

Survey LA

Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey

LOS ANGELES CITYWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT

Context: Entertainment Industry, 1908-1980

Theme: Residential Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry, 1908-1980



Prepared for:

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



October 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	1
Contributors	1
Theme Introduction	1
Theme: Residential Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry	3
Sub-theme: Residential Properties Associated with Significant Persons in the Entertainment Industry, 1908-1980	13
Sub-theme: Entertainment Industry Housing and Neighborhoods, 1908-1980	30
Selected Bibliography	52

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Entertainment Industry/Residential Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry, 1908-1980

PREFACE

This theme is a component of SurveyLA's citywide historic context statement and provides guidance to field surveyors in identifying and evaluating potential historic resources relating to residential properties associated with the entertainment industry. Refer to www.HistoricPlacesLA.org for information on designated resources associated with this context (or themes) as well as those identified through SurveyLA and other surveys.

CONTRIBUTORS

The Entertainment Industry context (and all related themes) was prepared by Christine Lazzaretto and Heather Goers, Historic Resources Group, with significant guidance and input from Christy Johnson McAvoy. Christy is the founding principal of Historic Resources Group, with over thirty years of experience in historic preservation in Southern California. Christine is a Principal at HRG; she earned her Master of Historic Preservation degree from the University of Southern California, and has fourteen years of experience in historic preservation. Heather is an Architectural Historian at HRG; she earned her Master of Historic Preservation degree from the University of Southern California and has been practicing in the field since 2012.

THEME INTRODUCTION

This theme, “Residential Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry,” examines the development of residential properties associated with significant persons in the entertainment industry, which includes the fields of motion pictures, radio, television, and sound recording.¹ They are associated with individuals who made significant contributions to the Entertainment Industry including actors, directors, producers, technicians, recording artists, and others. This theme also examines patterns of residential development associated with the establishment and expansion of adjacent entertainment industry-related facilities, particularly those neighborhoods that developed in proximity to the early motion picture studios. Properties evaluated under this theme are significant in the areas of Entertainment. Some properties may also be significant in the area of Ethnic History.

¹ For a detailed discussion of individual entertainment mediums and their history and development within the industry, see the Entertainment Industry Context, Industrial theme at <https://preservation.lacity.org/historic-context>

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Entertainment Industry/Residential Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry, 1908-1980

Evaluation Considerations:

This theme may overlap with other SurveyLA contexts and themes as follows:

- Individual properties and historic districts significant for their architectural quality may also be evaluated under themes within the Architecture & Engineering context.
- Historic Districts may also be evaluated under themes within the Residential Development and Suburbanization context.
- Properties significant for ethnic history are also discussed within the ethnic/cultural contexts of the citywide context statement available at <https://preservation.lacity.org/historic-context#Ethnic-Cultural Themes>
- Worker housing may also be significant under the Working-Class Communities theme of the Labor History context.
- Some properties may also be associated with themes within the Cultural Development and Institutions subcontext, such as Performing Arts.

THEME: RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY, 1908-1980**HISTORIC CONTEXT****Introduction**

The entertainment industry as we know it today originated at the dawn of the 20th century with the production of motion pictures. As time went on, the industry evolved to include the establishment and growth of other media, including radio, television, and sound recording – all of which featured their own major players, moguls, and hitmakers. While this theme focuses primarily on individuals and development patterns associated with the film industry, which reflect the origins of residential migration associated with the entertainment industry as a whole, it should be noted that properties associated with performers and other industry leaders across every medium may be eligible under this theme.²

From the earliest days of the motion picture industry, the lives of the individuals who operate within it have captured the interest of the moviegoing public. Anecdotes and interviews recounting how the stars worked, lived, loved, and played provided ample opportunities for the promotion of individual actors and actresses as well as the movies in which they starred. Allowing the public a glimpse into their lives off-screen fostered a sense of familiarity between the moviegoing public and their favorite entertainers, allowing readers of fan magazines, newspapers, and other periodicals to find commonality with the people that heretofore had only existed in front of a screen.

One of the most popular contexts for promotion was the idea of depicting stars at home. The “homes of the stars” offered a seemingly tantalizing glimpse into what a movie star’s life was *really* like – and, hopefully, demonstrated that deep down inside, stars were “just like us.” Publications like *Picture Show* and the *Picture Show Annual*, *Photoplay*, and *New Movie* often featured profiles of entertainers’ home lives. “Beginning this month,” *New Movie* announced in December 1931, “*NEW MOVIE* is taking its readers into the Beverly Hills and Hollywood homes of the movie stars, showing you exactly how your favorites live.”³

Detailed ground plans of the estates and various floors of the houses will be shown, presenting the exact arrangement of furnishing. With the aid of this series you can re-arrange and refurnish your home to match that of your player. If you wish to study the details of your idol’s home, write a letter to us, naming the home you wish to see and giving your own name and address.⁴

² For a detailed discussion of individual entertainment media and their history and development within the industry, see the Entertainment Industry Context, Industrial theme at <https://preservation.lacity.org/historic-context>

³ “*NEW MOVIE* Takes You Upon a Personal Visit to the Brentwood Home of Doug Fairbanks Jr., and Joan Crawford,” *New Movie*, December 1931, as reproduced at <https://www.joancrawfordbest.com/magnewmovie.htm> (accessed September 2017).

⁴ “*NEW MOVIE* Takes You Upon a Personal Visit to the Brentwood Home of Doug Fairbanks Jr., and Joan Crawford,” *New Movie*, December 1931, as reproduced at <https://www.joancrawfordbest.com/magnewmovie.htm> (accessed September 2017).

Due to the nationwide publication and promotion of the motion picture industry, during the Golden Age of the motion picture industry, the homes of the stars as we think of them today were some of the most widely promoted examples of residential architecture in the country. They shaped and supported not only the intangible character and careers of the players who inhabited them, but the landscape of Southern California as well.

While these homes played a distinctive role in defining trends in residential architecture in the early part of the 20th century, another housing trend within the industry had a much broader impact on the Los Angeles landscape: housing for studio workers. By 1915, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce claimed that eighty percent of the country's motion pictures were produced in Los Angeles,⁵ and it would be only a few years more before motion pictures became Hollywood's biggest industry. As the film industry continued to flourish, so did the number of workers within it. Set amidst the backdrop of widespread population growth and an already-accelerated demand for housing across Southern California, there arose a specific need to house those workers associated with the entertainment industry and its related operations. Real estate developers were happy to capitalize on this niche, and soon entire neighborhoods were rising near motion picture studios in order to house cameramen, choreographers, and contract players. The development of these neighborhoods helped to shape the landscape of Los Angeles and define the character of and relationship between residential neighborhoods and nearby industrial operations.

This theme examines both of these trends: the development of residential properties associated with significant persons in the entertainment industry, as well as the broad patterns of residential development associated with the establishment and expansion of nearby entertainment industry-related facilities. Each trend is discussed in greater detail as a sub-theme below.

Early Homes of Entertainers

When the motion picture industry first established itself in Los Angeles in 1907, the business was a fledgling one, and there was little call for extravagant private residences. Indeed, most entertainers would have been satisfied to secure housing at all as, at the time, the industry was regarded with such skepticism that many real estate developers and property owners refused to lease or sell housing to those in the movie business. This was particularly problematic in Hollywood⁶, which was quickly becoming the center of the film industry, but socially the town remained a morally upright and staunchly "dry" community. As Gregory Paul Williams explained, "Hollywood's residents, who had come to the area for domestic tranquility, treated the movies like a leper colony. 'No Movies' began to appear on For Rent signs in windows and in newspaper advertisements. No one wanted to take a chance on tenants, there for a fast buck, known to skip on the rents, and leave a rental house in shambles."⁷

⁵ As cited in Eileen Bowser, *The Transformation of Cinema, 1907-1915*, vol. 2, *History of the American Cinema*, ed. Charles Harpole (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 20.

⁶ Hollywood was incorporated as a City in 1903 and was then consolidated with the City of Los Angeles in 1910.

⁷ Gregory Paul Williams, *The Story of Hollywood: An Illustrated History* (BL Press LLC, 2011), 64.

By 1915, however, the tide began to turn. Gregory Paul Williams observes that “the edict of no movies living in Hollywood” crumbled with the creation of the movie star. No one complained when internationally known opera singer, Geraldine Farrar, rented a house on Hollywood Boulevard west of La Brea Avenue. Starring in a silent version of *Carmen* at Lasky’s studio, her high notes resounded through the neighborhood as she practiced, adding to the cachet of Hollywood as a place of culture and sophistication.”⁸ Indeed, as industry profits grew and community reception improved, the second half of the 1910s saw greater settlement by entertainment industry leaders than ever before. “As the wealthiest in the community, many stars opted for what the fan magazines called ‘the bungalow lifestyle’ north and south of Hollywood Boulevard. Buying or renting homes, they began a continuous round of house parties, bringing nightlife to the area.”⁹ Merry Ovnick explains that “in the 1910s, few film people built mansions, partly because their source of wealth was so new there was no assurance it would last. By the close of World War I, though, some of the screen stars and studio moguls were renting or purchasing older houses in expensive Los Angeles neighborhoods. The available stock of local mansions, dating from the 1900-1915 period, were often in the Tudor or Beaux Arts Italianate style.”¹⁰ This trend was highlighted by director Cecil B. DeMille’s purchase of a home in the Laughlin Park neighborhood in 1916 (2000 North DeMille Drive),¹¹ where he would reside for the rest of his life. His neighbor at the time was actor Charlie Chaplin. When Chaplin relocated, DeMille purchased the adjacent property and converted Chaplin’s former home into an office (2010 North DeMille Drive).



*Cecil B. DeMille’s Laughlin Park residence, c. 1930.
(Bruce Torrence Hollywood Photograph Collection)*

⁸ Williams, 77.

⁹ Williams, 77.

¹⁰ Merry Ovnick, *Los Angeles: The End of the Rainbow* (Los Angeles: Balcony Press, 1994), 170-171.

¹¹ See page 35 for a discussion of Laughlin Park.

For the most part, “in the teens and early 1920s, actors and actresses lived fairly nondescript lives in Los Angeles,” writes Bruce Henstell. “Their residences were usually modest but then a little went a long way when it came to housing in Los Angeles.”¹² One home, however, stood out from the rest and marked the turning point when an entertainer’s residence ceased to be merely their home, and instead began to represent an extension of their success and celebrity. Popular actors Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., and Mary Pickford – often known as “America’s Sweetheart” – married after a passionate affair and began renovating a hunting lodge in the new city of Beverly Hills. Completed in 1923, Pickfair “was the first, only the first, of what historian Charles Lockwood called the ‘dream palaces.’”¹³ As Bruce Henstell would later comment, “Once there was a first, everybody could measure their success in Hollywood. The building of estates both well-conceived and garish would be a local pastime for the next twenty years.”¹⁴



Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford set sail at their Beverly Hills estate, Pickfair. (Los Angeles Public Library)

¹² Bruce Henstell, *Sunshine and Wealth: Los Angeles in the Twenties and Thirties* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1984), 81.

¹³ As quoted in Henstell, 81.

¹⁴ Henstell, 81.

Entertainers' Homes in the 1920s and 1930s

As Pickfair swiftly became the “acknowledged seat of power”¹⁵ in Hollywood society, its construction, along with that of other entertainers’ homes during the early 1920s, signaled a marked shift in the growing influence and importance of the entertainment industry, and the role the industry played in its workers’ private lives. As motion picture studios rearranged themselves into the Big Eight and film production exploded, so did the industry’s stars – and their salaries. If there is a single distinguishing factor between the homes acquired during the 1910s and those constructed during the 1920s, it is the influx of wealth which financed their development.

The advent of the star system had one definite impact on the Los Angeles landscape. As money flowed into the business and more of it found its way into the hands of the stars, they began to live life more gloriously and with less thought of frugality. That included their housing. Moreover, the studios realized that, in addition to the sums they paid their stars, there was publicity mileage in the manner in which the stars lived. The bigger the better, the more romantic it made films.¹⁶

With the relocation of Pickford and Fairbanks to Beverly Hills, as well as the opening of the Beverly Hills Hotel, the social epicenter of the Hollywood industry had begun its inexorable migration westward – due, in part, to how the explosive nature of development which had overtaken Hollywood in a few short years had taken its toll.

It seemed that all hell had broken loose as roads to Hollywood looked like amusement parks with giant barrels, cafés shaped like dogs, and Sphinx real estate offices. Empty lots, strewn with litter, now had advertising billboards. If the public expected stars to live like royalty, stars needed to get away Hollywood’s commercial district with its encroaching poverty, dirt, and commercial ugliness.¹⁷

Moreover, “having endured the disdain of the original residents, movie people felt little loyalty to Hollywood.”¹⁸ Beverly Hills, by comparison, was “unblemished by a business district and its attendant traffic and gawkers.”¹⁹ Furthermore, as studios – constricted now by surrounding development – began to expand and relocate to larger properties to the west and north, those workers who continued to reside in Hollywood and commuted to the outlying studios also faced additional challenges.

Traffic on the dirt Cahuenga Pass became intolerable. The Pass needed regrading, widening and substantial paving to take the heavy traffic...By 1927, Cahuenga Pass became the third most heavily traveled thoroughfare in the nation, with 75,000 cars per

¹⁵ Arthur Knight, *The Hollywood Style*, with photographs by Eliot Elisofon (London: Macmillan, 1969), 22.

¹⁶ Henstell, 81.

¹⁷ Williams, 132.

¹⁸ Williams, 132.

¹⁹ Williams, 133.

day. The roads south of Hollywood needed attention too. People in Hollywood who worked in Culver City traveled on a crude fifteen-mile road through bean fields that became large, impassable lakes during the rainy season. The road had ruined several hundred cars. Since no public transportation reached this outback of movie production, in 1924, film people petitioned the county to improve the arduous commute between Hollywood and Culver City.²⁰

Given the circumstances, by the mid-1920s it was clear that for stars on the rise, Hollywood could no longer meet their needs. The exodus westward commenced, where new and promising Los Angeles communities were opening, such as Bel Air, Brentwood, Holmby Hills, and Westwood. These communities, far from the humble bungalows of Hollywood, would come to define the glamorous lifestyle of the entertainment industry.



*A signpost in Bel Air points the way toward the upscale amenities offered to residents.
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

At the same time, the popularity of movies spawned a secondary industry of fan publications, which served as a valuable promotional vehicle, and private homes began to take on more importance in the increasingly public entertainment industry.

By the time the star system had reached major proportions in the '20s and movie stars were constructing the houses the tourists came to see, their studios and agents were fully cognizant of the importance of their houses to stars' created images. Great

²⁰ Williams, 132.

attention was given to creating houses that would showcase their occupants to best advantage. Few screen stars came from privileged backgrounds. Their only acquaintance with opulence had been formed by movie props, their wealth had come too suddenly to permit a gradual acceptance into a high society of old wealth.²¹

Most entertainers, however, embraced their *nouveau riche* roles – at least publicly – as evidence of their talent and success. Indeed, by the 1920s “the wealthy element in Los Angeles was suddenly and preponderantly composed of nouveaux riches like themselves – movie, oil, and real estate people.”²²

In fact, it was the very lack of established wealth that enhanced a star’s appearance of accessibility – leaving the average fan who dreamed of Hollywood to imagine that someday, with the right lucky break, this too could be theirs.

Most of all, their houses provided the most opulent and convincing demonstrations of the film colony’s new-found affluence. Often constructed in a style that Dorothy Parker once devastatingly described as “early marzipan,” they betrayed all too accurately the tastes and aspirations of their *nouveau-riche* occupants – but were the cynosures of the shining eyes of all their myriad fans who gaped at them in the pages of *Photoplay* and *Picture Play* and dreamed of the day when they might ascend to similar elegance and luxury.²³

When many moviegoers could not extrapolate their dreams of their own personal success beyond realistic circumstance, stars whose personal stories, backgrounds, careers, and lifestyles were promoted as accessible and identifiable with the average American provided a feasible alternative.

The power of stars to attract readers and the conformity of Hollywood house design to national trends made celebrity houses ideal for magazines selling domestic dreams. In the 1920s and 1930s, movie actors and actresses superseded traditional business elites as avatars of success. Their stories of humble beginnings on family farms and in small cities resonated with democratically minded Americans. Mary Pickford could boast that she entertained “titled guests” at her hilltop mansion, Pickfair, but fans knew in their hearts that the “Poor Little Rich Girl” was still just one of them. Through big screen movies and gossipy portraits in society columns, anyone could imagine living the Hollywood highlife.²⁴

Stars’ homes during this period functioned as a physical manifestation of their success, and their design, construction, and development expanded in size and scope along with this growing importance. As

²¹ Ovnick, 171.

²² Ovnick, 171.

²³ Knight, 19.

²⁴ Sam Watters, “Making Hollywood Magic,” in *Maynard L. Parker: Modern Photography and the American Dream*, ed. Jennifer A. Watts (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 63.

entertainers aspired to new and higher ideals in home life, the location of their homes took on greater significance as well. For many entertainers, purchasing new homesites in nascent communities afforded them the opportunity for new construction that reflected their public personas; whereas once they might have purchased an existing home, the inherent promotional demands of their industry almost dictated that they construct a new residence, built in their own image and identity. As a result, when new, upscale communities on the west side of Los Angeles were opened, the stars followed.

Entertainers' Homes in the Postwar Era

In the years following World War II, residential development within the entertainment industry began to reflect the changing relationship between the entertainer and their house. Beginning in the late 1940s, with the dissolution of the studio system, promotional strategies evolved along with the motion picture industry, and efforts were no longer focused on depicting a star's private residence as an extension of their public persona. Hollywood house publication slowed at *House Beautiful*, which had heavily promoted photographer Maynard Parker's images of "Hollywood at home," from the late 1940s with the rise of television, the decline of movie audiences, the hearings of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, and celebrity coverage saturation.²⁵ By the early 1960s, *Good Housekeeping* rejected Hollywood stories because of the magazine's "inventory of show business personalities."²⁶ Private celebrity homes were no longer developed for public consumption.

Conclusion

The years following World War II brought the most dramatic shift to residential construction within the entertainment industry. Early industry enclaves, as well as existing estates in western neighborhoods, were jeopardized by new growth and development, and the accompanying economic impacts. Whitley Heights, one of the first celebrity enclaves, was situated in the path of the future Hollywood Freeway. "The project carved a swath through many of Hollywood's loveliest neighborhoods, where original owners were either of advanced years or deceased. Whitley Heights was sliced in half, and the former home of Rudolph Valentino came down with other houses."²⁷

At the same time, early stars who had originally sought out the western neighborhoods of Bel-Air, Holmby Hills, and their adjacent brethren during the 1920s and 1930s now found themselves saddled with assessments and tax bills they could not afford. Eventually, their dream homes were done in by the very factors that had once made them so appealing: their size and scale. As Jeffrey Hyland recounts,

Even very wealthy Harold Lloyd requested a tax reduction, not once but several times. In 1940, the Board of Equalization denied his request for a reduction from \$280,000 to \$127,320. "The film comedian," according to one article, "contended that the 15-acre

²⁵ Watters, 96.

²⁶ Watters, 96.

²⁷ Williams, 293.

place was costing him \$48,000 a year for upkeep and taxes, that it had greatly depreciated in value, and that it was too large to rent.”²⁸

As a consequence, many of the original estates which had once defined the character and identity of the entertainment industry and its stars were ultimately subdivided, the acreage broken up and sold for the development of multiple properties. Jeffrey Hyland notes that sometimes it was the original owner who sought to make money by selling off excess acreage, although these sales more typically occurred after a first or second owner died. The heirs kept the mansion, but they wished to maximize the value of the land.²⁹ Given this trend, it was virtually inevitable that many of the residences would ultimately be demolished, as even up-and-coming leaders and stars in the entertainment industry desired a more up-to-date home. Many of the earliest and grandest estates constructed by stars in Beverly Hills, Bel-Air, Holmby Hills, and the Hollywood Hills were torn down in the 1960s and 1970s.

The estate properties that survived became a rare resource type – a type which actually experienced a renaissance in the late 1970s. Proposition 13 and the subsequent reduction in property taxes made estate properties more affordable to upscale buyers, while at the same time creating a greater demand for higher-value homes by allowing homeowners to “buy up.”³⁰ These properties were now also seen as desirable by a new generation of entertainers for the same reasons they were originally constructed: privacy, amenities, and proximity to studios. “What does happen is that the homes they gravitate to are similar types,” explained a real estate agent in a 1979 *Los Angeles Times* article. “Celebrities want privacy, gates, security. Some want tennis courts and projection rooms.”³¹ Having these amenities in place was considered particularly appealing, as “They don’t want to take the trouble to add a playhouse, a pool room or a projection-screening room. Their careers are too demanding.”³² Furthermore, “there are only so many houses like that in the Southland, and most of them are in Beverly Hills, Brentwood, and Bel-Air. So it is not unusual to find a house that has been owned or leased by three or four entertainment figures at different times.”³³

As for new construction, building activity was largely limited to rare instances of infill construction in established industry enclaves. Residences, while still expansive, were smaller than the previous generation of estates and were constructed on significantly smaller lots.³⁴ The most distinctive difference between pre- and postwar construction could be seen in the architectural aesthetic, and while many stars still commissioned prominent architects to design their homes, they did so in the more streamlined styles of mid-century era. For example, Gary Cooper purchased one of the rare remaining vacant lots in Holmby Hills in 1953, and commissioned architect A. Quincy Jones to construct a more modern house, which was completed in 1954 (200 North Baroda Drive); Cooper resided there until his

²⁸ Jeffrey Hyland, *The Legendary Estates of Beverly Hills* (New York: Rizzoli, 2008), 315.

²⁹ Hyland, 315.

³⁰ “Estates Back in Fashion With Wealthy,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 29, 1979. See also “Heaven for the Stars Is a Private One,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 29, 1979.

³¹ “Many Stars Want the Same House,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 28, 1979.

³² “Many Stars Want the Same House,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 28, 1979.

³³ “Many Stars Want the Same House,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 28, 1979.

³⁴ Hyland, 314.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement**Entertainment Industry/Residential Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry, 1908-1980**

death in 1961. Charlton Heston also commissioned Welton Becket to design a modern residence at 2859 North Coldwater Canyon Drive in 1959. In 1961, Steve McQueen also purchased a home previously designed by Buff, Straub & Hensman in 1958 (Waldman Residence, 2419 North Solar Drive), and hired the firm again to remodel the residence.

SUB-THEME: RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES ASSOCIATED WITH SIGNIFICANT PERSONS IN THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY, 1908-1980

The presence of the entertainment industry in Los Angeles has, over time, contributed a unique and distinctive quality to the city's built environment. This is evident in the realm of private residences, which reflect the most personal expression of an entertainer's true identity. Costume designer Edith Head once observed that "perhaps no other well-to-do community in the world presents such a wide variety of architectural styles and interior décor as the homes of Hollywood, an expression of both the individuality and the creative urges of those who live there."³⁵

In the 1970s historian Arthur Knight, one of the first to examine the history and development of private residences belonging to entertainers, began to research and record the homes of entertainment industry leaders from the 1920s onward. Working with noted photographer Eliot Elisofon, Arthur Knight penned essays regarding the lives and experiences of Hollywood celebrities; his writing accompanied Elisofon's photos of the stars at home, in their natural habitat. Knight's efforts document a golden period in the history of Hollywood, when the industry's pioneers still walked the backlot, and the next generation of stars had only just emerged. Among those stars whose lives he documented were Cecil B. DeMille, Mary Pickford, William S. Hart, Will Rogers, Jennifer Jones and David O. Selznick, John Barrymore, George Cukor, Jean Negulesco, Ira Gershwin, and Edith Head. Knight's up-and-comers included Tony Curtis, Natalie Wood, Kirk Douglas, Henry Fonda, Rock Hudson, Charlton Heston, and Steve McQueen.



Edith Head at home, as photographed by Eliot Elisofon for Arthur Knight's The Hollywood Style.

³⁵ Knight, 8.

Knight recognized the almost inextricable interrelationship between the private life and public work of some of the world's most famous personalities; in discussing his book on the subject, *The Hollywood Style*, Knight wrote that he hoped documenting these homes would serve as a "record of a way of life made possible by the movies. By a simple reversal this book may also provide some useful insights into the nature of the American film itself, for the people who live (or lived) in these houses are among those who most influenced and shaped this pervasive art form."³⁶

Part of this influence was fashioned by the distinct advantages that the stars' positions afforded them.

The old-time Hollywood, believes Professor Knight, was America's equivalent of European royalty. "Because of their wealth and status, the stars of yesterday could exercise their personal tastes as only the landed gentry of the Old Country could. They traveled; were exposed to the best of many worlds. And because they were personalities (that has always been their business), they dared to express their individualities, to develop them and to reflect them almost narcissistically in their homes." Hollywood royalty bowed to no social strictures. It could flaunt the vogue.³⁷

The result of this daring and these advantages were amply reflected in the entertainer's surroundings. After surveying a variety of homes, Knight observed that "probably no other city in the United States, including New York, has a higher concentration of great art in its private homes, nor more homes designed and built by the foremost American architects, from Wright and Neutra to Becket and Pereira."³⁸

Contemporary criticism, however, has argued that in examining entertainers' residences in comparison to those developed by private individuals of the period, the most notable distinguishing factor appears to be, in fact, that there are very few distinguishing factors. Historian Sam Watters offers his opinion:

What is notable about these havens of the glamorously famous is their conformity to upper-middle-class taste. When broadly considered, they have no defining architecture, no regional style, and no unique design identity. The Hollywood home was no more than another American house next door, destined to be largely forgotten if not for its celebrity resident...³⁹

Watters also argues that in light of their unremarkable qualities as physical structures, the enduring significance and influence of these residences can be credited to their widespread promotion and publication. Southern California's most prominent architects, including James Dolena, Roland Coate, Wallace Neff, and Paul Revere Williams commissioned noted architectural photographers such as

³⁶ Knight, 8.

³⁷ "The Inside on Stars' Homes in Hollywood," *Los Angeles Times*, February 1, 1970.

³⁸ Knight, 8.

³⁹ Watters, 61.

Maynard Parker to photograph their celebrity commissions for presentation albums as well as magazine publications.⁴⁰ Furniture chains also paid for Parker to photograph celebrity rooms by their in-house designers, and celebrity decorators who catered to their movie industry brethren also sought to have their work photographed and published for promotional purposes.⁴¹

The result was a barrage of photographic evidence of how the stars lived, worked, and played, which then made its way across the country through editorials and advertisements. It is clear from a review of fan magazines as well as architectural and lifestyle periodicals that the homes of entertainers were often strongly associated with the lives and careers of their inhabitants; over time, these residences became synonymous with what it meant to live a successful Hollywood lifestyle, and symbolized what living in Los Angeles could be like if one were lucky enough to “make it big.” In many ways and through many mediums, the development of residences for entertainers and entertainment industry leaders – as well as their promotion – has contributed significantly to the built environment of Los Angeles, as well as to the perception of the city’s character and identity.

Early Entertainers Living in West Adams and Hollywood

Due in part to the community’s lukewarm reception, most of the film industry’s early stars lived anywhere *but* Hollywood proper. Indeed, as Arthur Knight wrote, “The day of the Hollywood mansion had not yet arrived.”⁴² In the industry’s earliest days, when filming activity was still concentrated near Edendale and Downtown Los Angeles, many successful silent film stars and directors settled in the upscale West Adams neighborhood. Early residents included Theda Bara and, subsequently, Roscoe “Fatty” Arbuckle (649 West Adams Boulevard), along with Buster Keaton, Rupert Hughes, W. C. Fields, and the Talmadge sisters, Constance, Norma, and Natalie.⁴³ Later residents included director Busby Berkeley (3500 West Adams, Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 478) and – after the neighborhood’s restrictive covenants were lifted in the 1940s – African American entertainers such as actress Hattie McDaniel (2173 West 31st Street and 2203 South Harvard Boulevard) and singers Ray Charles (3910 South Hepburn Avenue) and Ella Fitzgerald (3971 South Hepburn Avenue).⁴⁴ Notably, Hattie McDaniel was a leader in organizing against racial segregation in West Adams, and her longtime home on South Harvard Boulevard was one of the triggers of United States’ Supreme Court ruling in *Shelley v. Kraemer* that racially restrictive real estate covenants were not enforceable.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Watters, 61.

⁴¹ Watters, 61.

⁴² Knight, 17.

⁴³ “West Adams and the Movies,” West Adams Heritage, <http://www.westadamsheritage.org/read/454> (accessed January 2017). Individual addresses not noted.

⁴⁴ See also the African American Historic Context Statement at

http://preservation.lacity.org/sites/default/files/SurveyLA_AfricanAmericanHCS_09252017.pdf

⁴⁵ “Hattie McDaniel,” West Adams Heritage, <http://www.westadamsheritage.org/read/460> (accessed January 2017).



*Hattie McDaniel's longtime West Adams home, "Sugar Hill."
(Sabrina's Design Studio)*

Arthur Knight notes that director Cecil B. DeMille became the first “movie” to have a house near Hollywood, renting a shack in the Cahuenga Pass between Hollywood and the San Fernando Valley; the road was so bad that DeMille rode a horse to the studio, relishing the pioneer existence, and even claimed someone once shot at him in the Pass.⁴⁶ Actor Charlie Chaplin lived first at the Los Angeles Athletic Club (431 West Seventh Street, Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 69), and then in a succession of second-rate hotels.⁴⁷ While Hollywood’s reluctance to embrace its new community members no doubt contributed to the lack of early settlement by entertainers, the newfound industry’s lack of stability was likely a greater contributor to the stars’ reluctance to invest in real estate. According to Knight, “No doubt all of them, despite their new affluence, were haunted by the fear, as Mary Pickford once put it, ‘that every year might be my last in pictures. I never once thought my popularity was anything but a temporary and freakish phenomenon.’”⁴⁸

That same year (1915) marked the first time a home in Hollywood was sold to an actor – or, as Williams recounts, “It was eccentric Dr. Schloesser who ultimately betrayed his old-guard neighbors.”⁴⁹ Schloesser, who owned the distinctive Glengary Castle on Hollywood Boulevard (demolished), sold the property to Japanese actor S. I. Hayakawa. It was Hayakawa’s acquisition that “opened a floodgate of movie people buying homes in Hollywood.”⁵⁰ New residents included Francis X. Bushman, Thomas Ince, Samuel Goldwyn, Jesse Lasky, William Farnum, and Antonio Moreno; Lon Chaney and King Vidor also lived nearby.⁵¹ As Arthur Knight would later describe it, “the pioneers were turning into settlers.”⁵²

⁴⁶ Williams, 75-77.

⁴⁷ Knight, 17.

⁴⁸ Knight, 17.

⁴⁹ Williams, 77.

⁵⁰ Williams, 77.

⁵¹ Williams, 77. Individual addresses not noted; for approximate locations see reference map in Williams, 402-403.

⁵² Knight, 17.



Glengary Castle, c. 1915 (demolished). (West Adams Avenues)

By the mid-1920s, however, the settlers had forsaken Hollywood for greener pastures. As Arthur Knight recounts:

[...] During this period, it should also be noted, several of the major companies moved out of Hollywood proper, taking considerable chunks of the population with them.⁵³ As a consequence, studio people began moving out of the Hollywood hills, out of once fashionable Whitley Heights, Los Feliz, and the Rossmore district, to make their abodes in such new real-estate developments, farther west, such as Brentwood, Holmby Hills, and Bel-Air; or they followed the Cahuenga Pass into Toluca Lake, Studio City, and Encino. Hollywood itself was left largely to the hot-eyed crew of hangers-on and the sun-dried band of Midwestern early settlers so harrowingly described by Nathanael West in *The Day of the Locust*.⁵⁴

As Arthur Knight observed, “For the glamour people, Hollywood was now a place to work but no longer the place to live.”⁵⁵ However, while acknowledging that “important movie people no longer lived along Hollywood Boulevard,”⁵⁶ Gregory Paul Williams argues that the area still retained some degree of cache, and “the surrounding middle-class neighborhood still attracted famous people;”⁵⁷ Whitley Heights counted among its residents Bette Davis, Ronald Reagan, Jean Harlow, Rosalind Russell, Janet Gaynor, Carmen Miranda, and Jack Haley.⁵⁸

⁵³ Knight, 89.

⁵⁴ Knight, 90.

⁵⁵ Knight, 90.

⁵⁶ Williams, 227.

⁵⁷ Williams, 209-211.

⁵⁸ Williams, 209. Individual addresses not indicated.

While Hollywood remained the metaphorical home of the motion picture industry, it took some time for the community to establish itself as a desirable location for housing the industry leaders who contributed to its growth. Even then, it wasn't long before stars began to migrate westward to communities such as Brentwood, Bel Air, Holmby Hills, and Westwood. Those who favored a more rustic lifestyle chose ranches in the San Fernando Valley. While these communities do not represent a comprehensive inventory of neighborhoods inhabited by entertainers, they reflect the broad patterns and trends of migration and settlement within the industry. As representative examples, they are discussed in greater detail below.

Entertainers Living in Brentwood

In the early 1920s, the upscale communities on the west side of Los Angeles that surrounded Bel Air, such as Brentwood, Holmby Hills, and Westwood, benefitted from the restrictions imposed on Bel Air's prospective residents by Alphonzo Bell. Open to actors and other entertainers, on the whole these communities saw an earlier influx of residents from the entertainment industry.

The name "Brentwood" first appears in 1906, when the Western Pacific Development Company bought 350 acres from the Santa Monica Land and Water Company and announced development of an exclusive tract to be known as Brentwood Park. Said to be located "midway between the National Soldiers' Home and the Pacific," the tract extended north from San Vicente Boulevard beyond Sunset (then Beverly) Boulevard, with Bristol Avenue, originally called Grand Avenue, as its central thoroughfare. Restrictions stipulating minimum setbacks; prohibiting billboards and oil wells, business uses, more than one house per lot, and distillation or sale of alcohol; and dictating race, color, and creed of buyers and residents were imposed.⁵⁹ Despite the reputed \$1,000,000 investment by its backers,



Jesse Lasky's Brentwood estate at 181 North Saltair, c. 1935.
(Los Angeles Public Library)

Brentwood Park got off to a slow start, forcing Western Pacific to sell a substantial interest to Dr. Herman Janss of the Braly-Janss Company. By 1916 only about twenty-five percent of the lots had been sold, but sales and construction picked up markedly in the 1920s, when several of the most prominent architects in the region were called upon to design lavish homes in the then-fashionable Period Revival architecture styles.

⁵⁹ "Park History," BPPOA Blog, http://blog.brentwoodpark.org/?page_id=744 (accessed January 2017).

Over time, Brentwood became a popular area for entertainers. Judy Garland resided there in the 1960s, at the height of her television variety show (129 South Rockingham Avenue). Academy Award-winning composer Alfred Newman was also a lifelong resident; he constructed a home at 14148 Sunset Boulevard in 1934 and lived there until his passing in 1970. Other residents included Shirley Temple and her family, who occupied three adjacent parcels on North Rockingham Avenue which formed a family compound; the property included the family home at present-day 231 North Rockingham Avenue, and a full-size “playhouse” constructed for Shirley at 227 North Rockingham Avenue, where she would later reside with her husband following her first marriage. Set designer Cedric Gibbons and his wife, Mexican film actress Dolores del Rio, also designed and constructed a particularly notable Art Deco-style home at 757 North Kingman Avenue in 1930, which is designated as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 1038. Phyllis Diller purchased an early Brentwood home at 155 South Rockingham (demolished) in the 1960s, and remained there until her death in 2012. Marilyn Monroe also resided in Brentwood at 12305 5th Helena Drive; while she lived in the home for less than a year before her death at home in August 1962, of her many residences it is the only home she ever owned herself.

Entertainers Living in Bel Air

The development of Bel Air and its eventual, albeit reluctant acceptance of entertainers as residents reflected the very attitudes that many actors had sought to escape by moving westward. The



*Bel Air's West Gate at Sunset Boulevard, 1932.
(waterandpower.org)*

community of Bel Air was first developed beginning in 1922 by Alphonzo Edward Bell. Bell was a pioneering oil man and real estate developer who relocated his family to Beverly Hills, where they remained for several months while he and Frank Meline, another prominent real estate developer who brokered Beverly Hills lot sales for the Rodeo Land and Water Company, negotiated a deal to purchase the expansive La Quinta estate near Beverly Glen previously owned by Jake Danziger and Daisy Canfield Danziger. Bell subdivided the several hundred-acre estate to create the new community of Bel Air. The first batch of 128 fully improved Bel Air lots between Sunset Boulevard and Bell's own estate ranged from three-quarters of an acre to more than ten acres and cost \$7,500 to \$30,000, and deeds required a minimum expenditure of \$15,000 on houses as well as a formal architectural review.⁶⁰ Each residence

⁶⁰ Michael Gross, *Unreal Estate: Money, Ambition, and the Lust for Land in Los Angeles* (New York: Broadway Books, 2011), 102.

was fully customized to the owner; no model or spec houses were constructed. According to author and historian Jeffrey Hyland, “no detail was too small to escape Bell’s attention.”⁶¹ The care taken in the design, planning, and execution of the subdivision extended to the selection of potential residents and their tastes, as well. “References are required,” an offering explained, “and credentials are carefully investigated.” Bell quietly directed that no sales be made on Sundays, and neither movie people nor Jews were allowed to buy. Nonwhites were also barred, as in next-door Beverly Hills.⁶²

Lot sales and construction commenced in late 1922, and Bell continued to develop Bel Air throughout the 1920s. Residential lot sales in Bel Air throughout the decade were steady, if not exuberant. Michael Gross characterizes the new residents of the fledgling subdivision as “relatively anonymous compared to the show-offs who were flocking to Beverly Hills, but numerous nonetheless...Not one of their names would ring a bell today.”⁶³ However, as Gross notes, “A few picture people did sneak into Bel Air in its early days, Bell’s prohibition notwithstanding.”⁶⁴ One of the most prominent was film star Colleen Moore and her husband, theater executive and producer John McCormick, “who convinced a Chicago businessman to direct-sell them the unfinished Spanish house he was building...thereby evading Bell’s screening.”⁶⁵ Moore separated from McCormick only a year after buying the house on St. Pierre Road, which she subsequently leased to Marlene Dietrich before it was ultimately sold to actor Robert Stack in 1945.⁶⁶

Despite Bell’s early successes, the stock market crash of 1929 and the subsequent economic depression effectively halted Bell’s dreams of developing Bel Air. Land sales in the subdivision fell dramatically and oil production at Bell’s Santa Fe ranch was declining; without his oil revenue, Bell quickly became overextended in his real estate ventures.⁶⁷ In 1931, after several years of legal battles, financial and development struggles, and personal and family difficulties, Alphonzo Bell effectively retired, handing sales in Bel Air and its beach club to Charles B. Hopper.⁶⁸

Author Michael Gross argues that Bell’s retirement proved to be a turning point for Bel Air.⁶⁹ Indeed, Hopper lifted many of the restrictions on potential residents originally enforced by Bell which, along with additional subdivisions, ultimately ensured the success of the development. As Hopper would later recount, “I told [Bell] very frankly that these were absurd conditions and proceeded to hand him back my contract. ‘You can at least keep out the movie people, can’t you?’ he pleaded.”⁷⁰ But Hopper stood firm, having realized that the economic effects of the Great Depression had limited home buying power,

⁶¹ Hyland, 242.

⁶² Gross, 102.

⁶³ Gross, 105.

⁶⁴ Gross, 105.

⁶⁵ Gross, 105.

⁶⁶ Gross, 105. See also “Colleen Moore and McCormick Buy New Home,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 8, 1929, and “Then and Now – 345 St. Pierre Road,” Paradise Leased, <https://paradiseleased.wordpress.com/2012/07/01/then-and-now-345-st-pierre-road/> (accessed January 2017).

⁶⁷ Hyland, 245.

⁶⁸ Gross, 110.

⁶⁹ Gross, 110.

⁷⁰ As quoted in Gross, 110.

even among wealthy and upscale residents, and Bel Air would have to expand its offerings to remain competitive with nearby Beverly Hills. As Hopper noted, “there simply weren’t enough people of great means to populate both areas.”⁷¹ Hopper’s recognition of the limited market for such properties motivated him to release the restrictions against Bell’s reviled “movie people,” and, as Hopper later noted, “as I had clearly foreseen, movie actors and executives moved in by the score.”⁷²

Along with Colleen Moore, one of the earliest industry leaders to evade Bell’s restrictions was Sol Wurtzel. Wurtzel, who at the time was the general superintendent of Fox Films, commissioned noted architect Wallace Neff to design a residence for him and his wife, Marian, at 10539 West Bellagio Road. According to Jeffrey Hyland, the Wurtzels “never approached Bell about buying the empty Bellagio Road parcel. They purchased the property from a couple who had met Bell’s ‘standards’ and who had bought the lot before the 1929 stock market crash, then had second thoughts about constructing a costly new home afterward.”⁷³ Neff proposed a plan which was based on “the lines of the Florentine villas found on the hillsides near Florence, Italy.”⁷⁴ The Wurtzels moved into the house in 1932, and remained until in 1951. The house was later leased (by subsequent owners) to Howard Hughes, Prince Rainier of Monaco, who lived there while courting Grace Kelly, and Elvis Presley.⁷⁵

From the 1930s into the 1980s, many stars purchased homes in Bel Air as a sign of their successful arrival in Hollywood, and many remained for the rest of their lives, including actor Robert Stack (345 North Saint Pierre Road), director Alfred Hitchcock (10957 West Bellagio Road), and designer Tony Duquette, whose estate (1354 North Dawnridge Drive), served as a living laboratory of his 50-year career as a costume, set, and interior designer. Other residents, while not lifelong inhabitants, are known for their Bel Air estates, including Judy Garland (1231 Stone Canyon Road), Elizabeth Taylor (700 Nimes Road), Art Linkletter (1100 North Bel Air Road), and Johnny Carson, who purchased producer Mervyn LeRoy’s former estate (400 North Saint Cloud Road).

Entertainers Living in Holmby Hills and Westwood

Holmby Hills was first developed by the Janss Corporation in 1925, concurrent with the construction of the nearby University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) campus and the development of Westwood, their planned residential community adjacent to the new campus. From the start, Jeffrey Hyland claims, Holmby Hills became “one of the most successful residential developments in United States history.”⁷⁶ As he observed, “Holmby Hills may be less famous than its neighbors to the east and west, Beverly Hills and Bel Air, but its residents know that this anonymity has enhanced their prized neighborhood’s privacy, seclusion, desirability, and livability.”⁷⁷

⁷¹ Gross, 111.

⁷² As quoted in Gross, 110.

⁷³ Hyland, 264.

⁷⁴ Hyland, 264.

⁷⁵ Hyland, 268.

⁷⁶ Hyland, 157.

⁷⁷ Hyland, 157.

While the Janss brothers adopted restrictions regarding the design and construction of residences that were similar to that of surrounding communities, Holmby Hills held particular appeal as the Los Angeles neighborhood geographically closest to Beverly Hills – the social center of the Hollywood scene – that did not prevent actors from residing there. Soon, residents of Holmby Hills and Westwood included Gregory Peck (375 North Carolwood; demolished); producer Jay Paley (1060 North Brooklawn Drive); Bing Crosby (594 South Mapleton; demolished); Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall (222-232 South Mapleton Drive); Jean Harlow (1353 South Club View Drive); and composer Henry Mancini (211-219 South Mapleton Drive).

One of the largest and most impressive estates in Holmby Hills is Harold Lloyd's Greenacres.⁷⁸ Designed by prominent architect Sumner Spaulding and landscape architect A. E. Hanson and completed in 1929, the fifteen-acre Greenacres estate eclipsed even Pickfair in its size and extravagance. In addition to the expansive main residence, the grounds included a seven-car garage and servants' quarters, a large



*Harold Lloyd's expansive Greenacres estate, 1056 North Maybrook Drive and 1740 Green Acres Drive, 1929.
(California State Library)*

⁷⁸ Greenacres occupies multiple parcels on the border of Beverly Hills and Los Angeles.

paved entrance court, a nine-hole golf course with a sandstone clubhouse, a manmade canoe pond with a stone bridge, a play yard for Lloyd's daughter with a thatched-roof cottage and miniature barn, and twelve different gardens which featured both a stepped, cascading fountain and a hillside waterfall. The property is designated as Los Angeles Historic Cultural-Monument No. 279, California Historical Landmark No. 961, and is listed in the National Register.

Like Harold Lloyd, stars commissioned noted architects for their new homes in these western neighborhoods, which served to enhance their reputation among established society and also ensured that the completed residence would reflect their newfound affluence and acquired good taste. "Many of the newly successful turned for guidance to the examples already made acceptable by earlier association with wealth. They merely revived their revival styles..."⁷⁹ Director George Cukor commissioned noted architect Roland Coate (9166 West Cordell Drive) and actress ZaSu Pitts commissioned Paul Revere Williams (241 North Rockingham Avenue). Architect Wallace Neff was a particularly popular choice; Kevin Starr declared Neff "the architect of choice for Hollywood" by the late 1920s and early 1930s, writing, "In the hands of a master such as Wallace Neff, who became by the late 1920s and early 1930s the architect of choice for Hollywood, such narrational eclecticism, properly employed, could and did result in much fine architecture. The homes Neff designed for Hollywood clients such as Joan Bennett, King Vidor, Darryl Zanuck, and Charles Chaplin and short-term wife Paulette Goddard, each bore the Neff imprint of skilled siting, proportioning, and storytelling through historical motifs."⁸⁰ Starr also notes that it was no accident that such creative expression of historicist and exotic architectural styles was popularized through residential construction for entertainers.

The more sets Hollywood created, including numerous back lots built as towns, cities, or fantasies of every description, the more expressively scenic became the popular architecture of the Southland. If Hollywood, working through set designers and architects, could build a perfect replica of a thatched Scottish cottage, a Montenegrin villa, or Dublin townhouse for use as locations, then it is not surprising that citizens of the nearby area, influenced by both the movies and the sets themselves, should also be increasingly desirous of stage-set values in their domestic architecture.⁸¹

The stock market crash of 1929 brought many of the financial, social, and cultural excesses of the 1920s – particularly prevalent in the entertainment industry – to an abrupt halt. The grand estates of the decade, characterized by expansive acreage, multiple buildings serving a variety of functional needs, and lush landscaped gardens, would never be constructed again. While residential construction within the entertainment industry in the 1920s was characterized by wealth, development in the 1930s was motivated by migration – of both the studios and their stars. Arthur Knight explains how this occurred during a period of economic depression:

⁷⁹ Ovnick, 171.

⁸⁰ Kevin Starr, *Material Dreams: Southern California through the 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 210.

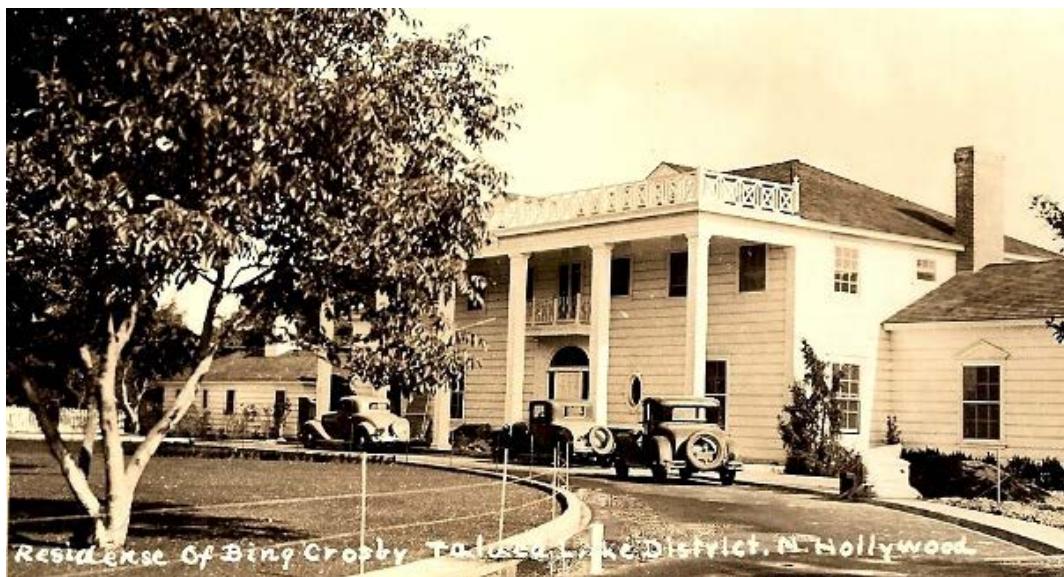
⁸¹ Starr, *Material Dreams*, 209.

It must also be remembered that during the Thirties the studios were turning out better than five hundred pictures a year, almost all of which were made in Hollywood. The weekly paychecks might not have been fancy by today's standards, but never again was the industry to employ so many, nor to proffer virtually continuous employment to its chosen ones. And since prices were down and taxes were low, members of the movie colony could afford to live like kings. Many of them did so.⁸²

Entertainers Living in the San Fernando Valley

The next wave of celebrity migration brought entertainers northward, into the San Fernando Valley. Though the area would become known in the 1950s and beyond for celebrities such as Liberace (15413 West Valley Vista Boulevard, Encino), the Jackson Family (4641 North Hayvenhurst Avenue, Encino), and Ritchie Valens (13428 West Remington Street, Pacoima), celebrities first began settling in the region in the 1930s.

The trend which defined the entertainers' migration to the Valley was the development of "celebrity" ranches. With the construction of their movie ranches, Universal Studios and Warner Brothers had "abetted a stampede of stars to the San Fernando Valley where land was comparatively cheap. Owning a ranch became a popular getaway."⁸³ Beginning in the 1930, "film folk" who preferred the Valley for its "climate, rural nature, and seclusion" began settling there;⁸⁴ eventually, residents would include such industry heavyweights as Frank Sinatra (10051 Valley Spring Lane), Bing Crosby (10500 West Camarillo



Bing Crosby's Toluca Lake residence (subsequently altered).
(Paradise Leased)

⁸² Knight, 87.

⁸³ Williams, 227.

⁸⁴ Kevin Starr, *Golden Dreams: California in an Age of Abundance, 1950-1963* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 4.

Street), and Bob Hope (10346 Moorpark).⁸⁵ Al Jolson also resided in Toluca Lake, having purchased Crosby's former home at 4326 Forman Avenue, as did Mary Astor (the former owner of Sinatra's home), Tennessee "Ernie" Ford, and Hoagie Carmichael.

According to Kevin Starr, other Valley residents included Clark Gable, Dennis Morgan, Edward Everett Horton, Janet Gaynor, John Huston, and Andy Devine.⁸⁶ Merry Ovnick believes that it was this move that eventually popularized the "ranch house" trend.

In the 1920s and '30s, motion picture stars and famous directors began buying and building rustic ranches in the San Fernando Valley. These retreats were usually not working cattle-ranches or citrus farms, but weekend retreats with white rail fences and simple wood-sided houses in which actors could relax, away from the pressures of autograph seekers. Some actors and actresses lived out their movie fantasies on these ranches, riding horses for fan-magazine photographs. A few developed ranches for breeding horses. Stars such as Ernest Borgnine, Monty Montana, Barbara Stanwyck, and Betty Grable were among them. During the '40s era of tract development in the valley and other outlying areas in the Los Angeles basin, the proximity to these "ranchettes" of the stars stimulated real estate sales.⁸⁷



Barbara Stanwyck's San Fernando Valley Ranch, Marwyck, at 18650 West Devonshire Street, Northridge, in 1937. The ranch was later purchased by actor Jack Oakie and became known as Oakridge. The property is now designated as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No.484. (Friends of Oakridge)

⁸⁵ An application was submitted in 2017 to designate Hope's former residence as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument, but the application was declined by City Council which supported the recommendation of the Cultural-Heritage Commission.

⁸⁶ Starr, *Golden Dreams*, 4. Individual addresses not indicated.

⁸⁷ Ovnick, 288.

Other “ranchers” included Roy Rogers and Dale Evans (22832 West Trigger Street, Chatsworth), and Gene Autry’s “Flying A Estate” (3171 North Brookdale Road, Studio City) and Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz’s “Desilu Ranch” (19700 West Devonshire Street, Northridge, demolished). By the end of the 1930s, emerging stars had settled in these new industry enclaves, which reflected the changing architectural tastes and societal trends of the time. While grand estates were still being constructed in the western neighborhoods of Bel-Air, Brentwood, and Holmby Hills until World War II, by the close of the decade popular opinion had already turned against them.⁸⁸ Evolutions in architectural styles and aesthetics, as well as the introduction of new technological innovations such as all-electric kitchens and central air conditioning, made the grand estates of earlier decades obsolete.

At the same time, as the country went to war, the “servant lifestyle” required to maintain these expansive estates was considered anachronistic and out of touch with modern society. Furthermore, even if this kind of elaborate lifestyle had been accepted, for many homeowners it would no longer have been feasible. A 1943 *Los Angeles Times* article offered a prediction of things to come, declaring, “No more luxury homes will be built in the United States because there will not be persons with sufficient income to maintain them.”⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Hyland, 314.

⁸⁹ As quoted in Hyland, 314.

EVALUATION CRITERIA: RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES ASSOCIATED WITH SIGNIFICANT PERSONS IN THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY, 1908-1980

General Guidance on evaluations: There are many hundreds of residential properties in Los Angeles associated with persons in the entertainment industry and, in some cases, there are multiple residences associated with a single individual. Not all of these resources are significant under this theme. As indicated in the eligibility standard below, the property must be directly associated with the productive life of the person within the entertainment industry AND the individual must be proven to have made an important contribution to the entertainment industry. Eligibility standards developed for this theme are largely based on the National Register Bulletin “Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Properties Associated with Significant Persons” (<https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/pdfs/nrb32.pdf>) which may provide additional information to apply in making property evaluations under this theme, particularly as it related to comparative analysis.

Summary Statement of Significance:

Los Angeles' identify is inextricably tied to its role in the entertainment industry. The well-known advertising slogan “The Entertainment Capital of the World” reflects the city's central place in the motion picture, radio, television, and recording/music industries. Residential properties evaluated under this theme are significant in the areas of Entertainment and/or Ethnic History and are directly associated with individuals who made significant contributions to the entertainment industry. This may include actors, directors, writers, producers, musicians, technicians, recording artists, and others. Residential properties were often designed and built for a significant person and/or were the long-term home of a significant person.

Period of Significance: 1908 – 1980**Period of Significance Justification:**

The period of significance begins in 1908, the origin of the motion picture industry in Los Angeles (though resources from this period associated with the entertainment industry are rare) and ends in 1980, the end date for Survey. The end date may be extended over time.

Geographic Location:

Citywide, with concentrations in Hollywood (including Laurel Canyon and Beachwood Canyon), South Los Angeles (including West Adams), Pacific Palisades, Brentwood, Bel Air, Los Feliz, Silver Lake, Echo Park, Hancock Park, Studio City, Sherman Oaks, Encino, Chatsworth, and Northridge

Area(s) of Significance: Entertainment; Ethnic History

Note: See also the Entertainment Industry themes of the ethnic/cultural contexts available at
<https://preservation.lacity.org/historic-context>)

Criteria:

NR: B

CR: 2

Local: 2

Associated Property Types:

Residential – Single-Family Residence - House, Estate
Residential – Multi-Family Residence

Property Type Description:

Single- or multi-family residence and/or residential estate of a significant person in the entertainment industry. The majority of the properties identified through SurveyLA are single-family although some multi-family may be identified through additional research.

Property Type Significance:

See Summary Statement of Significance above.

Eligibility Standards:

- A residence, estate, or multi-family property designed specifically for a significant person in the entertainment industry and/or
- The long-term residence, estate, or multi-family property of a significant person in the entertainment industry
- Is directly associated with the productive life of the person within the entertainment industry (film, radio, television, and recording industries)
- Individual must be proven to have made an important contribution to the entertainment industry

Character Defining/Associative Features:

- Retains most of the essential character defining features from the period of significance when the property was associated with the significant person
- The individual must have resided in the property during the period in which he or she achieved significance
- For multi-family properties, the apartment or room occupied by the person must be readable from the period of significance
- If the property is the only remaining resource associated with a person significant in the entertainment industry, it may be eligible even if all or most of the person's significant work occurred before living in the property
- For the National Register, properties associated with individuals whose significant accomplishments date from the last 50 years must possess exceptional significance

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Entertainment Industry/Residential Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry, 1908-1980

- May also be a significant example of an architectural style and/or the work of a noted architect, designer, or builder
- May be associated with individuals important in ethnic, cultural, LGBT, or women's history

Integrity Considerations:

- Should retain integrity of Location, Design, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance
- Integrity is based on the period during which the significant person occupied the residence
- Properties may be difficult to observe from the public right-of-way due to privacy walls and landscaping
- Adjacent setting may have changed
- Some original materials may be altered or removed

SUB-THEME: ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS, 1908-1980

Although the entertainment industry has evolved over time to encompass a variety of media, including film, radio, television, and sound recording, the industry's presence in Los Angeles originated with the development of motion picture production in Southern California. As such, many of the neighborhoods that were developed for industry workers were first populated with players from the motion picture industry. Like-minded artists, such as writers, musicians, and other entertainers often settled in these neighborhoods – many of which were developed specifically for their proximity to the studios - upon their arrival in Hollywood.

Pioneering real estate developer C. E. Toberman once described the movie industry's descent on Hollywood as "a mushrooming growth that almost overnight changed this community from the small, 'countrylike place to live'...to a booming industrial city."⁹⁰ Indeed, to residents who remembered Hollywood for its bungalows, small farms, and expansive open space, the transformation of the nascent community into the nexus of the entertainment industry in just a few short years must surely have seemed almost incomprehensible. By 1917, only six years after the opening of the first film studio in Hollywood, motion picture-making was Hollywood's largest industry.⁹¹

The arrival of industry in Hollywood was swiftly followed by the arrival of the workers who supported it. With studios employing hundreds of employees at every position and pay grade, from production assistants to presidents, a need existed for expansive residential development at every price point. Furthermore, those who desired housing were largely prepared to pay for it. Although residents of Hollywood had initially resisted the influx of newcomers who had come to populate the newly-established studios, expressing skepticism over their seemingly transient lifestyles, "as time went on and the golden stream that flowed from the box offices of the world into the studios of Hollywood showed no signs of diminishing, at least some of those fears were allayed."⁹²

The situation presented real estate developers with an ideal set of circumstances: substantial demand and surefire profits. In response, real estate developers began subdividing and improving the land around existing studios for residential development. Streets of modest bungalow courts were constructed for the average studio worker or contract player, and exclusive hillside neighborhoods populated with expansive estates were built with the stars in mind. Flush with the cash of their newfound success, "picture people" sparked a minor real estate boom in Hollywood, with Gregory Paul Williams acknowledging that "even the strictest Bible browser had to admit that movies had not harmed property values. New residential subdivisions sold out quickly as movie people spent money like water, demanding bigger and more pretentious homes."⁹³ C. E. Toberman would later recall how "lots sold rapidly, in some cases even before the street installations were completed."⁹⁴

⁹⁰ As quoted in Knight, 15-16.

⁹¹ Williams, 87.

⁹² Knight, 17.

⁹³ Williams, 78.

⁹⁴ Knight, 15-16.

As new motion picture studios were established outside Hollywood and existing studios began the great migration westward and northward to new and expanded facilities in the 1930s, many workers followed suit. However, this time, studio facilities were being constructed on large tracts of open land, unimpeded by the physical restraints of surrounding development. As a result, the anticipated demand for associated residential construction could be accommodated and, indeed, even anticipated during preliminary planning.

Residential Development in Hollywood

Residential construction developed near the early studios in Hollywood was not necessarily promoted as such. This may have been due in part to the community's reluctance to embrace or encourage picture people, who were so ostracized in early Hollywood society they "didn't even mix with workers from other studios."⁹⁵ Alternatively, it is possible that the demand may have been so great that promoting the obvious connection was deemed unnecessary. In any case, the causal relationship is evident in the location and concentration of residential construction in areas surrounding studio properties, as well as the settlement of entertainment industry leaders in upscale residential communities.



*The Garden Court Apartments (since demolished), c. 1920.
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

⁹⁵ Williams, 78.

The bungalow court played an important role in the development of studio-adjacent housing, as large colonies of courts were constructed only blocks away from the studios in Hollywood. These were developed primarily in the 1920s, when the studio era and its associated employment was reaching its peak. Other multiple-family dwellings, typically constructed as income properties and rented to studio workers, included boarding houses, residential hotels, duplexes, and apartment houses. The Garden Court Apartments (demolished) was one of the preeminent apartment houses of early Hollywood, having opened in 1917. "Considered one of the most beautiful apartment building in California, the residential hotel was a marvel of craftsmanship and luxury...Many Hollywood stars, like John Gilbert, Tom Mix and, later, Marilyn Monroe, lived in the Garden Court. Saturday night dances in the full-sized basement ballroom rivaled the Hollywood Hotel."⁹⁶

Those stars and industry leaders who had found success and desired more space and greater privacy settled in one of the many residential neighborhoods surrounding the studio district, such as Whitley Heights, Laughlin Park, Outpost Estates, and Hollywoodland. The development of these pioneering neighborhoods is described in greater detail below.

Whitley Heights

One of the earliest tracts to be recorded was Whitley Heights, which is situated in the central portion of Hollywood, just to the east of Highland Avenue and north of Franklin Avenue. The tract was first recorded by its developer, Hobart J. Whitley, in 1901, but Whitley did not commence widespread residential development of the area until 1918, after the tract had been subdivided several times.⁹⁷ Whitley's obituary later noted that "it was his last project and into it he poured his highest dreams for his city-in-the-hills. The terraced roofs and gardens he had seen in Egypt, on a world tour, lingered in his mind as an ideal."⁹⁸ Canadian born Hobart Johnstone Whitley came west by way of Chicago.⁹⁹ He had a vision for development. Almost every town he created had a bank and hotel as its foundation. His simple plan was to follow the railroad. Whitley married his second wife in 1886, and they honeymooned in Southern California. The experience piqued his imagination. Upon return, he opened a jewelry store on Spring Street in Los Angeles. Soon after, he began buying land. One parcel, the Herd Ranch, included 480 acres above the Cahuenga Valley. In 1889 the purchase was finalized. Whitley and his bride renamed it Whitley Heights. Not one for small gestures, Whitley planted 10,000 trees and invited 1,000 people to a barbecue. This established him as an early founder of Hollywood.

⁹⁶ Williams, 99.

⁹⁷ For a detailed history of Whitley Heights, please see the Whitley Heights Preservation Plan at <https://preservation.lacity.org/files/Whitley%20Heights%20PP.pdf> (accessed October 2017). Whitley Heights was designated as a City Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) in 1992.

⁹⁸ "Father of Hollywood Dies," *Hollywood Daily Citizen*, undated clipping, <http://thefatherofhollywood.com/images/pdf/TheFatherofHollywoodDiesHollywoodDailyCitizen.pdf> (accessed January 2017).

⁹⁹ Discussion of Whitley Heights has been excerpted and adapted from "About Whitley Heights," Welcome to Whitley Heights, <https://www.whitleyheights.org/detailed-history> (accessed September 2017).



*A photographic postcard depicts the early days of Whitley Heights.
(Paradise Leased)*

Whitley saw the end of Victorian culture and believed Mediterranean architecture would be more compatible with Southern California climate and landscape. An avid traveler himself, he hired architect Arthur Barnes to tour Europe and study architecture and landscaping. In 1918 Whitley began to subdivide the hill. Concerts were held to entertain prospective buyers of the tracts. The majority of the houses were built before the stock market crash of 1929. Barnes trained a cadre of young assistants to carry on his work, creating homogeneous yet individualistic homes.

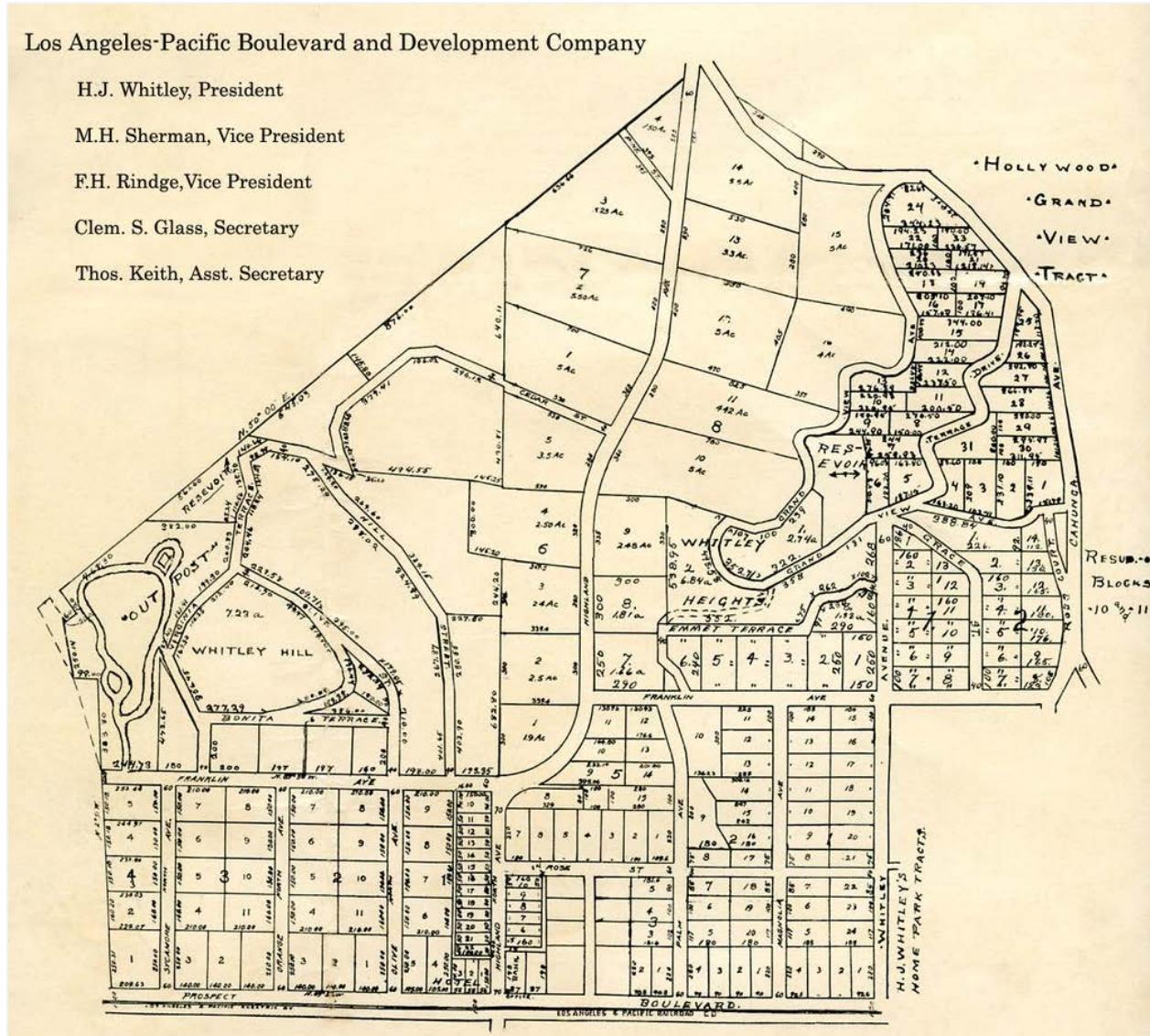
Silent screen stars gravitated to this secluded hillside setting and its easy commute to RKO Pictures, Paramount, Warner Brothers, and Chaplin Studios. Early residents included Rudolph Valentino and his wife Natacha Rambova, Barbara La Marr, Francis X Bushman, Jean Harlow, Blanche Sweet, Eugene O'Brien, Marie Dressler, Charlie Chaplin, and Gloria Swanson. Some stars transitioned into talkies. As the Golden Age of film approached, Bette Davis, Tyrone Power, Carole Lombard, William Powell, Maurice Chevalier, Donald O'Connor, Barbara Stanwyck, and Rosalind Russell moved into Whitley Heights. William Faulkner also wrote several screenplays on the hill.

After 1930 other styles of architecture were introduced. Watsonia Terrace is named after developer Arthur Watson, who hired set designer Harry McAfee to design his Normandy cottage on Milner Road. German expatriate Kem Weber trained at Bauhaus. Weber was an industrial designer before designing the Walt Disney Studios and private residences.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Entertainment Industry/Residential Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry, 1908-1980

The Hollywood Freeway began construction in 1946, dividing Whitley Heights. This development impacted dozens of significant homes. Rudolph Valentino's residence on Wedgewood was destroyed. Harold Lloyd's home was moved to Iris Circle. After the Topside estate was demolished, the Whitley Heights Civic Association sought to retain the character of the neighborhood. Community involvement led to the listing of Whitley Heights in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982, and it was named a City Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) in 1992.¹⁰⁰



¹⁰⁰ For the specific boundaries of the Whitley Heights HPOZ, please refer to the Whitley Heights HPOZ Survey Map at <https://preservation.lacity.org/files/Whitley%20Heights%20Survey%20Map.pdf> (accessed October 2017). While the boundaries for the Whitley Heights National Register Historic District were refined from the original tract boundaries, the boundary for the Whitley Heights HPOZ was developed separately as part of the HPOZ planning process.

Laughlin Park

Laughlin Park is located in the present-day Los Feliz neighborhood, just south of Los Feliz Boulevard and several blocks east of Western Avenue.¹⁰¹ The neighborhood was originally developed by businessman Homer Laughlin, who is best known for establishing the Homer Laughlin China Company. Laughlin spent his early life in Ohio, where his eponymous company was founded, but relocated with his family to Los Angeles in 1897 after selling his interest in the company to his business partner. Laughlin dabbled in commercial real estate in Downtown Los Angeles, but soon began to seek out a suitable site for his own home. Around the turn of the century, Laughlin purchased a portion of the Lick tract in Los Feliz from James Lick, who is best known for funding the development of the Lick Observatory. Laughlin's purchase formed the basis of a real estate acquisition that would eventually come to comprise over thirty acres atop a hill south of Los Feliz Boulevard. Initially, Laughlin intended to develop the site as his own personal estate and private botanical garden; to that end, he commissioned noted East Coast landscape architect Nathan F. Barrett – designer of New York's Tuxedo Park – to design the landscape plan for the property. A nursery was established on site and within several years over 50,000 trees, shrubs, and rare and exotic plants were planted.¹⁰² However, following the death of his wife in 1909, Laughlin abandoned his plans to live on the site and instead opted to subdivide the property for further development.¹⁰³



*Laughlin Park, looking south from Los Feliz Boulevard, 2010.
(Historic Resources Group)*

Sometime before his death in 1913, Laughlin transferred ownership of the site to a syndicate organized as the Laughlin Park Company. The syndicate, which was headed by Laughlin's son, Homer Laughlin, Jr., subdivided the acreage into forty residential lots of varying sizes. In the tradition of upscale neighborhoods such as Fremont Place and Chester Place, the streets in Laughlin Park would be private and exclusive.

¹⁰¹ Laughlin Park was identified as a potential historic district in SurveyLA. However, as the property is a gated community and therefore not visible from the public right-of-way, the evaluation could not be completed.

¹⁰² "Mid Cypress and Hedges: Villa Homes Will Have Real Italian Setting," *Los Angeles Times*, August 10, 1913.

¹⁰³ "Mid Cypress and Hedges: Villa Homes Will Have Real Italian Setting," *Los Angeles Times*, August 10, 1913.

Homer Laughlin, Jr. hired noted architect Irving Gill to design a plan for the neighborhood that respected the previous landscaping commissioned by his father, and selected an Italian theme for the architecture of the neighborhood.¹⁰⁴

The building restrictions at Laughlin Park are unusual. The cost of the house does not enter into them, but its architectural design must be approved by the Laughlin Park Company before it can be built. In this way the company aims to make of the hill a harmonious and picturesque home community...in which the homes will have artistic expression without ostentation. To attain this end the long, low lines of Italian architecture are considered the most admirable of all, and the Italian villa style, with modifications, probably will enter into all of the homes to be built here.¹⁰⁵

Gill prepared a site plan and landscape plan to help Laughlin market Laughlin Park to the public, and hoped to attract wealthy clients who would then commission him to design their homes in the neighborhood. However, for reasons unknown, Gill's site plan went unrealized. Initial development in the neighborhood was driven largely by architects associated with Gill and Laughlin, including William J. Dodd. Dodd purchased the second lot to be sold in Laughlin Park and designed several residences in the neighborhood.

The first home to be sold in Laughlin Park, however, was a residence for C. F. Perry, which was designed by architect B. Cooper Corbett and completed in 1914.¹⁰⁶ Two years later the home was purchased from Perry's widow by director Cecil B. DeMille. DeMille and his wife Constance felt they had found their permanent home in Laughlin Park, and indeed the pioneering director would reside in the home he had purchased in 1916 until his death in 1959. In 1918, Charlie Chaplin rented the house next door to DeMille's, which belonged to architect William Dodd. In 1920, after Chaplin moved out, DeMille purchased the Dodd property, and from thereon, the Chaplin house served as a screening room, office, and guest house for the DeMilles. In his later years, DeMille played an active role in the community, and even served as Laughlin Park's air raid warden during World War II.

DeMille's love of the neighborhood notwithstanding, following an initial speculative period driven largely by architects associated with the development, sales were slow to take off. The 1920 United States Census notes only three households residing in Laughlin Park, and by 1924 only four households had registered to vote. In these early years, residents were assigned a single number and simply given the address of "Laughlin Park." However, by 1930 the neighborhood's interior streets had been named; the street leading to DeMille's property at the top of the hill was named DeMille Drive. Over time DeMille's neighbors came to include actors W. C. Fields, Antonio Moreno, Maurice Chevalier, and

¹⁰⁴ For a detailed discussion of Gill's work with Lloyd Wright, Jr. for Laughlin and his plans for Laughlin Park, see John Crosse, "Irving Gill, Homer Laughlin and the Beginnings of Modern Architecture in Los Angeles, Part II, 1911-1916," Southern California Architectural History, <https://socalarchhistory.blogspot.com/2015/12/irving-gill-homer-laughlin-and.html> (accessed September 2017).

¹⁰⁵ "Hollywood's Beauty Spot: Laughlin Park," *Los Angeles Times*, August 28, 1913.

¹⁰⁶ "First of Fine Homes Finished," *Los Angeles Times*, August 2, 1914.

Deanna Durbin, and architects Carleton Monroe Winslow and William J. Dodd. DeMille's daughter Katherine also lived in the neighborhood with her husband, actor Anthony Quinn. Original residences constructed in the 1920s and 1930s were designed by prominent architects such as, J. Martyn Haenke, Carleton Monroe Winslow, Arthur Kelly, Roland Coate, and Gordon B. Kaufmann. Later residents included boxer Jack Dempsey, musician Chick Corea, and actress Lily Tomlin. The DeMille family remained an enduring presence in Laughlin Park; Cecil B. DeMille's family retained his residence on DeMille Drive following his death until the 1980s, and two of his children continued to reside in the neighborhood.



*Laughlin Park, 1921. Cecil B. DeMille's compound is shown atop the hill in the center.
(Bruce Torrence Hollywood Photograph Collection)*

In the years following World War II, when housing across Los Angeles was appearing as swiftly as it could be built, the expansive lots of Laughlin Park proved to be too tempting for developers to resist. Some of the original forty lots were subdivided – sometimes into four or smaller lots – and were developed with infill construction. While some longtime owners resisted change as the neighborhood evolved, newer residents embraced the opportunity to profit off the land: property taxes continued to rise, and soon the sizable estates of Laughlin Park were seen as an anachronism.¹⁰⁷ The move highlighted a schism between the property owners of Laughlin Park: those who resided on interior streets valued the privacy and seclusion their large lots afforded them; on the other hand, owners of property fronting major thoroughfares like Los Feliz Boulevard or Franklin Avenue were frustrated by their inability to maximize their land value. As one resident living on Franklin Avenue explained, “I have an acre of land and that doesn’t make sense. I tried to get the property rezoned for multiple residences, but the people up the hill really made it difficult.”¹⁰⁸

Subdivision activity continued through at least the 1960s, however, and by the mid-1980s the original forty parcels had grown to sixty.¹⁰⁹ Gates were added to the neighborhood’s five entrances around 1990, defining the private enclave as it is known today.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ “Laughlin Park Survives,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 3, 1972.

¹⁰⁸ “Laughlin Park Survives,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 3, 1972.

¹⁰⁹ “Laughlin Park: Here Film Pioneers Felt Right at Home,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 4, 1986.

¹¹⁰ “Keepers of the Gates,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 2, 1992.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Entertainment Industry/Residential Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry, 1908-1980

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Entertainment Industry/Residential Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry, 1908-1980

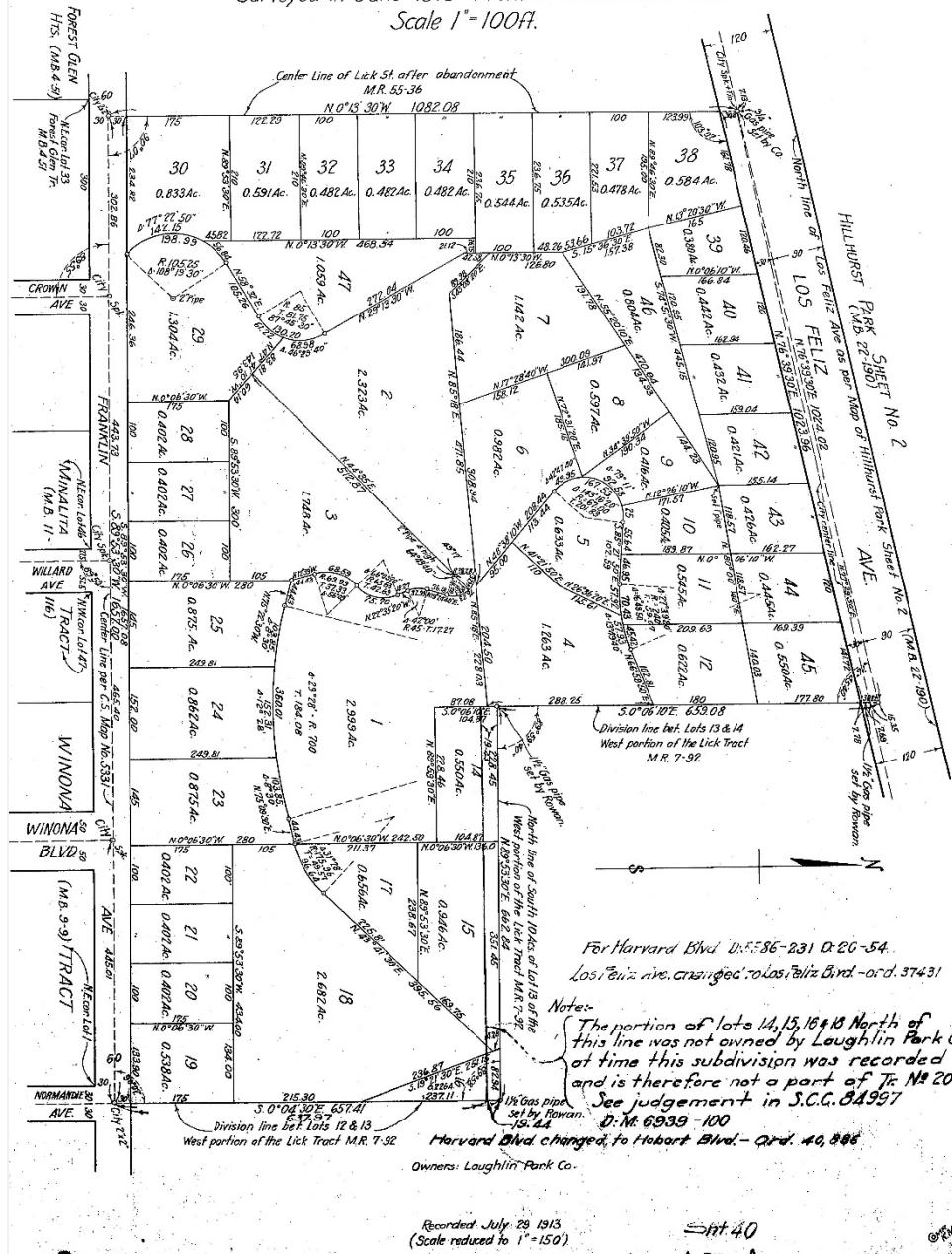
TRACT²⁸ No. 2099

*Being a resubdivision of Lot 14 and South 10 Acres of Lot 13
of the West portion of the Lick Tract as per Map recorded in
Book 7 Page 92 Miscellaneous Records and also Lots 1 to 7
inclusive and the East half of Lick Street (abandoned)
as per Map of "Lot 15 Lick Tract" recorded in Book 55 page 36
Miscellaneous Records of Los Angeles County.*

Los Angeles Cal. - True Courses.

Surveyed in June 1913 Fremont Ackerman C.E.

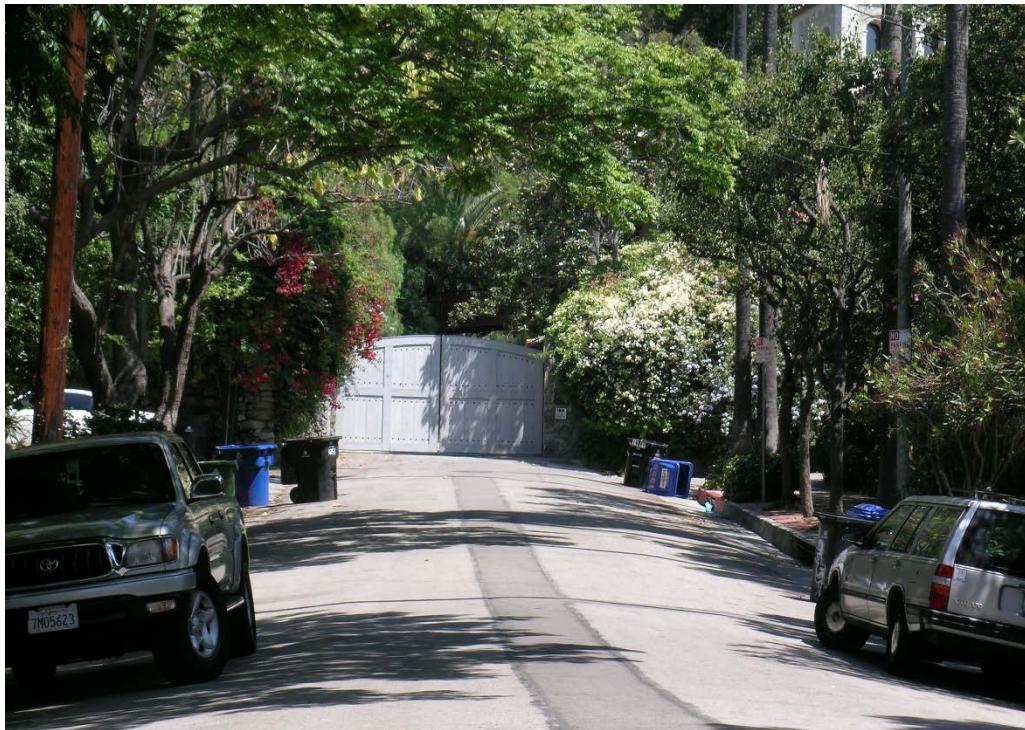
Scale 1" = 100ft.



*This tract map (MB23-20) for Tract No. 2099
reflects the initial subdivision of Homer Laughlin's land for residential development.
(Los Angeles County Department of Public Works)*

Las Colinas Heights and Outpost Estates

Las Colinas Heights and Outpost Estates were both conceived by pioneering real estate developer Charles E. Toberman. By 1914, Toberman had purchased ten acres west of La Brea and north of Hollywood Blvd. from T.E. Gibbon, the former vice president of the Salt Lake Railway for a \$70,000 option. This land included the existing Las Colinas Heights Tract, which was situated to the west of La Brea Avenue and north of Franklin Avenue.¹¹¹ Toberman did the necessary grading to make the topography more conducive to residential development and added paved streets, concrete sidewalks, and streetlights. The Las Colinas Heights Tract opened in 1915, and lots were sold for the unheard-of price of \$65 to \$75 per front foot. Las Colinas Heights proved to be one of Toberman's most successful developments, and he constructed his personal residence here at 1847 North Camino Palmero (City Historic-Cultural Monument No. 285 and also listed in the California Register and the National Register). Toberman subsequently sold his estate to producer Jesse Lasky in 1922. In addition to Lasky, Las Colinas Heights was also populated by film stars, directors, and other influential people in the motion picture industry in the early 1920s. Residents included Anita Stewart (7425 West Franklin Avenue), director Oscar Apfel (1840 North Camino Palmero), and Ozzie & Harriet Nelson (1822 North Camino Palmero). "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet" – the longest running live-action comedy series – was filmed at the Nelsons' home on Camino Palmero from 1952 to 1966.

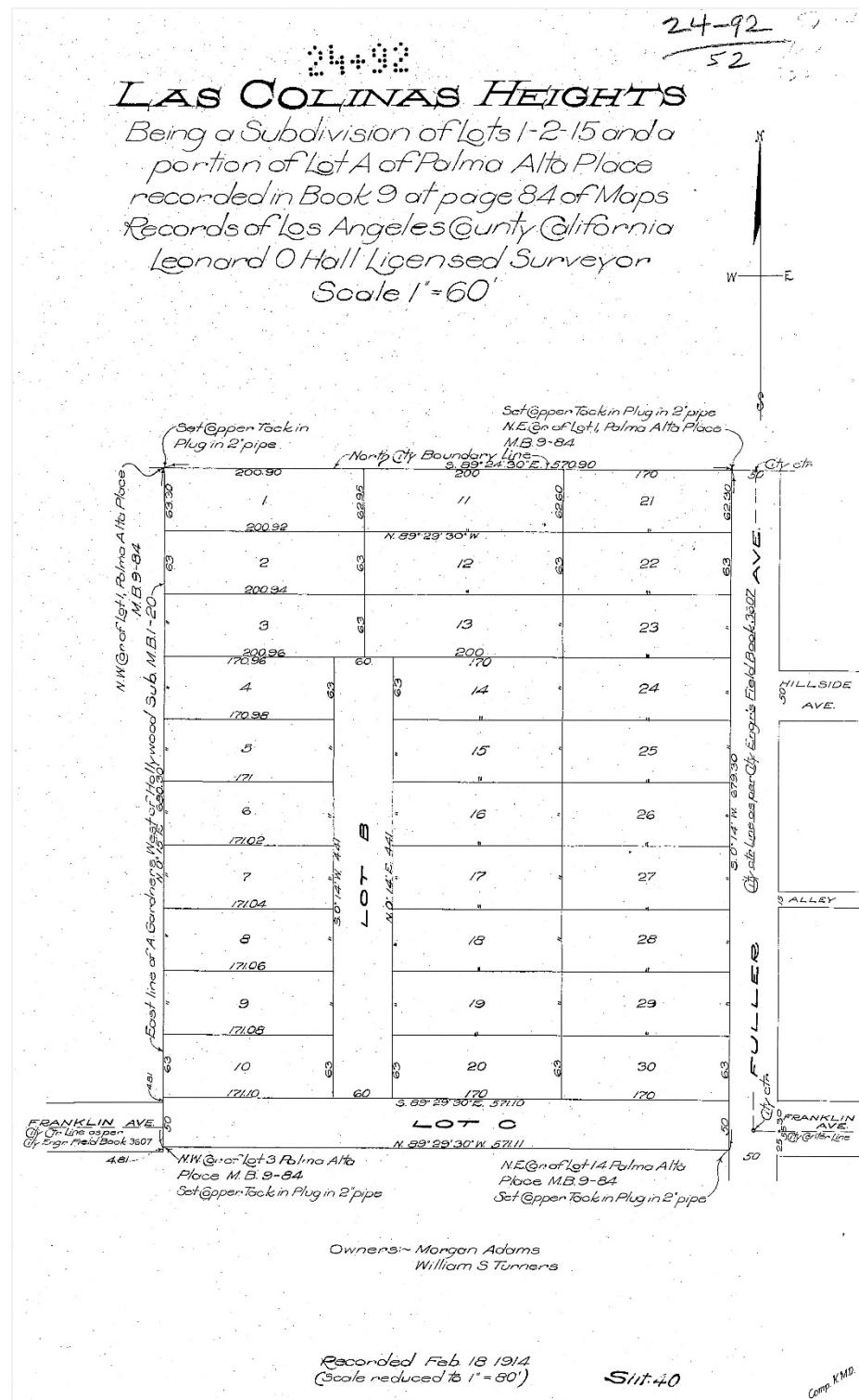


A street in Las Colinas Heights, 2010.
(Historic Resources Group)

¹¹¹ Las Colinas Heights was identified as a potential residential historic district by SurveyLA.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Entertainment Industry/Residential Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry, 1908-1980



This tract map (MB24-92) for the Las Colinas Heights tract reflects the eastern portion of the present-day Las Colinas Heights neighborhood.
(Los Angeles County Department of Public Works)

Outpost Estates was developed nearby in 1924, just north of Franklin Avenue and east of La Brea Avenue.¹¹² Toberman envisioned his development as the “jewel in the hills.” Its name was inspired by a former owner, General Harrison Gray Otis, founder of the *Los Angeles Times* and patriarch of the Chandler newspaper dynasty. General Otis’ acquisition of the land included the existing Urdiquez adobe, which Otis dubbed “The Outpost.” (The adobe was later demolished to allow for the development of Outpost Estates.) By 1924, Toberman had acquired several hundred acres to the north of the Outpost for a planned residential development, and his acquisition of the Outpost land connected the area with adjacent major thoroughfares.



*Outpost Estates, 2010.
(Historic Resources Group)*

Outpost Estates officially opened in 1925. (Additional tracts were subdivided in 1927 and 1935.) Toberman erected a sign on the hillside that read “Outpost” in big neon letters, not unlike the nearby Hollywoodland sign a few miles to the east. Advertisements touted the area’s “natural hillside setting”, as well as its proximity to the “business, amusement and shopping facilities of Hollywood Boulevard” just blocks away. Features of the development included paved streets with grading to ensure proper drainage, underground utilities to preserve the natural views, and decorative street trees and lampposts. From the outset, Toberman established strict building standards and architectural restrictions to ensure high-quality and unified design throughout. His organization included an

¹¹² Due to architectural restrictions which were modified in the 1930s and 1940s, a strong sense of architectural cohesion is only present in the lower portion of the original development. As a result, only the lower portion of Outpost Estates was identified as a potential residential historic district by SurveyLA.

architectural department that reviewed plans, some of which were drafted by noted Los Angeles architect Marshall P. Wilkinson and builder Lester L. Pedersen. Originally, residences could only be designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival or Mediterranean Revival architectural styles, in keeping with Toberman's vision of his new development as "a bit of Old Spain" in Hollywood. All residences in the early tracts feature rough plaster exteriors and red clay tile roofs, and display a variety of details including heavy wooden carved doors, arched openings, and decorative tile and wrought iron. However, the architectural restrictions were modified in the 1930s and 1940s to allow for more stylistic variation.

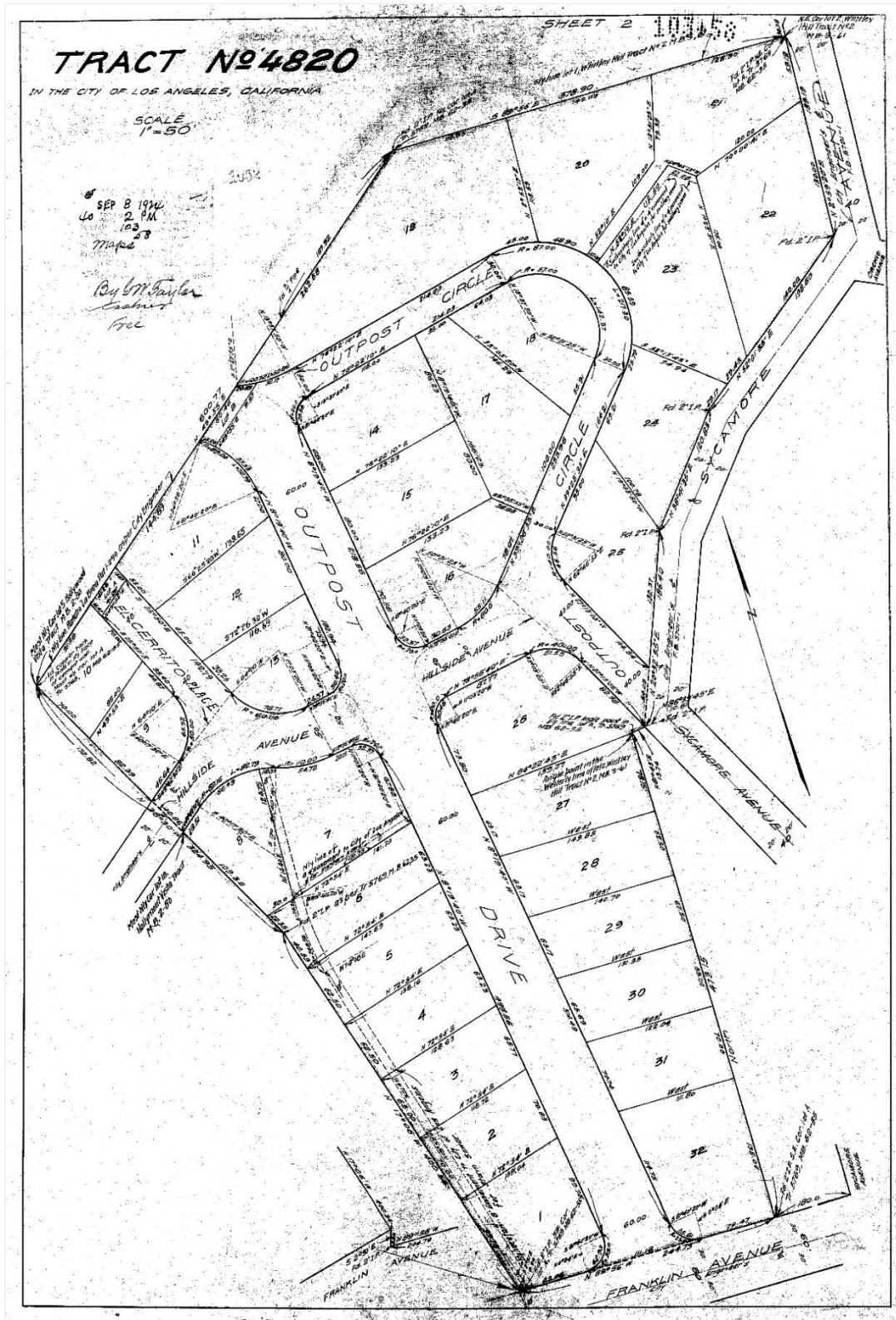
Due to its high-quality design and proximity to central Hollywood, Outpost Estates soon became one of Hollywood's most prestigious neighborhoods attracting doctors, lawyers, and businessmen, as well as people working the city's burgeoning entertainment industry. Over time, industry residents came to include Dolores del Rio, Bela Lugosi, Melvyn Douglas, Frank Sinatra and Ava Gardner, and Bob Barker.



*Residence of Dolores del Rio, constructed in Outpost Estates in 1928 by architect Milton Black.
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Entertainment Industry/Residential Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry, 1908-1980



This tract map (MB103-57) for Tract No. 4820 reflects the initial subdivision for Charles E. Toberman's Outpost Estates community, which opened in 1925.
(Los Angeles County Department of Public Works)

Hollywoodland

Hollywoodland is particularly notable as one of the few neighborhoods to advertise its proximity to the motion picture studios as an amenity.¹¹³ Hollywood was initially developed from multiple tracts as a 500-acre residential subdivision established at the top of Beachwood Drive, in an area then known as the Sherman & Clark Ranch.¹¹⁴ The subdivision was developed by a five-member real estate syndicate that included *Los Angeles Times* publisher Harry Chandler, Pacific Electric Railway Co. director M. H. Sherman, landowner E.P. Clark, and developers S.H. Woodruff and Tracy E. Shoults. Hollywoodland was conceived as an elegant, exclusive hillside community to be developed with well-appointed Period Revival style homes and extensive recreational facilities.

Advertisements touted the area's bucolic hillside setting and panoramic views of the city below, while a streetcar line along Beachwood Drive provided easy access to business and social activities in Hollywood and Downtown Los Angeles. Italian stonemasons were hired to create the neighborhood's characteristic granite features, including retaining walls, public stairways, and the entry gates (the entry gates are designated City Historic-Cultural Monument No. 20, and the granite retaining walls and stairs are designated City Historic-Cultural

Monument No. 535.).

Improvements included concrete roadways, aqueduct water, sewers, gas, electricity, and ornamental street lighting. Horse stables were built in the hills above the development, with an extensive system of bridal paths and hiking trails leading to Lake Hollywood and Griffith Park. The iconic Hollywood sign originally read "Hollywoodland," a colossal advertisement for the new development.



*Hollywoodland, c. 1925.
(waterandpower.org)*

Hollywoodland was intended to be a gated community with strict architectural guidelines. Initially, the development permitted just four architectural styles – French Norman, English Tudor, Mediterranean and Spanish Colonial Revival – and all plans were approved by the Hollywoodland architectural

¹¹³ "Display Ad 103," *Los Angeles Times*, February 6, 1927.

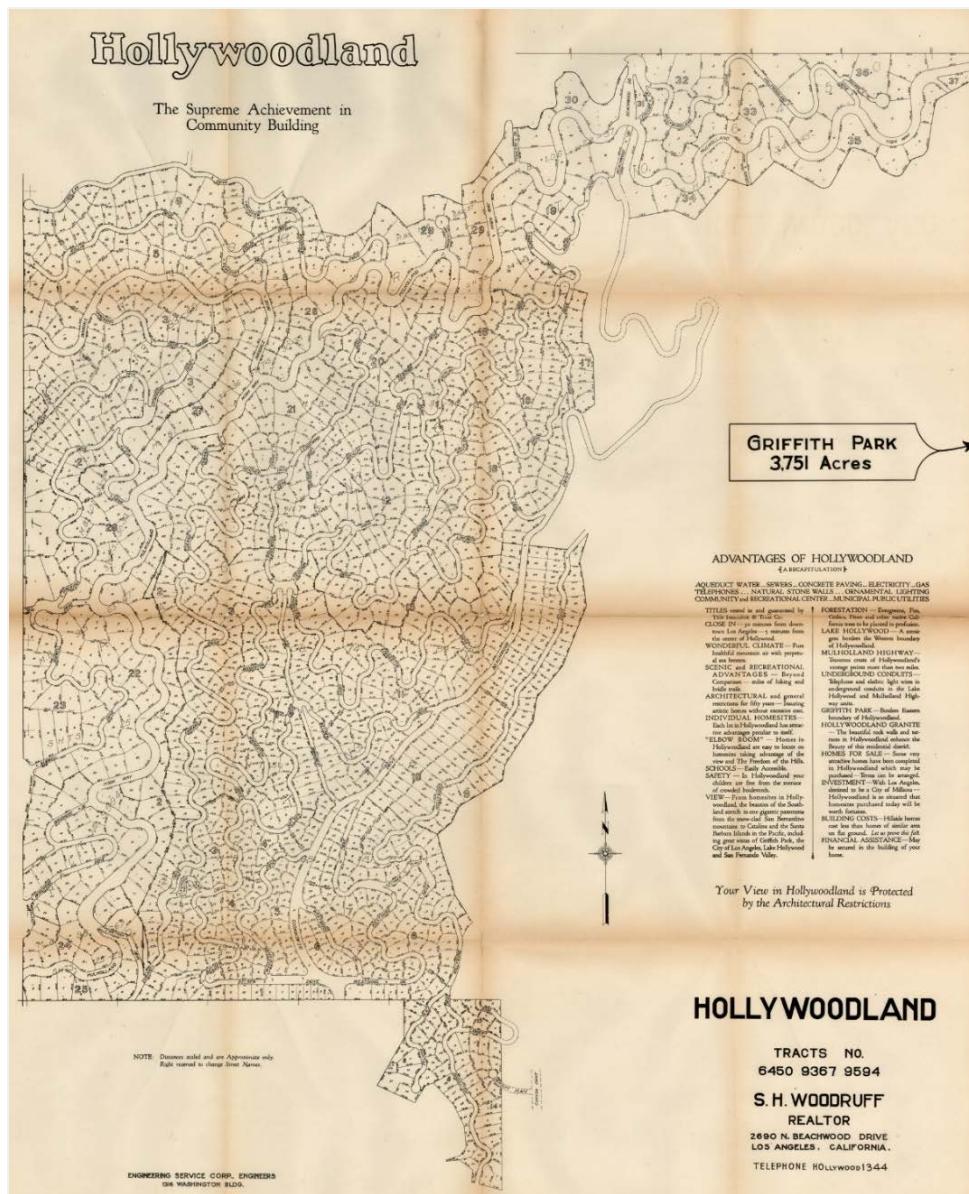
¹¹⁴ Hollywoodland was identified as two separate districts by SurveyLA: the neighborhood as a whole was identified as a potential planning district, and a portion of the neighborhood was identified as a potential historic district. The potential planning district corresponds with the boundaries defined in the Hollywood Specific Plan and generally corresponds with the boundaries of the original development, which was composed of multiple tracts. The potential historic district comprises the core of the original 1923 Hollywoodland development around the intersection of Beachwood Drive and Belden Drive, and represents the subdivision's most cohesive collection of original Hollywoodland buildings.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Entertainment Industry/Residential Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry, 1908-1980

committee. Developers retained noted architect John DeLario to design the area's most prominent buildings and many of its earliest residences in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Architectural restrictions were lifted in the 1940s, accounting for the wide range of building sizes, shapes, and styles present throughout Hollywoodland today.

Because of its high-end design and proximity to central Hollywood, Hollywoodland became one of the most prestigious neighborhoods for early film stars and other entertainment industry players. Over the years, Hollywoodland has been home to many writers, actors, and other famous personalities, including Aldous Huxley, James M. Cain, Bela Lugosi, Bugsy Siegel, Busby Berkeley, and Humphrey Bogart.



*Hollywoodland was initially developed from Tract No. 6450. This and two other tracts are shown here in this promotional map.
(Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps)*

Residential Development Outside Hollywood

Many studios, which either settled outside of Hollywood or relocated away from the area, were able to set aside acreage specifically for the development of residential neighborhoods during the planning of their new facilities. In addition, many private real estate developers seized the opportunity to capitalize on the industry's expansion and recorded their own tracts nearby. Perhaps as a result of proactive planning, on the whole these subdivisions, which offered both single and multiple-family dwellings, tended to be more widely advertised and their association with nearby studios promoted more aggressively. Among the studios who invested substantially in associated residential construction – and promoted their land accordingly – were Universal Studios in Studio City and Fox Studios in Westwood. The area adjacent to Universal was subdivided in 1927 as the Central Motion Picture District, which was developed by a consortium that included producer and early Studio City booster and developer Mack Sennett, producer Al Christie, and a group of real estate professionals. The consortium's goal was to build a new studio in the area as well as a residential and commercial district "to support the economic growth of their new city." In 1928, Sennett succeeded in establishing Mack Sennett's Studioland, just across the Los Angeles River, which helped jump-start residential settlement in the area. Fox Studios, an early investor in the Westwood area, purchased a large tract of land south of the proposed site of the future University of California, Los Angeles campus and made plans to establish a studio there. In conjunction with their successful industrial development, the Janss brothers – the developers of Westwood – also laid out residential tracts adjacent to the new studio and dubbed the area "Fox Hills." Fox Hills units were widely promoted as "the only subdivision adjoining [the] new \$2,000,000 Fox Studio Site."¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ "Display Ad 247," *Los Angeles Times*, September 23, 1923.

EVALUATION CRITERIA: ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS, 1908-1980**Summary Statement of Significance:**

Los Angeles' identity is inextricably tied to its role in the entertainment industry. The well-known advertising slogan "The Entertainment Capital of the World" reflects the city's central place in the motion picture, radio, television, and recording/music industries. Residential properties evaluated under this subtheme are significant in the areas of Entertainment, Industry, and/or Social History. Resources primarily include multi-family properties and residential neighborhoods developed adjacent to, or in the proximity of, motion picture studios specifically to cater to and house people working in the entertainment industry. Significant properties range from modest bungalow courts built to house industry support workers to high-end residential housing and neighborhoods catering to movie stars and other celebrities.

Period of Significance:

1908 – 1980

Period of Significance Justification:

The period of significance begins in 1908, the origin of the motion picture industry in Los Angeles (though resources from this period associated with the entertainment industry are rare) and ends in 1980, the end date for Survey. The end date may be extended over time.

Geographic Location:

Concentrations may be found in Hollywood, Los Feliz, Echo Park, Silver Lake, Studio City, and West Los Angeles

Area(s) of Significance:

Entertainment, Industry, Social History

Criteria:

NR: A

CR: 1

Local: 1

Associated Property Types:

Residential – Single-Family Residence

Note: Single-family residences are not common, but may be eligible in cases where an important residential neighborhood is not sufficiently intact to be eligible as a historic district.

Residential – Multi-Family Residence

Residential – Residential Neighborhood (Historic District)

Property Type Description:

Multi-family property types include bungalow courts, duplexes, apartment buildings, and residential hotels. Residential neighborhoods may include single-family and multi-family residences.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Entertainment Industry/Residential Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry, 1908-1980

Property Type Significance: See Summary Statement of Significance above.

Eligibility Standards:

- A single- or multi-family residence or residential neighborhood designed to house people working in the entertainment industry
- Located adjacent to, or in the proximity of, a motion picture studio specifically to cater to and house people working in the entertainment industry

Character Defining/Associative Features:

- Retains the essential physical and character defining features from the period of significance
- Was developed immediately following the establishment of the facility or facilities that provided entertainment-related jobs
- May also be a significant example of an architectural style and/or the work of a noted architect, designer, or builder
- The physical relationship between the residential property or district and the adjacent entertainment-related facility may still be apparent
- For the National Register, must possess exceptional importance if less than 50 years of age

Additional features for Historic Districts:

- As a whole, retains the essential physical and character defining features from the period of significance
- Is a definable geographic area composed of residential properties developed adjacent to a motion picture studio
- Possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of residential buildings united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development
- Conveys a strong visual sense of the overall historic environment from its period of significance
- May be composed of single-family and/or multi-family properties
- May also be significant as a good representation of residential development from a specified time period
- May also contain significant examples of architectural styles from the period and represent the work of noted architects, designers, or builders

Integrity Considerations:

- Should retain integrity of Location, Design, Feeling, Setting, and Association
- In some cases, the physical relationship between the property/district and the motion picture studio or other entertainment-related property may not be apparent as the original facility may no longer be extant

Additional consideration for Historic Districts:

- May contain some buildings outside the period of significance, including infill development
- Contributors to the district may have a greater degree of alteration than individually significant properties

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning. "Context: African American Historic Context Statement," in *SurveyLA: Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey Project Historic Context Statement*. http://preservation.lacity.org/sites/default/files/SurveyLA_AfricanAmericanHCS_09252017.pdf (accessed October 2017).
- . "Context: Jewish History Context Statement," in *SurveyLA: Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey Project Historic Context Statement*. <http://preservation.lacity.org/sites/default/files/LosAngelesJewishHistoryContext.pdf> (accessed October 2017).
- . "Context: Latino Los Angeles Historic Context Statement," in *SurveyLA: Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey Project Historic Context Statement*. <http://preservation.lacity.org/sites/default/files/Latino%20Los%20Angeles%20Historic%20Context%20FINAL%209-23-15.pdf> (accessed October 2017).
- Crosse, John. "Irving Gill, Homer Laughlin and the Beginnings of Modern Architecture in Los Angeles, Part II, 1911-1916." *Southern California Architectural History*. <https://socalarchhistory.blogspot.com/2015/12/irving-gill-homer-laughlin-and.html> (accessed September 2017).
- Gross, Michael. *Unreal Estate: Money, Ambition, and the Lust for Land in Los Angeles*. New York: Broadway Books, 2011.
- Henstell, Bruce. *Sunshine and Wealth: Los Angeles in the Twenties and Thirties*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1984.
- Hyland, Jeffrey. *The Legendary Estates of Beverly Hills*. New York: Rizzoli, 2008.
- Knight, Arthur. *The Hollywood Style*. With photographs by Eliot Elisofon. London: Macmillan, 1969.
- Ovnick, Merry. *Los Angeles: The End of the Rainbow*. Los Angeles: Balcony Press, 1994.
- Picture Show Annual*. London: Amalgamated Press, various years. Archived online at <https://archive.org/> (accessed June 2017).
- Torrence, Bruce T. *Hollywood: The First 100 Years*. Hollywood, CA: The Hollywood Chamber of Commerce & Fiske Enterprises, 1979.
- Watters, Sam. "Making Hollywood Magic," in *Maynard L. Parker: Modern Photography and the American Dream*, ed. Jennifer A. Watts. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012.
- "West Adams and the Movies." West Adams Heritage. <http://www.westadamsheritage.org/read/454> (accessed January 2017).
- Williams, Gregory Paul. *The Story of Hollywood: An Illustrated History*. BL Press LLC, 2011.