 523) was prepared for the “Wyvernwood Garden Apartments” site at 2901 East Olympic Boulevard, Los Angeles in 1997. The 1997 form evaluated the property as status code “2S2” or “determined eligible for the National Register, by a consensus through Section 106 process. Listed in the California Register.”

<sup>32</sup> The 1997 inventory form indicates the period of significance as 1938-1939. Period articles and construction records, however, indicate that the Wyvernwood complex was not completed until 1941.

TABLE 1: Contributing Buildings to the Wyvernwood Garden Apartments Historic District

Resource Type	Number Extant	Number of Stories
<b>RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS</b>		
Type 1: U-shaped plan	28	2
Type 2: U-shaped plan	2	2
Type 3: U-shaped plan	7	2
Type 4: U-shaped plan	18	2
Type 5: Rectangular Plan	16	2
Type 6: Rectangular Plan	26	2
Type 7: U-shaped	13	2
Type 8: Rectangular Plan	22	2
Type 9: Rectangular Plan	5	2
<b>SERVICE BUILDINGS</b>		
Leasing Office	1	2
Laundry	2	1
Garage/Maintenance	100+	1
Not Classified	2	1

Non-contributing buildings include six (6) two-story apartment buildings constructed in the 1960s, two apartment buildings constructed separately from Wyvernwood in the 1950s, and two laundry buildings constructed after 2000.

The site also includes two non-contributing apartment buildings located on Eighth Avenue (referred to collectively by the applicant as the Mori Building). One building contains four units and the other building contains eight units for a total of twelve units. Constructed separately from Wyvernwood in the 1950s, the two buildings have no association with the development of Wyvernwood. Neither building has been previously identified or evaluated as historically significant and neither appears to be a distinctive example of a type, period, region or method of construction, nor is it the work of a recognized master architect or possessing of high artistic values. Neither building appears to be associated with any significant historic events or persons.

A map of the historic district is shown in Figure 4 on the following page.

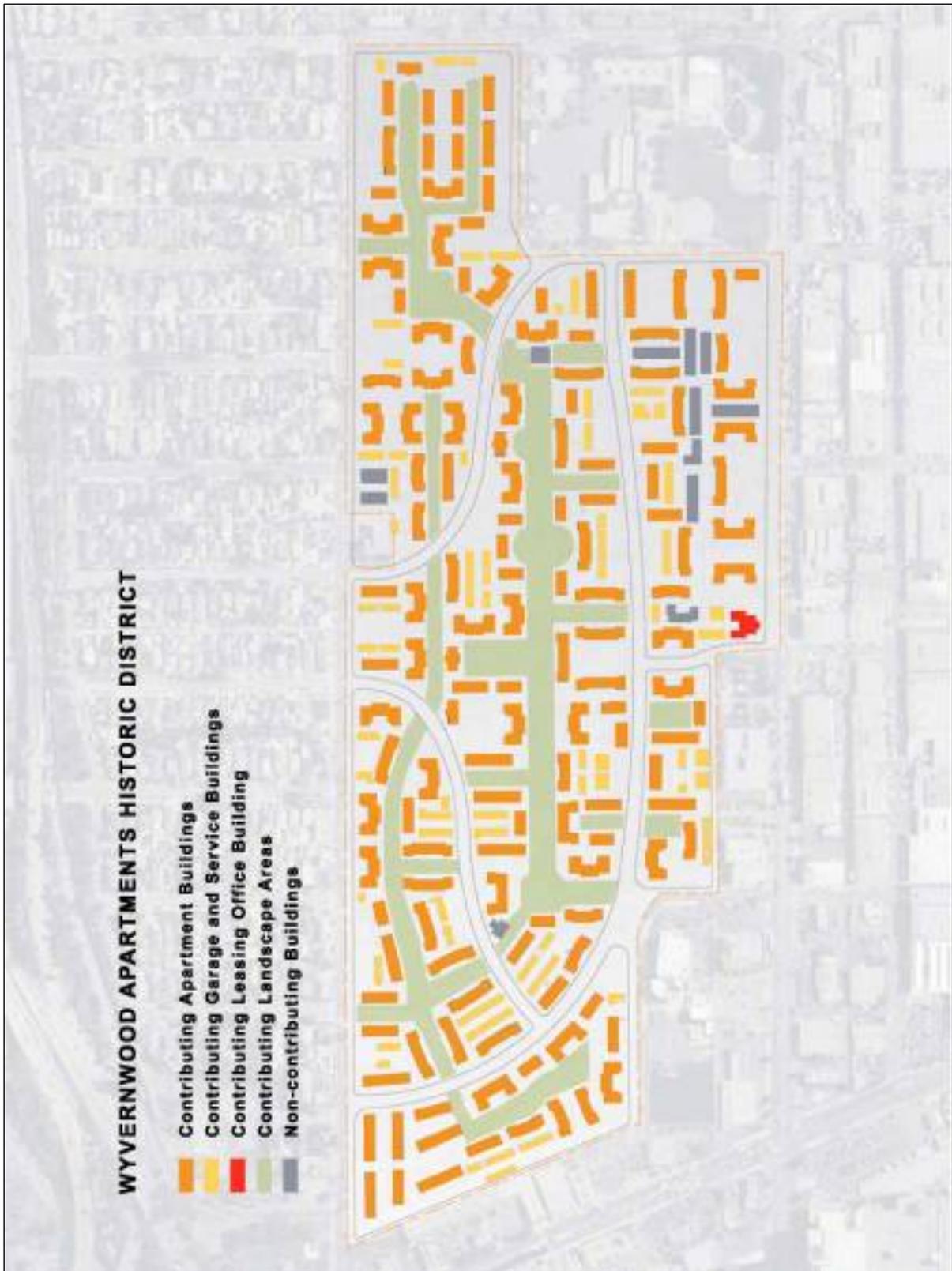


Figure 4: Wyvernwood Historic District Map

## 5.2 Evaluation of Integrity

As noted in Section 3.2 of this report, the National Park Service defines seven aspects of integrity for historic resources. These are *location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association*. The integrity of the Wyvernwood Garden Apartments historic district is evaluated below based on these seven aspects.

***Location** is defined as the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.<sup>33</sup>*

The Wyvernwood Garden Apartments complex remains in its original location. All resources that contribute to the historic district, including buildings, internal streets, alleys, and landscaped open spaces also remain in their original locations and configurations.

***Design** is defined as the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.*

The design integrity of the Wyvernwood Garden Apartments complex must be evaluated in terms of the overall site plan as well as the design of individual buildings and landscape areas. These are discussed separately below.

### Site Plan

The design of the overall site remains largely intact. Throughout the majority of the complex, the location and spatial relationships among residential buildings, garage and service buildings, streets, alleys, and landscaped open spaces remain unchanged since the period of significance. Spatial relationships are compromised in the southeastern portion of the property where eight (8) apartment buildings were added in the 1960s within what was originally the landscaped open space of Sussex Lane. Spatial relationships have also been slightly altered by the addition of a laundry building at the eastern end of the landscaped central Mall after 2002. Several residents have also created de-facto private yards by building fences in areas originally intended as common spaces. This condition, however, would be easily reversed by the removal of the fences.

Despite some changes, the design philosophy of the original plan remains legible on the site. The carefully planned circulation system separating pedestrian and automobile traffic, the sensitive arrangement of landscape and open spaces to create a park-like setting, and the U-, L-, and T-shaped configuration of residential buildings to delineate smaller courtyards and intimate outdoor spaces is still clearly evident. Overall, the design integrity of the site plan remains intact.

### Buildings

Buildings at Wyvernwood were originally designed in a stripped-down Minimal Traditional style with subtle elements of Streamline Moderne, characteristic of the late 1930s and 1940s. Residential buildings do retain their original material composition – wood framing and stucco cladding – as well as the

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<sup>33</sup> Definitions for the aspects of integrity are taken from *National Register Bulletin 15, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, pp 44-45, U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service 1990, revised 1991, 1995

majority of original window and door openings. Their basic plan and form also remains unchanged. Exterior details that remain from the period of significance include flat-roof entrance canopies with metal vertical supports, stucco plaster entrance surrounds at courtyard stairwells, and octagonal stairwell vents.

The design integrity of individual buildings at Wyvernwood, however, is compromised due to the removal and replacement of many original architectural features and details. All residential buildings on the site were originally fitted with wood casement windows, which have since been replaced with aluminum sliding windows. Almost no original main entrance doors remain. Two building types (12-unit U-shape and 12-unit modified U-shape) were originally designed with wood porch railings on the second floor which have since been replaced with metal railings.

Period promotional brochures reveal shade canopies at ground-floor entrances supported by carved wood vertical supports and wood lattices at the sides. Most if not all of the vertical supports have been removed or replaced and none of the lattices remain. Ground-floor kitchen entrances have been altered on the majority of buildings.

Several apartment buildings originally contained decorative wood siding on the second floor which has been removed on all but three buildings. Other apartment buildings featured a continuous wood sill running along the bottom of the second story windows. While this feature remains on some buildings, on many buildings the sill has been removed and replaced with a painted white line.

Garage and service buildings were consciously utilitarian in their design, and therefore did not contain the stylistic elements originally found on apartment buildings. The wood frame and stucco garage and service buildings retain their basic form and the majority of their original material composition. Original doors have been replaced on the majority of garages, while other garages no longer have doors and function as carports. The few original doors that do remain are in very poor condition. Laundry buildings also no longer retain original windows or doors.

#### *Landscaped Common Areas*

The majority of Wyvernwood's park-like common spaces, smaller green spaces, and courtyards have retained their original configuration, and many mature trees. Design integrity has been compromised, however, by the removal of original trees, shrubs, and flower beds that have not been replaced in kind. Many original trees have also been removed to avoid structural damage to buildings and utilities. The removal or redesign of original recreation areas and children's playgrounds, evident in photographs from the 1940s, has also reduced the design integrity of landscape areas. Lawns have deteriorated and been impacted by drainage issues that have developed over time. The majority of footpaths and stairways have been altered or in some cases relocated to reflect changes in grade and circulation patterns caused by erosion and pedestrian traffic.

**Setting** is defined as the physical environment of the property and refers to the character of the place in which the property played its historic role.

The setting of the Wyvernwood Garden Apartments complex, immediately adjacent to neighborhood retail and schools and only two miles east of downtown Los Angeles, illustrates the FHA policy of only guaranteeing projects within close proximity to business centers and neighborhood services. While the surrounding area has sustained physical changes since the period of significance, the mix of residential, civic, and commercial uses remain.

**Materials** are defined as the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.

Although the majority of buildings at Wyvernwood do retain their original wood frame and stucco construction, much of the material integrity of Wyvernwood buildings has been compromised by the removal or replacement of architectural features including windows, doors, entrance canopies, balcony railings, and decorative siding. The majority of landscape areas have retained their original grassy expanses and many mature trees; their material integrity, however, has been compromised by the removal of trees, shrubs, and flower beds and the removal or redesign of playgrounds and recreation areas.

**Workmanship** is defined as the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period.

As noted in the discussion of design integrity above, alterations to buildings and landscapes has compromised the integrity of workmanship on the Wyvernwood site. Workmanship at Wyvernwood, however, is primarily revealed through sensitive site planning and the careful integration of buildings, landscape, and circulation. These elements continue to reflect the progressive planning and design theories of the 1930s as applied to multi-family urban housing.

**Feeling** is defined as a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of particular period of time.

The Wyvernwood Apartments continues to reflect the progressive planning and design theories of the 1930s through the largely intact site plan integrating streets, alleys, pedestrian pathways and buildings with landscaped open spaces.

**Association** is defined as the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

The association of the Wyvernwood Apartments property with the urban planning and community design theories that developed out of the Garden City Movement, European Modernism, and Depression Era social concerns remains clearly evident on the site. The carefully planned circulation system separating pedestrian and automobile traffic, the sensitive arrangement of landscape and open spaces to create a park-like setting, and the configuration

of residential buildings to delineate more intimate outdoor spaces all continue to reflect the ideals advanced by housing reformers, architects, and urban planners during the period of significance, as well as the guidelines of the FHA.

### ***Overall Integrity***

The Wyvernwood Garden Apartments property has retained integrity of *location, setting, feeling* and *association*. The removal of original architectural elements and landscape features is such that the integrity of *materials, design, and workmanship* of the Wyvernwood property has been compromised.

The historic significance of the Wyvernwood property, however, rests largely with the design of its site plan and the careful integration of buildings, landscape, and circulation in accordance with the planning and design theories of the 1930s. The original location, configuration, and spatial relationships of buildings, landscapes and circulation elements remain largely unchanged since the period of significance such that the Wyvernwood property continues to retain integrity of *design* and *workmanship* despite the removal of individual architectural and landscape elements.

## **5.3 Application of Criteria**

### ***Evaluation of the Wyvernwood Apartments Historic District for the National Register***

The Wyvernwood Apartments site was formally determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as an historic district under Criterion A as the first large-scale Garden Apartment complex in Los Angeles and the first backed by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The Wyvernwood Apartments property is also eligible under Criterion C as a rare example of a Depression-era Garden Apartment housing community in Los Angeles, whose site plan and design reflects the urban planning and community design theories that developed out of the Garden City Movement, European Modernism, and Depression Era social concerns.

The Wyvernwood Apartments historic district has retained integrity of *location, design, workmanship, feeling, setting, and association* and remains eligible for listing in the National Register.

### ***Evaluation of the Wyvernwood Apartments Historic District for the California Register***

The Wyvernwood Apartments is listed in the California Register of Historical Resources as an historic district under Criterion 1 as the first large-scale Garden Apartment complex in Los Angeles and the first backed by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The Wyvernwood Apartments property is also eligible under Criterion 3 as a rare example of a Depression-era Garden Apartment housing community in Los Angeles, whose site plan and design reflects the urban planning and community design theories that developed out of the Garden City Movement, European Modernism, and Depression Era social concerns.

The Wyvernwood Apartments historic district has retained integrity of *location, design, workmanship, feeling, setting, and association* and remains eligible for listing in the California Register.

### ***Local Evaluation***

The Wyvernwood Apartments is eligible for designation as a City of Los Angeles Cultural Historic Monument as the first large-scale Garden Apartment complex in Los Angeles and the first backed by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The Wyvernwood Apartments property is also eligible as a rare example of a Depression-era Garden Apartment housing community in Los Angeles, whose site plan and design reflects the urban planning and community design theories that developed out of the Garden City Movement, European Modernism, and Depression Era social concerns.

## **5.4 Conclusions**

The Project site contains an historic district that that has been formally determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and is listed in the California Register of Historical Resources. It also is eligible for designation as a City of Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. As such, the Wyvernwood Apartments site qualifies as an historical resource under CEQA.

## 6.0 POTENTIAL IMPACTS

### 6.1 Significance Threshold

The City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide (2006, p. D.3-2) states that a project would normally have a significant impact on historic resources if it would result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource. A substantial adverse change in significance occurs if the project involves:

- Demolition of a significant resource;
- Relocation that does not maintain the integrity and (historical/architectural) significance of a significant resource;
- Conversion, rehabilitation, or alteration of a significant resource which does not conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings; or
- Construction that reduces the integrity or significance of important resources on the site or in the vicinity.

A project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment.<sup>34</sup> A substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource means demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of a historical resource would be materially impaired.<sup>35</sup>

The State CEQA Guidelines go on to state that “[t]he significance of an historic resource is materially impaired when a project... [d]emolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for, inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources... local register of historic resources... or its identification in a historic resources survey.”<sup>36</sup>

As such, the test for determining whether or not the project will have a significant impact on the identified historic resources is whether it will materially impair their physical integrity such that they would no longer be listed in the National or California Registers or other landmark programs such as the City's list of Historic-Cultural Monuments.

The significance thresholds established by the City of Los Angeles include and exceed all of the provisions set forth in the CEQA Guidelines and as such, the significance thresholds set forth in the City's CEQA Thresholds Guide are used in the following analysis.

Potential impacts to the potential historic district are discussed below.

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<sup>34</sup> *CEQA Guidelines*, section 15064.5(b).

<sup>35</sup> *CEQA Guidelines*, section 15064.5(b) (1).

<sup>36</sup> *CEQA Guidelines*, section 15064.5(b)(2).

## **6.2 Potential Impacts to District Resources**

The proposed Project Plan anticipates the demolition of all existing buildings on the Project site including all contributing buildings. Although many of the mature trees would be retained, the contributing landscape areas would be removed, or completely re-configured and re-designed. Internal streets, alleys, and footpaths would be either destroyed or re-configured, and new through-streets would be added.

The demolition, re-configuration, and re-design of contributing resources proposed by Project Plan would result in significant impacts to the Wyvernwood Historic District such that the District could no longer convey its historic significance. These impacts could not be mitigated to a less-than-significant level.

## 7.0 RECOMMENDED RECORDATION MEASURES

As noted in Section 6.2 of this report the impacts of the proposed project cannot be mitigated to a level of insignificance. The following measures are recommended to ensure adequate recordation and interpretation:

- Prepare a Historic Structures Report prior to any alteration, relocation or demolition of any contributing building, structure, or site. The report shall document the significance and physical condition of all contributing buildings, structures, and sites with photographs, text, and existing drawings. This documentation shall include:
  - a) A brief written historic and descriptive report completed in narrative format, including an architectural data form for each contributing building.
  - b) A site plan showing the location of each building. This site plan shall include a photo key.
  - c) A sketch floor plan shall accompany each architectural data form.
  - d) Large format (4" x 5" negative or larger) photographs in accordance with Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) guidelines and standards. Views shall include contextual views, all exterior elevations, detailed views of significant exterior architectural features, and interior views of significant historical architectural features or spaces.
  - e) Field photographs (35mm) based on HABS guidelines to ensure full documentation of the site. Views should correspond to and augment those in the large format photographs.
  - f) Available historic photographs and historic or current plans.
- One original copy of the documentation as specified above shall be assembled and offered to each of the following:
  - a) One set shall be sent to the Southern California Information Center at California State University Fullerton.
  - b) One set shall be offered to and, if accepted, deposited in the archives of the Los Angeles Conservancy.
  - c) One set shall be offered to and, if accepted, deposited in the archives of the University of Southern California.
  - d) One set shall be offered to and, if accepted, deposited in the Central Library of the Los Angeles Public Library.

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