

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received **JUL 30 1986**
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic The Villa Bonita

and/or common The Villa Bonita

2. Location

street & number 1817 Hillcrest Road n/a not for publication

city, town Hollywood n/a vicinity of

state California code 06 county Los Angeles code 037

3. Classification

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> educational | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> religious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | <input type="checkbox"/> in process | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property

name Albert V. Siniscal/Villa Bonita Properties

street & number 1817 Hillcrest Road

city, town Hollywood n/a vicinity of state CA 90028

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Los Angeles County Hall of Records

street & number 511 W. Temple Street

city, town Los Angeles state CA 90012

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moveddate N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Hillside siting and Eastern tradition combine to make this Hollywood apartment an example of the adaptation of Eastern formality to the Southern California of the 1920s. Sited on a narrow hillside lot on the southwest corner of Hillcrest Road and Pinehurst Street, the Villa Bonita is a seven-story classically designed apartment building, constructed of reinforced concrete, which exhibits both medieval and Spanish Renaissance decorative motifs. Roughly rectangular, the structure's main facade is the Hillcrest Road (east) elevation. This facade is irregularly stepped, and set back from the street, as it proceeds north. The southernmost portion is devoted to a canted bay extending from the second through seventh floors, fenestrated by a pair of casement windows flanked by single casements. The northern two-thirds of the building step back from the facade, and carry a pair of casement windows on each floor in the northernmost bay, and a fixed pane window and a tall, one-over-one double-hung sash opening onto a firescape. Alterations are minimal.

The north facade, facing Pinehurst Street, is arranged into bays with an A-B-B-A arrangement. The central bays are made up of pairs of four-light casement windows, each pair separated by a muntin. These bays are flanked by canted bays which reflect the design of the east facade. While the placement of elements and the design give distinct verticality to the structure, the exterior retains the traditional tripartite divisions of Classical Revival styles. The ground level of both the east and north is highly ornamented with pairs of arched, casement windows aligned vertically with the casements above. The center bay of the front facade contains the entry. The central entry is recessed in a stepped, square-columned arch, flanked by heavily decorated Composite order columns, and surmounted by a broken pediment carrying a scalloped parapet and capped with finials. The entrance is slightly elevated, creating a small vestibule; the entry doors are a simple pair of wood-framed glass doors, topped by a wood-framed lunette. As in most structures of this style, most of the ornament is contained on the ground floor and then at the upper levels. The fifth and sixth stories are separated by a corbeled frieze on the east and north facades. Above this frieze, the vertical rhythm is echoed in the alignment of scallop-arched pairs of casement windows, flanked by piers with Corinthian capitals. Medallions are placed at intervals above the windows, and the building service itself is also heavily decorated with a diamond motif. The building is topped with a broken pediment, hiding the flat roof, with urns over each canted bay. The seventh floor consists of a penthouse and roof garden, a uniquely private space with a commanding view of the city and the Hollywood hills. The highly ornamented parapet serves as a garden wall. The south and west facades are treated in a more utilitarian fashion, with each facade carrying rows of casement windows on each level. Alterations are confined to the enclosure of a portion of the roof garden in 1940, an addition to the original penthouse, and security grilles in a style compatible with the building on the ground floor openings.

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The building has a small lobby with marble floor, ornate moldings and brackets, and original chandelier. Metal mailboxes occupy a portion of the north wall. An original panelled elevator and a central stairway provide access to the upper floors. The building is bisected by an east-west hallway. Each of the twenty-four apartments contain living/dining area, kitchens with breakfast nooks, and baths. Interiors are largely intact, featuring casement windows, entry halls, original cabinetry, and hardware.

A low wall surmounted by an ornamental iron fence encloses a small landscaped courtyard at the front of the building. No other features are present within the boundaries.

8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> law | <input type="checkbox"/> science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> economics | <input type="checkbox"/> literature | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900– | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | |

Specific dates 1929 **Builder/Architect** Frank Webster

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Villa Bonita is a seven-story Spanish Renaissance Revival style apartment building located in the foothills of Hollywood just a few blocks north of Hollywood Boulevard. Designed by local architect Frank Webster in 1929, the building's owner was Sidney Ullman, Rudolph Valentino's business manager and agent. The quality of detailing throughout the structure is remarkable for a building of its size, making it a prime representative example of multi-unit housing in Hollywood during its prime period of significance.

Nestled in the single-family residential Hollywood Heights area of Hollywood, the intimate Villa Bonita offered quality apartment living for those who preferred the formality of an East Coast plan and yet wanted the quiet of a hillside setting. The Hollywood of the 1920s and '30s was experiencing tremendous growth, as the film industry continued to have a major impact on the area. The small town became "urbanized", building more apartments and multi-family units to house its growing population. This is an atypical pattern for a suburb, and as a result, the Hollywood area today boasts a collection of vintage apartment buildings acknowledged to be among the finest in the city. The Hollywood Historic and Cultural Resources Survey, conducted in 1978 through 1980 and updated in 1984, identified approximately thirty such sites as a thematic grouping of special merit. The structures ring the commercial core, with the finest examples concentrated along the Franklin Corridor and in the Hancock Park/Rossmore area. While not included in the original survey due to its location north of Franklin Avenue, the Villa Bonita displays all the characteristics of size, scale, detailing, and function of those surveyed and is an integral part of this body of housing stock. The smallest of the high-rise apartment buildings constructed above Hollywood Boulevard to serve the needs of part-time residents connected with the entertainment industry, the siting of the building and its styling set it apart from other structures of its type along the Franklin Corridor. Of particular merit is the detailing of the entry and the upper stories, where the architect has embellished window surrounds and bays with exceptionally varied patterns to enhance the verticality of his creation. While its larger neighbors, most in the Spanish Colonial Revival, Chateausque, or Art Deco styles, functioned as apartment/hotels and provided a variety of services, the Villa Bonita integrated itself into the residential neighborhood as a security apartment building, catering not to stars or directors, but to those behind the camera. Reminiscent of urban East Coast apartments, the arrangement and plan is formal with a small, well-appointed lobby and panelled elevator as its main ground floor accouterments. The views, penthouse, and private roof garden are additional features which enhance the well-appointed, small luxury

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.1 acre

Quadrangle name Hollywood

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 11 376520 3774380
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

The east 90 feet of Lot 3 of Pinehurst Terrace Tract, Page 90 of Maps, office of the Los Angeles County Assessor. Boundaries encompass the building on its original 50' x 90' lot.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dawn T. Jacobson/Christy Johnson McAvoy

organization Johnson Research Associates date September 1985

street & number 3103 Lindo Street telephone (213) 851-8854

city or town Hollywood state CA 90068

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Kathryn Guetteri

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 6/18/86

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

William B. Buckley 9/12/86
for Keeper of the National Register

Attest:
Chief of Registration

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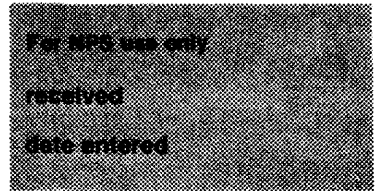
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building of the 1920s. Views were a primary consideration, and roof gardens a popular component of the major buildings. Few examples remain. Along with the neighboring Methodist Church of Gothic design, the Villa Bonita provides a buffer for its hillside neighbors from the busy flatlands of Hollywood. The building was constructed in 1929 by Sidney Ullman, well known in Hollywood as Rudolph Valentino's agent. Like many in the industry, Ullman used his profits to invest in real estate. This tremendous source of capital enabled Hollywood buildings to exercise their creativity without regard to cost, as each builder tried to outdo the others. Local architect Frank Webster designed this building, which was built at a cost of \$75,000 in May of 1929. Webster also built several less ornate four- and five-story structures in the flatlands of Hollywood, and designed a number of Spanish Colonial Revival and bungalow residences. The Villa Bonita is the best intact example of his extant work. Webster's extraordinary attention to detail, from the siting of the building to both the interior and exterior detailing, is remarkable. Although still close by to the studios, and the shopping areas of Hollywood Boulevard, the apartment's proximity to homes and churches made it appealing to those wishing for a haven from the hustle and bustle of the Boulevard. Restored by the current owner, the Villa Bonita is in excellent condition, and continues to provide a comfortable retreat for its residents. There is no other comparable resource of its type and style in the area.

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Hollywood Historical and Cultural Resources Survey, Hollywood Revitalization
and Hollywood Heritage, 1977-80 and 1984.

Los Angeles City Building Permit Records.

Los Angeles County Tax Assessor Files.

Ullman, Sidney. Valentino, as I Knew Him. Macy-Masius (New York: 1926).



Hillcrest Road

50'

90'

Pinehurst Street

Franklin Avenue

The Villa Bonita
1817 Hillcrest Road
Hollywood, CA 90028

(Los Angeles County)