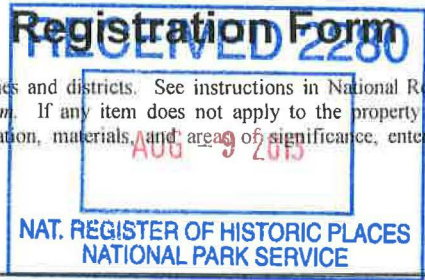


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

754

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and area of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Strathmore Apartments
Other names/site number: _____
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 11005 - 11013 1/2 Strathmore Drive
City or town: Los Angeles State: California County: Los Angeles
Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets
the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic
Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria.
I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following
level(s) of significance:

national statewide local
Applicable National Register Criteria:
 A B C D

[Signature] 8/6/13

Jenan Saunders, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date
California State Office of Historic Preservation

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Lee Eason H. Beall 9-25-13
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>4</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>4</u>	<u> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling
-
-
-
-

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/International Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: reinforced concrete, wood

Walls: stucco

Roof: tar, gravel

Windows: steel, glass

Doors: wood

Fascia: aluminum

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

"Well landscaped, the layout preserves the best of its charming situation and broad clear glass areas give views onto the attractive California landscape; still privacy is accomplished for each dwelling," Neutra summarized in his own description of the Strathmore Apartments.¹ Located just west of UCLA in Westwood, Los Angeles, the complex, built in 1937, is designed in the International Style. Four one- and two-story buildings housing eight dwelling units, of frame-and-stucco construction, step up a sharply sloping hillside, grouped around a cruciform-shaped central pedestrian core generously landscaped with trees and plantings. Secondary stairways are located at the far north and south edges of the property. Two four-car ground-level garages flanking the central core serve to raise and remove the residences from street level, creating a permeable threshold of greenery to the dwellings. The primarily east-facing buildings are configured as interlocking or stacked rectangular volumes characterized by flat roofs, white-painted stucco cladding, cutaway balconies, terraces, and long banks of steel-framed casement and fixed-light windows. Subtle gestures of asymmetry, a tenet of the International Style, animate the composition in plan, elevation, and section. All exterior details, including doors, windows, and trim, have been maintained in silver-colored aluminum paint. The interiors retain their original layouts and details integral to the building, and many retain character-defining finishes. With the exception of the landscape, now matured as originally designed, the complex has changed very little since its completion and retains its historic integrity.

Narrative Description

Community Context

The Strathmore Apartments complex, hereafter also referred to as "the Strathmore," or "the Apartments," are located on Strathmore Drive in Westwood, a community in the north central part of Los Angeles. The diverse area includes high-rise office towers aligned on major thoroughfares; densely packed apartment buildings; upscale single-family residences on leafy, quiet streets; and the pedestrian-oriented retail district Westwood Village, which has retained its low-rise village atmosphere since it opened in 1929. The sprawling campus of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), is one of the most important anchors in the area, which is approximately bounded by Sunset Boulevard on the north, Whittier Drive on the east, Santa Monica Boulevard on the south, and the 405 Freeway on the west.

East of Veteran Avenue, a major street, and west of Gayley Avenue, bordering UCLA's western edge, the relatively flat topography becomes a series of rolling hills with narrow, curving streets and close-knit

¹ UCLA, Charles E. Young Research Library, Special Collections, Collection 1179, Richard and Dion Neutra Papers, Box 1485, Folder 1.

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

low- to medium-rise apartment houses, many housing UCLA students. Strathmore Drive, Kelton Avenue, and Landfair Avenue are neighboring streets in this busy area filled with constant pedestrian and automobile traffic. These three streets include four Neutra-designed apartment buildings: the eight-unit Landfair Apartments, completed early 1937; the eight-unit Strathmore Apartments, completed late summer 1937; the three-unit Kelton Apartments, completed in 1942; and the neighboring five-unit Kievman Apartments, also known as the ElKay Apartments, completed in 1948.² The Landfair comprises a two-story series of stepped volumes with a stacked pair of larger units present on the south. While its configuration differs sharply from that of the Strathmore's, the two share a range of character-defining features.³ In contrast, the later Kelton and Kievman Apartments present themselves as large, low-slung houses rather than as multi-unit complexes. More relaxed in character compared to the more rigorously International Style of the earlier two designs, they embody a later period in Neutra's work.

Parcel Context

When constructed, the Strathmore Apartments occupied Lots 17 and 16, Block 9, of Tract 9617, a 277-parcel subdivision of Rancho San Jose de Buenos Ayres purchased in 1927 by the Janss Investment Company, the area's most important developer.⁴ Today, the northern four units, Lot 17, belong to one owner and have one Assessor's Parcel Number (APN), while the southern four units, Lot 16, are condominiums, each with its own APN, under a Homeowners' Association. See "Additional Documentation" for individual APN numbers.

The complex occupies one of the immediate neighborhood's steeper short hills. The two-lot parcel is roughly square except for its angled north boundary and a gentle curve on the northeast. It is approximately 123.5 feet wide on the north, 115.5 feet on the east, 115 feet wide on the south, and 142 feet on the west, or a total of approximately 15,180 square feet. The lot rises almost 34 feet from east to west and seven feet from north to south, creating a twisting two-way slope.

The site plan's *partei* bilaterally divides the lot along an imaginary east-west line, with four units in two buildings on each side of the line for a total of four buildings. However, while basically mirrored in plan, each unit's cardinal orientations are naturally different. Each unit also has a different elevation and approach because the architecture minimizes a "cut-and-fill" approach that would have diminished the hill's eccentric character and the opportunities for privacy and views inherent in the site.

The setting of the complex is a highly important character-defining feature. A cruciform central landscaped core complemented by plantings and trees at the property's edges is bilaterally divided by a pedestrian spine of concrete steps, landings, and staircases with original steel railings. Together, these components occupy a large middle portion, almost 50 percent, of the site. When the landscaping was planted in 1937 (**Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4**), the complex's appearance was that of two rows of crisp white rectangular volumes, animated by recessed balconies and punctuated by long banks of glass fenestration, stepping up the steep slope. Today the Strathmore's rich profusion of plantings range from

² The nickname ElKay derives from the first initials of the client, Louis Kievman, a noted violinist who sometimes played with Dione Neutra's father, Alfred Niedermann.

³ Owned by UCLA and used as student housing since 1941, the Landfair Apartments were designated as a Historic-Cultural Monument (H-CM), City of Los Angeles, in 1987. Along with the Strathmore Apartments, the Kelton and ElKay Apartments were designated as H-CMs in 1988.

⁴ Los Angeles County Assessor's Tract 9617, Map Book 134-78-82, Sheet 3.

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

bright green ferns to the dark foliage of rhododendron. Set against lighter, more diaphanous toyon, pittosporum, and eucalyptus trees, the landscaping dominates and visually obscures much of the upper units unless one penetrates the pedestrian core. Only the lowest two units, near ground level and set apart by trees and shrubs that reach out over the sidewalk, can plainly be seen. While it has matured, the setting has changed a little over the years and remains largely intact.⁵

The central pedestrian spine rises through the foliage, narrowing as it approaches the hilltop. Two large concrete landings interrupt the steps. Each landing opens to individual walkways, perpendicular to the landings, leading to narrow runs of steps, walkways, and staircases that serve the primary entrance of each unit. The spine splits into two short walkways near the top of the hill to meet the staircases leading to the second stories of the upper units. Because of the twisting slope, each of these secondary approaches is different, contributing to the individual character of each unit. Narrow secondary concrete staircases for rear and service porch access border the side property lines.

The same basic layout flanks the spine on each side: a stucco-clad two-story building, closest to the street, houses a four-car garage below a one-story duplex. The duplex consists of a larger rectangular unit, approximately 1,230 square feet in area, which shares a party wall with an L-shaped unit, approximately 615 square feet in area, at a higher elevation. In plan, the façade of the larger unit extends the width of the garage below and is recessed from the edge of the garage about five feet. A small section steps back again, defining a private terrace sheltered by the roof above. In conjunction with the shallower terrace running the width of the garage, the L-shaped terrace provides a secondary remove from the street. Recessed well away from the central pedestrian spine, the smaller L-shaped unit stands at the far edge of the lot and extends west, creating an overall eccentric U-shaped massing for this lower duplex.

Although this basic description applies to both sides (north and south) of the composition, the two lower buildings differ slightly. On the south, each garage unit is stepped and on a slightly different level, tracking the changes in the falling slope. On the north, the garages share one level, but the entire section steps slightly east, corresponding to a curve in the street that creates a deeper sidewalk depth.

Within this four-car section, the northmost garage unit breaks that pattern, extending into the sidewalk as a white cube, affording a second small private terrace for the unit above. Unsheltered by a roof and with a slightly taller wall, this terrace is accessed by a secondary entrance, a glass-and-wood door.

A deep stucco band above the garage doors, which are built of vertical thin wood slats and painted silver, is almost the same depth of the bands of white stucco present on the upper duplex. Alternating white bands are a typical feature of the International Style, although usually not separated both in plan and section as they are here.

⁵ E-mail correspondence with Dion Neutra, former owner of the north four units, November 23, 2012, who knew the property since childhood; and with Gaby and Gregory Chazanas, current owners of the south four units since 1975, December 5, 2012.

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

The stucco-clad units are wood-framed based on a modified four-by-four post-and-beam technique, a method Neutra referred to as a “standardized timber chassis.”⁶

At the street, the two garage portions perform the role of a classical plinth, raising the entire composition up and away from the street. Structurally and aesthetically the garages act as the composition’s unadorned base, supporting the more articulated detailing of the units above. The garages also present a solid wall at pedestrian level, interrupted only by the effusion of landscaping at the steps. As soon as one begins ascending, the lush plantings effectively erase the receding street and its bustle below.⁷

Another dense section of landscaping separates the two lower one-story duplexes from the two-story duplexes higher on the hill. Here, these stacked units are similar but not identical. The areas of the two southern units are only slightly less than the approximately 1,330-square-foot area of each of the northern units. Like the two lowest units (11005, north, and 11011, south) the primary elevations of all four units in these two-story buildings feature a full-width bank of steel-framed fenestration. They likewise include an east-facing partial-width recessed terrace oriented to the pedestrian and landscape core, thus affording opportunities for public engagement if desired. The terraces of these stacked duplexes are similar but not identical to one another, with the southern terraces slightly shorter and deeper than the longer, shallower terraces on the north. Neutra described these terraces as “balconies off the living room shielded against too much sun radiation by roof overhangs.”⁸

Corresponding with the 27-foot difference in width between the east and west property lines, the units are further distinguished individually by the shallow full-height wall projections on the buildings’ north and south sides (*Figure 1*.) These bump-outs follow the widening of the site and define service and access areas.

Unit Identification

North side, east to west:

11005	approx. 1230 square feet, lowest unit, two bedrooms
11007	approx. 615 square feet, middle unit, one bedroom
11009	approx. 1,330 square feet, ground floor, upper duplex
11009½	approx. 1,330 square feet, upper floor, upper duplex

South side, east to west

11011	approx. 1230 square feet, lowest unit, two bedrooms
11011 ½	approx. 615 square feet, middle unit, one bedroom
11013	approx. 1,300 square feet, ground floor, upper duplex
11013 ½	approx. 1,330 square feet, upper floor, upper duplex

⁶ Neutra often used this phrase in describing his wood-framed projects, including the Strathmore Apartments. The phrase was intended to associate this variation on conventional wood framing with industrial/assembly line methods of one of his heroes, Henry Ford. The framing was typically a hybrid between standard wood framing and post-and-beam.

⁷ In contrast, a more readily seen typical Neutra strategy, especially for single-family suburban houses, is that of a closed façade except for clerestory windows, while elevations facing away from the street are open to views.

⁸ UCLA, Special Collections, op. cit. (See Footnote 1.)

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

Exterior Materials and Strategies

Exterior character-defining features seen in virtually all of Neutra's later 1930s architecture, such as the VDL Research House I, 1932, and the Davis House, Bakersfield, 1937, and present at the Strathmore Apartments include:

1. *Strong sense of horizontality defined by flat roof planes, parapets, and extended bands of window groupings.*
 2. *Vertical end wall planes slightly taller in height than the projecting horizontal fascias, so that these horizontal roof sections appear to be sliding out from a container.⁹ Figures 1, 4.*
 3. *Roof overhangs aligned with the footprint of the dwelling unit. Their "screened undersides [present on Units 11005, 11009 ½, 11011, and 11013 1/2] permit cooling air circulation over well-insulated ceilings," Neutra noted.¹⁰ Figure 5.*
 4. *Sand-finished stucco.*
 5. *Silver-colored paint used for all exterior trim, metal and wood. The silver color is maintained on the interior, seen in the window trim and four-by-four posts.*
 6. *Use of crimped metal fascia on horizontal eaves in contrast to parapets and the tops of walls, balconies, and staircases, which are capped by silver-painted galvanized metal trim. Figure 2.*
 7. *Separated by a regular series of load-bearing 4x4 posts 3'-3 ½" apart on center, fenestration in all except two cases is restricted to either a pair of steel-framed casement windows or a single-light pane of glass, fixed or operable, located between evenly spaced wood posts. The long runs of this regular sequence underscore the larger horizontality established by the volumetric massing and flat roofs. Window heights vary between 27 inches, in bathrooms, to 57 inches, almost six feet, in the living areas, which are fronted by the larger fixed panes of glass. Shorter units are used for the façades of adjoining bedrooms, but this difference is not apparent as one looks up from below because of the depth of the terrace off the living room area. The stucco wall below the bedroom windows becomes the low wall framing the terrace, and maintains a strong and consistent horizontal line. For private areas such as bathrooms, finely ribbed or obscure industrial glass known as "Factrolite" was used, which has either been retained or replaced in kind or with compatible types of obscuring glass.*
- The primary façades of the two small units facing into the core, Unit 11007 on the north and Unit 11011 ½ on the south, depart from this strategy. These units each feature a single-light, five-foot-wide window flanking the front door.*
8. *The buildings' sharp angularity is tempered on the exterior by the slightly rounded wood "cap" applied to the face of the four-by-four posts and in the slightly rounded wood window sills.*

⁹ In later decades, this changing push and pull of discreet planes, displacing the monolithic volumes of the 1930s, became much more prominent in Neutra's work.

¹⁰ UCLA, Special Collections, op.cit. (See Footnote 1.)

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

9. The front door unit consists of a solid silver-painted single-panel exterior wood door with a peephole. In some cases a fixed single-light window, present at Unit 11013, is located above the door. In other units no infill panel was ever present, such as Unit 11011.

According to architect and son Dion Neutra, the distinctive font used for the unit numbers seen on every door are "originals made by A.J. Bayer, a metal fabricator who made aluminum numbers and letters of a style which inspired the modern iteration of *Neutraface* [a contemporary font]. The houses on Neutra Place, for example, also sport numbers from that period."¹¹ Even details such as milk receptacles, mechanical service access covers, mail box covers, the peepholes for front doors, and exterior service doors that are punctuated with a series of holes top and bottom for ventilation, are intact in every unit. All porch lights, located near exterior front doors or on staircases, are extant and operable.

Interiors

As noted above, while each unit is virtually identical to its "flip" in plan, each differs in minor ways. For example, Unit 11005, the lowest unit on the south, tracks the rising slope in section, with short runs of interior steps leading up from the entry or the bedroom to the living room, kitchen, and service porch. One bedroom also features a ceiling that changes heights in section. Across the central walkway to the south, Unit 11011 has a tiny sleeping nook, not shown in the plan, dug into the hill on the unit's west side. Near the nook is a small north-facing clerestory window providing sunlight as well as a view of the bottom of plants.

The units' interior spatial layouts are configured as compact spaces with conjoined dining and living areas that are L-shaped in the six larger units. The "L" permits a diagonal view to the view outdoors through the corner window configuration. The wood doors leading from the living room to the terraces are silver-painted with a single light in the upper half of the door. Bedrooms are located at the rear of each unit, and typically feature casement windows rather than the fixed, single-light glazing present in the more public living areas. Kitchens are also located at the rear. With the exception of the smallest units, 11007 and 11011½, the kitchens lead to service porches for laundry and mechanical equipment and to secondary entrances to the staircases along the property lines. While it was not possible to evaluate each unit, all of the kitchens and bathrooms viewed have retained their original layouts, including the location of the fixtures in the bathrooms, and some have retained original Crane taps and faucets.¹² Some kitchens have retained the original horizontally oriented stacked bond white subway tile (**Photo 31**.) Other kitchens have been renovated.

In the four bathrooms viewed, each had the original wall tile, in a stacked bond pattern, vertically or horizontally oriented, and floor tile. The color of the wall tiles varies from unit to unit, including black, burgundy, blue, and red. (**Photos 29, 30**.)

Notable extant interior details include full-height wall ends that terminate in semi-circular curves, usually one per unit and only included in some of the units, including units 11009, 11009 ½, and 11005.

¹¹ E-mail correspondence with Dion Neutra, December 10, 2012.

¹² Other long-term occupants, familiar with the interiors of the units, have stated that most interiors in units not viewed have retained most principal character-defining features.

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

Additionally, almost all door jambs, frames, and cabinet moldings are gently radiused in portions of the detail. The importance of these curves and silver paint to Neutra's work and to the Strathmore Apartments is explained in the **Statement of Significance**. Neutra also designed the closet/storage closets at the entrance of the six larger units, all extant. The role of these rectangular volumes, attached at one end, is also described in the **Statement of Significance**.

Inscribed picture rails are present throughout, seen in living areas and bedrooms, and all hardwood floors viewed are intact.

Alterations

Minor exterior alterations include a shallow, partial width sun-shading device on the north end of Unit 11005; an original flush panel wood front door replaced by a wood-framed glass door with a single, full-height light at Unit 11007; and a replica of the original solid panel front door at Unit 11009. Interiors have retained their primary character-defining features, including spatial relationships, wood flooring in principal public areas, living room closet volumes, and the rounded trim, wall, moldings, etc., described above. Bathrooms typically retain spatial layouts, a number of fixtures, and finishes such as tile walls and floors. As noted, some kitchens, which are secondary areas, have been renovated and all have retained their original spatial configurations.

Evaluation of Integrity

Over the last 75 years there have been very few alterations to the exterior and to the principal public areas and character-defining features of the interiors. This is unusual for any Neutra project of this age, but especially remarkable here given the number of units with changing occupants, whether owners or renters, thus demonstrating the success of Neutra's goal of designing a "comprehensive framework" suitable for a wide range of people. The historic physical fabric is in excellent condition. Noted minor changes are reversible and do not compromise the Strathmore Apartments' exceptionally high degree of integrity. The resource continues to convey its period of significance, 1937.

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Period of Significance
1937

Significant Dates
1937

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Richard Joseph Neutra

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Completed in 1937, the property's period of significance, the Strathmore Apartments is eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the state level of significance as one of California's highest quality examples of a courtyard garden apartment complex designed in the International Style executed at an exceptional level of artistry. Internationally renowned, it is also the sole example of Modernist architect Richard Neutra's synthesis of two building types, the single-family house and the apartment, in a setting in which landscape occupies almost half of the site. Comprising eight units in four buildings in Westwood, Los Angeles, the hillside complex embodies Neutra's spirited resolution of a diversity of urgent issues in the 1930s, including the Depression, a rapid population growth in Los Angeles, and the Garden City Movement's call for nature in urban centers. Its relaxed but tautly composed ambience also reflects an integration of the European-rooted architectural language known as the International Style in a way only possible given Southern California's unique topography, climate, and life style. The Apartments also flawlessly embody four key Neutra principles: first, that landscape and greenery were not luxuries but necessities; second, that the size of dwelling unit did not dictate the quality of life; third, that whatever the socioeconomic strata everyone deserved excellent design; and four, that his architecture could accommodate the specific needs of an individual by exploiting a varied generic vocabulary. Conceived and built as one design around a central sloping landscaped core, each unit shares the same repertoire of features characteristic of Neutra's 1930s work, yet each is distinct, creating a dynamic but harmonious composition. As an illustration in "designing small" without compromising gracious urban living, the Strathmore Apartments offers a prescient model for contemporary land use concerns. Finally, the Strathmore's special élan ensured its popularity with some of twentieth century's major cultural figures such as Charles and Ray Eames, supporting the primary arguments for the project's excellence as a work of architecture. As an outstanding example of the International Style applied to conditions unique to Southern California of the 1930s; as a seminal demonstration of Neutra's mastery of architecture evident through his home, California; and retaining an exceptional degree of integrity, the Strathmore Apartments meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion C, Architecture. It is eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the state level of significance.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Historic Context: The Garden City Movement, Federal Support of Garden Apartments and the Small House, and the European Influences of "Existenzminimum" and "Licht und Luft"

The Strathmore Apartments, sometimes referred to as the Strathmore or the Apartments, can be framed within several major movements in nineteenth and early twentieth century architectural and urban history. These movements were devoted to ameliorating urban ills and improving human health by increasing access to nature, seen in the Garden City Movement and in the promotion of "Licht und Luft," light and air, in Europe. Another development relevant to the Strathmore Apartments was the desire to creatively respond to urgent housing needs against a backdrop of scarce resources during the Great Depression. In conjunction with the new loan tools developed under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration in the 1930s, the smaller house was not only necessary but given the right

Strathmore Apartments

Name of Property

Los Angeles, California

County and State

architectural treatment could garner considerable cachet. Additionally, Neutra embraced the concept of *existenzminimum*, a term arising in the European architectural *avant-garde* in the late 1920s following the upheaval of World War I. It referred to the attempt, with limited success, to quantify minimum housing standards based on biological, not economic requirements, in order to design smaller houses and housing without sacrificing progressive architectural ideals.¹³ Finally, Neutra was especially equipped to design the Strathmore Apartments. His knowledge of the biology sciences led him to believe that "Nature" was not only good medicine but requisite to psychological and physiological human well-being. His early practical training with a seminal Swiss landscape architect ensured his suppleness in integrating building and landscape on a hillside as undisturbed as little as possible.

The Garden City Movement

The courtyard and garden apartments of Los Angeles have their origins in the Garden City Movement of late nineteenth century Europe and in the writings of British-born visionary Sir Ebenezer Howard (1850 – 1928), who immigrated to the U.S. as a young man. His influential 1902 book, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, proposed melding the attributes of town and country while addressing increased urban density. The resulting new multi-unit developments emphasized fresh air and green space. They downplayed architectural styles in favor of more generic, repeatable forms amidst a landscape designed to offset the impact of the automobile. In the early twentieth century, several garden apartments were built in England and later in America, including Clarence Stein and Frank Lloyd's Wright's famous Radburn, a large community in New Jersey completed in 1929. The movement spread to German-speaking countries through Howard's acquaintances, well-known architects and theorists such as Bruno Taut and Herman Muthesius.

While "garden apartments" are usually associated with large, "super-block" developments featuring a park-like ambience, curving streets, and the separation of automobile and pedestrian,¹⁴ smaller precedents and versions abounded, embodied by the Strathmore Apartments, which can also be considered a "courtyard apartment." Both types challenged the hegemony of the free-standing house. As one historian observed,

"If the single-family domestic residence is taken as a yardstick of the 'American dream,' Los Angeles epitomized that dream more than any other city, with a staggering 94 percent of all dwellings falling into this category by 1930."¹⁵

The bungalow court, popular in the 1910s and 1920s, especially in Pasadena and Hollywood, was an early model of addressing density. Located on a single parcel of land, it comprised a small group of one-story dwellings in the Craftsman Bungalow style, each typically between 600 and 1,000 square feet, that faced a central landscaped courtyard. There was little or no affordance for vehicles. Usually constructed by builders, by adopting the overall scale and architectural vocabulary of neighboring single-family houses, the bungalow courts appealed to those of lower means or with few household members. However, between 1910 and 1937, the year the Strathmore was completed, the population of Los

¹³ Edward Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism 1928 – 1960*, Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 2000, 31.

¹⁴ See *Garden Apartments in Los Angeles 1937 – 1955*, draft Historic Context Statement, July 16, 2012, prepared for the Los Angeles Conservancy by Architectural Resources Group, Inc., with Steven Keyton.

¹⁵ Pat Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames: Designers of the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1995, 53. Kirkham quotes from Mike Davis, *City of Quartz*, 28.

Strathmore Apartments

Name of Property

Los Angeles, California

County and State

Angeles County grew from 504,131 to 2,609,270, a dramatic 417 percent increase. Exacerbated by the Great Depression, the need for denser and multi-family housing now affected everyone, not only the poor and working class. The "courtyard apartment" appeared in the late 1920s. While similar to the bungalow courts in its flat site and general layout, developers hired architects to create more style and romance for more upscale buyers. Mediterranean, Spanish Colonial or the occasional Streamline Moderne styles displaced the more homely Craftsman bungalow style. Influenced by the bucolic California climate, architects added pergolas, fountains, bougainvillea, and grass lawns. They,

*designed 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. ... Still generally relegated to one or two city parcels, the courtyard apartment 'can be seen as a significant alternative to the illusory American dream of the freestanding house (or apartment house) in the landscaped park.'*¹⁶

While the single-family house never lost its primacy, trade and popular press publicity helped win acceptance for the small, or smaller, dwelling, especially in combination with landscape and gardens. Articles praised the ease of maintenance, functional features, reduced building costs, and the wholesome attributes of the outdoors. The architectural press framed small house design as a professional opportunity throughout the 1930s and early 1940s, seen in such articles such as "The Architect Must Be Considered in Small House Shortage," and "Garden Apartments Come of Age."¹⁷ Neutra, too, lent his own success stories in championing this building type:

*While the Californian single residence and even the smallest, simple, economically built house has gone through a period of adaption to the contemporary requirements of an open vastly decentralized type of community layout and of a motorized population – the multiple dwelling in the same region only recently went into a stage of similar mutation. In several examples of Flat- and Apartment Buildings, Richard J. Neutra has successfully applied the progressive standards of his previous dwelling designs to the aggregated habitations, to the grouping together of dwellings in apartment and row buildings, without abandoning privacy and the liberal opening up of each unit into the landscaped out-doors.*¹⁸

In 1936, the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the Federal Home Loan Board, and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) formed a coalition of architects, builders, bankers, and government agencies to tackle the "small house problem." "A major objective is to bring architectural services, hitherto largely confined to costlier structures, into the small house field," the new committee announced.¹⁹ Stressing economical construction without sacrificing comfort, the *Los Angeles Times* educated its readers on the attributes of the small house with articles on furnishing a small home, the advantages of the "prefabricated up-to-date small home for the smaller-income family," or clever space-

¹⁶ Ibid., 6. The draft statement quotes Stephanos Polyzoides, Roger Sherwood, and James Tice from *Courtyard Housing in Los Angeles: A Typological Analysis*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992, 9.

¹⁷ *Architect and Engineer*, May 1937, 397; and *Architectural Forum*, May 1940, 309.

¹⁸ Richard Neutra, undated untitled typewritten description of what he termed "Strathmore Flats." UCLA, Special Collections, op.cit.

¹⁹ "Housing Aid Plan Begun," *Los Angeles Times*, March 15, 1936. See also April 25, 1937.

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

saving techniques.²⁰ One article, "Garden Use Considered: Opportunity for Outdoor Living ... Light and Air" tellingly combined garden living with small house design.²¹

European Influences: Existenzminimum and "Licht und Luft"

The promotion by architects and planners for houses with more access to greenery, sun, and fresh air; the greater acceptance of Modernist architecture in a progressive political climate; and the Depression's spur to government support of the smaller dwelling coalesced in the U.S. in the 1930s. These three factors were paralleled even more urgently in Europe, although there public developments were more typical than individual mortgages and private incentives, as they were in America. In 1928, the *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (International Congress of Modern Architecture), or CIAM, was established. The influential organization drew together the world's most famous radically Modern architects to promote the new anti-traditional architecture. While contemporaneous with the Garden City Movement in advocating a restorative relationship with nature, the Movement was more catholic in terms of architectural style. The European organization differed in how that new relationship should be accommodated. CIAM was intent on using Modern architecture as the best medium for responding to the terrible economic conditions in Europe and the need for housing in the 1920s and '30, exacerbated by outbreaks of air- and water-borne diseases. CIAM's 1929 meeting's topic was "Die Wohnung für das Existenzminimum," or "The Dwelling for Minimum Standards," which were to employ new methodologies, including prefabrication, in housing. Additionally, the new architecture was to be deployed as a hygienic weapon in the manner of domestic sanatoria. These small "houses of health" were in turn modeled on innovative features of actual sanatoria in Switzerland, Austria, and Germany. These sanatoria, such as the likely inspiration for Thomas Mann's 1924 novel *The Magic Mountain*, the Queen Alexandra Sanatorium, Davos, 1907. The sanatorium, high in the Alps and surrounded by sparkling lakes and pine trees, boasted large windows and broad terraces for taking clean air and sunlight treatments. Furniture of chromed steel tubing, light to handle and easy to clean around, replaced clunky wood pieces as not only physically but "optically hygienic."²²

Many of these features were adapted by Modernist architects intent on stimulating healthy living. Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius presented a paper arguing for housing that included the "biological advantages of more sun and light" and buildings separated by parks.²³ The expanded needs of every human being were represented in the concern for "Befreites Wohnen," or "liberated living," which extolled the qualities of "Licht und Luft," or light and air. The term became the title of a book by its proponent, Siegfried Giedion, which included a prominent image of Neutra's Jardinette (Garden) Apartments, Los Angeles, completed in 1927.²⁴ As one of CIAM's American delegates, Neutra attended CIAM's third meeting in Brussels in 1930. The group held a sidebar session promoting the horizontal arrangement of long bands of steel fenestration, a trend associated with Neutra's former employer, Frank Lloyd Wright, and his work of a decade earlier, although Wright eschewed steel in residential settings. The session included a how-to practicum on the technical aspects of the "horizontale

²⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, "Here's How to Furnish Home [that was] Shown Today," April 22, 1934. "It's a California Type of Dwelling," September 2, 1934; Sketch, Small Dwelling Design, Oct. 7, 1934.

²¹ *Ibid.*, January 20, 1935.

²² Paul Overy, *Light, Air and Openness*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2007, 25.

²³ Mumford, *op.cit.*, 38.

²⁴ This large U-shaped monolithic apartment building of reinforced concrete, extant and still serving the working poor in a working class neighborhood, featured compact kitchens and open-air balconies with planters for greenery.

Strathmore Apartments

Name of Property

Los Angeles, California

County and State

Schiebefenster," or the horizontal sliding glass window.²⁵ Neutra introduced such sliding glass units in a few projects of the 1930s, including the Beard House, Altadena, 1934; the Ward-Berger House, Los Angeles, 1939; and the rear guest flat in the VDL Research House I, Los Angeles, 1939. However, in most projects of the 1920s and 1930s, including the Strathmore Apartments, Neutra achieved horizontality through grouping identically sized commercial steel casement windows.

Such an arrangement of horizontal bands of casement windows for both primary and secondary elevations, almost invariably paired in 3' – 3 1/2" widths, is an important hallmark of Neutra's early work and amply demonstrated in the Apartments. Beginning in the early 1940s, when plate glass became cheaper and more popular, Neutra used full-height and much larger sections of fixed and sliding plate glass units for a home's public areas, reserving casement windows for a dwelling's private spaces, such as bedrooms. Additionally, much of Neutra's residential work of any period is basically visually closed to the street and open, usually at the rear, to views and landscape. However, in more urban environments, the primary elevations of houses such as the VDL Research House I; the Davis House, Bakersfield, 1937; or the Schiff House, San Francisco, 1938, feature full-width window runs, announcing a more engaged relationship with the street. For privacy, these houses relied on drapes or blinds, as were originally employed at the Strathmore Apartments.

Neutra's Influences and Impact on Work: Frank Lloyd Wright, Adolf Loos, and Gustav Ammann

Richard Joseph Neutra (1892 – 1970) is regarded as one of the most influential architects of the twentieth century. Born in 1892 in Vienna, Austria, the Modernist architect graduated summa cum laude from the Technical Institute, Vienna. He also attended the informal school founded in 1912 by the radical theorist, writer, and architect Adolf Loos before serving with the Austro-Hungarian Empire forces in World War I. Like his early friend and colleague Rudolf M. Schindler, Neutra was also deeply influenced by the European publication of Frank Lloyd Wright's *Wasmuth Portfolio*, published in 1910-11, a watershed manifesto in twentieth century architectural history. The publication illuminated Wright's radical conception of the "breaking of the [conventional] box" through more open plans and an emphasis on the extended low horizontal line. Both younger architects absorbed and reinterpreted Wright's strategies, whose uninterrupted diagonal sightlines into nature were afforded by long banks of windows and corner windows. Such corner configurations were also common in the work of many of the European Modernists, such as Gerrit Rietveld and Neutra's early employer in Germany, Erich Mendelsohn. They became a standard strategy in Neutra's subsequent designs, including the Strathmore Apartments.

Another primary influence was the architect and critic Adolf Loos, who advocated a return to the qualities of humility, anonymity, and what Loos termed "lastingness," or durability, in building. Rejecting historicism, Loos argued for a sober, forthright architecture that rejected stylish innovations. These views anchored Neutra's belief that great architecture did not have to be a series of novel designs. Apart from a handful of designs clad in wood such as the McIntosh House, Los Angeles, 1937, virtually all of Neutra's work in this decade—whatever the building type or budget—share the identical architectural vocabulary based on a family of details, materials, and products, many of them from commercial or industrial sources. Many of them, refined over decades, remained a permanent element in Neutra's kit-of-parts for houses lavish or modest, from the 1930s and their first use to the 1960s. Because there

²⁵ Mumford, *op.cit.*, 78.

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

were predictable ways of doing things, construction costs were lower, allowing the architect to focus on site and user needs.

Despite his broad education, because of the economy and the lack of opportunities at the end of World War I, Neutra's first postwar job was in Zurich, doing hands-on gardening, drafting, and design for the Swiss landscape architect, botanist, and gardener Gustav Ammann. Ammann, now considered one of key European figures in modern landscape theory, promoted the role of nature and landscape as a necessary component in any architectural setting. He also advocated a more natural, relaxed style, an approach evident at the Strathmore Apartments today and a consistent element in many Neutra designs.²⁶ Neutra's early income in Germany relied on small garden and landscape designs for Ernst Freud, Neutra's close friend and architect son of Sigmund Freud. In these early designs, he specified plant types, budgets, and maintenance schedules. Beginning in the 1930s, Neutra typically used more general instructions on the height of plant or tree, scale of foliage, and plant placement. While no landscape plan could be located, this was probably the case at the Strathmore Apartments.

Neutra worked for Mendelsohn, Germany's most successful architect between the two world wars, from 1921 to 1923, when he immigrated to America. After a short stint in New York, he was hired as a draftsman for the famous Chicago firm, Holabird and Roche, where he mastered steel skyscraper framing and later met another hero, architect Louis Sullivan. He then worked for Frank Lloyd Wright in his atelier, Taliesin, in Spring Green, Wisconsin, beginning in the fall of 1924 before moving in early 1925 to Los Angeles, where his fellow Austrian, Schindler, was based. The city became Neutra's permanent home.

Schindler and his wife, Pauline, welcomed the Neutras into their daring duplex on King's Road, West Hollywood, a consummate integration of garden and house completed in 1922. The building was structurally innovative, inaugurating Schindler's "Slab-Tilt" method whose title explains the method, tilting up slabs of reinforced concrete formed on the ground. The duplex was also socially radical, designed for the Schindlers and their married friends, Clyde Chace and Marian Da Camara, Pauline's classmate at Smith College. The two couples purchased the 20,000-square-foot parcel together, an area about 25 percent larger than the two combined lots Neutra purchased with Mrs. Friedman for the eight-unit Strathmore. Two L-shaped wings, opposed in plan and each with its own patio and garden, provided an individual studio for each person. The men's studios occupied the far ends of each L, while Marian and Pauline's studios were in the middle, separated by a wall inset with a fireplace. An offset kitchen acted as communal space.²⁷ When the Chaces moved out, the Neutras moved in. For the next few years, the two architects worked on some projects together out of the same building. Schindler subcontracted landscape work to Neutra, who helped design some of the land- and hardscape elements for Wright's Barnsdall (Hollyhock) House, Los Angeles, 1921; the How House, Los Angeles, 1926; and for Schindler's Lovell Beach House, Newport Beach, 1926. For these houses, Neutra's plant lists included eucalyptus trees, which he specified for the Strathmore Apartments and many other later designs.²⁸ It is notable

²⁶ Later in his career, Neutra worked with important landscape architects such as Garrett Eckbo and Roberto Burle Marx, in which their designs, incorporating curves and other geometries, offset Neutra's orthogonal forms.

²⁷ Judith Sheine and Robert Sweeney, *Schindler, Kings Road, and Southern California Modernism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012, 14, 15.

²⁸ Neutra often specified eucalyptus trees, calling attention to how trees played an aesthetic role in dappling a stucco wall's surface. Fast-growing, the species' open branching, range of leaf color from blue-green to grey-green, and the variegated

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

that like Schindler, Neutra used the idea of the L-shape for the two smaller units at the Strathmore to outline the edges of the cruciform comprising the Strathmore landscaping, although the Strathmore is nowhere near as radical in upending prevailing social conventions.

Apart from European and American influences, Neutra's round-the-world tour in 1930 included Japan and Holland. The visit to Asia was partially facilitated by his Japanese colleagues he met at Wright's Taliesin West. While brief, his stay there was a turning point for him, as he later wrote in the foreword to a book on Japanese gardens. The traditional integration of gardens, texture, landscape, views, and architecture that he witnessed strengthened his conviction that nature, or nature's qualities, was indispensable in architecture.²⁹ Additionally, the diminutive scale of vernacular Japanese architecture; the well-proportioned use of asymmetry; and the consistent use of a standard palette of materials for a wide range of users further confirmed his belief in the soundness of his approach. All these qualities are abundantly demonstrated at the Strathmore Apartments.

In Holland, Neutra stayed in the Rotterdam home of his future patron, Cornelius van der Leeuw.³⁰ His 1929 house, a supreme expression of Dutch Functionalism, was designed by Leedert van der Vlugt, co-architect of the world-famous Van Nelle Factory, Rotterdam, 1930, one of the world's most important monuments of the Modern Movement. With its lean white interlocking volumes, emphasis on light and fenestration, sense of straightforwardness, connections between interior and exterior, and use of silver paint to disperse and "dematerialize" light, Neutra's 1930s architecture has often been affiliated with the Dutch movement.

Neutra's international fame was established by the Lovell Health House, which was one of the few West Coast designs included in the iconic "International Exhibition of Modern Architecture" held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1932. He went on to design hundreds of buildings, of which approximately 450 were built. Although many have been demolished, many others are now designated historic resources in the U.S. as well as protected abroad. Although more popular, perhaps, for his houses, his achievements range from innovative construction techniques to his radical reconceptualization of American schools, discussed below. Winner of numerous honorary doctorates, prizes and awards, he earned the American Institute of Architects' Gold Medal posthumously in 1977.

The Influence of the Pueblo

During the 1920s and '30s the Neutras, Richard and Dione, immersed themselves in the culture and geography of more local areas, especially the Northwest, the California coast, and the Southwest. In his 1929 book published for a German-speaking architectural audience, *Wie Baut Amerika*, "How America Builds," Neutra praised new technologies, especially advances in steel framing. However, he also relayed traditional Native American building techniques such as adobe construction to his German-speaking audience, praising its authenticity and its simple, direct forms and the pueblo-dwelling Native Americans

texture of their bark appealed to many California Modernist architects. See also Marie Botnick and Pamela Burton, *Private Landscapes: Modernist Gardens in Southern California*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002), 30 – 78.

²⁹ See Lamprecht, "Neutra in Japan, 1930, to his European Audiences and Southern California Work," *Southern California Quarterly*, Vol. 92, No. 3, Fall 2010, 215 – 242; and Richard Neutra, foreword, *Japanese Gardens for Today*, by David H. Engel, Tokyo and Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle, 1959, xii, xiii.

³⁰ Impressed with Neutra's work, Van der Leeuw loaned Neutra funds to build his own house in Silver Lake, Los Angeles, in 1932. Neutra named the house the VDL Research House I after his patron and repaid the loan with interest in the 1940s.

Strathmore Apartments

Name of Property

Los Angeles, California

County and State

who perfected it. **Figure 9** shows one of Neutra's many photographs of vernacular adobe dwellings from his book, and their similarity to the strong, volumetric massing of the Strathmore Apartments is striking. Architectural historian and Neutra biographer Thomas Hines has pointed out that Neutra's nearby Landfair Apartments, while adroitly addressing urban living, was nonetheless essentially European in its massing as "block of densely packed row houses." The Strathmore Apartments, however, was a "significant breakthrough," Hines wrote, in that the complex:

... acknowledged older regional architectural traditions as well. Long impressed with the elegantly stacked megastructures of the Southwest Pueblo Indians and with the more recent bungalow courts of Southern California, Neutra designed Strathmore as a modernist version of the two vernaculars.³¹

The successful September 5, 1985 application for listing the Apartments in the City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument register also noted the influence of the pueblo in the design of the Apartments.

U.S. Government Support of Smaller Dwellings and the Courtyard Apartments

In establishing the FHA, the National Housing Act of 1934 enabled borrowers to secure housing loans with lower down payments, mortgage insurance premiums, and interest rates. President Roosevelt called on architects to find innovative ways to control building costs, ranging from the small house to entire residential communities and large low-rent apartment buildings. While primarily intended for single-family houses, between 1934 and 1940, the FHA insured mortgages for over 200 garden apartments "composed of individual buildings forming a group of at least three buildings designed and constructed specifically to function as a multiple dwelling. These small buildings were designed to contain at least four self-sufficient dwelling units. The group is designed and sited to relate to the surrounding landscape."³² The definition aptly fitted plans for the Strathmore Apartments.

Given the urgency for more and for smaller housing, it appears that the Strathmore was among the few small garden apartments built under such a loan. In her annual report, "The Year 1937 In The Life Of Richard And Dione Neutra," Richard Neutra's wife, Dione, recounts that the couple decided to build the Strathmore Apartments with a partner, a Mrs. Adele Friedman:³³

During the first part of the year [1937] we decided to build four apartments ourselves in conjunction with a lady who also wanted to build four apartments, thus creating an eight-apartment complex. We decided to do this in order to create financial support for my parents who wanted to come, as well as for ourselves in case Richard should become disabled. [Neutra had just been hospitalized after a severe hemorrhage and related illness, she recounted earlier.] Such a project is possible here with a government loan. Unfortunately, times were bad and we had difficulty in finding tenants, which was quite a worry.³⁴

In the same account, Mrs. Neutra also credited the FHA as a component in the "building boom" in the mid-1930s, even helping to propel Modern architecture, never widely popular, she noted.

³¹ Thomas S. Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982, 170 – 171.

³² Draft Historic Context Statement, op.cit., , 11.

³³ No information regarding the identity of Mrs. Friedman or her relationship to the Neutras could be obtained.

³⁴ Dione Neutra, "The Year 1937 In The Life Of Richard And Dione Neutra," Richard Neutra Archives, California Polytechnic University, Pomona, Manuscript III 8 beginning with 1936.

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

While in the 1930s the federal government initiated an epic of construction unprecedented in California, much of its “therapeutic presence,” as termed by historian Kevin Starr, was devoted to major public projects. During this difficult time, most architects who focused on private commissions suffered. In contrast, Neutra’s career flourished. The Lovell Health House was designed as a grand template for designs that facilitated healthy living. It won him international acclaim and ushered in his most productive and innovative decade with 45 built projects. Neutra won commissions for schools that revolutionized school design, beginning with the five-room addition to Corona Avenue School, Bell, 1935, in which each classroom’s exterior wall consisted of a massive full-height glass-and-steel slider opening to a hedge-bordered garden acting as an outdoor classroom. Neutra’s lightweight, one-story design was a direct response to the Field Act for building safety, legislation passed one month after the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake destroyed many of the city’s schools, typically multi-story buildings and constructed of unreinforced masonry.

Corona’s success led to the commission to design the entire campus of the two-story Ralph Waldo Emerson Junior High School, 1937, also in Westwood. Still extant, it features open roof terraces, sliding glass walls, and landscaped spaces that percolate throughout the campus.

Dione Neutra noted her husband’s savvy in convincing conservative federal agencies of the merits of Modernism in residential architecture as well. Recalling the experimental all-metal and glass Beard House, she observed that “with great difficulties,” and using his typical charm, Neutra persuaded the FHA not only to permit the living room to face the mountains and gardens at the rear, an unprecedented reversal of orientation, but to place a commercial sliding glass door to facilitate easy access, the first use of such a door in the country.³⁵ The house was a huge success, winning the prestigious Gold Medal Award in the “small house” category of the *Better Homes in America* competition, 1934. Three years later, Neutra applied his FHA acumen to his joint venture, the Strathmore Apartments.

During the 1930s, Neutra won prestigious commercial commissions as well, such as the office building for Universal Studio’s founder Carl Laemmle, completed in 1933 at one of the expensive and most hallowed corners in Los Angeles film lore, known simply as “Hollywood and Vine.”³⁶ He designed the Josef von Sternberg House, San Fernando Valley, for the eccentric Hollywood director, and the John Nicholas Brown House, Fishers Island, Rhode Island, 1938, was a lavish Modern villa for the scion of one of the country’s oldest and most distinguished East Coast families. All were designed in the International Style and all were demolished or destroyed by fire.

Throughout his long career, while he sometimes won commissions from the wealthy, or more typically the professional middle class, Neutra never lost his passion for housing ‘everyman’ regardless of status or income. As his mentor Loos had written, “Rich and poor; the lower middle-class worker has his own little house just like the rich businessman...,” a belief Neutra embodied.³⁷ Apart from his many experiments with technologies and materials throughout the 1920s and ‘30s,

³⁵ Dione Neutra, “To Tell the Truth,” interview with Lawrence Wechsler, Oral History Project, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), 1983, 204.

³⁶ After decades of significant alterations, the Laemmle building was demolished in 2008.

³⁷ In her afterword, scholar Carrie Patterson quotes from Loos’s “Everyone Should Be His Own Boss,” in Claire Beck Loos, *Adolf Loos: A Private Portrait*, Los Angeles: Doppelhouse Press, 2011, 198.

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

Neutra also sought creative solutions in responding to density, even apart from actual building size. For example, in his hypothetical scheme of the mid-1920s, *Rush City Reformed*, he designed apartments that would “do double duty” in that a family whose breadwinner worked during the day and an unrelated man who worked nights could alternate time in the same flat, making the space “work” 24 hours a day). In the 1930s, Neutra used orange crates to design small houses for migrant workers. Just before he died in 1970, he embarked on a study evaluating ways to successfully house an astronaut in space, a very small footprint indeed.

Construction History

It is not known how Neutra learned about the Westwood site; certainly he was familiar with the area. In any case, it was well chosen. In his marketing publicity, he noted that how the parcel “benefitted by the ocean breeze and a magnificent view onto the Santa Monica Mountains,” as well as its proximity “to the University of California, Westwood Village, stores, restaurants, and bus lines.”³⁸ An informal, hand-drawn survey by R. K. Earle with no notation of the client is dated September 11, 1936. Additional research at the Los Angeles County Hall of Records Tax Assessor archives shows that Richard Neutra acquired the property, formerly owned by the Janss Investment Co., on October 21, 1936.³⁹ According to the archives, Adele Friedman acquired her portion of the property on January 16, 1937, five days before the first permit was approved.

Two original permits for buildings of conventional frame-and-stucco construction were issued on January 21 and February 11, 1937, respectively. The same crabbed hand was used for each permit, the earlier one listing Adele Friedman as the owner, the later one Alfred Niedermann, Dione Neutra’s father. However, Niedermann never owned half of the Strathmore. According to Dione Neutra’s papers, her parents did not arrive in the U.S. until February 1938. They moved into a new Strathmore unit, prepared by Dione Neutra and Regula Thurston, Dione’s sister and future manager of the family’s side, with their parents’ own furniture, which arrived earlier. As recounted by Neutra’s sons Dion and Raymond, their parents did not want to be known as “rich architects,” preferring to imply that Mrs. Neutra’s father was the owner of the northern units.

Throughout the project’s life on the drafting boards, Peter Pfisterer, a Swiss-born architect who worked for Neutra, is named as collaborator. Max Zimmer, of Zimmer Construction, was the contractor.

Neutra worked quickly. Early color landscaping sketches show general plant placement. Preliminary drawings dated November 10, 1936, reveals Neutra considered fireplaces for some of the units, eliminated by January. Zimmer ordered “Ariston Standard Casement Windows,” manufactured by Michel and Pfeffer Ironworks, San Francisco, on January 27.⁴⁰ The order shows a range in window height from 2’-3” to 6’ in height, with the unchanging standard width of 3’-3 ½” mentioned above. Judging from permits for finishes such as tile, issued in June and July, the units were probably completed in summer 1937.

³⁸ UCLA, Box 1485, Folder 1.

³⁹ Founded in 1895, the family-run real estate development company underwrote much of the land costs for the UCLA campus and developed nearby Westwood Village and surrounding residential communities, which opened two years later.

⁴⁰ Uncatalogued material, UCLA, Box 1721.

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

Demonstrating Neutra's Philosophy at the Strathmore Apartments

The Strathmore Apartments complex is exceptional in its comprehensive demonstration of Neutra's sustained convictions. Neutra distinguished himself from his Modernist peers in his credo that the human being was not *other* than nature but *part* of it: access to nature, to the sky, and to the landscape, was not a romantic pleasantry but flatly requisite to well-being. Where privacy was not a concern, he directly connected outdoors and indoors through transparent banks of tall windows opening to landscape and terraces, and ensured light or views in window banks in more private areas, such as bathrooms and kitchens. He consistently argued that architecture as a profession needed to embrace a range of sciences including biology, evolutionary biology, environmental psychology, Gestalt aesthetics, and anthropology in order to better understand the basis of human needs and how best to address them.⁴¹ Neutra called the synthesis of architecture and these sciences "biorealism," which he explicated in many books, beginning with *Survival Through Design*, 1954, and ending with *Nature Near: The Late Essays of Richard Neutra*, 1989.

Anchored by a lifetime of reading in the sciences, he believed that all humans shared certain core needs based on a long evolutionary history. The best habitats for humans responded to those needs and were designed best by those who understood them. Rather than arriving at a brand new design for each new dwelling, Neutra developed a "kit of parts" that varied according to client, site, and budget. In his eyes, American suburbs were flawed because its makers insisted on superficial differences based on historicist styles, differences that ignored basic human similarities that evolved over millennia. Arguing for his approach, he wrote:

*...Nobody ever seems to have lamented the monotony or uniformity of a tree, but our neighborhoods are found needing to be ... 'relieved of monotony.' Artificial relief [is] sought in the diversity of the elements rather than in the comprehensive framework, and so each house in new suburbs [gets] its own particular skin-deep style ...*⁴²

The Strathmore Apartments embody Neutra's goal of a "comprehensive framework" of an architecture integrated with nature or with the qualities of nature necessary for well-being.

Neutra adopted another strategy Wright made famous, addressing the "compression" and "expansion" of interior space. This strategy is also present at the Strathmore. Six of the eight units feature a coat closet located near the front door. Attached at just one end, the rectangular volume, about six feet tall, acts as a short hall, blocking immediate visual access of the interior and momentarily "compressing" space before one enters the expansive living area. Neutra also concealed up-lighting on the closet's flat "roof." At night, this lighting softly illuminates the ceiling and helps way-finding; in outlining the length and depth of the closet volume, the glow also enhances the aesthetic architectural experience of the space. The closet, a character-defining feature, exemplifies Neutra's approach in requiring a humble architectural element to accommodate a multivalent brief of psychological and pragmatic concerns. Neutra charged details usually considered banal, of not much architectural interest, with new responsibilities both budgetary and biological.

⁴¹ See *Survival Through Design* by Richard Neutra.

⁴² See "Richard Neutra: Compressing the Footprint," publication 8 June 1997, Society of Architectural Historians, Southern California Chapter, publication of tour and lecture of Neutra's work and ideas.

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

Two other special interior features exemplify this demand on everyday details. Characteristic of Neutra's work in the 1930s, and present in a handful of surviving single-family homes Neutra-designed houses anywhere, such as the Bald House, Ojai, 1941, or the Ward-Berger House, Los Angeles, 1939, these features are present at the Strathmore in abundance. Previously noted in the description, they are examined here with respect to their significance in Neutra's work in general and specifically to the significance of the Apartments.

The first interior feature of note is analogous to the exterior feature of rounded caps and sills noted in the description. To reiterate, some of the units feature a full-height interior wall whose projecting end is curved. (*Photo 28.*) The top of the curve is aligned with the top of a door opening and with a picture wall incised into the plaster running the circumference of living areas and bedrooms, effecting a flowing continuity between curve and line, between solid wall and the void of the door opening. While such a gesture could be interpreted as a nod to the then-popular Streamline Moderne style in vogue, an alternate interpretation could be articulated, based on Neutra's consistent attention to the human body and to perception. These curved ends are located in what could be a tight space, near transitions between bedrooms and hallways, acknowledging the ergonomic implications of maneuvering sharp corners. This feature is present in some units, including 11009 ½, but not in its mirror opposite, Unit 11013 ½, yet another subtle disparity among the units that add interest and individuality. At a smaller scale and common to all units, door and cabinet jambs and moldings are curved, again subtly undermining the visual impact of rigid orthogonality.

The second feature of note addresses how drawer faces are treated. Convenient handholds made from an angled cut at the base of the drawer became standard practice in Neutra's kitchens and bathrooms, from the Lovell Health House to houses well into the 1950s.⁴³ The detail maintained a visually uncluttered plane, eliminated a budget line item for cabinet hardware, and reduced maintenance in keeping the drawer face clean, exemplifying Neutra's love of strategies that addressed a multivalent brief. The drawer face also exemplifies his stated resolve to design features that were functional but robust, as Loos had preached. The resolve permeates his description of Strathmore features:

Smooth, clean kitchens with stainless steel trimmed drainboard and [counter] tops, well appointed with revolving, aerated [vegetable] cooler, built-in vented refuse receptacles, an abundance of cupboard space, Norge Electric Refrigerators, recessed ceiling and wall lights, light blue battle ship linoleum floor in the kitchen and porches to harmonize with the interior color scheme of cabinets. Hardwood flooring in living quarters and bedrooms.

A large service porch with delivery entrance, with trim Marvellaire Ventilating and forced draft Heating Units, high class Superior Water Heaters furnishing ample hot water. Fold-up ironing board, lockable delivery cabinets, wash tubs, milk receptacles.

Flush door, free of antiquated trim, plain chromed hardware without old-time gingerbread, locked and unlocked with a push of the finger. Clean walls and ceilings covered with washable Sanitas wall fabric. Numerous convenience outlets, recessed and indirect lighting – everything designed to offer the best of

⁴³ Schindler frequently used the detail as well, and may have introduced it to Neutra. This detail apparently predates both of them, according to German designer and historian Peter Goessel, and was not necessarily "Modern."

Strathmore Apartments

Name of Property

Los Angeles, California

County and State

that contemporary comfort which the architect has developed for his reputed and well-known residences of his many clients.

Modern Courtyard Housing and Comparisons with the Strathmore Apartments

While few examples of courtyard multiplex housing in the International Style exist, similar Modern projects were erected. Internationally, the Weissenhof Siedlung (White City Settlement), Stuttgart, 1927, is considered one of twentieth century Modernism's anchors. Although larger, with 21 units comprising 60 dwellings designed by 17 European architects, in site planning, steep hillside site, small unit size, and in its stated desire to create a garden-like setting with direct access to nature, sunlight, and fresh air, it prefigured the Strathmore complex.⁴⁴ The famous project exemplified the "stepped-terrace type." The narrow building type was characterized as Modernist dwellings with open terraces that were sited as a group on hillside terrain. This approach, lending all units to unique elevations, views, and fresh air, was advocated by architect Richard Döcker in his 1929 book, *Terrassentyp* and demonstrated in the two terraced houses he designed for Weissenhof.⁴⁵ The Strathmore "settlement" embodies the ideal *Terrassentyp* in not only possessing the desired features but because of the benevolent climate, could fulfill the desire for sunshine and air even more abundantly.

In Southern California, architect Irving Gill's Horatio West Court, Santa Monica, 1919, is a compact two-story complex with a small central courtyard; its interlocking white stucco-clad cubes with wood-trimmed windows is similar in character to his design of Lewis Courts, Sierra Madre, 1910.⁴⁶ Hines noted that Horatio West was one of Neutra's favorite projects, perhaps unsurprising given Neutra's admiration of similar strategies employed by his mentor, Adolf Loos, for single-family houses in Vienna.⁴⁷ Neutra included Horatio West and Schindler's El Pueblo Ribera Court, La Jolla, 1923, in *Wie Baut Amerika*. However, while a brilliant work of Modernism, El Pueblo Ribera's design, with its earthy combination of concrete and wood elements, contradicts the hygienic tenets of the International Style. Additionally, its 12 units are not unified by a central courtyard. Rather, each unit leads out to a separate hedge-bordered patio and faces a different direction. Likewise, each unit and associated garden in Mies van der Rohe's unbuilt, orthogonally arrayed "Group of Court Houses" of 1931, is sealed off by tall walls.

Schindler went on to design six important apartment complexes in Los Angeles, spanning from El Pueblo Ribera to the Laurelwood Apartments of 1949. Primarily Modern spatial experiments on hillsides, all are expressions of Schindler's characteristic mastery of complex interlocking volumes. In addressing challenging sites with Modern thinking, they are closest in ambition and in period of significance to the Strathmore. The Sachs Apartments in particular, constructed between 1926 and 1940, in Silver Lake, Los Angeles, resembles the Strathmore in its *parti*. The 16 west-facing units, tightly arranged on a narrow parcel, are organized around a public stepped walkway. Like the Strathmore, garages are located at street level and act as a "plinth" for the units stepping up the hill. Extended wood trellises and garden pathways integrate architecture and nature. However, while sharing some of the same character-defining features associated with the International Style, such as crisply articulated orthogonal volumes,

⁴⁴ Research, including interviews with Neutra family members, indicates that given its fame, Neutra probably saw the Weissenhof Siedlung in publications but not in person until decades later, if at all. While he discusses other Modernist works in Europe at length in his many writings, including his autobiography, Neutra makes no mention of visiting the Stuttgart project.

⁴⁵ Overy, *Light, Air and Openness*, 34.

⁴⁶ Horatio West Court was listed in the NRHP in 1977.

⁴⁷ Thomas S. Hines, "Knowing Neutra," *Dwell Magazine*, July/August 2006, 149.

Strathmore Apartments

Name of Property

Los Angeles, California

County and State

lack of historicist ornament, and balanced asymmetry, Schindler's designs do not express other basic tenets of the style such as the use of ganged ribbons of metal-framed windows and the strong sense of horizontality.⁴⁸ At the Sachs, windows are large and "punched into" the wall. Several series of vertically aligned wood timbers serve to weave perpendicular alignments together. Additionally, the Strathmore's buildings are set into a wooded landscape that consumes more than half of the parcel, conferring the complex with a sense of relaxed largesse. While the means of integrating nature into an urban setting no less dense than Westwood's are ingenious, the area at the Sachs that is devoted to gardens and plants is by necessity far less.⁴⁹ Finally, the philosophies of the two architects, made manifest in Sachs and the Strathmore, were quite opposed. Schindler's idea was to make "the building an abstraction of the hillside" while Neutra's idea was to create a "thrilling dialectic" between nature and his white architecture of the 1930s⁵⁰ an approach more in keeping with the International Style as defined by Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock.⁵¹ Hines has called this formal contrast "the machine in the garden," referring to the 1964 book with that title by critic Leo Marx, although it is important to note that Neutra also argued the buildings were intended to be as organic as anything Wright designed.

Most examples of constructed International Style multiplex housing are included in the now-famous municipal exhibition housing in Europe, such as the previously noted Weissenhof Siedlungen or the Werkbund Siedlungen Wien (German Work Federation Settlement), Vienna, 1932, for which Neutra contributed the only free-standing but very small house.⁵² In Southern California, notable examples of International Style apartments include Dunsmuir Flats, Los Angeles, 1939, and Avenel Homes, Los Angeles, 1948, both designed by Neutra's protégé, Gregory Ain, as well as Neutra's own Landfair Apartments, a block away from the Strathmore and completed in early 1937.⁵³ However, these projects are all attached row houses. Typically parallel to one another, they face one direction and have separate rear gardens. Except for Landfair, set on the sloped ridge of a hill, they all occupy relatively flat sites.

Neutra's fearless distribution of the units, around a landscaped pedestrian core on the site's twisting slope, shows his command in hillside building, established with the Lovell Health House, Los Angeles, 1929. While the 64 steps to the Strathmore's upper units are considerable, the slope itself helps to ensure privacy for each occupant, in contrast to configurations on flat sites, which might invite a little bit too much community for some.

Additional Considerations in Significance

The significance of the Strathmore Apartments rests on Neutra's innovative response not only to major architectural concerns, histories, and circumstances on both continents, but also to regional cultural and

⁴⁸ Tenets established by the National Park Service based on a range of sources employed for architectural classification. See "How to Complete the National Register Registration Form," National Register Bulletin 16A Part III.

⁴⁹ Both Neutra and Schindler disdained the label "International Style" if defined solely as a set of physical features. Neutra argued that in the classical world, Greek and Roman architecture was far more "international" than the regional interpretations necessarily imposed by economic, social, and regulatory demands of contemporary building.

⁵⁰ Peter Noever, edtr., David LeClerc, "The Good News and the Bad News," *Schindler by MAK*, Munich, London, and New York: Prestel Verlag, 2005, 145.

⁵¹ Ibid. Henry-Russell Hitchcock collaborated with Philip Johnson and Lewis Mumford on "Modern Architecture: International Exhibition" at the Museum of Modern Art, 1932, introducing what the team called the new "International Style" architecture of Europe to an American audience. Hitchcock and Johnson's co-authored book *The International Style: Architecture Since 1922* was published simultaneously with the MOMA exhibit and intended to explicate the style's tenets.

⁵² Extant, the one-story house stands in the middle of the site and is the heart of the project.

⁵³ Avenel Homes was listed in the NRHP in 2005.

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

climatic conditions, as already shown. While the National Register nomination is proposed and justified under Criterion C, architecture, it is also important to note that the Apartments' unique provisions for modern living has consistently attracted and inspired important people in the arts for the past 75 years.

Besides the Neutra family, tenants during the first two decades included Charles and Ray Eames, possibly the twentieth century's most renowned designers; *Arts + Architecture* publisher and Case Study House Program founder John Entenza, who apparently lived in Unit 11009 after 1950, when he sold his own home, designed by Eero Saarinen and Charles Eames and completed five years earlier;⁵⁴ the Oscar-winning German film star Luise Rainer; actress Dolores del Rio and her lover actor/director Orson Welles; *Life* photographer Eliot Elisofon, known for his federal Works Project Administration (WPA) images and later color work on major Hollywood movies. The Russian-American jazz and movie composer Vernon Duke lived at the Strathmore; he may have been introduced to the Apartments by his friend from New York days, stage and film director Vincente Minnelli, who also rented a unit there after his arrival in Hollywood.⁵⁵ Lilly Latté, the longtime companion of German émigré Fritz Lang, director of *Metropolis* and *M*, kept Unit 11005 there. Neutra designed furniture layouts for both Rainer and Latté.⁵⁶

Introduced to Richard Neutra and to the Strathmore by Entenza, the Eameses' eight-year tenure is particularly relevant to Criterion C because the Strathmore's qualities informed their design for the Eames House, famous as a box made of "off-the-shelf" components and now a National Historic Landmark.⁵⁷ Fresh from Michigan, they rented Unit 11013 ½, the highest and most private apartment, probably in the summer of 1941.⁵⁸ They stayed until they moved into their own new house in 1949. Here at the Strathmore, they devised the primitive hand-built press, nicknamed the "Kazam! Machine," for devising the technique for bending laminated wood in compound curves, the "nucleus of all further developments in the plywood-molding process."⁵⁹ During these experiments, a U.S. Navy doctor visited them in December 1941. He suggested that they apply their technique to creating leg splints for wounded soldiers, replacing unforgiving and unhygienic metal fabrications.⁶⁰ The now famous splint went into production the next year, and by 1943 the Navy had placed an order for 200,000 splints, improving the rehabilitation of many American veterans.⁶¹

In their writings, the Eameses proved themselves to be acutely aware of Neutra's philosophical intentions, an awareness atypical of most of his clients and critics. They were familiar with his passion for prefabrication, demonstrated in his several steel frame experiments in residential architecture in the late 1920s and early 1930s beginning with the steel cage skeleton for the Lovell Health House, predating the Eames House by two decades. However, they actually experienced and enacted Neutra's larger

⁵⁴ Kirkham, op. cit., 126.

⁵⁵ Hines, op.cit, 172, and e-mail correspondence, Dion Neutra, November 4, 2012.

⁵⁶ Neutra's layouts for the two Hollywood stars are in uncatalogued material, UCLA, Box 1721. The layout for Rainer, whom the Neutras knew and socialized with beginning in 1935, is undated. The Latté layout is dated September 6, 1938, and contains instructions for upholstery with "welted square corners" and for the "carpenter and upholsterer to take exact measurements on premises!"

⁵⁷ The Eames House was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2006.

⁵⁸ Oral History interview with Ray Eames, July 28-August 20, 1980. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

⁵⁹ John Neuhart, Marilyn Neuhart, *Eames Design*, (New York: Abrams, 1989), 25-26.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 28.

⁶¹ Kirkham, op.cit., 213.

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

objective in creating spaces that addressed the fundamental human needs of light, air, and access to nature in spaces ready to take on various roles. As Charles Eames once wrote in an undated memo,

*... In our house rooms have no names such as living room, dining room, bedroom ... Rooms are portions of our great living space and pragmatically elastic.*⁶²

In the late 1940s, Ray Eames wrote an article that revealed a rarely matched insight into exactly this intention:

[Neutra's] long-developed architectural simplicities impose no style on the tenants, but leave them free to create their own surroundings through color, texture, use of area and objects and equipment needed for everyday life and activities.

*In such a shell each family creates its environment without forced direction through architectural details. Our particular needs were set by a pattern of work, which made the prime function of our apartment one of providing moments of calm and rest and pleasure at the beginning and end of each day. It is intended, quite selfishly and quite necessarily, for individual needs rather than to provide a setting for entertainment.*⁶³

Thus, domesticity was only a part of the flat's tasks. The kitchen was enlisted for processing photographs, while a bedroom housed their tiny workshop and occasionally co-workers.⁶⁴

Based on the brief the Eameses set for their own house, it is evident that their criteria were informed by the couple's habitation at the Strathmore and its architectural qualities. Both the Strathmore Apartments and the Eames House were "shells" for human endeavor, sited in nature with expansive views. In a December 1945 article for *Arts + Architecture*, Charles Eames wrote that their home, Case Study House #8, was designed for a working couple that liked the Strathmore's convenience and neutral architectural character:

*"Basically apartment dwellers, there is a conscious effort to be free of complications rising from maintenance. The house must make no insistent demands for itself but rather aid as background for life in work."*⁶⁵

Like his wife, Charles, too, noted the adaptability of the apartments, an observation that perhaps he could only have made by living in this courtyard complex and not had he lived in a solitary Neutra house. Living there, the designer wrote Neutra in a letter of thanks,

has added greatly to the richness of our lives, and it is obvious that it has had the same effect on others living in this group of apartments. Strangely enough, this feeling has no relation to the tastes and backgrounds of the tenants in that they were "modern" or "conventional." The apartments you have

⁶² Lamprecht, op. cit., 60.

⁶³ Undated article with byline by Ray Eames. Local library, Library of Congress, and Eames Archives, Eames Office Gallery, enquiries have not yet ascertained the title or date of the publication in question, a photocopied portion of which exists and was supplied to the author.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Neuhart, op.cit., 110.

Strathmore Apartments

Name of Property

Los Angeles, California

County and State

developed here have given each the opportunity to develop his surroundings in the most expansive way

...⁶⁶

In addressing the success of the apartments despite a tenant's particular allegiance to style, Eames addressed a third phenomenon dear to Neutra's heart: that standardized architecture could fit a range of needs. In his round-the-world trip in 1930, Neutra observed that in Japanese architecture, a house for royalty or peasantry shared similar characteristics. Later in that same tour, when he taught at the Bauhaus, he made the observation again when he noted that Gropius, too, had made the same assumptions in designing housing for the Bauhaus masters:

*Here were practically standardized and identical abodes, accommodating the most diversified people who were certainly not convergent as artists! ...These people could indeed live in identical dwellings, when we worry whether or not one can frame habitations for quite ordinary families of coal miners or steel workers in Pittsburgh or East Germany! What a demonstration! What a fascinating, persuasive deed of Walter Gropius! And a typical characteristic of the Bauhaus at that!*⁶⁷

The quote could be applied to the Strathmore's recent tenants, many of whom are outstanding figures in culture and the arts, and also "certainly not convergent" in their professional roles. These names include Larry Gagosian, considered the world's most powerful art dealer and Richard Koshalek, director of the Smithsonian Institution's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden and the former director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

Neutra's other experiments in architecture also inspired the Eameses. Among other influences, a 1951 experimental plywood house designed by the Eameses "owed a great deal to Richard Neutra's own plywood house..."⁶⁸ Featured in an outdoor building show, the "Douglas Fir Plywood Demonstration House" was completed in 1936. Neutra's choice of sheathing was only possible because new glues had been invented that increased water resistance. A few years later, it was raffled off and moved to a Westwood location just west of the Strathmore. It is still extant. The dramatic cantilever of Lovell Health House, among other iconic cantilevered houses, is credited as being an influence in the first design of Eames House, in which the house extended over its site; the unbuilt project is well known in its own right as one of California's and the nation's most important works of postwar architecture.⁶⁹ The Eameses continued their interest in Neutra, evidenced not only by an enduring friendship with Richard and Dione but even in the large handbill posted in their office in 1962 of a symposium by Neutra on his seminal 1954 book, *Survival Through Design*.⁷⁰

Actress Luise Rainer, for whom Neutra also designed a furniture layout, also wrote a letter of thanks, dated February 16, 1938, to Neutra. Like the Eameses, she made an observation about living there that acknowledged yet another of Neutra's architectural passions: an access to nature that ranged in scale

⁶⁶ Charles Eames, Letter to Richard Neutra, May 18, 1949. UCLA, Box 1485, Folder 1.

⁶⁷ Quote taken from an interview with Richard Neutra published in *Opus* magazine, published by then-California State Polytechnic College, Kellogg-Voorhis. Spring 1970, p. 15.

⁶⁸ Kirkham, op.cit., 138.

⁶⁹ The Eameses closely followed the changes in exhibition design beginning in the 1930s and exhibited consistently at the Museum of Modern Art. See Kirkham chapter, "Exhibitions," op.cit., 111, 263 – 309.

⁷⁰ Library of Congress holding, Prints and Photographs Division, Call Number: Unprocessed in PR 13 CN 1989:150 [item] [P&P].

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

from close-up to distant views, a belief based on his readings in evolutionary biology, Gestalt theory, and anthropology.⁷¹ Rainer wrote:

*The clearness, the long lines of windows which allow the light to come in and the eye to rove out far, far, all this gives you a strange feeling of happiness and freedom. There is nothing disturbing to the eye, nothing disconcerting to your mind.*⁷²

In his 1951 book *Mystery and Realities of the Site*, Neutra wrote that because glass was the only impediment to nature, “the living space sweeps on through and reaches out for miles until finally it is closed off by the mountains. The mountain, indeed, is the back wall of this stupendous living room.”⁷³ He was speaking about one of his masterpieces, the Tremaine House, Montecito, 1948, but the range in scale from close-up to distant views was his principle in his landscape designs no matter the size or type of building.

Architectural Legacy in Neutra’s Work and in Related Literature

Three other award-winning Neutra-designed multiple-dwelling developments are related to the Strathmore but differ substantially. The first, the Poster Apartments, is a two-story rectangular block located in a flat, unglamorous section of North Hollywood, California. The second are related developments of sturdy, modest one- and two-story duplexes in Germany. The third is the “Silver Lake Colony,” a related group of nine single-family homes on the hillside overlooking the Silver Lake Reservoir, Los Angeles.

Completed in 1958, the restored eight-unit Poster Apartments are identical studio dwellings of 600 square feet. They were intended for those who served the defense-related industries prevalent in the area at mid-century.⁷⁴ While sliding glass walls and windows afford views of nature and the San Gabriel Mountains, individual access to private ground-floor gardens is limited to the four ground units, and all eight units share the same undifferentiated north-south relationship with the outdoors. The inexpensive housing includes features typical to Neutra’s later work such as the extension of ceiling joists beyond the building envelope, but as its brief required, the design is quite basic.

For a German developer, Neutra developed a limited range of choices for single-family houses and duplexes. Constructed in the early 1960s, and located in Quickborn, with 67 dwellings, and Mörfelden-Walldorf, with 42 dwellings, the two developments are collectively known as Bewobau. These popular residences differ from the Strathmore in that they reflect Neutra’s later, more relaxed style; are on relatively flat ground; are suburban rather than urban, and enjoy individual, not shared, yards and gardens. However, Bewobau is a descendant of the Apartments in other important ways. Neutra laid out the development’s two site plans in ways that preserved woodlands and natural vegetation. Second, he designed a limited range of choices, demonstrating his universal-but-individual sensibilities. Like the Strathmore, all the dwellings are compact and functional and provide means to enjoy light, air, and strong relationships with nature and landscape.

⁷¹ See “Biorealism: The Bodily Substrate of the Mental Life,” Barbara Lamprecht, *Richard Neutra—Complete Works* (Köln and Los Angeles: 2000), 42 – 50.

⁷² Luise Rainer, letter to Richard Neutra, February 16, 1938, UCLA.

⁷³ Richard Neutra, *Mystery and Realities of the Site*, Scarsdale, New York: Morgan & Morgan, 1951, 24.

⁷⁴ Restored in 2006, the property won a Los Angeles Conservancy Preservation Award in 2007.

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

The third example, the Silver Lake Colony, sometimes known as the Neutra Colony, is a group of nine single-family homes sited on the west side of Silver Lake Reservoir in northeast Los Angeles. While five of the houses are located across from the reservoir, four are sited above, following the slope of the hill as it rises above the lake. Constructed between 1948 and 1961, Neutra sequentially designed these postwar homes individually and in pairs so that some houses shared walkways and stairs, economically consolidating entrances and materials, as he did on a larger scale at Strathmore Apartments, in favor of landscaping.⁷⁵ He arranged with the buyer of the lots that Neutra would design each of the nine properties. He ensured that each dwelling, while sharing a broad palette of familiar Neutra features, also had a specific identity, with a few houses clad in wood and others sheathed in stucco. Although designed over 13 years, in contrast to the Apartments' single construction date of 1937, like the Strathmore Neutra also ensured the privacy for the inhabitants of each residence, designing each dwelling so that it had a unique relationship to its neighbors, to the distant hills beyond, and to the reservoir. Further demonstrating Neutra's ideal of serving everyone, his first clients were Asian Americans. Like Hispanics and African Americans, Asian Americans were only permitted to buy property after restrictive covenants were abolished in 1948 although such covenants continued informally in homeowners' agreements.⁷⁶

Thus, the Apartments gain further significance as the progenitor to later examples of Neutra's mastery in designing a variety of different configurations of multi-unit housing depending on site, market, density, topography, and incomes. All three examples were informed by Neutra's interest in the compact dwelling. Neutra designed many other multi-unit developments, private and public, some realized, some demolished, which are not addressed here.

Since its completion, the Strathmore Apartments has consistently appeared in books and articles. It is often held up as the epitome of how to fuse nature and urbanity on a small footprint; as a symbol of change in the history of Los Angeles and has even served as the basis for studio courses in architecture schools. Seven years after the Apartments were completed, the legendary architectural journal *Pencil Points* lauded Neutra's (then) three apartment complexes with the title, "Unusual and Highly Successful Apartments in Los Angeles, Calif."⁷⁷ It noted:

*In all three examples—Kelton, Strathmore, and Landfair—there is evident Neutra's desire to apply to multifamily dwellings the same standards of design he uses in single family residences ... The ever-more motorized postwar future may bring us many families who would prefer a sort of suburban urban life, but who won't want to give up the simplicity of a city apartment.*⁷⁸

The Apartments were featured abroad as well, appearing in *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* in 1938 as part of a substantial article, complemented with many photographs and an introduction by Neutra, on his

⁷⁵ The Silver Lake Colony includes the Sokol House, 1948; the Treweek House, 1948; the Earl Street Reunion/Dion Neutra House, 1949, renovated 1966; the Flavin House, 1957; the Yew House, 1957; the Ohara House, 1959; the Inadomi House, 1960; the Kambara House, 1960; and the Akai House, 1962. The deft grouping could be considered for designation as a historic district.

⁷⁶ Mike Davis, *City of Quartz*, London, New York: Verso, 1990, 174.

⁷⁷ Founded in 1920, *Pencil Points* was the leading voice in architectural and graphic design, publishing both pragmatic and theoretical articles as architecture moved from traditional forms to Modernism's new ideals. It merged with *Progressive Architecture* in 1943.

⁷⁸ *Pencil Points*, January 1944, 52 – 58.

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

work to date. A later article on Neutra's four Westwood apartments was published in the same magazine in 1946.⁷⁹ Both articles served to publicize Neutra's garden apartments to an international audience. A master's thesis, "Constructing Privacy: Richard Neutra's Westwood Apartments," presented in 2012, noted that Neutra "transformed the relationship between public and private space in buildings that sit somewhere on the spectrum between house and apartment."⁸⁰ Of particular note is the award-winning book *Landscapes of Desire: Anglo Mythologies of Los Angeles*. Here historian William McClung uses the Strathmore Apartments to show a cultural shift from architecture that dominates, when the Strathmore site was barren, to architecture that "dwells with." He refers to the earliest photographs of the complex, with their uncompromising white boxes upon a barren hill (**Figure 3**), as a Utopian "supercity," that "proclaimed not only the formal triumphs of modern architecture but also architecture's command over the apparently irreducible hills of West L.A." However, in photographs taken only two years later (**Figures 4, 5**), McClung notes the "harmony between structure and landscape ... forcing a heightened esthetic of severe grandeur while at the same time projecting luxury and sophistication."⁸¹ Where the earlier images emphasized disjunction, the later emphasized unity.

Finally, nationally and internationally renowned architects and scholars consistently single out the Strathmore Apartments complex as an excellent example of Neutra's work, citing its high degree of artistry and its contribution to California Modernism and the state's history. To name only a few, these include architect Hubert-Jan Henket, founder of DOCOMOMO International and co-lead restoration architect for some of Europe's seminal works of Early Modernism including the previously noted Van Nelle Factory and Zonnestraal Sanitorium, Hilversum, the Netherlands, 1928, designed by Jan Duicker; Thomas S. Hines, professor emeritus UCLA, Neutra biographer and author of *Architecture of the Sun: Los Angeles Modernism 1900 to 1970*, a comprehensive volume addressing the broad scope of twentieth century architecture in Southern California; and Prof. Dietrich Neumann, Brown University, former president, Society of Architectural Historians and the editor of/contributor to *Richard Neutra's Windshield House*.⁸² All support this nomination, which is also endorsed by the Los Angeles Conservancy.

Conclusion

The Strathmore Apartments may be the only known representative of a courtyard garden apartment complex designed in the International Style in California, and possibly in the nation. In Richard Neutra's extensive canon, the Strathmore Apartments stands alone in demonstrating how the master architect blended the typologies of the free-standing house and the apartment with views, landscape, and gardens, adapting the International Style with artistry to a steep hillside site. Neutra realized the potential of a challenging site and creating a new way of dwelling combining urbanity, woodland,

⁷⁹ "Architecture Et Standardisation," *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, January 1938, 31-36; and "Immeubles D'Appartement (Apartment Buildings)," May/June, 1946, 57 - 61.

⁸⁰ ARH 7401, University of Virginia, School of Architecture, taught by Dr. Sheila McClure, assistant professor. Justin Greving, Master of Arts thesis, "Constructing Privacy: Richard Neutra's Westwood Apartments." <http://www.arch.virginia.edu/projects/arh-7401-constructing-privacy-richard-neutras-westwood-apartments>, retrieved Oct. 22, 2012. Noted here, the M.A. is not included in the bibliography because it was not consulted for this application.

⁸¹ William A. McClung, *Landscapes of Desire: Anglo Mythologies of Los Angeles*, Berkeley: University of California, 2002, 10.

⁸² DOCOMOMO stands for the Documentation and Conservation of Buildings of the Modern Movement. The influential preservation organization was founded by Henket and Wessel de Jonge in 1988 and has spawned 40 chapters across the world. *Richard Neutra's Windshield House*, Yale University Press, 2011, explores the legendary house designed for John Nicholas Brown II of the prominent Rhode Island family (noted earlier in the text.) Other contributors include leading American architectural historians Joyce Botelho, Sarah Williams Goldhagen, Thomas S. Hines, Thomas Michie, as well the late J. Carter Brown, curator and former director of the U.S. National Gallery of Art and Nicholas Brown II's son.

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

privacy, community, and view, luxurious qualities for the inhabitants of small dwellings, and rarely afforded in one setting whatever the size of the house or the income of the user. The unique hybrid synthesizes European and American concerns promoting smaller, apartment-style dwellings for both health and economic concerns but also appealed to those who desired single-family lifestyles. Neutra's response expresses his deep understanding of both cultures and his ability to assimilate *avante garde*, theoretical architectural and urban design discussions on both continents into a seminal design. It also manifests his conviction that a standardized architectural vocabulary could be manipulated to accommodate a variety of individual backgrounds and tastes. Additionally, the Strathmore's flexible architectural qualities and its central landscaped setting, a small but dense thicket of trees and plantings, attracted and inspired many figures outstanding for their cultural and artistic contributions. Finally, the Strathmore Apartments complex continues to offer many lessons in sustainable modes of urban dwelling without sacrificing access to nature. Possessing an exceptionally high degree of integrity in location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, it is among the finest examples of a garden apartment complex in the International Style in the nation. Already designated as a Historic-Cultural Monument, City of Los Angeles, the Strathmore Apartments complex is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the state level of significance.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

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Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

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Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: UCLA, Charles E. Young Research Library, Special Collections, Richard and Dion Neutra Papers, Collection 1179, and California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, Richard Neutra Archives.

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

Designated as Historic-Cultural Monument No. 351, City of Los Angeles, on April 8, 1988.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .0165

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

Unit 11005 (most northeast unit)

1. Zone: 11S Easting: 366 116 Northing: 3770 342

Unit 11013 (most southwest unit)

2. Zone: 11S Easting: 366 101 Northing: 3770 357

Middle Point (average of two)

3. Zone: 11S Easting: 366 108 Northing: 3770 349

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

North Side, Four Dwellings, Four Properties

1. Unit 11005. APN 4363-015-038. TR 9617 LOT 17 BLK 9 CONDO UNIT 11005 (AIRSPACE AND 1/4 INT IN COMMON AREA)
2. Unit 11007. APN 4363-015-039. TR 9617 LOT 17 BLK 9 CONDO UNIT 11007 (AIRSPACE AND 1/4 INT IN COMMON AREA)
3. Unit 11009. APN 4363-015-040. TR 9617 LOT 17 BLK 9 CONDO UNIT 11009 (AIRSPACE AND 1/4 INT IN COMMON AREA).
4. Unit 11009 1/2. APN 4363-015-04. TR 9617 LOT 17 BLK 9 CONDO UNIT 11009 1/2 (AIRSPACE AND 1/4 INT IN COMMON AREA)

South Side, Four Dwellings, One Property

5. Units 11011, 11011 1/2, 11013, 11013 1/2. APN 4363-015-017. TRACT 9617 LOT 16 BLK 9

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes all of the intact resources associated with the Strathmore Apartments and represents the legal original property lines, changed only in that the four north properties, formerly owned by the Neutra family, were converted into condominiums.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Barbara Lamprecht, M.Arch.
organization: _____
street & number: 550 Jackson Street
city or town: Pasadena state: CA zip code: 91104-3621
e-mail: bmlamprecht@gmail.com
telephone: 626 264 7600
date: January 2013; revised May 2013

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)
 1. Aerial View Map (Sketch Map), p. 39.
 2. Historic Figure Map, p. 40.
 3. Index of Figures, p. 41.
 4. Historic Figures, pp. 42 – 47.
 5. Photo Map, p. 48.
 6. Photograph Log pp. 49 – 51.

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

AERIAL VIEW MAP (Sketch Map)



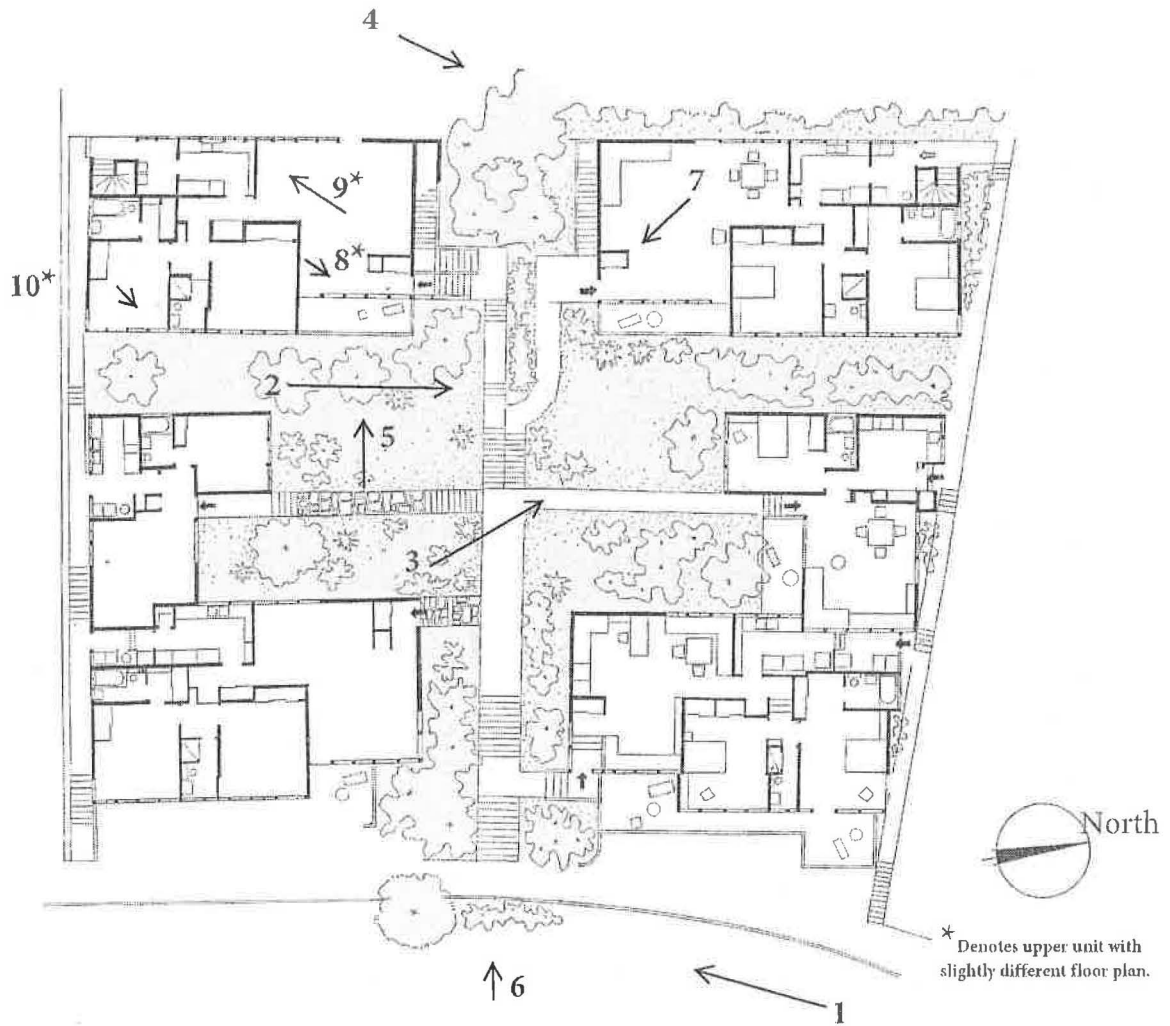
**11005 – 11013½ Strathmore Drive
Los Angeles California 90024 – 2304**

—————→ **North**

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

HISTORIC FIGURE MAP



11005-11013 1/2 strathmore drive
los angeles california 90024-2304

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

Index of Figures

Figure 1. North and east exterior elevations, camera facing southwest. Photo by Julius Shulman. Personal Collection, Dr. Thomas S. Hines. Used with permission.

Figure 2. South exterior elevation of the northern four units, camera facing north. From left (west) to right (east): east-facing units 11009 ½ and 11009 (two story building), south-facing 11007, center, attached to rear of east-facing 11005. Photo by Luckhaus Studios. Personal Collection, Dr. Thomas S. Hines. Used with permission.

Figure 3. East exterior elevation, camera facing northwest. Units 11009 and 11009 ½, left, Unit 11007, right. Photo by Julius Shulman. Personal Collection, Dr. Thomas S. Hines. © J. Paul Getty Trust. Used with permission. Julius Shulman Photography Archive, Research Library at the Getty Research Institute (2004.R.10.) Shulman Job No. 090-4.

Figure 4. South and west (rear) elevation, camera facing northeast. Units 11009, below, and 11009 ½, above. Photo by Julius Shulman. Personal Collection, Dr. Thomas S. Hines. © J. Paul Getty Trust. Used with permission. Julius Shulman Photography Archive, Research Library at the Getty Research Institute (2004.R.10.) Shulman Job No. 090-7.

Figure 5. East exterior elevation, camera facing west. Richard Neutra and Luise Rainer on balcony, Unit 11013½ (former home/workplace of the Eameses). Unit 11013, below. Photo by Julius Shulman. Personal Collection, Dr. Thomas S. Hines. © J. Paul Getty Trust. Used with permission. Julius Shulman Photography Archive, Research Library at the Getty Research Institute (2004.R.10.) Shulman Job No. 055-3.

Figure 6. Interior, camera facing northwest. Unit 11013 ½ living room with Richard Neutra and Luise Rainer. Photo by Julius Shulman. Personal Collection, Dr. Thomas S. Hines. Used with permission.

Figure 7. Interior, camera facing southeast. Unit 11009 living room, wardrobe/closet volume, window bank. Photo by Luckhaus Studios. Personal Collection, Dr. Thomas S. Hines. Used with permission.

Figure 8. Exterior, camera facing west and central pedestrian core. Charles Eames at wheel of car. Photo courtesy of the Eames Gallery, Eames Demetrious. Family photograph. Used with permission.

Figure 9*. Interior, camera facing southwest. Unit 11013 ½ living room with Charles and Ray Eames. Photo by Julius Shulman. Personal Collection, Dr. Thomas S. Hines. Used with permission.

Figure 10*. Interior, detail, "Kazam! Machine" rear bedroom, Unit 11013 ½. Photo courtesy of the Eames Gallery, Eames Demetrious. Family photograph. Used with permission.

Figure 11*. Adobe dwelling, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Unidentified photographer, possibly R. Neutra. Scanned from photocopy, *Wie Baut Amerika*, by Richard Neutra (Stuttgart: Julius Hoffman, 1929), 73. A small image of **Figure 1**, on the left side of the page, to show resemblance of new and old forms.

Note: * denotes correct orientation of image in upper unit, which has a slightly different floor plan than indicated on site plan.

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State



Figure 1



Figure 2

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

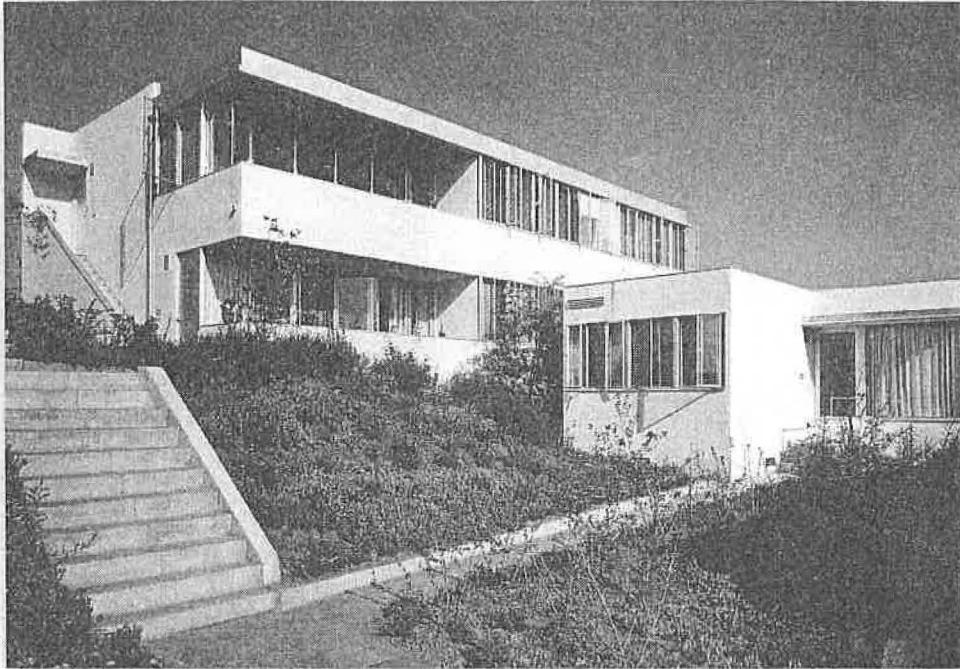


Figure 3

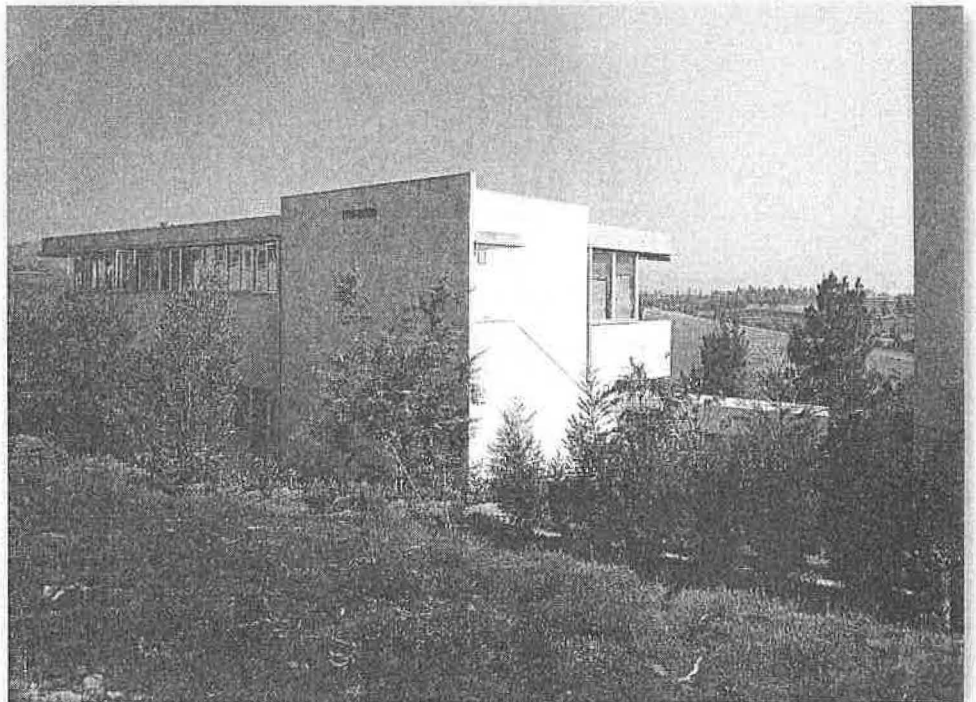


Figure 4

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State



Figure 5

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State



Figure 6

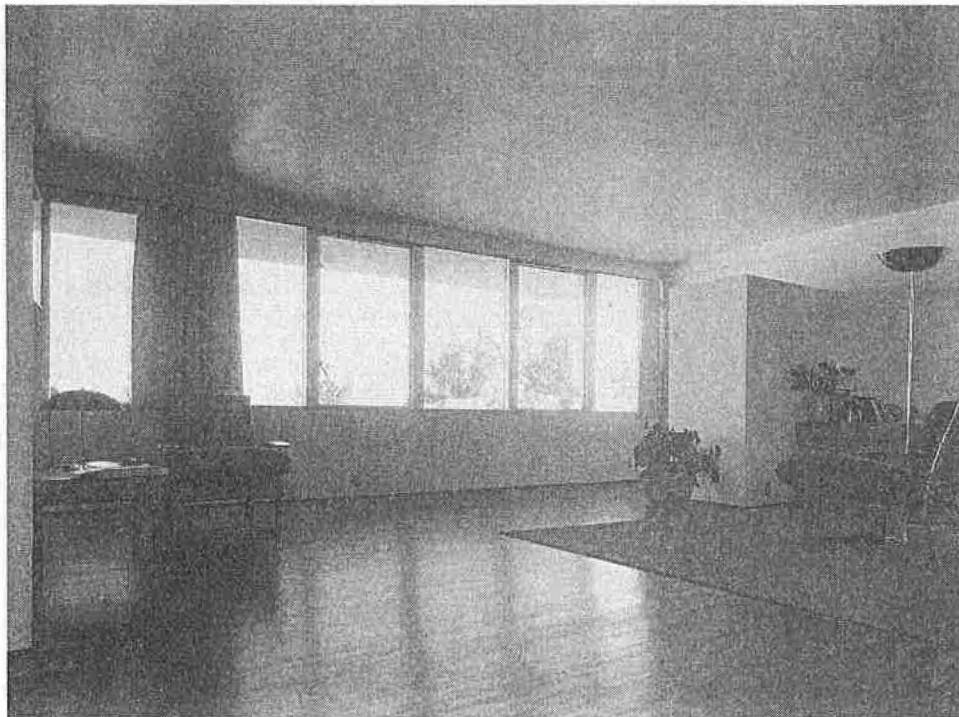


Figure 7

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State



Figure 8

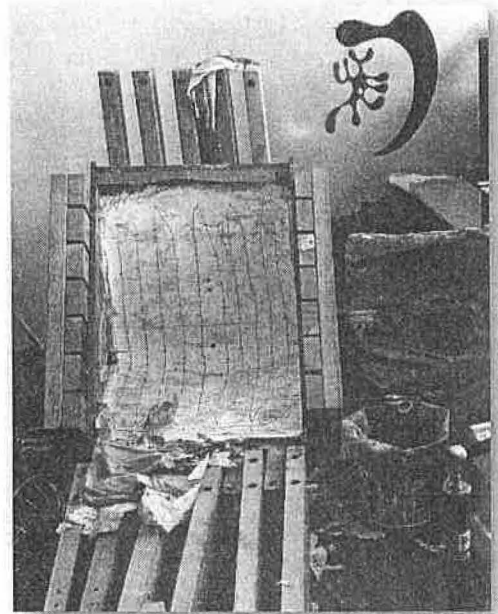


Figure 10



Figure 9

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State



Figure 1 shown for comparison

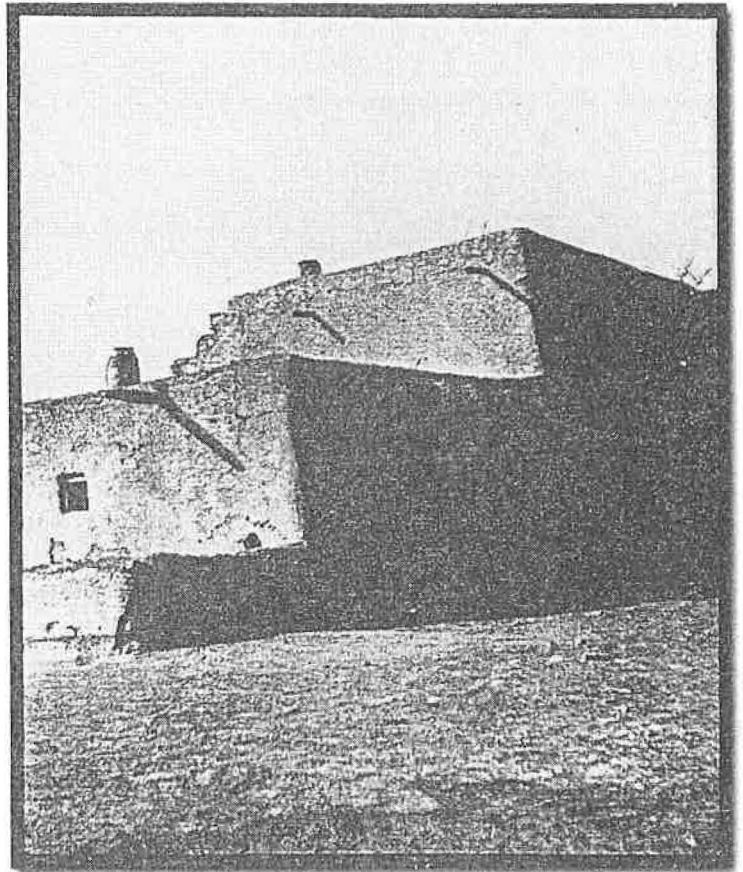
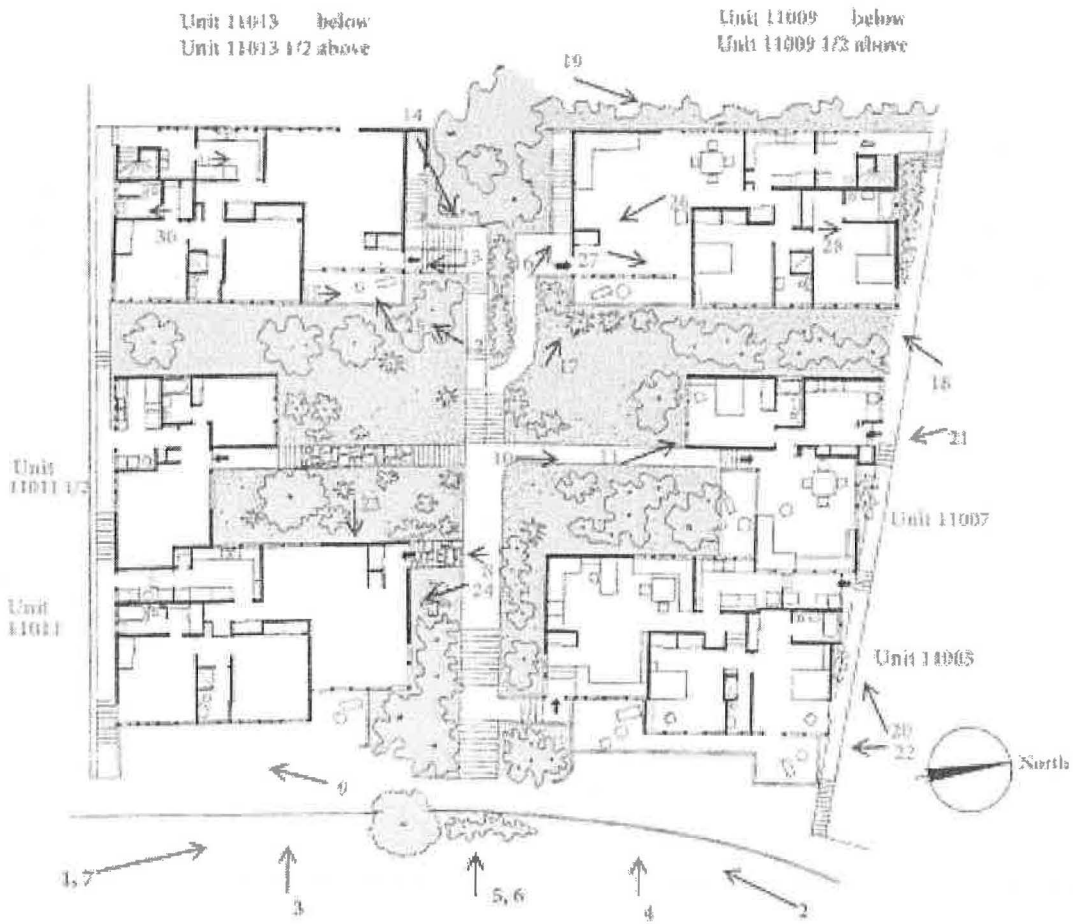


Figure 11

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

PHOTO MAP



11005-11013 1/2 strathmore drive
los angeles california 90024-2304

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

Photograph Log

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Name of Property: Strathmore Apartments
City or Vicinity: Los Angeles
County: Los Angeles
State: California
Photographer:
Date Photographed:
Number of Photographs: 31
Description of Photograph and Number

Note: Because five different individuals photographed the building at separate times, the name of the photographer, date, and number of photograph is included with the description of each image.

Photo Map Keyed Photographs

1. Exterior. Primary street elevation, east facade. Camera facing northwest. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, December 7, 2012. 1 of 31.
2. Exterior. Primary street elevation, east façade. Camera facing southwest. Photo by Hubert-Jan Henket, December 7, 2012. 2 of 31.
3. Exterior. East façade, southern garage, Unit 11011, and entrance to pedestrian circulation core, right. Camera facing west. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, Oct. 21, 2012. 3 of 31.
4. Exterior. East façade, northern garage, Unit 11005, entrance to pedestrian circulation core, left. Camera facing west. Photo by Hubert-Jan Henket, December 7, 2012. 4 of 31.
5. Exterior. Entrance, central pedestrian core. Camera facing west. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, December 7, 2012. 5 of 31.
6. Exterior. Closeup, central pedestrian core, original steel railing. Camera facing west. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, December 7, 2012. 6 of 31.
7. Exterior. East and primary façade/entry, Unit 11005 (lowest and eastmost unit, north side.) Camera facing north. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, December 7, 2012. 7 of 31.
8. Exterior. North façade, entry, Unit 11011 (lowest and eastmost unit, south side.) Camera facing south. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, December 7, 2012. 8 of 31.

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

9. Exterior. East and primary façade, Unit 11011, showing fenestration and (non-habitable) setback. Camera facing south. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, December 7, 2012. 9 of 31.
10. Exterior. Walkway and primary façade, Unit 11007 (smallest unit, north side.) Camera facing north. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, December 7, 2012. 10 of 31.
11. Exterior. South and east façade, bedroom volume, Unit 11007 (north/left of walkway in Photo 10.) Camera facing northwest. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, December 7, 2012. 11 of 31.
12. Exterior. North and (primary) east façade, Units 11013 (lower) and 11013½ (upper unit, south side.) Camera facing southwest. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, December 7, 2012. 12 of 31.
13. Exterior. North façade/entry to lower Unit 11013 (lower), with 11013½ (upper unit, south side.) Camera facing south. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, December 7, 2012. 13 of 31.
14. Exterior. View from entry, Unit 11013½, looking over central pedestrian core. Camera facing east. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, December 7, 2012. 14 of 31.
15. Exterior. Terrace and northern section, east facade, Unit 11013½. Camera facing north. Photo by Michael Webb, December 12, 2012. 15 of 31.
16. Exterior. South façade, duplex, north side. Staircase to Unit 11009½, above, and front door to Unit 11009, below. Camera facing northwest. Photo by Rebeca Mendez, November 23, 2012. 16 of 31.
17. Exterior. East façade, Unit 11009, below, and a portion of Unit 11009½, from southeast corner of building. Camera facing north. Photo by Rebeca Mendez, November 23, 2012. 17 of 31.
18. Exterior. East façade, Unit 11009, below and Unit 11009½, northern portion of northern duplex. Camera facing west. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, December 7, 2012. 18 of 31.
19. Exterior. Rear (north) façade, Unit 11009, below, and Unit 11009 ½, above, northern duplex. Camera facing north. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, December 7, 2012. 19 of 31.
20. Exterior. North façade and north (secondary) pedestrian staircase. Camera facing southwest. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, December 7, 2012. 20 of 31.
21. Exterior. North façade, ground level. Service entrance, Unit 11007. Camera facing south. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, December 7, 2012. 21 of 31.
22. Exterior. Detail. Located on north façade, north elevation, Unit 11005. Rounded window sill. Camera facing south. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, December 7, 2012. 22 of 31.
23. Exterior. Detail. Located on west façade, Unit 110011. Galvanized tin-lined milk receptacle. Camera facing east. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, December 7, 2012. 23 of 31.

Strathmore Apartments
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

24. Exterior. Detail. Located at entry, north façade, Unit 11011. Embedded entry light. Camera facing south. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, December 7, 2012. 24 of 31.

25. Exterior. Detail. Located on soffit, Unit 11013½. Detail shows mitered and rounded wood members. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, December 7, 2012. 25 of 31.

26. Interior. Living area, Unit 11009½. Camera facing southeast. Photo by Rebeca Mendez, November 23, 2012. 26 of 31.

27. Interior. Living area and terrace, Unit 11009½. Camera facing north. Photo by Rebeca Mendez, November 23, 2012. 27 of 31.

28. Interior. Detail, Unit 11009½. Curved wall at rear bedroom. Camera facing north. Photo by Rebeca Mendez, November 23, 2012. 28 of 31.

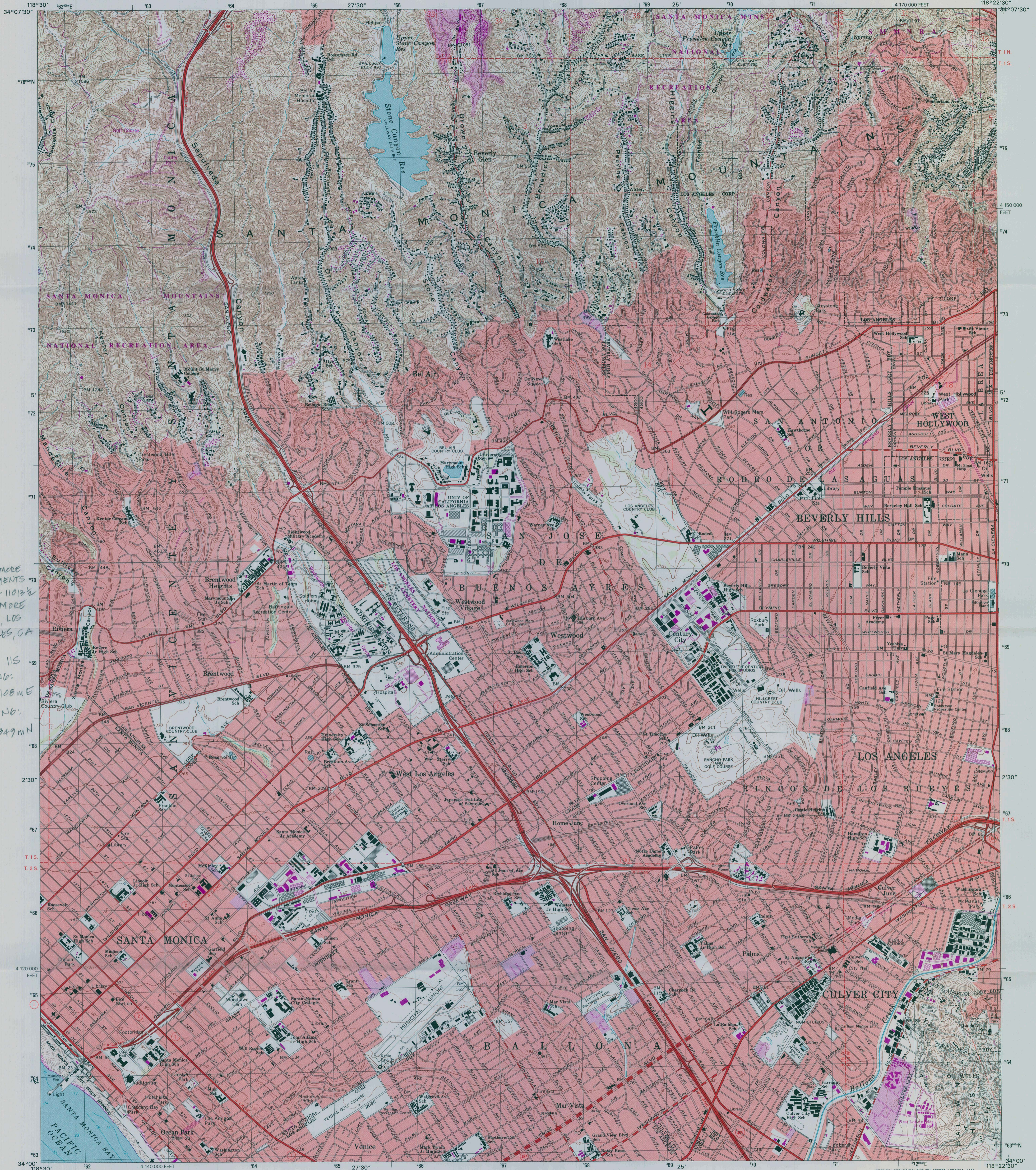
29. Interior. Bathroom No. 1, Unit 11013½. Camera facing south. Photo by Radek Kurzag, July 2004 (no change since then.) 29 of 31.

30. Interior. Bathroom No. 2, Unit 11013½. Camera facing east. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, December 20, 2012. 30 of 31.

31. Interior. Kitchen, Unit 11013½. Camera facing north. Photo by Michael Webb, December 20, 2012. 31 of 31.

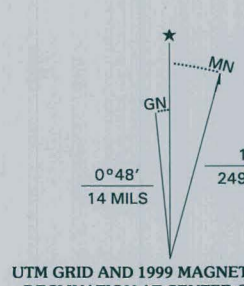
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



STATHMORE APARTMENTS 11005 - 11013 1/2 STRATHMORE DRIVE, LOS ANGELES, CA
ZONE 11S
EASTING: 3666108 ME
NORTHING: 3940349 MN

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
Topography compiled 1966. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1978 and other sources. Photomapped using imagery taken 1995; no major culture or drainage changes observed. PLSS and survey control current as of 1966. Boundaries, other than corporate, verified 1998.
Information shown in purple may not meet USGS content standards and may conflict with previously mapped content.
Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS/NOAA chart 18744 (1964). This information is not intended for navigational purposes.
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and 1000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 11 10 000-foot ticks: California Coordinate System of 1927 (zone 7).
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software.
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map.
A portion of the south half of this map lies within a subsidence area. Vertical control based on latest available adjustment.



SCALE 1:24 000
CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
SUPPLEMENTARY CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO METERS, MULTIPLY BY 0.3048
DEPTH CURVES IN FEET-DATUM IS VARIABLE
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 4 FEET
THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway	Light-duty road, hard or
hard surface	improved surface
Secondary highway	Unimproved road
hard surface	

Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1	2	3	1 Canoga Park
			2 Van Nuys
			3 Burbank
4	5	6	4 Topanga
			5 Hollywood
			6
6	7	8	7 Venice
			8 Inglewood

BEVERLY HILLS, CA
1995
NIMA 2352 III SW-SERIES V895













12
PARKING
Please Do Not
Park Here

12
PARKING
Please Do Not
Park Here





11005

















































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Strathmore Apartments

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: CALIFORNIA, Los Angeles

DATE RECEIVED: 8/09/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/30/13
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/16/13 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/25/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000754

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 9.25.13 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

1725 23rd Street, Suite 100
SACRAMENTO, CA 95816-7100
(916) 445-7000 Fax: (916) 445-7053
calshpo@parks.ca.gov
www.ohp.parks.ca.gov



August 6, 2013

Ms. Carol Shull, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service 2280
1201 I (Eye) Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

Subject: **Strathmore Apartments**
Los Angeles County, California
National Register of Historic Places Nomination

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the **Strathmore Apartments** nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. On August 2, 2013 in Sacramento, California, the California State Historical Resources Commission unanimously found the property eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C at the state level of significance.

The Strathmore Apartments is eligible at the state level of significance as one of California's highest quality examples of a courtyard garden apartment complex designed in the International Style executed at an exceptional level of artistry. Internationally renowned, it is also the sole example of Modernist architect Richard Neutra's synthesis of two building types, the single-family house and the apartment, in a setting in which landscape occupies almost half of the site.

Built in 1937, comprising eight units in four buildings, the hillside complex embodies Neutra's spirited resolution of a diversity of urgent issues in the 1930s, including the Depression, a rapid population growth in Los Angeles, and the Garden City Movement's call for nature in urban centers.

In its role as representative of a Certified Local Government, the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission authorized Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources staff to transmit a supportive draft resolution to the Los Angeles City Council for their approval.

If you have any questions regarding this nomination, please contact Amy Crain of my staff at (916) 445-7009.

Sincerely,

Jenan Saunders
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosure

Strathmore Apartments
Los Angeles, Los Angeles County
Staff Report

Located just west of UCLA in Westwood, Los Angeles, the Strathmore Apartments complex was built in 1937, its period of significance. It was designed in the International Style by Richard Neutra. Four one- and two-story buildings housing eight dwelling units, of frame-and-stucco construction, step up a sharply sloping hillside, grouped around a cruciform-shaped central pedestrian core generously landscaped with trees and plantings. Secondary stairways are located at the far north and south edges of the property. Two four-car ground-level garages flanking the central core serve to raise and remove the residences from street level, creating a permeable threshold of greenery to the dwellings. The primarily east-facing structures are configured as interlocking or stacked rectangular volumes characterized by flat roofs, white-painted stucco cladding, cutaway balconies, terraces, and long banks of steel-framed casement and fixed-light windows. Subtle gestures of asymmetry, a tenet of the International Style, animate the composition in plan, elevation, and section. All exterior details, including doors, windows, and trim, have been maintained in silver-colored aluminum paint. The interiors retain their original layouts and details integral to the structure, and many retain character-defining finishes. With the exception of the landscape, now matured as originally designed, the complex has changed very little since its completion and retains its historic integrity.

The Strathmore Apartments is eligible at the state level of significance as one of California's highest quality examples of a courtyard garden apartment complex designed in the International Style executed at an exceptional level of artistry. Internationally renowned, it is also the sole example of Modernist architect Richard Neutra's synthesis of two building types, the single-family house and the apartment, in a setting in which landscape occupies almost half of the site. Comprising eight units in four buildings, the hillside complex embodies Neutra's spirited resolution of a diversity of urgent issues in the 1930s, including the Depression, a rapid population growth in Los Angeles, and the Garden City Movement's call for nature in urban centers. Its relaxed but tautly composed ambience also reflects an integration of the European-rooted architectural language known as the International Style in a way only possible given Southern California's unique topography, climate, and life style. Conceived and built as one design around a central sloping landscaped core, each unit shares the same repertoire of features characteristic of Neutra's 1930s work, yet each is distinct, creating a dynamic but harmonious composition.

The property is nominated on behalf of its owners, who all support the nomination. In its role as representative of a Certified Local Government, the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission authorized Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources staff to transmit a supportive draft resolution to the Los Angeles City Council for their approval. To date, no letters of support or objection have been received. Staff supports the nomination as written and recommends the State Historical Resources Commission determine that the Strathmore Apartments property meets National Register Criterion C at the state level of significance. Staff recommends the State Historic Preservation Officer approve the nomination for forwarding to the National Park Service for listing in the National Register.

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