



SAN VICENTE APARTMENTS

Courtyard Housing Study

prepared for
The City of Santa Monica

prepared by
Architectural Resources Group, Inc.
Architects, Planners & Conservators

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Acknowledgements

PROJECT TEAM

Consultant Team

Architectural Resources Group, Inc. - Architecture and Historic Preservation

Bruce D. Judd, FAIA, Principal-in-Charge

M. Bridget Maley, Senior Associate

Katie Horak, Project Manager

Amanda Davis, Architectural Historian / Preservation Planner

Anny Su, Historian

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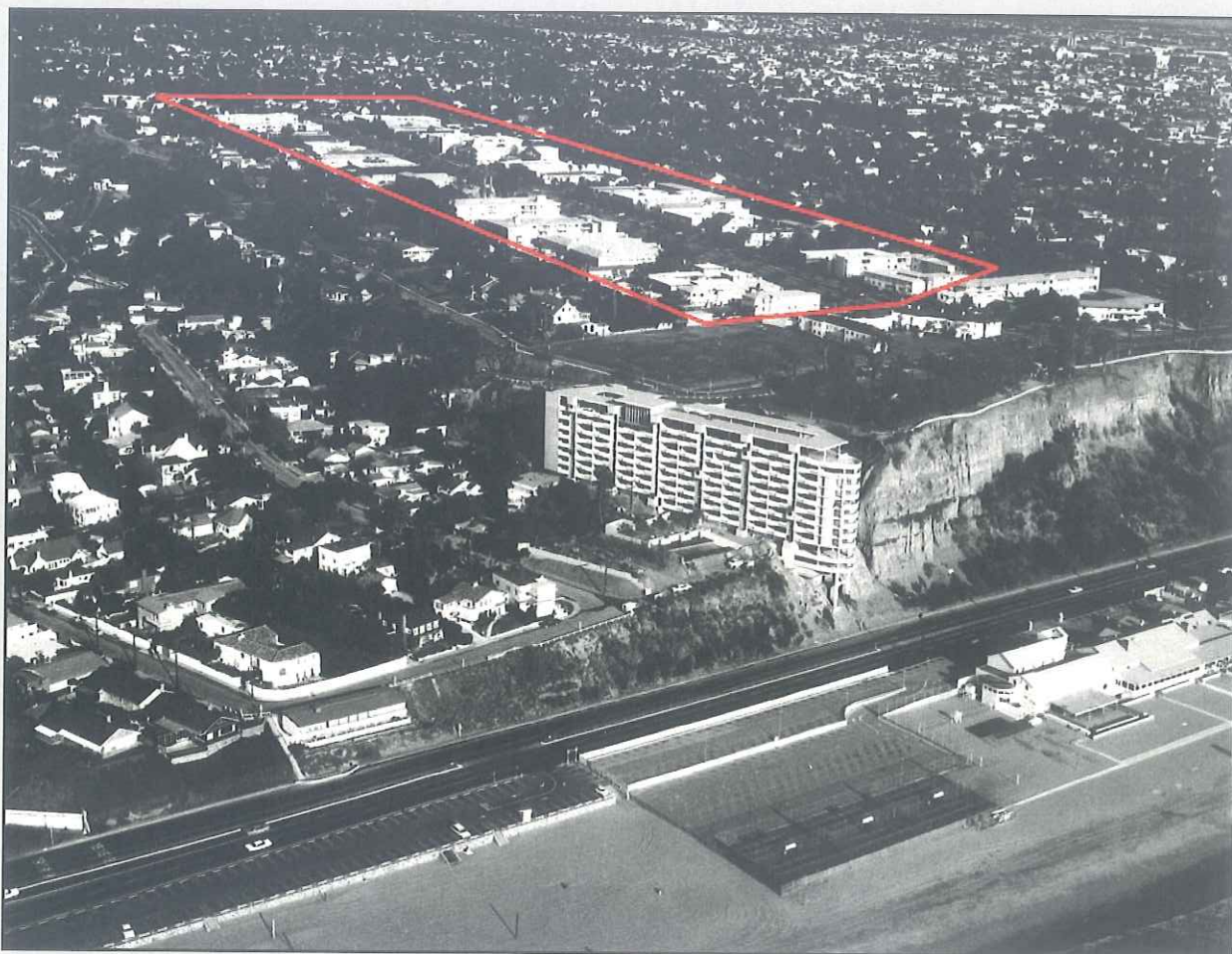
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1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In August 2009, the City of Santa Monica Planning Division engaged Architectural Resources Group, Inc. (ARG) to provide a preliminary study regarding the establishment of a potential Neighborhood Conservation District for a concentration of courtyard apartment buildings on San Vicente Boulevard, between Ocean Avenue and 7th Street. This area was identified as significant in a 1983 citywide historic resources survey and again in 2002 in the *North of Montana Historic Resources Inventory Update*. In both surveys, the area is referred to as “The San Vicente Apartments.” It has not been formally designated at the local level. Many of the buildings are listed in the California Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) as eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) as contributors to a historic district, identified through survey evaluation.

As part of the City’s update to the Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE), the Neighborhood Conservation initiative identifies the need to develop new and innovative tools to conserve the character and quality of Santa Monica’s older neighborhoods. A Neighborhood Conservation



San Vicente apartments within red boundary, 1964 aerial photograph

(Courtesy USC Digital Archives)

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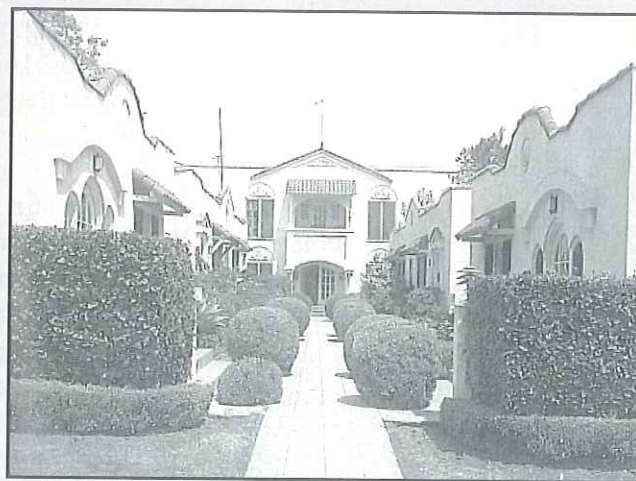
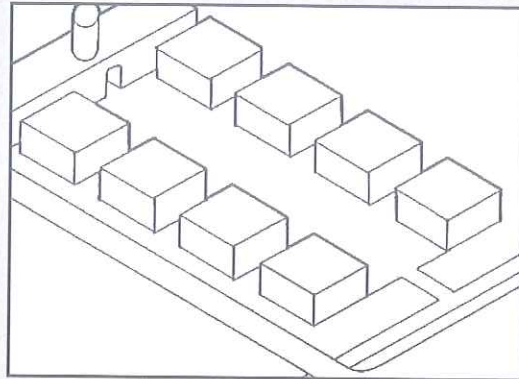
District or Overlay Zone is a tool used by many cities as an alternative to historic designation to protect the character of a specified area without the stringent building-by-building regulation often imposed by Historic District designation. Because of its distinct character and value to the community, the San Vicente Apartments study area has been targeted by the City of Santa Monica as a candidate for Neighborhood Conservation protection.

The general purpose of this study is to provide the City of Santa Monica with strategies for the conservation of the courtyard apartment buildings on San Vicente Boulevard through a Neighborhood Conservation mechanism. The findings and recommendations made herein are intended to not only address the courtyard buildings on San Vicente Boulevard, but also other notable concentrations of buildings in the City that may merit similar protection. This report includes:

- a brief description of courtyard apartment buildings and their historical context in Southern California;
- a description of the character of the study area;
- a definition of Neighborhood Conservation policies and examples of similar programs in other municipalities in California and elsewhere;
- criteria for the identification of courtyard apartment buildings in Santa Monica;
- proposed guidelines and standards for a potential San Vicente Apartments Neighborhood Conservation District;
- examples of protections and incentives that may be offered by Neighborhood Conservation zoning; and
- recommendations for further study.

2. COURTYARD HOUSING: HISTORY AND CHARACTER

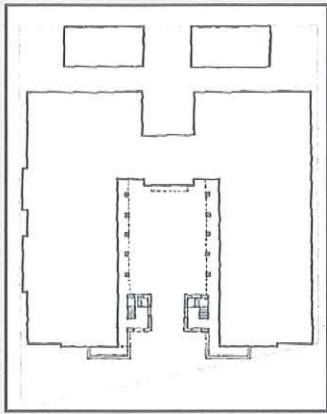
Within scholarly architectural literature, the term “courtyard housing” is broadly understood to include a spectrum of multi-family property types with characteristic communal site planning features, including courtyard apartments, garden courts, and bungalow courts. The buildings which comprise the study area on San Vicente Boulevard cover a range of dates from 1937 to the present day and encompass a variety of courtyard apartment subtypes. For the purposes of this report, they will be referred to generally as courtyard apartments and their varying subtypes and plans will be described in the following section of this report.



(above) U-shaped plan of a bungalow court and (below) a typical layout in Los Angeles, c. 1920 (from Stephanos Polyzoides et al., *Courtyard Housing in Los Angeles*, pp. 31 and 39)

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(below) Monterey Apartments in Los Angeles and (above) its open U-shaped plan (from Polyzoides et al., pp. 130-131)

Courtyard housing found its precedent in bungalow courts, which appeared in Southern California as early as the 1910s before reaching widespread popularity in the 1920s. The earliest and most prevalent examples consist of single-family bungalows arranged in a series, typically facing a center court. The automobile featured prominently in the development of bungalow courts; by the 1920s nearly all had accommodations for the automobile, commonly with a central or side driveway leading to rear garages. 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.

As multi-family housing became a more prevalent option for wealthy clients, the bungalow court matured into a new prototype of apartment dwelling: the courtyard apartment. While bungalow courts were modest and restrained, garden courts tended to be a type of high-style architecture. They were often designed by architects inspired by various types of courtyards in the Mediterranean, including patio houses, palaces, markets, and inns. The temperate California climate inspired architects to design spacious patios, verandas and balconies opening into a central courtyard, which was

almost always lushly landscaped with spaces designated to both rest and meditation and pedestrian circulation. Hallways and corridors were effectively placed out of doors, encouraging interaction among residents.

The elaborate Mediterranean-inspired garden court apartments of the 1920s and 30s gave way to more stripped-down, vernacular versions of courtyard housing in the World War II and postwar years. This can be attributed both to the need to quickly build housing for war industry workers and returning veterans as well as the shift in taste toward Modern styles. Growing concerns about privacy also began to change the appearance of courtyard housing; U- and L-shaped plans with courtyards open to the street gave way to C- and donut-shaped buildings which featured a nearly solid streetwall with a small opening into the courtyard. Similar to their predecessors, individual dwelling unit entrances opened into the interior courtyard which continued to serve as the primary location of pedestrian circulation and open space. The courtyard also became an area of recreation in the postwar era rather than meditation as it had been in earlier prototypes; lush landscaping and sitting areas gave way to swimming pools for communal use.

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In the 1960s and 70s, as an emphasis on maximizing lot capacity prevailed, courtyards were seen as wasted space that could be profitable as inhabitable, rentable square footage. Large, central courtyards were eliminated or replaced with small lightwells providing natural light to units, and in many cases corridors were placed indoors or at side elevations with exterior balconies.

Although the desire for single-family homeownership is still strong in Santa Monica and the greater Los Angeles area, new ideas in high-density housing will certainly evolve as the population continues to grow, limited land area is available for expansion, and concerns for sustainable lifestyles continue to increase. As stated by Polyzoides, Sherwood and Tice in their seminal work, *Courtyard Housing in Los Angeles* (1992): "If apartment buildings are to be viable alternatives to single-family houses, they must offer some of the presumed amenities of suburban living: quiet, privacy, security, adequate outdoor space, easy accommodation of the automobile, and the miscellaneous equipment of today's recreation-oriented family." Nearly a century after the invention of the bungalow court, many people recognize the superior quality of life presented by courtyard prototypes of the 1920s-50s. The conservation of existing courtyard housing will not only protect multi-family dwellings revered by residents today, but will also preserve examples of successful medium- and high-density residential prototypes for planners and developers in the future.

3. DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA: SAN VICENTE APARTMENTS

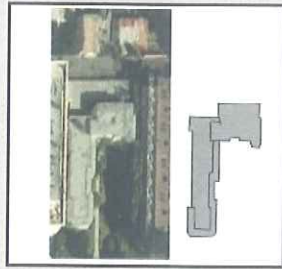
The study area includes multi-family dwellings on San Vicente Boulevard between Ocean Avenue and 7th Street. There are 45 parcels in the study area; 43 contain multi-family apartment buildings or condominiums between two and five stories tall. One parcel contains a school (the Carl Thorpe School) and there is one vacant lot in the study area. This vacant lot contained an eight-unit apartment dwelling constructed circa 1925; it was demolished circa 2002.



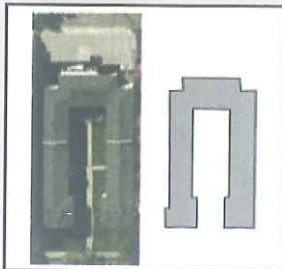
San Vicente Apartments study area within blue boundary; courtyard apartments shaded in green (GIS map courtesy of City of Santa Monica City Planning Division)

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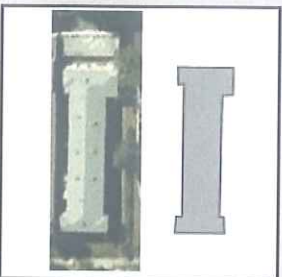
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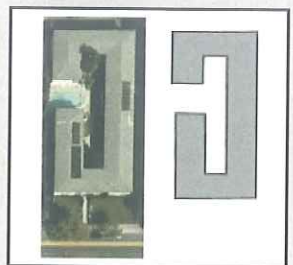
L-shaped plan



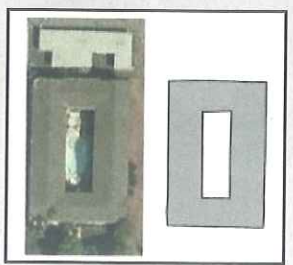
U-shaped plan



I-shaped plan with side court



C-shaped plan with pool



Donut-shaped plan with pool

This stretch of San Vicente Boulevard features a significant concentration of courtyard apartments, most of which contain a central, landscaped courtyard. The buildings were generally constructed in the post-World War II years; the earliest extant building was constructed in 1937 and the most recent in 1996.

Although this study focuses on the courtyard apartment buildings on San Vicente Boulevard, ARG conducted a brief reconnaissance survey of other courtyard buildings throughout Santa Monica in order to gain an understanding of common characteristics of the property type citywide. Survey investigation confirmed that while the stretch of buildings on San Vicente Boulevard between Ocean Avenue and 7th Street represents the most significant concentration of courtyard apartment buildings in the City, there are other areas in Santa Monica that may be candidates for Neighborhood Conservation zoning.

Site

The distinct character of the study area owes much to its site features as well as to its individual buildings. San Vicente Boulevard is characterized by a wide median; historically inhabited by streetcar tracks, the median is now landscaped with grass and large Coral trees. Well utilized by joggers and walkers, the median adds to the park-like nature of the area.

The buildings on San Vicente Boulevard feature consistent set-backs and almost always have landscaped front yards or forecourts. Concrete sidewalks and grassy parking strips line the boulevard, and with vehicular access mostly limited to rear alleys there is an almost complete absence of driveways and curb cuts.

Buildings

The buildings within the study area cover a range of construction dates and architectural styles, and therefore their configuration varies slightly from building to building. However, courtyard apartments within the boundary generally fall within one of the following plans:

- L-shaped
- U-shaped
- I-shaped with side court
- C-shaped (with or without pool)
- Donut-shaped (with or without pool)

Earlier prototypes in the study area feature courtyards that open to the street (U-shaped or L-shaped), while examples after approximately 1950 typically feature a nearly solid streetwall with a courtyard accessed by a small central opening (donut-shaped and C-shaped). Pools exist only in examples constructed after 1954.

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Despite variation in courtyard configuration, there are many consistent courtyard features that contribute to the cohesiveness of the study area. In all courtyard apartment buildings within the study area, the courtyard is a central and prominent design feature of the building, constituting a sizeable outdoor room for common use and enjoyment. In addition to providing ample landscaping and sitting areas, the courtyard also provides the major means of circulation in and through the buildings. Most dwelling units have an entrance directly onto the courtyard or are accessed through an exterior walkway or stairway that faces the courtyard.

Courtyards in nearly all cases are surrounded by building or landscaping, creating a well-defined outdoor space. Common landscape elements include broad lawns intersected by pedestrian pathways; low planters with hedges, shrubs and tropical or flowering plants; and small sitting areas with moveable outdoor furniture. Paving is limited to pedestrian walkways, with the optimum amount of courtyard dedicated to plantings and green space.

Architectural Styles

Common architectural styles in the study area include Streamline Moderne, Hollywood Regency, Vernacular Modern and Minimal Traditional. These styles feature prominently in courtyard housing constructed during this period elsewhere in Santa Monica and in Southern California in general.

Streamline Moderne

The Streamline Moderne style emerged in the United States in the 1930s and is often considered to be a late branch of the Art Deco style. Where Art Deco was rich, brightly colored and highly ornamented, Streamline Moderne was sparse, stripped down and monochromatic. Rounded corners, horizontal bands and smooth surfaces give Streamline Moderne buildings the appearance of being smoothed and rounded by aerodynamic forces. There was no style better suited to Southern California in the 1930s, which was at that time already defined by its love of the automobile and the optimism of progress inherent in a region growing at such a monumental rate. The Streamline Moderne style reached its zenith in the mid-1930s and fell from popularity soon after, owing mostly to the start of World War II and the subsequent pause in new construction.

Character-defining features of the style include:

- Smooth stucco cladding
- Curved surfaces, such as rounded corners or bays
- A flat roof, often with banded coping at the roofline
- Projecting bands accenting the façade between stories, emphasizing horizontality
- Multi-paned, steel casement windows
- Fenestration configuration: windows in bands and wrapping corners
- Minimal use of applied ornament, creating a streamlined appearance (for example, no surrounds at windows)
- Circular accent windows



Streamline Moderne style courtyard apartments at 212 San Vicente Boulevard

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Hollywood Regency style courtyard apartments at 211 (above) and 515-521 San Vicente Boulevard (below)



Minimal Traditional style courtyard apartments at 437-441 San Vicente Boulevard

Hollywood Regency

Also gaining popularity in the 1930s, the Hollywood Regency style recalls English and French Colonial idioms of the eighteenth century while satisfying the mid-twentieth century urge toward modernity. Early adaptations of the Hollywood Regency style adopt Georgian and Neoclassical influences, such as symmetrical massing, columns, pilasters, pedimented entrance hoods and balconettes, albeit all streamlined and simplified. As the style persisted in the postwar years, French-inspired mansard roofs and exaggerated façade decoration became more common.

Character-defining features of the style include:

- Simplified traditional ornament
- Entrance porches with simplified columns, often double height
- Pedimented entrance and window hoods
- Combination of wall cladding materials, including stucco and wood clapboard
- Steel casement windows
- Round, porthole windows

Minimal Traditional

This style emerged in the late 1930s and early 1940s and became the dominant residential building style in the United States through the early 1950s. Often referred to as a “compromise style,” Minimal Traditional buildings reflect the form of traditional Period Revival houses but lack ornament or decorative detailing. The style was well-suited to the postwar era, as its simplicity was conducive to the mass production of houses in postwar subdivisions. Although most often thought of as a single-family house style, Minimal Traditional apartment buildings are not uncommon.

Character-defining features of the style include:

- Low-pitched hipped roofs, typically with narrow eaves
- Smooth stucco cladding dominates, although a combination of cladding materials (clapboard, stucco and stone veneer) is not uncommon
- Minimal applied ornament
- Steel casement windows
- A times, faux shutters at windows

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Vernacular Modern

A number of the postwar apartment buildings in the study area (as well as in Santa Monica as a whole) were designed in a style termed “Vernacular Modern.” This style derives some of its elements from the Modernist tradition including a horizontal massing; horizontal bands of windows or other articulation and trim; and lightweight materials treated in a way that gives a thin appearance to the exterior walls. The apartment buildings of this style, however, are basically a populist and commercial interpretation of some of the elements of Modernism along with inexpensive, expedient materials and details that distinguish these rental apartment buildings from one another on the principal facade. They are almost universally of wood frame construction and finished in stucco. The buildings generally cover their sites completely, with any common open space contained in a partially or fully paved courtyard in the center, sometimes featuring a swimming pool. No ornamentation or articulation is applied to the sides and rear of the buildings, which are almost always at or very near the lot lines.

The street facades of such apartment buildings carry all of the building’s graphic and architectural information. Oversized graphics displaying the name or the address of the building are often applied to the front. Textural elements accent single- or double-height panels on the street façade, such as lava rock or flagstone, board siding, scored stucco, geometric-patterned metal screens, pebbledash, brick, or mosaic tile. Sometimes these elements will work in concert with the name given to the building and the plantings in the limited beds along the street to create an exotic theme for the building.

Character-defining features of the style include:

- Stucco cladding at all façades except, at times, the front façade, which may feature other textural elements
- Flat roofs, often with wide 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 (called “dingbats” after printers’ ornaments) or decorative face-mounted light fixtures
- Prominent graphic signage at front façade, often displaying apartment name and address



Vernacular Modern style courtyard apartments at 229 (above) and 451 San Vicente Boulevard (below)

4. NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICTS AND OVERLAY ZONES

The City of Santa Monica has two levels of historic designation for individual resources (Structure of Merit and Landmark) and one level of designation for multiple resources (Historic District). Historic Districts may be geographically contiguous, or, in the case of thematic districts, discontinuous. Chapter 9.36 of the Santa Monica Municipal Code, titled *Landmarks and Historic Districts*, delineates procedures for designation of these types of resources as well as the regulation of, alteration to, and demolition of designated resources.

The City is currently exploring a mechanism for the establishment of Neighborhood Conservation Districts or Overlay Zones. A Neighborhood Conservation District is an alternative to Historic District designation which can help protect the overall character of a specified area without rigorous regulation of building-specific architectural character. While review and regulation of proposed alterations, demolition and new construction within Historic Districts can be stringent, the goal of a Neighborhood Conservation District is the protection of overall character rather than strict building-by-building regulation.

Neighborhood Conservation Practices in Other Municipalities

A number of other municipalities utilize Neighborhood Conservation policies in the protection of their historic neighborhoods. Although not always called “Neighborhood Conservation” districts or zones, they have similar goals to what is being explored by the City of Santa Monica and have been utilized with great success. Below are a few examples of comparable programs in municipalities throughout California and elsewhere.

City of Los Angeles

The City of Los Angeles has two levels of designation for multiple resources: Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZ) and Community Design Overlay Districts (CDO). An HPOZ is similar to Historic District designation, while a CDO is similar to Neighborhood Conservation designation. A CDO is used as a tool to “regulate the design and character of development in order to prevent inconsistent, haphazard, and unrelated design.”¹ CDO designation ensures that development “promotes distinctive character, improves aesthetic attractiveness, protects areas of interest, prevents unacceptable design uses or structures, and provides a sense of place.”²

According to the Los Angeles Municipal Code, Section 13.08, the purpose of a CDO is to:

1. Assure that development within communities is in accordance with community design policies adopted in the Community Plans, and with the Community Design Guidelines and Standards;
2. Promote the distinctive character, stability and visual quality of existing neighborhoods and communities by ensuring that development visually provides a sense of place in terms of design within the Community Design Overlay District by considering the unique architectural character and environmental setting of the district;
3. Assist in improving the visual attractiveness of multi-family housing available to meet the needs of all social and economic groups within the community;

¹ From a brochure about Community Design Overlay Districts, created by the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning. Available online: <http://www.ncwpdr.org/library/cdo/CDO2.pdf>

² Ibid.

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4. Protect areas of natural scenic beauty, cultural or environmental interest;
5. Prevent the development of structures or uses which are not of acceptable exterior design or appearance;
6. Protect the integrity of previously attained entitlements; and
7. Provide for on-going community involvement in project design and evolution of guidelines.³

Communities in Los Angeles which have benefitted from Community Design Overlay designation include Echo Park and Venice.

City of Riverside

The City of Riverside has a successful Neighborhood Conservation program,⁴ with four designated Neighborhood Conservation Areas. Generally, Neighborhood Conservation Areas are “similar to a historic district, but with resources of somewhat lesser significance and/or with a lesser concentration of resources.”⁵ The Neighborhood Conservation Areas ordinance delineates the following criteria for designation:

A geographic area may be designated as a Neighborhood Conservation Area by the City Council upon the Recommendation of the Cultural Heritage Board if it:

- A. Provides a contextual understanding of the broader patterns of Riverside’s cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, architectural, or natural history; or
- B. Represents established and familiar visual features of a neighborhood, community, or the City; or
- C. Reflects significant development or geographical patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement or growth; or
- D. Conveys a sense of historic or architectural cohesiveness through its design, setting, materials, workmanship or association.⁶

City of Ontario

In addition to Historic District designation, the City of Ontario has an Architectural Conservation Area ordinance. Designation as an Architectural Conservation Area is intended to protect the character of “unique neighborhoods that may not have historical significance.”⁷ In order to be eligible for designation of an Architectural Conservation Area a neighborhood must meet one of the following criteria:

1. Architecture: It is a geographically definable area that conveys a sense of architectural cohesiveness through its design, setting, materials, workmanship or association; or
2. Development/Settlement: It reflects significant geographical patterns including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, particular transportation modes, or distinctive examples of park landscape, site design, or community planning or represents established and familiar visual features in the community.⁸

³ Los Angeles Municipal Code, Section 13.08, added by Ordinance No. 172,032, effective 6/29/98.

⁴ City of Riverside Municipal Code, Chapter 20.26.

⁵ City of Riverside website, “Riverside’s Designation Program.” <http://www.riversideca.gov/historic/city-program.asp>

⁶ City of Riverside, Ord. 6263 § 1 (part), 1996.

⁷ City of Ontario Municipal Code, Sec. 9-1.2615 (added by §5, Ordinance 2789, effective November 6, 2003).

⁸ Ibid., §9-1.2615(d)(1)(i-ii).

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City of Santa Cruz

The City of Santa Cruz has four types of designation for its historic resources: Historic Landmarks and Historic Resources for individual resources, and Historic Districts and Neighborhood Conservation Areas for multiple resources. Neighborhood Conservation designation is reserved for concentrations of buildings “that do not necessarily share a common historic theme or similar architecture which need a minimum amount of protection under the Zoning Ordinance.”⁹ To date there are six Neighborhood Conservation Areas identified in Santa Cruz.

City of Portland, Oregon

The City of Portland, Oregon designates Conservation Districts in addition to Historic Districts. Similar to Historic Districts, Conservation Districts must contain a concentration of related historic resources. However, the level of historic significance is generally “lower” in Conservation Districts than in Historic Districts; that is, they are typically important at the local or neighborhood level rather than at the state, region, or national level.¹⁰

The City of Portland has seven designated Conservation Districts, both in residential and commercial neighborhoods.

City of Chapel Hill, North Carolina

The City of Chapel Hill, North Carolina has a Neighborhood Conservation ordinance for those areas that “lack sufficient historical, architectural or cultural significance at the present time to be designated as Historic Districts” but are still worthy of protection and preservation.¹¹ The ordinance has a number of purposes, including promoting compatible development and “[protecting] and [strengthening] desirable and unique physical features, design characteristics, and recognized identity, charm and flavor.”¹² Criteria for Neighborhood Conservation District designation is as follows:

1. The area must contain a minimum of one block face (all the lots on one side of a block);
2. The area must have been platted or developed at least 25 years ago;
3. At least 75% of the land area in the proposed district is presently improved; and
4. The area must possess one or more of the following distinctive features that create a cohesive identifiable setting, character or association;
 - A. Scale, size, type of construction, or distinctive building materials;
 - B. Lot layouts, setbacks, street layouts, alleys or sidewalks;
 - C. Special natural or streetscape characteristics, such as creek beds, parks, gardens or street landscaping;
 - D. Land use patterns, including mixed or unique uses or activities; or
 - E. Abuts or links designated historic landmarks and/or districts.
5. The area must be predominantly residential in use and character.¹³

⁹ From the City of Santa Cruz website, “Historic Preservation in Santa Cruz.” <http://www.ci.santa-cruz.ca.us/pl/hpc/hpcsite/index.html>.

¹⁰ From the website of the City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. <http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=39750&a=133983>.

¹¹ Chapel Hill Land Use Management Ordinance, Section 3.6.5, effective 2/23/04.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

5. CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFICATION OF COURTYARD APARTMENTS

Of the 43 residential buildings in the study area, 26 are courtyard apartment buildings. The following is a list of criteria which were established for the identification of courtyard apartments within the study area, and which could generally be used for the identification of courtyard apartment buildings throughout Santa Monica.

Site Planning

- It must have a courtyard that constitutes a sizeable outdoor room or space for common use or enjoyment
- The courtyard should be a prominent feature and central design element of the building
- In addition to providing a landscaped outdoor space for common use and enjoyment, the courtyard should provide the major means of circulation in and through the buildings. The significant majority of dwelling units shall have a front door directly on the courtyard, or be accessed directly through a stairway or exterior walkway that is accessed from and faces the courtyard
- The courtyard must either be mostly enclosed by building and landscaping to create a well-defined outdoor space or it must be a landscaped side yard onto which unit entrances face
- The courtyard should be clearly visible from the street

Landscape

- There should be ample landscaping
- Character and integrity of original planting and landscaping design, such as original retaining walls, paving, and/or original or mature plant materials is preferred but not mandatory



No. 515-521: Courtyard visible from street



No. 401: Space for residents and guests to gather outdoors



No. 129-133: Pedestrian walkways and common lawn area



No. 316: Maintaining original courtyard features is encouraged



No. 415: Courtyard accessible from public right-of-way



No. 421-427: Ample landscaping helps define the courtyard

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Relationship of Courtyard to Street

- The courtyard must be reached directly from the public right-of-way by pedestrian path
- The opening of the courtyard to the public right-of-way should be wide enough to provide visual access to the interior of the courtyard and should provide a common entrance for residents and their visitors

Architecture

- The architecture of the building should be largely intact, including all major character-defining features of the prevailing style

6. GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS FOR A POTENTIAL SAN VICENTE APARTMENTS NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT



A landscaped median with Coral trees runs the length of the project study area

The designation of Historic Districts typically includes the identification of “Contributing” and “Non-Contributing” resources. Generally speaking, Contributors are resources which were constructed within the Historic District’s period of significance; relate to the significance of the area, called out in the historic context statement; and retain sufficient integrity to portray their significance.

For the purposes of a Neighborhood Conservation District, a different approach is often employed. Rather than identifying Contributors and Non-Contributors, guidelines and standards are applied to all resources within the specified boundary.

Guidelines and standards for potential Neighborhood Conservation Districts should include guidance regarding the treatment of the overall site, existing buildings, new construction, and demolition. The following are preliminary guidelines and standards for a potential San Vicente Apartments Neighborhood Conservation District; the list is by no means all inclusive and rather should be seen as a model to be refined and built upon with City staff and community input.

Site Planning

- Protect the landscaped median of San Vicente Boulevard, its Coral trees and lawn properly maintained and replanted as needed
- Retain the concrete pedestrian sidewalks lining San Vicente Boulevard and landscaped parking strips with mature trees
- Maintain relationship of courtyard entrances to the public right of way. Primary entrances to buildings and courtyards should face San Vicente Boulevard, with entrances to individual units located within the courtyards and off the street. Concrete pedestrian pathways should lead from the sidewalk to courtyard or building entrance
- Maintain consistent lot setbacks

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Individual Building Plans

- Retain existing courtyard building footprints
- In new construction, incorporate typical courtyard building plans (such as U-, C-, L-, I- and donut-shaped) into the design
- If non-courtyard buildings are demolished in the Conservation District, replace with new buildings that incorporate typical courtyard apartment plans and massing

Scale/Massing

- Maintain the scale of existing courtyard apartment buildings in the district, which is generally two stories
- Discourage rooftop and structural additions that would increase the scale of existing buildings
- Limit new construction to two-stories in height, or two-stories with subterranean parking
- In new construction, discourage street-facing façades which are comprised of solid, unbroken masses to avoid visual monotony. Rather, encourage open courtyards or large unobstructed entrances to courtyards

Architectural Styles

The study area comprises a wide range of architectural styles, ranging from styles popular in the 1930s and 40s to those of the late twentieth century. The purpose of a Neighborhood Conservation District is not to freeze an area to one particular point in time; new, innovative design should be encouraged as long as new construction adheres to the other guidelines set forth for the district.

Courtyard

- Retain existing courtyards, with historic configuration (areas of paving/landscape) maintained
- Maintain courtyard areas historically designated for plantings, replanting as necessary
- Preserve unobstructed openings to courtyards from the public right of way; they should not be covered by doors, shades, gates, or any other obstruction
- In the case of new construction, maintain a courtyard to building footprint ratio similar to that of existing courtyard apartments in the district

Forecourt

- Discourage paving of forecourt and front yard areas, or use for parking/vehicular access
- Properly maintain lawn, trees and plantings in the forecourt area, replanting as necessary
- Retain historic configuration of pedestrian pathways and planters in forecourt area

Parking

- Locate all parking to the rear of buildings, accessed via alleys, or underground. All parking should not be visible from San Vicente Boulevard and curb cuts on the boulevard should be avoided



Courtyard with historic faux bois hardscaping at 201 San Vicente Boulevard



Landscaped forecourt in front of 421 San Vicente Boulevard

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7. PROTECTIONS AND POSSIBLE INCENTIVES

As the City of Santa Monica considers the adoption of a Neighborhood Conservation mechanism, there are a number of potential protections and incentives that may result from such a program. These may include:

- Protection of district character and visual attractiveness of a specified area
- Design review assistance for owners of property within the Neighborhood Conservation District. Design guidelines may be drafted for each district, and appointed reviewing bodies may provide design review assistance to owners requesting Certificates of Appropriateness
- Conservation of open space, particularly in the case of a courtyard apartment Neighborhood Conservation District. The protection of existing courtyards and setbacks as well as an enforced ratio of courtyard to building footprint in all new construction within the district will ensure the protection of open space
- Use of the State Historic Building Code. The City of Santa Monica may decide that properties within Neighborhood Conservation Districts are eligible for the State Historic Building Code, which allows for less stringent code compliance for qualified historical buildings
- Disincentives such as permit fees, required delays and discretionary review(s) for demolition of a building within a Neighborhood Conservation District

8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

As part of this study on courtyard housing in the City of Santa Monica, ARG and City staff performed a drive-through of neighborhoods in addition to that of the project study area to get a general sense of courtyard housing in Santa Monica. Neighborhoods visited included Ocean Park, Sunset Park, Pico, Mid-City and Wilmont. This cursory reconnaissance survey revealed that there are many other examples of courtyard apartments in the City; however, those found in the study area on San Vicente Boulevard represent the most cohesive concentration of the property type.

Further, ARG observed in the field that Santa Monica retains a significant collection of bungalow courts throughout the City. ARG recommends the City undertake a similar study with the aim of identifying and protecting its bungalow courts, perhaps through a Neighborhood Conservation mechanism.

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10. APPENDICES

SAN VICENTE APARTMENTS
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APPENDIX A
Field Notes Spreadsheet

City of Santa Monica Courtyard Housing -- FIELD NOTES 8/13/09*

General Notes: most historic courtyards have open, landscaped courtyard with pedestrian walkways; no pavement in courtyards except walkways; front lawns with buildings set back; concrete sidewalks with landscaped parking strips; earlier courtyards more open and later ones are enclosed

Misc: alley at corner of San Vicente Blvd and 4th Street provides access to rear of courtyards/additional parking for several buildings

* Note: Data collected in field was compared to that of the 2008-09 Citywide HRI update. "Status" refers directly to the findings of that report.

Address	Status	Compatible	Style	Plan	Year Built	CDFs	Notes
129-133 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes	Minimal Traditional	3 buildings, open U	1948/49	setback; small scale; no street entrances; open, landscaped (parklike) courtyard with walkways; front lawn; ancillary building at rear	address doesn't match up with report (report has 123-43).
130-142 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes	Vernacular Modern	Irreg	1950	setback; small scale; minimal street entrances; open courtyard with gate; landscaped courtyard with walkway; landscaped front lawn	The Teriton
135 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes	Vernacular Modern	Open U	1948/49	setback; U-shape plan; small scale; no street entrances; open, landscaped courtyard with central walkway; landscaped front lawn	address doesn't match up with report (report has 123-43).
150-156 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes	Vernacular Modern	Open U	1949	setback; U-shape plan; small scale; minimal street entrances; open, landscaped courtyard with walkway; landscaped front lawn	"Overcliff Manor"
153 San Vicente Blvd	Non-Contributor	No		Rectangular	1967	setback; forecourt (not landscaped)	4 stories with ground floor parking and at front of lot; no courtyard (parking takes up entire floor)
201 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes	Hollywood Regency	O	1953	setback; O-shape plan; small scale; no street entrances; open, landscaped courtyard with walkways; front lawn; rear parking	report calls style Minimal Traditional; same design as 211 San Vicente
202 San Vicente Blvd	Non-Contributor	No		Two l's	1982	setback; l-shape plan; minimal street entrances; enclosed, landscaped courtyard; hardscaped forecourt; subterranean parking	3 stories, incompatible in scale with other buildings

211 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes	Hollywood Regency	O	1953	setback; O-shape plan; small scale; no street entrances; open, landscaped courtyard with walkways; front lawn; rear parking	Report calls style Minimal traditional; same design as 201 San Vicente
212 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes	Streamline Moderne	L	1937	setback; L-shape plan; small scale; no street entrances; open, landscaped courtyard with walkway; landscaped front lawn	
220 San Vicente Blvd	Non-Contributor	No		Rectangular	1972	setback; rectangular plan; landscaped forecourt; subterranean parking	no courtyard, 5 stories
222 7th Street	Non-Contributor	No		Trapezoidal	1974/78	setback; landscaped lawn	3 stories, closed entry
225 San Vicente Blvd	Non-Contributor	No	Vernacular Modern	I	1956	setback; no street entrances; enclosed courtyard; landscaped front lawn	no courtyard (interior corridors); 3 stories
229 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes	Vernacular Modern	Open U	1947	setback; I-shape plan (paired); small scale; no street entrances; open, landscaped courtyard with walkways; landscaped forecourt	
234 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes	Vernacular Modern	Irreg U	1953	setback; U-shape plan; small scale; minimal street entrances; open, landscaped courtyard; landscaped forecourt	"Villa Vicente"
301 A Ocean Avenue	Contributor	Yes	Vernacular Modern	Irreg	1952/54	minimal street entrances; landscaped courtyard; subterranean parking	demo pending
302-312 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes	Hollywood Regency	I	1941/45	setback; I-shape plan; small scale; no street entrances; open, landscaped courtyard with central walkway; landscaped forecourt; rear parking	"Nida"; report calls style Minimal Traditional
305 San Vicente Blvd	Non-Contributor	No		Rectangular, with light wells	1961	setback; landscaped forecourt	no front lawn, interior courtyard not visible from street, ground floor parking
316 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes	Vernacular Modern	C with pool	1955	setback; C-shape plan; small scale; no street entrances; enclosed, landscaped (tropical) courtyard with pool and central walkway; landscaped front lawn; ground floor parking	"The Biarritz"
323 San Vicente Blvd	Non-Contributor	No		Irreg	1977/79	setback; small scale; landscaped front lawn	driveway at side; courtyard not visible from street

326 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes		Vernacular Modern	Open U	1956	setback; U-shape plan; small scale; no street entrances; open, landscaped courtyard with small paved patio area; landscaped front lawn; ground floor parking (at 4th Street)	"San Vicente"; can access courtyard at side street (4th Street)
401 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes		Minimal Traditional	Open U	1953	setback; U-shape plan; small scale; no street entrances; open, landscaped courtyard with central walkway and patio; landscaped front lawn; rear parking	
404 San Vicente Blvd	Non-Contributor	No			Rectangular	1971/76	setback; landscaped front lawn	3 stories; appears to have light wells and no courtyard
415 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes		Hollywood Regency	O	1953	setback; O-shape plan; small scale; no street entrances; open, landscaped courtyard with central walkway and patio area; landscaped front lawn; rear parking; balconies facing courtyard	"Monica Manor"
416 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes		Vernacular Modern	C	1955	setback; C-shape plan; small scale; no street entrances; enclosed, landscaped courtyard with walkway; landscaped front lawn; subterranean parking	"Coral Gables"
435 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes		Minimal Traditional	C	1948	setback; C-shape plan; small scale; 4 entrances to street; open, landscaped courtyard with central walkway and common area (patio) instead of pool; landscaped front lawn; rear parking; balconies facing courtyard	
421 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes		Vernacular Modern	Open U	1951	setback; U-shape plan; small scale; no street entrances; open, landscaped courtyard with central walkway; landscaped front lawn; rear parking	
437-441 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes		Minimal Traditional	I	1948	setback; I-shape plan; small scale; no street entrances; open, landscaped side courtyard with walkway; landscaped front lawn; rear parking	

445-449 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes	Minimal Traditional	Irreg I	1940	setback; small scale; minimal street entrances; open, landscaped side courtyard with walkway; landscaped front lawn; rear parking	setback; small scale; minimal street entrances; open, landscaped side courtyard with walkway; landscaped front lawn; rear parking	paved courtyard, no landscaping; 3 stories
446 San Vicente Blvd	Non-Contributor	No		O	1962/77	setback; square donut shape; landscaped forecourt		3 stories
450 San Vicente Blvd	Non-Contributor	No		Irreg	1980	setback; heavily landscaped forecourt		3 stories
451 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes	Vernacular Modern	Open U	1951	setback; U-shape plan; small scale; no street entrances; open, landscaped courtyard with central walkway; landscaped front lawn; rear parking (accessed by alley)	other buildings have rear garages accessed by rear alley too	
502 San Vicente Blvd	Non-Contributor	No		Irreg	1979/81	setback; small scale; forecourt with perimeter landscaping and pool		3 stories
511 San Vicente Blvd	Non-Contributor	No		Rectangular	1969/82	setback; rectangular plan; landscaped forecourt with pool; ground floor parking		4 stories
515-521 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes	Hollywood Regency	Open U	1948	setback; U-shape plan; small scale; no street entrances; open, landscaped courtyard with central walkway; front lawn		
516 San Vicente Blvd	Non-Contributor	No		Rectangular with light wells	1962/67	setback; forecourt with perimeter landscaping, central walkway and pool	"San Vicente Villas" (condos); 3 stories	
522 San Vicente Blvd	Non-Contributor	Yes. I-shaped with side court.	Vernacular Modern	I	1951	setback; small scale; no street entrances; open, landscaped side courtyard with walkway		
527 San Vicente Blvd	Non-Contributor	Yes; central court visible from street		C with pool	1996	setback; C-shape plan; enclosed, heavily landscaped courtyard with pool; landscaped forecourt	example of recent construction meeting courtyard criteria, although slightly large in scale	
537 San Vicente Blvd	Non-Contributor	No		C	1957	setback; C-shape plan; landscaped forecourt; subterranean parking	appears to be no courtyard	
540 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes	Vernacular Modern	O with pool	1954	setback; O-shape plan; small scale; no street entrances; central opening has gate and screen partially blocking view of courtyard; pool in courtyard; landscaped front lawn; rear parking	"The Bermuda"	

605 San Vicente Blvd	Non-Contributor	No			Retangular with light wells	1973	setback; no courtyard (just light wells); landscaped forecourt; ground floor parking	
608 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	yes		Vernacular Modern	O with pool	1955	setback; O-shape plan; small scale; no street entrances; central opening has gate and screen partially blocking view of courtyard; pool with walkways at courtyard; landscaped front lawn; rear parking; balconies facing courtyard	
614 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes		Hollywood Regency	Open U	1948	setback; U-shape plan; small scale; no street entrances; open, landscaped courtyard with central walkway; front lawn; rear parking	
621 San Vicente Blvd	Non-Contributor	Not really. Lightwells and fenced patios, rather than communal courtyard space.		International Style	Rectangular. Pool in front, light wells and interior patios	1960	setback; rectangular plan; courtyard (not landscaped); partially landscaped forecourt with pool; ground floor parking	Interior features lightwells with private patios (fenced), doesn't really create sense of community
630 San Vicente Blvd	Contributor	Yes		Vernacular Modern	C with pool	1955	setback; C-shape plan; small scale; no street entrances; enclosed, landscaped courtyard with central walkway; landscaped forecourt; pool at side	

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APPENDIX B
Photographic Documentation



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