

San Vicente Courtyard Apartments Historic District Assessment - DRAFT

Santa Monica, CA 90402



Prepared for:

**City of Santa Monica
Planning & Community Development
Department**

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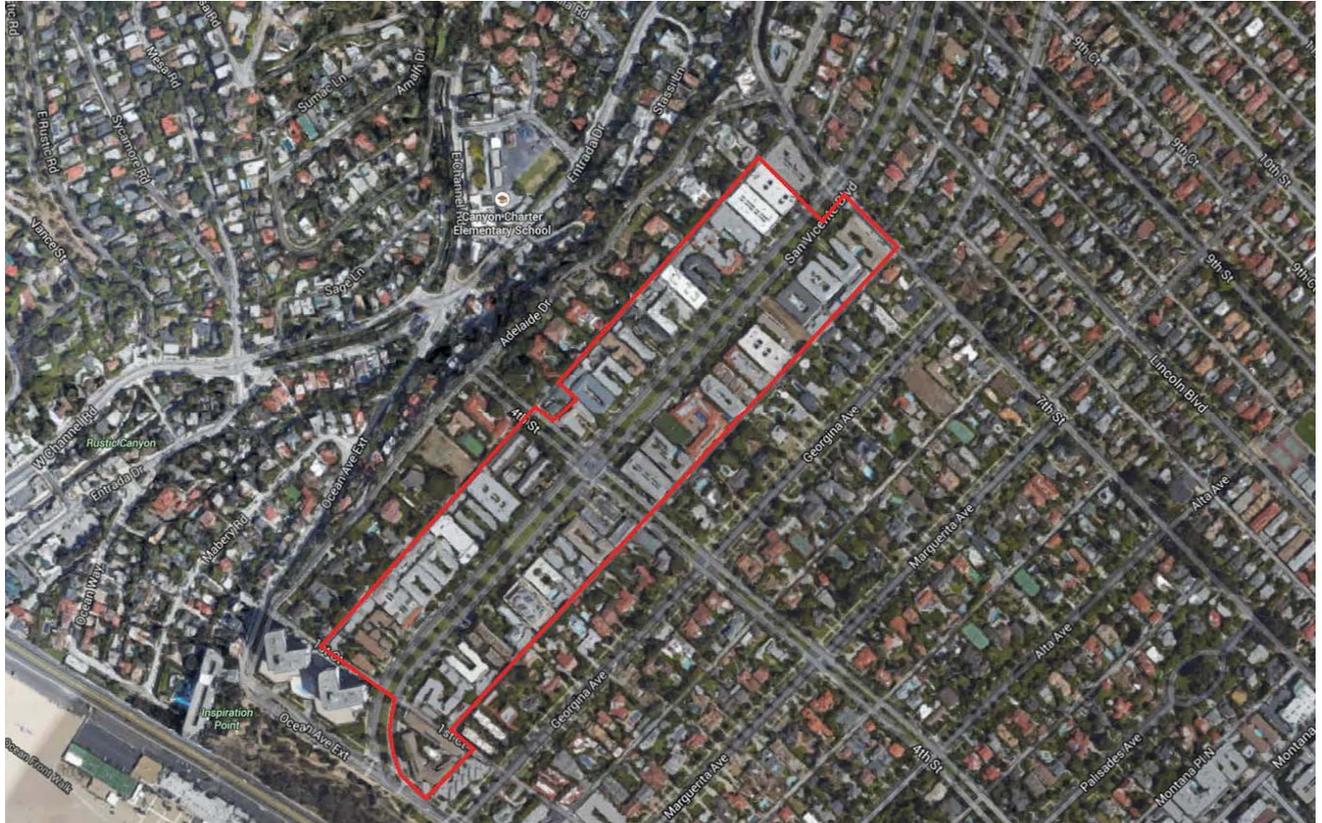
1. Introduction

At the request of the City of Santa Monica’s Planning and Community Development Department, Architectural Resources Group, Inc. (ARG) has prepared this historic district assessment for the potential San Vicente Courtyard Apartments Historic District (referred to herein as the Study Area), located on San Vicente Boulevard between 1st Court, Ocean Avenue, and 7th Street, in Santa Monica, Los Angeles County.

The Study Area is located within a single subdivision known as the Palisades tract, which was initially subdivided in 1905. It contains apartment houses, courtyard apartments, and condominiums dating from the 1930s to the 1990s and ranging in size from two to seven stories; a private school; and one vacant lot. ARG evaluated the district to determine whether it appears to satisfy one or more of the statutory criteria associated with City of Santa Monica Historic District eligibility, pursuant to Chapter 9.36 (Landmarks and Historic Districts Ordinance) of the Santa Monica Municipal Code.

Completion of this assessment involved a site visit and documentation of all resources within the Study Area on April 8, 2015; compilation and review of historic building permits obtained from the City’s Planning and Community Development Department; archival research conducted at the Santa Monica Public Library and various online repositories; development of applicable historic contexts and themes; and evaluation of eligibility under Santa Monica Landmark and Historic District criteria. This report was prepared by ARG staff Katie E. Horak, Principal; Mary Ringhoff, Associate; Evanne St. Charles; and Christina Park, Intern. All professional staff meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards for Architectural History and History.

In summary, ARG finds that the San Vicente Courtyard Apartments Historic District appears eligible under City of Santa Monica Landmark Criteria 9.36.100(a)(1), 9.36.100(a)(4), 9.36.100(a)(6), and Historic District Criteria 9.36.100(b)(1), 9.36.100(b)(2), 9.36.100(b)(3), and 9.36.100(b)(4). The following sections provide a contextual basis for analysis and a detailed discussion of how this determination was made.



Proposed San Vicente Courtyard Apartments Historic District, outlined in red. Aerial imagery courtesy Google Maps.

2. Previous Surveys and Evaluations

The San Vicente Courtyard Apartments Historic District has been previously evaluated as part of the City’s ongoing historic resource survey efforts. Through citywide historic resources surveys in 1983 and again in 1995, the district was identified as eligible for its significant concentration of apartment buildings constructed during the 1930s, 1940s, and early 1950s. In the *North of Montana Historic Resource Update* (2002), Historic Resources Group, LLC, did not record the area as eligible as a historic district because of the low number of contributing resources. Rather, the report recommended that properties be re-classified as Landmarks or Structures of Merit until “the 1945-1960 period of multi-family housing construction in Santa Monica [is] studied in greater detail.”¹

In its update of the Historic Resources Inventory in 2010, ICF Jones & Stokes recommended the area as eligible as a historic district composed of a notable grouping of apartment buildings dating from the late 1930s to the 1950s. Contributing properties were assigned a California Historical Resource status code of 5D3 (appears to be a contributor to a district that appears eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation). Three properties – 212 San Vicente Blvd., 451 San Vicente Blvd., and 614-618 San Vicente Blvd. – were determined to be locally significant both individually and as contributors to

¹ Historic Resources Group, LLC. *Historic Resources Inventory Update: North of Montana Area 2001-2002*, Prepared by Historic Resources Group, LLC for the City of Santa Monica Planning and Community Development Department, 2002.

the proposed historic district; they were given a status code of 5B. The courtyard apartment at 130-142 San Vicente Blvd. (the Teriton) received a status code of 5S1, as it was individually listed as a Santa Monica Landmark in 2006. It is the only building within the Study Area to have been formally designated.

In 2009, the City of Santa Monica contracted with ARG to conduct a preliminary assessment of the grouping of courtyard apartments on San Vicente Boulevard in order to provide a more in depth study of the property type and explore alternative methods of designation, such as a Neighborhood Conservation District. The report did not provide a formal determination of eligibility against local, state, or national designation criteria.

As a result of previous surveys and evaluations of the Study Area, several of its buildings are listed in the California Historic Resources Inventory (HRI):

Address	Status Code
123-133 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
130-142 San Vicente Blvd	5S1, 5D3
135 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
150-156 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
201 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
211 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
212 San Vicente Blvd	5B
229 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
234 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
302-312 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
316 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
326 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
401-409 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
415 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
416 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
421-427 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
435 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
437-441 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
445-449 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
451 San Vicente Blvd	5B
515-521 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
540 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
608 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
614-618 San Vicente Blvd	5B
621 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
630 San Vicente Blvd	5D3
301 Ocean Ave	5D3

Historic Resource Status Code Definitions

5D3 Appears to be a contributor to a district that appears eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation.

5S1 Individual property that is listed or designated locally.

5B Locally significant both individually (listed, eligible, or appears eligible) and as a contributor to a district that is locally listed, designated, determined eligible, or appears eligible through survey evaluation.

Properties at 212, 451, and 614-618 San Vicente Boulevard were given status codes of 5B because they were found to be individually eligible through previous survey evaluations (in addition to having been found eligible as contributors to the proposed historic district).

3. District Description

3.1 Site and Setting

The Study Area encompasses multi-family residential properties along both sides of San Vicente Boulevard between 1st Court, Ocean Avenue, and 7th Street, in northwest Santa Monica. The district slopes slightly from east to west and is rectangular in shape. The district and adjacent neighborhoods to the south adhere to Santa Monica's skewed orthogonal street network and are divided into a series of rectilinear blocks and parcels that are fairly uniform in size and shape. Neighborhoods to the north have a curvilinear street network that follows the natural topography. A wide, landscaped median featuring turf and regularly-spaced coral trees runs along the center of San Vicente Boulevard within the Study Area; this median marks the former location of the Westgate streetcar line, which traversed the district between 1906 and 1940. Consistent setbacks, landscaped front yards, and concrete sidewalks lined with ornamental streetlights further characterize the district.

3.2 Building Descriptions

The Study Area contains multi-family courtyard apartments, apartment houses, and condominiums, as well as a private elementary school (the Carlthorp School), and a vacant lot formerly occupied by a 1920s apartment house. Buildings are predominantly two and three stories in height; the tallest building in the area is seven stories tall. Despite variety in age and styles, buildings are consistently set back from the street and include various types of onsite parking. The majority of the buildings date from the postwar period; the earliest building in the district was constructed in 1937 and the latest in 1996. Architectural styles present include Streamline Moderne, American Colonial Revival, Minimal Traditional, and Mid-Century Modern. Most buildings are vernacular, modest versions of their respective styles. Common alterations to contributors within the district include window and door replacements (almost always within original window openings).

Of the 45 total properties, 26 (58%) contribute to the district's historic significance.



Proposed San Vicente Courtyard Apartments Historic District (Map courtesy of City of Santa Monica City Planning Division; edited by ARG, 2015)

Building / Complex	Year built	Status	Alterations	Arch. Style
301 Ocean Ave.	1952-1958	Non-Contributor	Completely altered	Not Applicable
301 Ocean Ave. is currently under construction. At the time of this study, only the wood framing of the original 1950s courtyard apartment remained.				
130-142 San Vicente Blvd. The Teriton	1950	Contributor	None visible	Mid-Century Modern
130-142 San Vicente Blvd. is a two- and three-story, Mid-Century Modern courtyard apartment with an irregular plan. The apartment complex is raised and set back, and fronted by lawn, trees, and hedges. A single concrete walkway leads to an L-shaped landscaped courtyard, partially surrounded by the apartment complex. Buildings within the complex feature flat roofs, stucco cladding, paired and grouped steel casement windows, and recessed entryways. The rear and side of the property include detached garage buildings, one of which includes an upper-story residential unit.				
135 San Vicente Blvd.	1948	Contributor	Some windows replaced	Minimal Traditional
135 San Vicente Blvd. is a two- and three-story, Minimal Traditional courtyard apartment complex of two buildings forming an open U-shaped plan. The courtyard apartment is raised and set back, and is fronted by hedges, lawn, trees, and shrubs. Two pairs of concrete steps with a low brick wall lead to a single concrete walkway and central landscaped courtyard. The courtyard retains a grouping of tall palms, lawn, and planters with hedges. Buildings feature low-pitched hipped roofs with wide eaves, stucco cladding, grouped steel fixed and casement windows, and recessed entries. Two detached garage buildings are located at the rear of the property.				
150-156 San Vicente Blvd. Overcliff Manor	1949	Contributor	Walkways repaved	Mid-Century Modern
150-156 San Vicente Blvd. is a two-story, Mid-Century Modern courtyard apartment with a U-shaped plan. It is set back from the street and fronted by lawn and a low brick wall. Two concrete walkways converge into a single walkway that runs through the central courtyard, which is landscaped with palm trees, lawn, hedges, and shrubs. Buildings feature flat roofs, stucco and brick cladding, paired and grouped steel casement windows, and recessed entries. Two detached garage buildings are located at the rear of the property.				
153 San Vicente Blvd.	1967	Non-Contributor	Balconies and entrance door and windows replaced	Mid-Century Modern
153 San Vicente Blvd. is a four-story apartment building. It is a non-contributor to the historic district because it was built outside of the district's period of significance.				
201 San Vicente Blvd.	1953	Contributor	None visible	American Colonial Revival
201 San Vicente Blvd. is a two-story, American Colonial Revival courtyard apartment with an O-shaped plan. The building is set back and raised from street level behind a stone retaining wall; it is fronted by lawn, hedges, and yucca. Stone steps and a central walkway lead to an open rectangular entry into the landscaped courtyard. The building features a symmetrical façade, front and side gable roofs, stucco and wood clapboard siding, and grouped and paired steel casement windows with shutters. Two detached carport buildings are located at the rear of the property.				
202 San Vicente Blvd.	1982	Non-Contributor	None visible	Other
202 San Vicente Blvd. is a courtyard apartment composed of three I-shaped buildings. It is a non-contributor because it was built outside of the district's period of significance.				

Building / Complex	Year built	Status	Alterations	Arch. Style
211 San Vicente Blvd.	1953	Contributor	None visible	American Colonial Revival
211 San Vicente Blvd. is a two-story, American Colonial Revival courtyard apartment with an O-shaped plan. The building is set back and is raised from street level behind a stone retaining wall; it is fronted by lawn, hedges, and yucca. Stone steps and a central walkway lead to an open rectangular entry into the landscaped courtyard. The building features a symmetrical façade, front and side gable roofs, stucco and wood clapboard siding, and grouped and paired steel casement windows with shutters. Two detached carport buildings are located at the rear of the property.				
212 San Vicente Blvd.	1937	Contributor	None visible	Streamline Moderne
212 San Vicente Blvd. is a two-story, Streamline Moderne apartment building with an L-shaped plan. The building is set back from the street, fronted by lawn, and accessed via a single concrete walkway crossing an open landscaped courtyard with lawn, hedges, and various trees. The building has a low-pitched hipped roof, stucco cladding, grouped steel casement windows (some in curving corner volumes), entrance stoops with rounded canopies and metal handrails, and vertical pilaster decorative elements. A detached garage building is located at the rear of the property.				
220 San Vicente Blvd.	1972	Non-Contributor	None visible	Other
220 San Vicente Blvd. is a seven-story apartment building. It is a non-contributor because it was built outside of the district's period of significance.				
225 San Vicente Blvd.	1956	Non-Contributor	None visible	Mid-Century Modern
225 San Vicente Blvd. is a three-story apartment building. It is a non-contributor because it does not relate to the historic contexts and themes within which the district is significant.				
229 San Vicente Blvd.	1947	Contributor	Some windows replaced	Mid-Century Modern
229 San Vicente Blvd. is a complex of two, two-story Mid-Century Modern courtyard apartment buildings forming an open U-shaped plan. It is set back and slightly raised from the street, fronted by lawn, trees (including large sweet gums), hedges, and a low brick retaining wall. Dual concrete walkways and steps curve around a short front wall segment into an open landscaped courtyard. The walkways lead to unit entry stoops. The buildings have flat roofs, stucco cladding, and grouped steel fixed and casement windows. Small projecting balconies are supported by angled "spider leg" supports. A detached garage building is located at the rear of the property.				
234 San Vicente Blvd. Villa Vicente	1953	Contributor	None visible	Mid-Century Modern
234 San Vicente Blvd. is a two-story, Mid-Century Modern courtyard apartment building with an irregular U-shaped plan. It is set back and slightly raised from the street, fronted by lawn with a large palm tree and other smaller trees. Dual rock-lined concrete walkways curve around a short concrete block privacy wall and converge into a xeriscaped central court with unit entry stoops and metal stairways. The building has a flat roof, stucco cladding with decorative bays of horizontal wood slats, and horizontal bands of grouped fixed and casement steel windows. Two carport buildings are located at the rear of the property.				

Building / Complex	Year built	Status	Alterations	Arch. Style
302-312 San Vicente Blvd. Nida Apartments	1941	Contributor	Soft-story retrofit – beams and columns replaced (1998)	American Colonial Revival
302-312 San Vicente Blvd. is a complex of three courtyard apartment buildings, the front two with I-shaped plans (one of which has an attached garage volume at the rear) and the rear building with an L-shaped plan (this building has first-story garages and upper-story residential units). The two-story, American Colonial Revival complex is set back and slightly raised from the street, fronted by lawn, trees, and hedges. Dual central brick walkways flanking a planter lead to an open landscaped courtyard with entry stoops. The buildings have gabled roofs with eave returns, stucco cladding, and decorative entry surrounds with pediments; some entrances feature canopies with double-height supports. Fenestration includes single and paired double-hung wood windows (some with shutters), and canted bays with fixed and double-hung wood windows.				
305 San Vicente Blvd.	1961	Non-Contributor	None visible	Mid-Century Modern
305 San Vicente Blvd. is a four-story apartment building. It is a non-contributor because it was built outside of the period of significance.				
316 San Vicente Blvd. The Biarritz	1955	Contributor	None visible	Mid-Century Modern
316 San Vicente Blvd. is a three-story, Mid-Century Modern courtyard apartment building (the first, partial soft story contains covered parking on both sides and the rear of the building) with a C-shaped plan. It is set back and raised from the street, fronted by lawn, trees, hedges, and shrubs in rock planters. Side driveways access the parking. A central concrete walkway with steps leads to a recessed courtyard entry with fully glazed metal doors, entering into a landscaped courtyard with a pool. The building has a low-pitched hipped roof, stucco and vertical wood cladding with stone veneer around the entry, and grouped fixed and louver metal windows set in wood-gridded bays.				
323 San Vicente Blvd.	1977	Non-Contributor	Wood railing added to original first floor patio walls; some windows replaced (2001)	Other
323 San Vicente Blvd. is a two- and three-story apartment complex of four buildings with irregular plans, together comprising an open O-shaped plan with a central pool. It is a non-contributor because it was built outside the district's period of significance.				
326 San Vicente Blvd.	1956	Contributor	New balcony railings; security gate added	Mid-Century Modern
326 San Vicente Blvd. is a two-story, Mid-Century Modern courtyard apartment with three buildings arranged in an open U-shaped plan. It is set back from the street and fronted by lawn and shrubs. A central concrete walkway leads to an open central landscaped court with stoop unit entries. The buildings have flat roofs, stucco cladding, and projecting balconies with metal railings. Windows are paired steel casements and grouped steel fixed and casements, some in vertical bays with wood clapboard details. The rear of the rear building includes first-floor soft-story parking, and at least one of the other buildings has several garages at ground level.				
401-409 San Vicente Blvd. Lucille Apartments	1953	Contributor	None visible	Minimal Traditional
401-409 San Vicente Blvd. is a two- and three-story, Minimal Traditional courtyard apartment building with a U-shaped plan. It is set back and raised from the street, fronted by a stone retaining wall, lawn, and hedges. Central concrete steps lead to a walkway running into an open landscaped courtyard with a fountain. The building has a hipped roof, stucco cladding, and unit entry stoops. Fenestration includes grouped steel casements, metal louvers, and wood fixed windows. The rear volume has first-story garages accessed from 4 th Street.				

Building / Complex	Year built	Status	Alterations	Arch. Style
404 San Vicente Blvd.	1971	Non-Contributor	Converted into condo (1979); re-stuccoed (1999)	Hollywood Regency
404 San Vicente Blvd. is a three-story apartment building. It is a non-contributor because it was built outside the district's period of significance.				
415 San Vicente Blvd. Monica Manor	1953	Contributor	None visible	American Colonial Revival
415 San Vicente Blvd. is a two-story, American Colonial Revival courtyard apartment building with an O-shaped plan. It is set back and raised from the street, fronted by lawn with trees and hedges. Central concrete steps lead to a walkway running through a covered entry to an open central courtyard, paved in concrete with open planters. The building has a gabled roof, stucco cladding, unit entry stoops, recessed balconies with iron railings, and paired double-hung wood windows. Decorative details include a broken pediment, shutters, pilasters, and double-height roof supports separating unit entries. Two detached garage buildings with upper-story residential units are located at the rear of the property.				
416 San Vicente Blvd. Coral Gables	1955	Contributor	Awning added	Mid-Century Modern
416 San Vicente Blvd. is a three story, Mid-Century Modern courtyard apartment building with a C-shaped plan. The first, partial soft story contains covered parking on one side and the rear. It is set back and slightly raised from the street, fronted by lawn with rock planters, shrubs, and hedges. A central concrete walkway leads to an entry stoop and a main entry with double wood doors, sidelights, and a transom; beyond the entry is a landscaped central courtyard with a pool. A side driveway leads to the covered parking. The building has a low-pitched hipped roof; cladding of scored stucco, vertical wood boards, and rock; and grouped wood fixed and metal louver windows in vertical gridded wood bays.				
421-427 San Vicente Blvd.	1951	Contributor	None visible	Mid-Century Modern
421-427 San Vicente Blvd. is a two-story, Mid-Century Modern courtyard apartment building with a U-shaped plan. It is set back and raised from the street, fronted by lawn, trees, and hedges. Central concrete steps and a walkway lead to an open central landscaped courtyard; unit entries are not visible from the sidewalk. The building has a low-pitched hipped roof with wide eaves, stucco cladding, grouped steel fixed and casement windows, and vertical wood slat decorative elements at the entry. The rear of the property includes two detached garage buildings.				
435 San Vicente Blvd.	1948	Contributor	None visible	Minimal Traditional
435 San Vicente Blvd. is a two-story, Minimal Traditional courtyard apartment building with a C-shaped plan. It is set back and raised from the street, and fronted by lawn with trees and hedges. Central concrete steps and a walkway lead to a covered entry, beyond which is a central courtyard with concrete walkways, planters, and entry stoops. A balcony spans the building's entire front façade. The building has a hipped roof, stucco cladding, and fixed and double-hung, wood windows. The rear of the property includes an attached garage volume with upper story residential units.				
437-441 San Vicente Blvd.	1948	Contributor	Doors replaced	Minimal Traditional
437-441 San Vicente Blvd. is a two-story, Minimal-Traditional style courtyard apartment building with an I-shaped plan. It is set back and raised from the street, fronted by xeriscaping with mulch, shrubs, and trees. Brick-lined concrete steps and a walkway run along the side of the lot past an open narrow side court with entry stoops. The building has a low-pitched hipped roof, stucco cladding, and paired and single double-hung wood windows. The rear of the property includes a detached garage building.				

Building / Complex	Year built	Status	Alterations	Arch. Style
438 San Vicente Blvd. Carlthorp School	1976	Non-Contributor	Multiple additions; window replacements; roofline alterations (alterations 1988, 1997, 1998)	Other
438 San Vicente Blvd. is a two-story private elementary school building. It is a non-contributor because it does not relate to the historic contexts and themes within which the district is significant.				
445-449 San Vicente Blvd.	1940	Contributor	Some windows replaced	Minimal Traditional
445-449 San Vicente Blvd. is a two-story, Minimal Traditional courtyard apartment building with an irregular I-shaped plan. It is set back and raised from the street, and fronted by lawn with trees and shrubs. Concrete steps and a walkway run along the side of the lot past an open narrow side court with entry stoops. The building has a hipped roof, stucco cladding, and single and paired double-hung wood windows (some in canted bays). A detached garage building with upper-story residential units is located at the rear of the property.				
446 San Vicente Blvd.	1962	Non-Contributor	Primary façade completely altered; roofline modified; window and door openings altered; windows and doors replaced (alterations 1977 and more recently)	Other
446 San Vicente Blvd. is a three-story apartment building. It is a non-contributor because it was built outside the district's period of significance.				
450 San Vicente Blvd.	1980	Non-Contributor	None visible	Other
450 San Vicente Blvd. is a four-story apartment building. It is a non-contributor because it was built outside the district's period of significance.				
451 San Vicente Blvd. The Seacliff	1951	Contributor	None visible	Mid-Century Modern
451 San Vicente Blvd. is a two- and three-story, Mid-Century Modern courtyard apartment with a U-shaped plan. It is set back and raised from the street, and fronted by ivy and sweet gum trees. Central concrete steps and a walkway lead to a wide paved courtyard with open xeriscaped planters and trees. Recessed shared unit entries with decorative grid details at the tops are accessed from the court. The building has a flat roof, stucco cladding, and grouped fixed and casement steel windows (some in canted bays with wood clapboard, others with wide shared surrounds). Three detached garage buildings, one of which has an upper-story residential unit, are located at the rear of the property.				
502 San Vicente Blvd.	1979	Non-Contributor	All windows and french doors replaced; balcony enclosed (1996)	Other
502 San Vicente Blvd. is a three-story apartment building. It is a non-contributor because it was built outside the district's period of significance.				

Building / Complex	Year built	Status	Alterations	Arch. Style
511 San Vicente Blvd.	1969	Non-Contributor	Some windows replaced; front court wall added/replaced; balcony railings replaced; primary door replaced; awnings and signage added; steps re-tiled; converted into condo (1996)	Other
511 San Vicente Blvd. is a four-story apartment building. It is a non-contributor because it was built outside the district's period of significance.				
515-521 San Vicente Blvd. The Colonial	1948	Contributor	None visible	American Colonial Revival
515-521 San Vicente Blvd. is a two-story, American Colonial Revival courtyard apartment with a U-shaped plan. It is set back and raised from the street, fronted by lawn with hedges, a low brick wall, and trees. Central concrete steps and a walkway lead into an open landscaped court; shared unit entries are present in brick-clad volumes with tall curving canopies, fixed octagonal wood windows, and decorative door surrounds. The building has a combination hipped and gabled roof, stucco and brick cladding, and paired double-hung wood windows with shutters. A detached garage building is located at the rear of the property.				
516 San Vicente Blvd.	1962	Non-Contributor	Wall cladding replaced (stone tile on primary façade and walkway); primary doors replaced; hedge added	Mid-Century Modern
516 San Vicente Blvd. is a three-story apartment building. It is a non-contributor because it was built outside the district's period of significance.				
522 San Vicente Blvd.	1951	Contributor	Re-clad in textured stucco; some side windows replaced; security doors added to rear entries	Mid-Century Modern
522 San Vicente Blvd. is a two-story, Mid-Century Modern- courtyard apartment with a C-shaped plan. It is set back from the street and fronted by lawn with trees and planters with shrubs. Side concrete walkways lead to main unit entries on the building's west side and rear entries on the east side; entrances are not visible from the street. The building has a low-pitched hipped roof with wide eaves, textured stucco cladding, paired double-hung wood windows, and single wood awning windows. A detached carport building is located at the rear of the property.				
527 San Vicente Blvd.	1996	Non-Contributor	None visible	Other
527 San Vicente Blvd. is a three-story apartment building. It is a non-contributor because it was built outside the district's period of significance.				
528 San Vicente Blvd.	N/A	Non-Contributor	Vacant lot (building demolished)	N/A
The property at 528 San Vicente Blvd. is a vacant lot.				
537 San Vicente Blvd.	1957	Non-Contributor	Driveway re-paved with pavers; front steps re-clad in stone	Mid-Century Modern
537 San Vicente Blvd. is a three-story apartment building. It is a non-contributor because it does not relate to the historic contexts and themes within which the district is significant.				

Building / Complex	Year built	Status	Alterations	Arch. Style
540 San Vicente Blvd. The Bermuda	1954	Contributor	Security gate added	Mid-Century Modern
540 San Vicente Blvd. is a two-story, Mid-Century Modern courtyard apartment with an O-shaped plan. It is set back from the street, and fronted by lawn with trees, hedges, and rock and concrete planters. A central concrete walkway with a planter divider leads to a hardscaped courtyard which contains a pool (not visible from the street). The building has a side-gabled roof, stucco cladding with rock and wood clapboard at the entry, and wood-framed window bays. The bays contain grouped fixed wood and metal louver windows, as well as paired and tripartite fixed and casement steel windows. The rear of the property includes a detached carport building.				
605 San Vicente Blvd.	1973	Non-Contributor	None visible	Other
605 San Vicente Blvd. is a three-story apartment building. It is a non-contributor because it was built outside the district's period of significance.				
608 San Vicente Blvd.	1955	Contributor	New glass tile added to primary façade; vinyl gate added; pool removed from courtyard	Mid-Century Modern
608 San Vicente Blvd. is a two-story, Mid-Century Modern courtyard apartment with an O-shaped plan. It is set back from the street, and fronted by lawn, palm trees, and concrete planters. A curving central concrete walkway leads to a breezeway that leads to an interior courtyard; the open breezeway is spanned by the second story and supported with metal pipe. The building has a low-hipped roof, stucco and new glass tile cladding, and paired steel casement windows, some with fixed transoms. Two detached carport buildings are located at the rear of the property.				
614-618 San Vicente Blvd.	1948	Contributor	Walkway repaved	American Colonial Revival
614-618 San Vicente Blvd. is a two-story, American Colonial Revival courtyard apartment with a U-shaped plan. It is set back from the street and fronted by lawn with mature trees. A central walkway leads to an open landscaped courtyard with a statue; shared unit entries on the courtyard have decorative door surrounds and fully glazed wood doors. The building has a hipped roof with vent dormers, stucco cladding, and paired double-height columns on the rear volume. Windows include paired and single metal casements with transoms, some with decorative surrounds (broken pediments, matching the door surrounds). A detached garage building is located at the rear of the property.				
621 San Vicente Blvd.	1960	Non-Contributor	None visible	Mid-Century Modern/Stucco Box
621 San Vicente Blvd. is a two-story apartment building. It is a non-contributor because it does not relate to the historic contexts and themes within which the district is significant.				
630 San Vicente Blvd. The Pacific	1955	Contributor	None visible	Mid-Century Modern
630 San Vicente Blvd. is a two-story, Mid-Century Modern courtyard apartment with a C-shaped plan. It is set back and raised from the street, and fronted by lawn with rock planters, trees, and shrubs. Double angled concrete steps lead to the rock-clad entry, which has double wood fully-glazed doors leading to an open landscaped courtyard with a pool. The building has a low-pitched hipped roof; stucco, vertical wood, and rock cladding with decorative wood slat grid details; grouped fixed and louver metal windows; and single metal louver windows. The rear of the building contains first-floor, soft-story covered parking, and the side facing 7 th Street contains first-floor garages.				

4. Historic Contexts and Themes

4.1 Residential Development in Santa Monica

Early Santa Monica

The roots of present-day Santa Monica, which was originally inhabited by the Tongva people and was later incorporated into California's network of expansive land grants during the state's Mexican period, can be traced to 1875 when the original townsite was platted and recorded. Like many communities in Southern California, Santa Monica was incorporated in 1887 at the height of a real estate boom, brought on by the completion of a transcontinental rail line to the region and a subsequent fare "war" that emerged between the competing Southern Pacific and Santa Fe Railroad companies.² Early in its history, the city was heavily marketed as a tourist destination and gained national acclaim for its recreational culture, balmy climate, bathhouses, opulent hotels, and amusement piers.

Residential development in Santa Monica at this time tended to be concentrated in sites nearest the ocean and around the present-day commercial core. Small communities of beach cottages, many of which were built as vacation homes for affluent out-of-towners, arose in those areas proximate to the shoreline, and several large residences were constructed on parcels atop the palisades that overlook the ocean.³ Prior to 1900, Santa Monica's growth was primarily clustered between Washington Avenue to the north, Railroad Avenue (now Colorado Avenue) to the south, 7th Street to the east and Ocean Avenue to the west. The area of the city north of Nevada Avenue (now Wilshire Boulevard) and east of 6th Street was left largely unimproved in this early development period.⁴ Residential development expanded outward toward the city's periphery as Santa Monica began to come of age as a residential enclave in the early 20th century.

Residential development beyond the city's core was aided by the proliferation of electric streetcar lines, increasing accessibility to areas that had previously been impractical to subdivide and develop. In 1906, the Los Angeles Pacific Railway established a line from Los Angeles to Santa Monica that ran down San Vicente Boulevard; this became part of the larger Pacific Electric Railway system during the 1911 consolidation of multiple regional companies. Pacific Electric's Westgate streetcar line ran along San Vicente Boulevard in Santa Monica from 1911 until 1940, when the company converted the route to a motorcoach line. The wide landscaped median that dominates the boulevard to this day follows the original streetcar tracks that brought both tourists and locals to northern Santa Monica.

Whereas small bungalows accounted for much of the development in the central and southern sections of the city during the early 20th century, the area north of Montana Avenue emerged as one of the city's premiere and most coveted residential districts.

² George L. Henderson, *California and the Fictions of Capital* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 154.

³ City of Santa Monica General Plan, "Historic Preservation Element," prepared by PCR Services Corporation and Historic Resources Group (September 2002), 12-13.

⁴ ICF Jones & Stokes, Santa Monica Citywide Historic Resources Inventory Update Final Report (prepared for the City of Santa Monica Planning and Community Development Department, 2010).

Residential Development of the Palisades Tract

Among the new residential tracts to open north of Montana Avenue was the Palisades Tract, which was initially subdivided by the Palisades Investment Company and the Alta Santa Monica Company in 1905 (the tract was extended further inland in 1912 and 1913). Original owners of the tract included H.M. Gorham, director of the California Bank and executive of the Santa Monica Land & Water Company; R.C. Gillis, owner of the Santa Monica Evening Outlook and executive of the Santa Monica Land & Water Company; C.L. Bundy, prominent businessman and executive of the Santa Monica Land & Water Company; and J.J. Davis, founder of the Davis Investment Company, which operated oil-producing properties in a number of states. The subdivision included 12 blocks bounded by Adelaide Drive, Montana Avenue, 7th Street, and Ocean Avenue. Land was subdivided into large 100-by-200 foot rectangular parcels. The Palisades Investment Company contracted with Memann & Kneen to carry out improvements in the tract, which included the “grading, oiling, sidewalking and curbing of the streets and the installation of sewers, water, gas and electricity and the planting of the parks and avenues...”⁵ The following year, the Palisades Tract was annexed by the City of Santa Monica.

By 1918, large single-family dwellings were scattered throughout the Palisades Tract, including along the stretch of San Vicente Boulevard between 7th Street and Ocean Avenue.⁶ Large lots, ocean views and easy access to the streetcar lines that ran along San Vicente Boulevard, Ocean Avenue, and Montana Avenue made this area a popular choice for affluent families looking to build vacation homes or reside permanently in the city. However, development of the Palisades Tract did not begin in earnest until the population boom of the 1920s. By the late 1920s, much of the tract had been filled with neighborhoods of Period Revival-style houses. Unlike the majority of the tract, the stretch of San Vicente Boulevard that comprises the proposed historic district had been zoned for income use, rather than residential use.⁷ In addition to single-family residences dating to the 1900s and 1910s, and a handful of multi-family properties, a small number of businesses (including two restaurants, a grocery store, and an insurance company office) were constructed along this portion of San Vicente Boulevard in the 1920s and 1930s.⁸

In 1924, the five-story Shoreham apartment hotel opened at Ocean Avenue and San Vicente Boulevard. The Shoreham offered maximum “home privacy and comfort” with the “advantages of a luxuriously operated apartment hotel.”⁹ Though on the grander scale of multi-family apartment housing, the Shoreham established precedent for the construction of more modest apartment houses in the proposed historic district. Four-flats, duplexes, bungalow courts, and courtyard apartments began filling the empty lots between single-family residences. By 1937, the stretch of San Vicente Boulevard between 1st Court, Ocean Avenue, and 7th Street was zoned R3 for multi-family residential development, a zoning use largely non-existent in the city’s neighborhoods north of Montana.¹⁰

As with much of Southern California and Los Angeles County, Santa Monica’s population skyrocketed during and after World War II. The Douglas Aircraft manufacturing plant in Santa Monica employed thousands of local residents from the 1940s into the postwar years. Following the war, the RAND

⁵ “Santa Monica: Cyclone of Buyers,” *Los Angeles Times*, 3 August 1905, II9.

⁶ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1918.

⁷ City of Santa Monica Zoning Map, 1929.

⁸ Santa Monica City Directories, 1925; Display Ad 23, Thistle Cottage, *Los Angeles Times*, 26 November 1931; Display Ad 1, Red Door Patio, *Los Angeles Times*, 27 June 1936.

⁹ Display Ad 10, The Shoreham Apartment Hotel, *Los Angeles Times*, 2 October 1924, 8.

¹⁰ Santa Monica Zoning Map, 1937.

Corporation provided employment for hundreds of Santa Monica residents in the fields of mathematics, aerodynamics, engineering, physics, chemistry, economics, and psychology. As housing demands quickly exceeded supply, courtyard apartment complexes replaced smaller multi-family dwellings and the remaining single-family residences along San Vicente Boulevard.

Census records from the 1920s, '30s, and '40s indicate the courtyard apartments in the Study Area were owned or rented by middleclass residents reflecting a wide range of occupations, including engineers, teachers, dentists, salesmen, gardeners and realtors. Residents of the area were also exclusively white, as restrictive housing practices kept non-white residents from living nearly anywhere in Santa Monica other than the Pico neighborhood until well into the post-World War II era. Even with the Supreme Court decision in 1948 that deemed restrictive covenants based on race and ethnicity unconstitutional, realtors and landlords employed other tactics to keep non-white residents from renting and owning in many Southland neighborhoods. By the time of the passage of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prohibits racial discrimination in programs (including the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) that receive federal financial assistance, housing restrictions were largely unenforceable and many previously homogenous neighborhoods began to diversify.

The Westgate streetcar line that had run along San Vicente Boulevard since 1906 was abandoned in 1940 and replaced with a wide median landscaped with lawn and coral trees circa 1958.¹¹ By the 1970s, condominiums had surpassed lower density courtyard apartments as the most prevalent form of multi-family housing along San Vicente Boulevard. Today, the historic district comprises courtyard apartments, apartment houses, and condominiums, dating from the late 1930s to the mid-1990s.

4.2 Courtyard Apartment Property Type

The Study Area is predominantly composed of multi-family residences that reflect variations on the courtyard apartment property type. The courtyard apartment evolved from its predecessor, the bungalow court, which originated in Southern California in the 1910s and reached widespread popularity by the 1920s. The bungalow court is typically composed of a series of small single-family residences, often with a two-story apartment house at the rear, arranged around a common central courtyard. Bungalow courts commonly feature rear detached garages, shared outdoor landscaped spaces, and entrances that face into the central court rather than the street. Although early bungalow courts were often constructed by builders rather than architects and intended for residents of modest means, their evolution represented a major shift from preceding idioms of American dwelling types. Bungalow courts were the first multi-family prototype to focus more on space than object, providing residents with the advantages of parks and shared spaces for communal interaction within a densely urban setting. Due to their unobtrusive manner and ability to fit on single lots, they were frequently constructed in neighborhoods of single-family properties, into which they assimilated with little intrusion.

¹¹ John P. Schwieterman, *When the Railroad Leaves Town: American Communities in the Age of Rail Line Abandonment* (Kirkville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2004), 77-78; "San Vicente Beautification Delayed Again," *Los Angeles Times*, 6 July 1958, WS8.

As multi-family housing became a more prevalent option for wealthier clients in the late 1920s, the bungalow court matured into a new prototype of apartment dwelling: the courtyard apartment. While bungalow courts were modest and restrained, courtyard apartments tended to be a type of high-style architecture. They were often designed by architects inspired by various types of courtyards in the Mediterranean region, including patio houses, palaces, markets, and inns. The temperate California climate enabled architects to design spacious patios, verandas, and balconies opening into a central courtyard, which was almost always lushly landscaped with spaces designed for both rest and meditation as well as pedestrian circulation. Hallways and corridors were effectively placed out of doors, encouraging interaction among residents. Buildings were arranged in U- and L-shaped configurations, acting as both dwelling and enclosure for carefully designed courtyards.

The elaborate Mediterranean-inspired courtyard apartments of the 1920s and 1930s were surpassed by more stripped-down, vernacular versions during World War II and the postwar era. As California's population skyrocketed during and after the war, the demand for housing outweighed supply; the need to quickly build residences for defense workers and returning veterans influenced the more stripped-down appearance of the courtyard apartment. Additionally, tastes in style shifted in favor of more minimal, Modern modes of architecture. The postwar years also brought increased concerns about privacy, which influenced courtyard housing plans. Open U- and L-shaped plans were replaced with O- and C-shaped plans, which featured a solid or nearly solid street wall with a small front or side opening into the courtyard. Though residential units or common entry halls were still accessed through the courtyard, the communal function of the space changed. Lush landscaping and sitting areas for rest and contemplation gave way to paving and swimming pools for communal recreational use.

With the late 1960s and 1970s came a shift away from the courtyard apartment as a popular multi-family housing type. Courtyards were viewed as a waste of potentially inhabitable, rentable space as demands for maximizing lot capacity increased. Building plans became rectangular in shape, and outdoor courtyards were replaced with interior entrance corridors and light wells. The location of parking changed as well. Whereas earlier courtyard apartments had rear detached garages or rear soft-story parking, apartments in the 1960s often had integrated parking structures at the first floor of the building, and 1970s apartments typically featured subterranean parking structures.

The variety of courtyard apartments within the Study Area closely align with the evolution of courtyard housing throughout Santa Monica and the rest of Southern California. Courtyard apartments were constructed in the district from the late 1930s to the late 1950s. All are two or three stories in height, have L-, U-, I-, C- or O-shaped plans, exterior landscaped courtyards, and rear detached garages or rear/side soft-story parking. Apartments in the district from the 1960s and 1970s are typically three or more stories in height, with rectangular plans, interior corridors with light wells, and integrated first-story or subterranean parking structures.

5. Physical Character

5.1 Courtyard Apartment Typology

The Study Area is primarily composed of 1930s to 1950s courtyard apartments featuring open plans surrounding landscaped courtyards. Although the complexes vary in age, style and appearance, contributors to the district share distinguishing characteristics of various courtyard apartment property types, creating a unified and cohesive overall appearance.

Character-defining features of the courtyard apartment property type, as conveyed by buildings and complexes within the Study Area, include the following:

- L-, U-, I-, C- or O-shaped plans
- Generous setbacks from San Vicente Boulevard, creating a park-like appearance along the boulevard
- One to three stories in height
- Landscaped courtyards accessible from the street, either along the side or at the center of the apartment complex, often featuring paved walkways, planters, and, in later iterations, swimming pools
- Dwelling units accessed via courtyard entrances, with exterior walkways/stairways that face the courtyard (rather than interior corridors or hallways)
- Rear detached garages or rear soft-story parking

5.2 Architectural Styles

While unified as a cohesive collection of courtyard apartments, buildings within the Study Area convey a variety of architectural styles. Style featured within the district boundary include Streamline Moderne, American Colonial Revival, Minimal Traditional, and Mid-Century Modern. These styles were commonly applied to courtyard apartments throughout Santa Monica and the rest of Southern California during the 1930s, '40s and '50s.

Buildings and complexes within the Study Area were designed by a number of architects and builders; in only a few cases were more than one building or complex designed by a single architect. Notable architects whose work can be found in the Study Area include Carl Maston (229 San Vicente Boulevard) and Edith Northman (614-618 San Vicente Boulevard).

Streamline Moderne

Streamline Moderne architecture emerged in the 1930s and is often considered to be a later subtype of the Art Deco style. Whereas Art Deco architecture is typically brightly colored and richly decorated, Streamline Moderne is sparse, unornamented and monochromatic. The Streamline Moderne style offered a modern aesthetic and streamlined appearance appropriate to the motor age and automobile culture in Southern California. The Study Area's earliest surviving courtyard apartment was constructed in the Streamline Moderne style.

Common character-defining features of the Streamline Moderne style include:

- Smooth stucco cladding
- Curved surfaces, such as rounded corners and/or bays
- A flat roof, often with banded coping at the parapet
- Projecting bands accenting the façade between stories and emphasizing horizontality
- Minimal use of applied ornament
- Multi-paned steel casement windows, often arranged in bands
- Circular accent windows

American Colonial Revival

American Colonial Revival architecture experienced a resurgence in popularity in the 1920s and continued to be applied to both single- and multi-family properties in Santa Monica and throughout the greater Los Angeles area through the 1950s. A number of courtyard apartments in the proposed historic district are examples of American Colonial Revival architecture. American Colonial Revival elements are applied to several Minimal Traditional-style buildings in the district as well.

Common character-defining features of the American Colonial Revival style include:

- Front or side gabled roofs
- Wood clapboard siding, sometimes applied in combination with stucco cladding
- Double-hung wood sash windows, often with divided lights
- Shutters at windows
- Pediments over entryways
- Columns or pilasters at entries (either as porch supports or surrounding doorways)

Minimal Traditional

The Minimal Traditional style emerged in the late 1930s and was popular through the mid-1950s. Minimal Traditional buildings often reflect the form of Period Revival buildings, but lack the ornament and decorative detailing of the Period Revival style. Although most often thought of as a single-family house style, Minimal Traditional apartment buildings are not uncommon; multiple examples exist within the Study Area.

Common character-defining features of the Minimal Traditional style include:

- Low-pitched hipped roofs, typically with narrow eaves
- Smooth stucco cladding, often used in combination with clapboard, brick or stone veneer
- Minimal applied ornament
- Steel casement windows
- At times, stripped down decorative features such as shutters or pilasters

Mid-Century Modern

The Mid-Century Modern style emerged after World War II and was influenced by an early and influential tradition of Modernism in Southern California, which found precedents in Europe's International Style. Modern architecture in the postwar era was widely applied to all property types, including residential, commercial, and institutional, many of which were designed by some of Southern California's most influential architects. In general, Mid-Century Modernism rejected previous architectural traditions and historicist styles, instead embracing new, innovative materials and

technologies and prioritizing function over form. A number of Mid-Century Modern courtyard apartments and apartment houses are extant in the Study Area.

Common character-defining features of Mid-Century Modern architecture include:

- Stucco cladding at times used in combination with other textural elements, such as brick or concrete block
- Low-pitched or flat roofs, often with wide, cantilevered overhangs
- Horizontal elements such as fascias that cap the front edge of the flat roofs or parapets
- Aluminum-frame windows grouped within horizontal frames
- Oversized decorative elements or decorative face-mounted light fixtures
- Prominent graphic signage at front façade, often displaying apartment name and address

6. Regulations and Criteria for Evaluation

6.1 City of Santa Monica Landmarks and Historic Districts Ordinance

Historic preservation in Santa Monica is governed by Chapter 9.36 (Landmarks and Historic Districts Ordinance) of the Santa Monica Municipal Code. The Ordinance was adopted by the Santa Monica City Council on March 24, 1976 and twice amended, first in 1987 and again in 1991.¹² Among the primary objectives achieved by the Ordinance was the creation of a local designation program for buildings, structures, sites, objects, districts, and landscapes in the City that are of historical significance.

With regard to individually significant properties, the Ordinance distinguishes between two tiers of designation: Landmarks and Structures of Merit. Landmarks, outlined in §9.36.100, are considered to exhibit “the highest level of individual historical or architectural significance.” Structures of Merit, outlined in §9.36.080, possess a degree of individual significance that is more limited in scope.¹³ Protections against demolition and alterations are commensurate with the tier of individual designation assigned to a particular resource.

In addition to individual Landmarks and Structures of Merit, the Ordinance establishes statutory criteria and procedures for the designation of Historic Districts, defined in §9.36.030 as a “geographic area or noncontiguous grouping of thematically related properties” that collectively contribute to the historic character of an area within the City.

Per §9.36.100(a) of the Ordinance, a property (or a geographic area or grouping of properties) merits consideration as a Landmark (or Historic District) if it satisfies one or more of the following six statutory criteria:

- (1) It exemplifies, symbolizes, or manifests elements of the cultural, social, economic, political, or architectural history of the City;

¹² City of Santa Monica General Plan, “Historic Preservation Element,” prepared by PCR Services Corporation and Historic Resources Group (September 2002), 1-2.

¹³ City of Santa Monica Planning and Community Development Department, “Historic Preservation in Santa Monica,” accessed 8 August 2014 < <http://www.smgov.net/departments/PCD/Programs/Historic-Preservation/> >

- (2) It has aesthetic or artistic interest or value, or other noteworthy interest or value;
- (3) It is identified with historic personages or with important events in local, state, or national history;
- (4) It embodies distinguishing architectural characteristics valuable to a study of a period, style, method of construction, or the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship, or is a unique or rare example of an architectural design, detail, or historical type valuable to such a study;
- (5) It is a significant or a representative example of the work or product of a notable builder, designer, or architect;
- (6) It has a unique location, a singular physical characteristic, or is an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City.

Per §9.36.100(b) of the Ordinance, a geographic area or grouping of properties merits consideration as a Historic District if it satisfies one of the following four statutory criteria:

- (1) Any of the criteria identified in Section 9.36.100(a)(1) through (6);
- (2) It is a noncontiguous grouping of thematically related properties or a definable area possessing a concentration of historic, scenic or thematic sites, which contribute to each other and are unified aesthetically by plan, physical development or architectural quality;
- (3) It reflects significant geographical patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, particular transportation modes, or distinctive examples of park or community planning;
- (4) It has a unique location, a singular physical characteristic, or is an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City.

6.2 Guidelines for Historic District Contribution

Pursuant to the Landmarks and Historic Districts Ordinance, the City of Santa Monica defines a Contributing Building or Structure as one “which has been identified by the Landmarks Commission as one which contributes to the designation of an area as a Historic District” (Santa Monica Municipal Code §9.36.030).

For the purposes of this assessment, a building was identified as a contributor to the proposed historic district if it meets all of the following criteria:

- It relates to the historic contexts/themes within which the Historic District is significant;
- It was constructed during the period(s) of significance which has (have) been defined for the Historic District; and
- It retains sufficient integrity to reflect its significance.

Buildings that do not meet these criteria are considered to be non-contributors to the proposed historic district.

7. Evaluation of Significance

7.1 Boundary Justification

The proposed boundary for the San Vicente Courtyard Apartments Historic District is a two-block-long stretch of San Vicente Boulevard containing 45 properties. It is bounded by the alley between San Vicente Boulevard and Adelaide Drive to the north, the alley between San Vicente Boulevard and Georgina Avenue to the south, 7th Street to the east, and 1st Court and Ocean Avenue to the west.

The district nearly spans the east-west boundaries of the Palisades tract (properties that front on 4th Street and 7th Street are excluded), which was subdivided in 1905. The district is distinguished by its substantial concentration of multi-family properties compared to the adjacent streets, which primarily consist of single-family residences. As early as the 1930s, the stretch of San Vicente Boulevard comprising the district was zoned for multi-family residential development, whereas the neighborhoods surrounding the district were zoned for single-family residential use.

7.2 Evaluation of Local Significance

In summary, the proposed San Vicente Courtyard Apartments Historic District appears to meet local criteria for designation as a Historic District. This determination was made by evaluating the district against each of Santa Monica's statutory criteria, as follows:

Landmark Criteria

9.36.100(a)(1). *It exemplifies, symbolizes, or manifests elements of the cultural, social, economic, political, or architectural history of the City.*

The Study Area appears to satisfy this criterion for exemplifying major patterns in Santa Monica's history, as an excellent and distinctive concentration of courtyard apartments. Courtyard apartments are a multi-family housing type that emerged in the 1920s and were a popular form of multi-family housing in Santa Monica and throughout Southern California through the 1950s. Responding to the temperate climate of the region and the growing popularity of multi-family living among middle- and upper-middle income residents in the years preceding and following World War II, courtyard apartments are an important regional dwelling type in the architectural history of Southern California. Although courtyard apartments are relatively common in the larger area, it is rare to find a geographic concentration such as that which exists on San Vicente Boulevard in Santa Monica. Therefore, the proposed district is significant as exemplifying patterns of multi-family housing in Santa Monica and trends in regional dwelling types, in particular the courtyard apartment.

9.36.100(a)(2). *It has aesthetic or artistic interest or value, or other noteworthy interest or value.*

The historic district contains buildings constructed in a variety of architectural styles, including Streamline Moderne, American Colonial Revival, Minimal Traditional, and Mid-Century Modern. Although the district has value as a concentration of the courtyard apartment property type, the

buildings themselves are typical examples of their styles; their artistic values are not highly significant, unusual, or noteworthy. Therefore, the historic district does not appear to meet this criterion.

9.36.100(a)(3). *It is identified with historic personages or with important events in local, state, or national history.*

The San Vicente Courtyard Apartments Historic District was originally subdivided in 1905 by the Palisades Investment Company and the Alta Santa Monica Company as part of the Palisades tract. Original owners of the tract included H.M. Gorham, R.C. Gillis, C.L. Bundy, and J.J. Davis. Although each of the original subdividers was significant in the development of early Santa Monica, their influence is not reflected by the built environment within the Study Area. Furthermore, research did not reveal that the district is significant for its association with a single tenant or owner. Therefore, it does not appear to meet this criterion.

9.36.100(a)(4). *It embodies distinguishing architectural characteristics valuable to a study of a period, style, method of construction, or the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship, or is a unique or rare example of an architectural design, detail, or historical type valuable to such a study.*

The historic district satisfies this criterion as an excellent collection of 1930s to 1950s courtyard apartments in Santa Monica. As demands for high density, multi-family housing have continued to grow in Santa Monica, intact groupings of smaller scale, multi-family properties have become increasingly rare in the city. Contributing properties in the San Vicente Courtyard Apartments Historic District are low-scale courtyard apartment buildings with open plans partially or fully surrounding exterior landscaped courtyards. Consistency of scale, plan, layout, and style distinguishes the Study Area from other residential neighborhoods in Santa Monica. Thus, the district contains buildings that embody the distinguishing characteristics of the courtyard apartment dwelling type; in addition, it is a rare contiguous concentration of the property type in Santa Monica.

9.36.100(a)(5). *It is a significant or a representative example of the work or product of a notable builder, designer, or architect.*

A number of builders, designers and architects were involved in the district's development, including a few architects of note, including Carl Maston and Edith Northman. As no individual or company singularly influenced its development, the district is not a significant or representative example of the work of a notable builder or architect. The historic district does not appear to satisfy this criterion.

9.36.100(a)(6). *It has a unique location, a singular physical characteristic, or is an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City.*

Multi-family courtyard apartments comprise the majority of the Study Area, distinguishing it from adjacent neighborhoods, which are almost exclusively single-family residential in composition. Additionally, the district's setting is distinctive due to its location on San Vicente Boulevard, a major corridor that originally had streetcar tracks running down its center and is now occupied by a 50-foot-wide median featuring regularly spaced coral trees. Due to its distinctive location along San Vicente Boulevard and its unique multi-family residential composition in northwest Santa Monica, the Study Area is an established and familiar visual feature in the city. Therefore it appears to meet this criterion.

Historic District Criteria

9.36.100(b)(1). Any of the criteria identified in Section 9.36.100(a)(1) through (6)

The Study Area appears to satisfy Criteria 9.36.100(a)(1), 9.36.100(a)(4), and 9.36.100(a)(6), as described above. Thus, the district appears to meet this criterion.

9.36.100(b)(2). It is a noncontiguous grouping of thematically related properties or a definable area possessing a concentration of historic, scenic or thematic sites, which contribute to each other and are unified aesthetically by plan, physical development or architectural quality

The Study Area contains a significant concentration of courtyard apartments, a popular multi-family housing type in Southern California from the 1920s to the 1950s. Though a few courtyard apartments within the district were constructed prior to World War II, the majority of contributing properties were built in response to Santa Monica's postwar housing demands. As all contributors in the district are courtyard apartments, all have L-, O-, I-, C-, or U-shaped plans that partially or fully surround a landscaped courtyard. Since most properties were constructed after World War II, popular 1940s-1950s architectural styles, including American Colonial Revival, Minimal Traditional, and Mid-Century Modern, are prominent in the district. Thus, the district is composed of a concentration of similar multi-family property subtypes that are united aesthetically by their plans, scale, appearance, and architectural styles. For these reasons, it appears to satisfy this criterion.

9.36.100(b)(3). It reflects significant geographical patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, particular transportation modes, or distinctive examples of park or community planning

The Study Area was originally subdivided as part of the Palisades tract in 1905. Initial development of the district paralleled the development of the surrounding area, as a number of large single-family residences lined this stretch of San Vicente Boulevard by 1918. However, by the 1920s, small apartment houses, bungalow courts, and courtyard apartments began filling empty lots between single-family dwellings, and by 1937, the district was zoned for multi-family residential development. Development of the district increased substantially during Santa Monica's population boom after World War II. By the late 1950s, two- and three-story courtyard apartment complexes had filled empty lots and replaced smaller multi-family dwellings and single-family houses. To this day, the district reflects multi-family residential development patterns, and in particular, the popularity of courtyard apartment housing, in Santa Monica during the postwar era. Therefore, it appears to meet this criterion.

9.36.100(b)(4). It has a unique location, a singular physical characteristic, or is an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City.

Since the Study Area appears to meet Criterion 9.36.100(a)(6), it also satisfies this criterion.

7.3 Period of Significance

The period of significance for the proposed San Vicente Courtyard Apartments Historic District begins in 1937, with the construction of the earliest extant courtyard apartment in the Study Area, and ends in 1956, with the erection of the district's last courtyard apartment. Buildings constructed after 1956 signify a shift from the courtyard apartment property type to higher density apartment houses and condominiums. In order to maximize lot capacity, open plans around shared courtyards were generally replaced with rectangular plans and small, interior light wells in these later multi-family properties.

Although a small number of later apartment and condominium complexes in the Study Area feature courtyards, in general these later complexes do not embody the mid-20th century courtyard apartment property type as they lack the essential character-defining features of the type, including access to the courtyard from the street, dwelling units facing the courtyard, exterior corridors, and rear parking. Therefore, the period of significance was not extended to include these later examples, although they may merit further study in the future.

7.4 Recommendations of Individual Eligibility

Although ARG did not conduct an intensive-level survey of all properties within the district to evaluate for individual eligibility against Santa Monica Landmark criteria, two properties stood out as appearing locally eligible as excellent examples of their respective architectural styles and/or property types.

- 212 San Vicente Boulevard appears eligible against Santa Monica Landmark criteria as the earliest example of a courtyard apartment on San Vicente Boulevard and as an excellent example of the Streamline Moderne style.
- 621 San Vicente Boulevard does not retain the character-defining features of the courtyard apartment housing typology and therefore it was not identified as a contributor to the proposed San Vicente Courtyard Apartments historic district. However, ARG recommends that it appears eligible against Santa Monica Landmark criteria as an excellent example of the Mid-Century Modern style.

8. Conclusion

Based on documentary research, field investigation, the development of historic contexts, and an evaluation against local eligibility criteria, ARG finds that the San Vicente Courtyard Apartments Historic District appears eligible under City of Santa Monica Landmark Criteria 9.36.100(a)(1), 9.36.100(a)(4), 9.36.100(a)(6); and Historic District Criteria 9.36.100(b)(1), 9.36.100(b)(2), 9.36.100(b)(3), and 9.36.100(b)(4). Of the 45 total properties in the district, 26 (58%) were found to be contributors to the historic district.

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Attachments:

Appendix A: Property Table

Appendix B: Photo Log