

## LOS ANGELES CITYWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT

**Context: Commercial Development, 1880-1980**

**Theme: Post WWII Recreation, 1940-1975**

**Sub-theme: Bowling Centers, 1949-1970**



*Prepared by:*

City of Los Angeles  
Department of City Planning  
Office of Historic Resources

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## **PREFACE**

The theme of Post War II Recreation/Bowling Centers is a component of Los Angeles' citywide historic context statement and provides guidance to field surveyors in evaluating resources that are significant for their association with this commercial building type. Refer to [www.HistoricPlacesLA.org](http://www.HistoricPlacesLA.org) for information on designated resources associated with this theme as well as those identified through SurveyLA and other surveys.

## **CONTRIBUTOR**

Sandra Shannon is a cultural resource management consultant. She earned her Master of Heritage Conservation from the University of Southern California and has been working in the field since 2013.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Post WWII Recreation property types dating from 1940-1975 include skating rinks, miniature golf courses, and bowling centers. SurveyLA did not identify any intact miniature golf facilities from this time and only three intact skating rinks were identified: Van Nuys Iceland (original Rainbow Rink, 1950) at 14318 Calvert Street in Van Nuys,<sup>1</sup> Olympic Ice Arena (1962) at 23770 S. Western Avenue in Harbor City, and Northridge Skateland (1958) at 18140 W. Parthenia Street.<sup>2</sup> As such no narrative context or eligibility standards have been developed for miniature golf courses or skating rinks as part of the citywide historic context statement and this narrative focuses on Post WWII bowling centers.<sup>3</sup>

The sport of bowling played a significant role in the social and recreational life of Post WWII Americans. In Los Angeles, as elsewhere in the U.S., modern bowling centers were constructed in the postwar era in large numbers and particularly in areas of west Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley. Postwar bowling centers were designed and marketed to provide recreational opportunities for men, women, children, and families. Bowling centers also typically had restaurants and lounges which served as popular places to socialize, and often included meeting or banquet rooms which served as gathering places for local clubs, groups, organizations. During this time, bowling centers were typically designed in Mode-Century Modern and Googie styles and often by noted architects. Today there few intact Postwar bowling centers in Los Angeles.

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<sup>1</sup> Rainbow Rink was originally a roller skating rink and later converted to an ice skating rink.

<sup>2</sup> Northridge Skateland was evaluated as an excellent and rare example of the type and as a long-term business important to the commercial identity of Northridge. Originally called Valley Skateland, it has been in continuous operation at this location since 1958. It is also significant for its association with the area's African American community.

<sup>3</sup> For the extant skating rinks, a site-specific significance statement would be developed as part of any assessment required for proposed future development or for an application to designate a property.

**Evaluation Considerations:**

Properties significant under the bowling centers theme may overlap with other SurveyLA themes as follows:

- Bowling centers may also be significant for their association with ethnic/cultural groups and may be discussed in the ethnic/cultural themes developed as part of the citywide historic context statement (see in particular the African American and the Japanese American Historic Contexts).
- Bowling centers may also be evaluated as significant example of architectural styles under themes within the Architecture and Engineering context, and in particular the Googie style.
- Bowling alley signs may be significant under the Commercial Signs theme of the Commercial Development context (especially in cases where the building is demolished or significantly altered).

## **HISTORIC CONTEXT**

### **Bowling Establishment History**

Prior to 1920, bowling alleys in America were typically located in urban areas, in or near saloons.<sup>4</sup> They were usually dark and dingy places, often found in basements, with only one or two bowling lanes.<sup>5</sup> They were seen as places where working-class men gathered to drink and gamble and take part in disreputable, unproductive, and sometimes criminal behavior.<sup>6</sup> Women, and men who considered themselves respectable citizens, rarely entered early bowling establishments.<sup>7</sup>

With the advent of Prohibition in 1920, owners of saloons with bowling alleys had to appeal to a broader market to survive without alcohol sales.<sup>8</sup> Whereas many establishments shut down during Prohibition, others transformed into full-fledged, large-scale bowling parlors, and efforts were made to clean up the sport's sordid reputation.<sup>9</sup> The word "alley" was often dropped from the name of bowling establishments around this time to distance the sport from its earlier reputation. Words like "bowl" or "lane" were used in place of "alley" in business names.<sup>10</sup> The bowling industry also introduced bowling alley design guidelines, loans to upgrade facilities, and a lighter ball for women. This made it possible to attract a wider range of male customers to the sport and, by the late 1920s, women were bowling in greater numbers.<sup>11</sup> The game's popularity grew steadily during the 1930s and through World War II.

League play became increasingly important to the sport just before the war. Industrial leagues, which were sponsored by companies for their employees, were particularly common. This practice was thought to be a way for the company to encourage their employees to socialize with each other and take part in wholesome entertainment.<sup>12</sup> League play helped to further distance bowling from the gambling and cash prizes that characterized the early history of the sport.<sup>13</sup>

During World War II, there was a surge in popularity in bowling because the United States military constructed approximately 4,500 lanes on military bases to provide servicemen with recreation. This

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<sup>4</sup> The first formalized rules were developed in New York City in 1875. Chicago is recognized as the early center of the sport, largely due to the popularity of the game among the city's Eastern European immigrant population. "History of Bowling," Bowling2u, [http://bowling2u.com/trivia/game/history\\_of\\_bowling.asp](http://bowling2u.com/trivia/game/history_of_bowling.asp); Raymond Schmidt, "Encyclopedia of Chicago: Bowling," Chicago Historical Society, <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/158.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks: Chasing the American Dream in the Postwar Consumer Culture* (New York City: Basic Books, 2002), 112-114.

<sup>6</sup> Andrew Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks*, 114; Mary Alice Hudgens, "Strikes and Spare Time: Bowling, Race, and the Politics of Work and Leisure in Twentieth-Century America" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2010), 13-14; American Society of Planning Officials, *Information Report No. 110*, May 1958, 1.

<sup>7</sup> Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks*, 115-117.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 116-117.

<sup>9</sup> One study found that the number of bowling alleys in Chicago decreased by one-third between 1929 and 1935. Despite the total loss, the number of alleys increased, suggesting that small saloons were being replaced with larger establishments. Hudgens, "Strikes and Spare Time," 56.

<sup>10</sup> Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks*, 154; American Society of Planning Officials, *Information Report No. 110*, May 1958, 2.

<sup>11</sup> Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks*, 117-118; Hudgens, "Strikes and Spare Time," 61.

<sup>12</sup> Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks*, 125.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

was often the first exposure to the game for many soldiers.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, “ladies leagues” filled bowling alleys back home.<sup>15</sup> After the war ended, men and women started to bowl together in leagues for the first time.<sup>16</sup> In 1947, the Truman administration installed a one-lane bowling alley in the White House, signifying that the sport had become a true American pastime.<sup>17</sup> Just before the U.S. entered World War II, there were an estimated 12 million bowlers in the United States, making bowling the most popular competitive sport in the country. After the war, in 1948, there were 20 million bowlers across the nation.<sup>18</sup>

By the 1950s, the bowling industry had successfully established itself as a form of entertainment suitable for all members of the family and, at this point, bowling establishments entered an era of the modern bowling center.<sup>19</sup> Bowling centers were typically constructed in upwardly-mobile middle class postwar suburbs, where they were designed to serve as visual landmarks in these communities.<sup>20</sup> They often reflected the modern aesthetic of the suburbs and many were designed by noted architects in the Googie style with sweeping roofs, modern materials, futuristic details, and flashy signs.<sup>21</sup>

Bowling centers were larger than previous bowling establishments and much more elaborate. Forty to 60 lanes became the norm and they had the latest technology including air conditioning, automatic pinsetters, foul detectors, and underground ball returns.<sup>22</sup> Interiors were lavishly designed and lobbies often contained features like colorful carpeting, murals, fountains, and sculptures. Bowling centers of this sort were constructed rapidly during the 1950s and early 1960s as the popularity of the sport surged and suburban land was abundant and relatively inexpensive.<sup>23</sup> It was not unusual for the construction of these buildings to cost more than one million dollars, a considerable sum of money at the time.

In addition to distinctive architecture and design, bowling centers offered a variety of amenities to attract a diverse clientele. Coffee shops, cocktail lounges, music performances, concession stands, pro shops, instructional programs, and childcare facilities were standard offerings.<sup>24</sup> Many were open 24 hours to accommodate workers on industrial night shifts.<sup>25</sup> With these lavish services and amenities, bowling centers earned a reputation as “the people’s country clubs.” In addition to providing leisure activities for middle-class suburbanites, bowling centers often served as community centers, particularly in newly developed areas that may have lacked community meeting space. Boy scouts, churches groups,

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<sup>14</sup> “History of Bowling,” Bowling2u, [http://bowling2u.com/trivia/game/history\\_of\\_bowling.asp](http://bowling2u.com/trivia/game/history_of_bowling.asp).

<sup>15</sup> Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks*, 123-124.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 177

<sup>17</sup> “White House Bowling Alley,” The White House Museum, accessed April 30, 2013, <http://www.whitehousemuseum.org/floor0/bowling-alley.htm>.

<sup>18</sup> Mary B. Stavish, “Bowling – The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History,” Case Western Reserve University, <http://ech.case.edu/cgi/article.pl?id=B16>; Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys and Trailer Parks*, 107-109.

<sup>19</sup> Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks*, 152.

<sup>20</sup> Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks*, 152; Alan Hess, *Googie Redux* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2004), 60.

<sup>21</sup> Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks*, 153; Hess, *Googie Redux*, 60.

<sup>22</sup> Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks*, 143.

<sup>23</sup> By 1964, there were 39 million bowlers in the U.S., two times the figure from the late 1940s. Hurley, *Diners*, 107-109.

<sup>24</sup> American Society of Planning Officials, *Information Report No. 110*, May 1958, 12-13.

<sup>25</sup> Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks*, 148, 155.

women's clubs, and other organizations gathered in the meeting rooms and banquet halls of modern bowling centers.<sup>26</sup>

Bowling provided an important social opportunity for women in postwar suburban America. While bowling centers were generally full during evening and weekend league play, the lanes were often empty during weekday hours. Childcare, laundry, and grocery shopping services were introduced at bowling centers to attract housewives during the day. The addition of these services was a strategic move by the industry. There was concern that if women were bowling during the day they would not be taking care of their household responsibilities. The industry addressed this by creating an environment in which they could do both. For example, a woman could turn in a grocery list when she arrived to bowl and, when she was done playing her groceries would be ready for pick up. This arrangement substantially increased business during the weekday.<sup>27</sup>

With suburban women convinced of the wholesomeness of bowling, they allowed their children to participate in the sport. Prior to World War II, children rarely bowled. After the war, junior leagues filled the lanes after school, providing business owners with an additional stream of revenue.<sup>28</sup> In 1959, membership in the Junior Congress bowling association totaled nearly 400,000 children.<sup>29</sup>

Because of racial segregation, the extravagant bowling center experience was generally restricted to suburban whites. Early saloon bowling alleys were generally not racially discriminatory, however. It was not until the 1920s and 1930s, when bowling started to become a more mainstream sport, that establishments began to segregate. Segregation at the local level was fueled by the ban of minorities by the national men's, women's, and youth bowling associations. In response to this ban, The National Bowling Association was established in 1939. Members were predominantly African American; however, the organization also welcomed Asian, Latino, and Native American bowlers. By 1943, the association had a membership of 1,800.<sup>30</sup>

The National Bowling Association primarily worked to help minorities get access to bowling facilities. For example, the organization was sometimes able to create arrangements with white business owners who would open their rear doors to minority bowlers on certain days or after regular business hours. Typically, minorities could not build their own bowling establishments because they were unable to obtain construction loans from white lenders. The National Bowling Association, instead, stepped forward with assistance. Within a few years of establishment, the organization had invested \$450,000 in African American owned and operated facilities. Often times, however, the facilities that minorities were able to purchase were older bowling alleys that white owners no longer wanted. These establishments were usually smaller, outdated, and deteriorating properties in urban areas and nothing like the lavish and modern "people's country clubs" of the white suburbs.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> American Society of Planning Officials, Information Report No. 110, 13-14.

<sup>27</sup> Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks*, 168-172; Hudgens, "Strikes and Spare Time," 63-65.

<sup>28</sup> Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks*, 179-182.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>30</sup> Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks*, 184-191; David K. Wiggins, and Patrick B. Miller, *The Uneven Playing Field: A Documentary History of the African American Experience in Sport* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois, 2003), 108-110.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



In addition to helping minorities access bowling facilities, The National Bowling Association worked to eradicate the discriminatory covenants of the American Bowling Congress and the Women's International Bowling Congress. Although the associations' racial restrictions were removed in the 1950s, discriminatory practices persisted locally at bowling establishments. In the early 1960s, African American bowlers took part in a series of sit-ins at bowling establishments, refusing to leave until they were allowed to bowl. Although these protests were often successful and despite the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the segregation of bowling was still informally practiced in many parts of the country.<sup>32</sup>

### **Bowling Decline**

After the bowling heyday of the 1950s and 1960s, many bowling establishments went out of business. This occurred for a variety of reasons. In the late 1960s, bowling centers were overbuilt in certain markets, and less successful centers were forced to close their doors.<sup>33</sup> Later, league play became less popular with the public in general, and as women entered the workforce in greater numbers during the 1970s, bowling centers were once again empty during daytime hours.<sup>34</sup> The reason that most bowling centers closed, however, was due to rising land values. As land became more and more valuable, bowling centers were targeted for redevelopment because they occupied large parcels of land.<sup>35</sup>

While many historical bowling establishments have been razed, numerous others have been altered. In the 1970s and 1980s, many bowling centers were purchased by large corporations and stripped of their original character defining features and signage for a more corporate look.

### **Bowling in Los Angeles**

The history of bowling in Los Angeles parallels the national context. Early newspaper articles show evidence that there were saloons with bowling alleys in the greater Los Angeles area around the turn of the century, and that there were public concerns about the morality of the activity that took place in these early establishments.<sup>36</sup> With the advent of Prohibition, bowling alleys disassociated from saloons and began gaining respectability. Two early 1920s bowling alleys in Los Angeles were located at Jensen's Recreation Center at 1700 W. Sunset Blvd. (1924, City Historic-Cultural Monument No. 652) and Highland Park Bowl at 5621 N. Figueroa (1927).<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Denise Hamilton, "Land Values Rise and Bowling Alleys Fall," *Los Angeles Times*, July 30, 1985.

<sup>34</sup> Dill Design Group, "Historical and Architectural Evaluation: Fiesta Lanes and Meineke Discount Mufflers," (Los Gatos, California, 2002), 14.

<sup>35</sup> Denise Hamilton, "Land Values Rise and Bowling Alleys Fall," *Los Angeles Times*, July 30, 1985.

<sup>36</sup> "Redlands," *Los Angeles Times*, June 19, 1894; "Long Beach: Figures of Progress, Will Allow Bowling," *Los Angeles Times*, November 6, 1901, 15; "Sunday Bowling War Begun in Pasadena," *Los Angeles Times*, May 24, 1902, A5; "Swept by Reform Wave," *Los Angeles Times*, January 7, 1914, I15.

<sup>37</sup> The bowling alley is no longer extant in Jensen's Recreation Center. The recently restored Highland Park Bowl at 5621 N. Figueroa is a contributing feature of the Highland Park Historic Preservation Overlay Zone and was not resurveyed for SurveyLA. No other extant prewar bowling alleys have been identified in Los Angeles.





*Highland Park Bowl, 2017 (Office of Historic Resources)*



*Bowling Alley at Jensen's Recreation Center, n.d. (Los Angeles Public Library)*

By the 1930s, several bowling establishments opened in Los Angeles with characteristics of the bowling centers that would later become prevalent. The Hollywood Recreation Center (demolished), for example, opened in 1938 in the Streamline Moderne style with 22 lanes, a restaurant, and bar.<sup>38</sup>



*Hollywood Recreation Center, 1936 (Los Angeles Public Library)*

More significant was the Sunset Bowling Center (demolished), which opened in 1939 on the site of the former Warner Brothers studio in Hollywood, where the first talking motion picture was made. It was the largest bowling establishment in the world at the time and touted as the "bowling showcase of the world" and "home to the famous 52 lanes in a row."<sup>39</sup>



*Sunset Bowling Center, n.d. (Los Angeles Public Library)*

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<sup>38</sup> Gregory Paul Williams, *The Story of Hollywood: An Illustrated History* (Los Angeles: BL Press, 2005), 231-233.

<sup>39</sup> Marc Wanamaker, "Images of America: Hollywood 1940-2008" (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 31; "Large Crowd of Bowlers Attends Sunset Opening," *Los Angeles Times*, May 30, 1939, A13.

By 1946 bowling was gaining popularity in the Los Angeles area and the *Los Angeles Times* began a regular feature called “Down the Alley,” written by long-time sportswriter Don Snyder.<sup>40</sup> By the late 1940s, large-scale and elaborate bowling centers were being rapidly constructed in developing areas in and around Los Angeles.

Although there were over 100 bowling center in the greater Los Angeles area by the early 1960, by 1985 there were only 34.<sup>41</sup> Centers began closing in the 1960s because of the intense competition in the local market. Starting in the 1970s, many bowling centers were demolished for redevelopment.<sup>42</sup> Those that survived were often remodeled over time. Today, very few postwar bowling centers remain in the city of Los Angeles.

### **Bowling Center Architecture in the Postwar Period**

Bowling centers were typically vast, one story, stand-alone structures. They were often located in or near new suburban shopping centers in areas where there was sufficient land to construct the building and its sprawling surrounding parking lot. Many of these establishments were designed by noted California architects of the time including Armet & Davis; Martin Stern, Jr.; Ron Cleveland; and Powers, Daly, and DeRosa. While some bowling centers were somewhat restrained examples of Mid-Century Modern, many others employed the Googie style. This style of roadside architecture was common to bowling alleys as well as coffee shops, motels, gas stations, and car washes. Between 1954 and 1961, the Long Beach-based firm of Powers, Daly, and DeRosa designed over one hundred bowling establishments across the United States in what was called the “California-style.”<sup>43</sup>

Googie bowling centers used sweeping shapes, slick lines, dramatic angles, and futuristic forms, such as parabolas, boomerangs, and domes. Modernistic elements like exposed structural systems, tapered columns, and expansive plate glass walls were common. New building materials of the time such as steel, glass block, plywood, and plastic, were an important component of the futuristic designs. The use of vivid colors was typical, as was the incorporation of abstract imagery like starbursts. Most centers had large-scale, bold signs with neon and, sometimes, moveable parts that served as extensions of the building design. They were quite imposing when illuminated at night.

On the inside, bowling centers had elaborate, open floor plans. Fixtures including a shoe rental counter, scorekeeper tables, seating, and automatic ball returns. Lanes were usually arranged in one long row across from the service and amenity areas, although some centers had a back-to-back configuration in which two sets of lanes flanked a central concourse.<sup>44</sup> Most centers additionally had a restaurant, lounge, nursery, billiards, offices, meeting space, and banquet rooms. Themes for the extravagantly decorated interiors included Egyptian and Tiki/Polynesian.

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<sup>40</sup> “Down the Alley” ran from 1946 until about 1971 and featured information on leagues, tournaments, and bowlers both locally and nationwide. According his obituary, Snyder specialized in writing about bowling and received several awards from the Bowling Writers Association of America. “Long Time Bowling Writer Snyder Dies,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 9, 2009.

<sup>41</sup> “Valley Bowling Notes,” *Valley News*, October 1, 1957, 13. Denise Hamilton, “Land Values Rise and Bowling Alleys Fall,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 30, 1985, B5A.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.; Dill Design Group, *Historical and Architectural Evaluation*, 14-15.

<sup>43</sup> Hess, *Googie Redux*, 60.

<sup>44</sup> Architectural Research Division, Brunswick-Balke-Callender Company as reproduced in American Society of Planning Officials, *Information Report No. 110*, May 1958.

## **Bowling Centers in Los Angeles**

The following are designated and known postwar bowling centers in Los Angeles. Note that SurveyLA included evaluations from the public-right of way only and no interiors were evaluated. In addition, since the time of SurveyLA, ownership of some centers changed and there have been some associated interior and exterior alterations.

### **Holiday Bowl**

- Historic Name: Holiday Bowl and Coffee Shop (now Starbucks)
- Location: 3722 S. Crenshaw Blvd.
- Year Built: 1958
- Architect: Armet & Davis
- Description: The Holiday Bowl originally included a bowling alley, pool hall, coffee shop, and bar. Although significantly altered (only the Googie-style coffee shop and sign remain), the Holiday Bowl was designated as a City Historic Cultural Monument (No. 688) in 2000, primarily for its association with the Post WWII Japanese community in the Crenshaw neighborhood. It was founded by Japanese businessmen and frequented by the Japanese and African American populations in the area. The coffee shop is now a Starbucks.



*Holiday Bowl and Coffee Shop, n.d. (Office of Historic Resources)*



## Paradise Theater and Bowl

- Historic Name: Paradise Theater and Bowl
- Current Name: Paradise Building (no longer used as a bowling alley)
- Location: 9110 S. Sepulveda Blvd
- Year Built: 1950
- Architect: Arthur Froehlich and Ted Rogvoy (associate architect)
- Description: Paradise Theater and Bowl was constructed as a 1,300-seat movie theater with an adjacent 16-lane bowling center.<sup>45</sup> It was designed in the Late Moderne style by Los Angeles architect Arthur Froehlich and associate architect, Ted Rogvoy, who designed numerous theaters and drive-ins in the United States. It featured a curving façade of stone, brick, and glass, as well as a stylized marquee, bowling sign, and a tower holding the name of the complex.



*Top: Paradise Theater and Bowl just prior to opening.*

*Source: Ed Braslaff*

*Los Angeles Public Library, Herald-Examiner Collection, 1950.*



*Right: Paradise Building, 2013 (Author Photo)*

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<sup>45</sup> "Westchester Theater Will Open Wednesday," *Los Angeles Times*, August 18, 1950, 28.

## **Mission Hills Bowl**

- Historic Names: Sepulveda Bowl , Citrus Bowl
- Current Name: Mission Hills Bowl
- Location: 10430 Sepulveda Blvd
- Year Built: 1958
- Architect: Martin Stern, Jr.
- Description: Originally called “Sepulveda Bowl” during design and construction, the bowling center later opened with the name “Citrus Bowl.” The building featured 24 lanes, a combined cocktail lounge-restaurant named “Black Ball Restaurant,” and a nursery.<sup>46</sup> The facility was unique in that it did not contain a billiards room, a decision the owner made to make the center more family friendly.<sup>47</sup>

Sepulveda Bowl was designed by noted architect Martin Stern, Jr. who is recognized for his Googie architecture and as a pioneer of large-scale hotel and casino projects. In Stern, Jr.’s rendering the building’s primary facade included a set of oversized Swiss cheese I-beams that project over the roof and extend to the ground. The flat-roofed building had unadorned, concrete block walls. The entrance featured a cantilevered roof, expanses of glass, a rock accent wall, and a prominent sign.”<sup>48</sup>

Since SurveyLA recorded this bowling center, a redevelopment project on the site has proposed alterations to the building while maintaining some of the character-defining features. Submittal of a Historic-Cultural Monument application is proposed as part of the project.



*Martin Stern, Jr.’s Rendering of Mission Hills Bowl (Sepulveda Bowl).  
(University of Nevada, Las Vegas; University Libraries, Martin Stern, Jr. Collection)*

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<sup>46</sup> “Valley Bowling Notes,” *Valley News*, January 24, 1957, 12B; “Valley Ramblings,” *Valley News*, November 7, 1957, 16C.

<sup>47</sup> “Valley Bowling Notes,” *Valley News*, January 24, 1957, 12B.

<sup>48</sup> “Googie Architectural Design Drawing of Sepulveda Bowl (Mission Hills, Calif.), Exterior Perspective,” Martin Stern, Jr. Collection, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, University Libraries, c1957. Available at <http://digital.library.unlv.edu/objects/sky/1715>.



*Mission Hills Bowl, 2013 (Author Photo)*



## **El Dorado Bowl**

- Historic Name: El Dorado Bowl/El Dorado Lanes
- Current Name: Bowlero
- Location: 8731 Lincoln Blvd
- Year Built: 1959
- Architect: Ron Cleveland
- Description: El Dorado Bowl opened in 1959 in Westchester, not far from Paradise Bowl. At only 10 years old, Paradise Bowl was considered dated, and the new El Dorado Bowl provided the residents of the area with a state of the art center. The facility opened with 32 lanes, banquet space, a diner, and cocktail bar. A café was later added.<sup>49</sup>

El Dorado Bowl was designed by Los Angeles architect Ron Cleveland in a modest Mid-Century Modern design. The façade was clad in brick and Palos Verdes stone, which was a locally sourced and commonly used building material in Westchester.<sup>50</sup> The entrance featured a cantilevered roof, brise soleil, and an expanse of plate glass. A colorful mosaic tile relief of a bowler adorned the building and is extant. The building has been altered since SurveyLA.



*AMF El Dorado Lanes, 2013 (Author Photo)*

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<sup>49</sup> Duke Dukesherer, email message to author, August 12, 2013.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

## **Mar Vista Bowl**

- Historic Name: Mar Vista Bowl/Mar Vista Lanes
- Current Name: Bowlero Mar Vista
- Location: 12125 Venice Blvd
- Year Built: 1960
- Architect: Armet & Davis
- Description: Mar Vista Bowl was designed by noted architects, Armet & Davis. The steel frame and brick building was two stories and 30,000 square feet, and cost \$750,000 to construct. Mar Vista Bowl had an “Easter Island” theme which reflected the Tiki/Polynesian style architectural trend popular at the time. The exterior of the building featured a mansard style roof, rock accents, and textile block walls, the pattern of which was made of the X’s and O’s of a bowling scorecard. A Polynesian inspired wooden figure adorned the entrance. A “space needle” sign originally projected from the southwest corner of the roof. The lower level of Mar Vista Bowl had 28 lanes, a billiard room, children’s game room, coffee shop, and Tiki-style bar called Makai Cocktail Lounge. The second floor had a nursery, banquet room, league room, secondary kitchen, offices, and storage. Mar Vista Bowl’s noise suppression system was advertised as a major, modern feature of the establishment when it opened. The bowling center operated 24 hours a day.<sup>51</sup>



*AMF Mar Vista Lanes, 2013 (Author Photo)*

## **Shatto 39 Lanes**

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<sup>51</sup> “Special Acoustical System Featured in Bowling Alley,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 8, 1960, N17; S. Ravi Tam, “Distant Vistas: Exploring the Historic Neighborhoods of Mar Vista” 15-16. Available at [http://www.marvistahistoricalsociety.net/pdf/Distant\\_Vistas.pdf](http://www.marvistahistoricalsociety.net/pdf/Distant_Vistas.pdf).

- Historic/Current Name: Shatto 39 Lanes
- Location: 3255 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street
- Year Built: 1961
- Architect: Hawkins and Lindsey & Associates
- Description: Shatto 39 Lanes was uniquely designed to be a combined bowling center/retail and office building with a subterranean parking garage in lieu of the surface lot that was customary in post-war bowling centers. The 80,000 building also featured a coffee shop, billiard room, bar, entertainment and dancing facilities, nursery, and TV room. Designed by noted architects Hawkins and Lindsey & Associates, Shatto 39 Lanes was constructed of reinforced concrete and steel and had aluminum shade louvers for sun control and air conditioning. The design had slight characteristics of the Googie style with angular concrete forms separated by expanses of glass.<sup>52</sup>



*Shatto 39 Lanes, 2013 (Author Photo)*

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<sup>52</sup> "Bowling Alley, Office Started," *Los Angeles Times*, July 16, 1961, I21.

## **All Star Lanes**

- Historic/Current Name: All Star Lanes
- Location: 4459 Eagle Rock Blvd.
- Year Built: 1959
- Architect: Unknown
- Description: This one-story bowling center featured 22 lanes, bar, restaurant, dance floor, and billiards.



*All Star Lanes, 2016 (SurveyLA)*



## Woodlake Bowl

- Historic Name: Woodlake Bowl
- Current Name: Woodlake Lanes
- Location: 23130 Ventura Blvd.
- Year Built: 1961
- Architect: William N. Bonham
- Description: When it opened, Woodlake Bowl featured 32 modern lanes with automatic pin-spotters, a coffee shop, executive club, dining room, and cocktail lounge. Services included free instruction and a nursery, which was complimentary during instructional classes for housewives. Movie stars and TV stars attended the grand opening, which featured exhibition bowling and music entertainment. The center, which was open 24 hours a day, was touted as the “San Fernando Valley’s finest.”<sup>53</sup>

Woodlake Bowl was constructed in the Googie style of architecture. Renderings indicate that it originally featured a distinctive coffee shop with a curving, glass-plated room, folded-plate roof, and a cosmically inspired spire. A large, street-side sign spelled out the word, “bowl” in large letters.<sup>54</sup>



*Woodlake Lanes, 2013 (Author Photo)*

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<sup>53</sup> “Display Ad 77,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 2, 1961, E3; “Display Ad 66,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 19, 1961, E5.

<sup>54</sup> “Display Ad 77,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 2, 1961, E3.

## **Airport Bowl**

- Historic Name: Airport Bowl
- Current Name: (not used as a bowling center)
- Location: 10706-10708 W. Vanowen Street
- Year Built: 1949
- Architect: Unknown
- Description: Airport Bowl was constructed across from Hollywood-Burbank (now Bob Hope) Airport in 1949. It has 16 lanes, a bar, coffee shop, and billiards room. It was later the first bowling center in the Valley to have automatic pinspotters. Airport Bowl is a modest example of the Later Moderne style. As designed, the building featured a prominent entry, red brick and smooth stucco wall, rounded corners, and horizontal band windows. <sup>55</sup>



*Airport Bowl, 2013 (Author Photo)*

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<sup>55</sup> At the time of SurveyLA the Airport Bowl was not identified as it was not apparent from the exterior and current use that it was originally a bowling center. It may not retain sufficient integrity to convey significance.

### Sign Only Intact

- Canoga Park Bowl sign (20122 Vanowen St)
- Corbin Bowl sign (19616 Ventura Blvd)



*Canoga Park Bowl sign, 2013. (Author Photo)*



*Corbin Bowl sign, 2013 (Author Photo)*



## **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

### **Post WWII Entertainment - Bowling Centers, 1949-1970**

<b>Summary Statement of Significance:</b>	Post WWII bowling alleys/centers may be significant in the areas of Commerce, Recreation, and/or Architecture. Some example may also be significant in the area of Ethnic Heritage under associated themes developed for SurveyLA. Prior to World War II, bowling was a sport dominated by working class men; however, after the war, in an effort to attract a broader demographic to the game, the bowling industry re-invented itself with bowling centers. Bowling centers were large-scale facilities which offered modern bowling amenities as well as coffee shops, cocktails bars, and meeting space. These lavish, typically suburban establishments were known as the “people’s country clubs.” The 1950s and 1960s were considered to be the golden age of bowling when participation, particularly in leagues, was at its peak and new bowling centers were being constructed at a furious pace. Bowling alleys also illustrate the adaptation of architectural styles of the day to the building type and in particular, Mid-Century Modern and Googie styles. Most are the work of noted Los Angeles area architects. Extant post-war bowling centers are now rare.		
<b>Geographic Location:</b>	Citywide, with concentrations in the San Fernando Valley and west Los Angeles		
<b>Period of Significance:</b>	1949 – 1969		
<b>Period of Significance Justification:</b>	1949 marks the opening of Airport Bowl, the earliest intact postwar bowling center in Los Angeles. The 1950s and 1960s are considered to be the Golden Age of bowling. Large numbers of post-war bowling centers began to go out of business in the 1970s.		
<b>Area(s) of Significance:</b>	Commerce; Recreation; Architecture		
<b>Criterion</b>	NR: A/C	CR: 1/3	LOCAL: 1/3
<b>Associated Property Type:</b>	Commercial/Recreation - Bowling Center		
<b>Property Type Description:</b>	Post-World War II bowling centers were typically constructed in areas such as the San Fernando Valley where large expanses of land were available. They are large, stand-alone one-story buildings, typically surrounded by sizeable parking lots. He center typically featured eye-catching and modern architecture,		

design, and signage. Bowling centers typically contained bowling, dining, and drinking establishments. Modern materials including the use of steel, concrete, and glass. Modern design elements (e.g., cantilevered roof, sharp lines, sweeping angles) and futuristic or cosmic details (e.g., starbursts, boomerangs)

**Property Type Significance:**

See Summary Statement of Significance above.

**Eligibility Standards:**

- Was developed during the period of significance as a neighborhood or regional bowling center
- Present appearance resembles the original appearance and retains sufficient historic integrity to convey its historical association

**Character-Defining Features:**

- Retains most of the essential physical and character-defining features
- Played a significant role in the social and/or cultural history of the neighborhood or region
- Is an excellent example of the type
- Is also a good to excellent example of its architectural style and the work of a noted architect/designer
- Modern design elements (e.g., cantilevered roof, sharp lines, sweeping angles) and futuristic or cosmic details (e.g., starbursts, boomerangs)
- Large-scale, colorful signs, frequently in neon
- Associated architectural styles may include Googie, Mid-Century Modern, Late Moderne, and Tiki/Polynesian

**Integrity Considerations**

- Should retain integrity of Location, Design, Materials, Feeling, and Association
- Extant post-war bowling centers are now rare; therefore, a greater degree of alteration or fewer character defining features may be acceptable
- Some design features may have been modified, altered, or replaced
- Adjacent setting may have changed

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