National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received SEP 1 9 1988

date entered

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

1. Nam	ie						
historic	El Greco Apar	tment					
and/or common							
2. Loca	ation						
street & number	street & number 817 North Hayworth Avenue			$\frac{N/A}{}$ not for publication			
city, town	Los Angeles		1.64 .41	47.38			
state		e 06 county	Los Angeles	code 037			
3. Clas	sification						
Category district _X_ building(s) structure site object	Ownership public private both Public Acquisition in process being considered NA	Status X occupied unoccupied work in progress Accessible yes: restricted x yes: unrestricted no	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park private residence(s religious scientific transportation other:			
4. Own	er of Prope	rty _{stable}	H () () () () () () () () ()	**************************************			
name	El Greco Prope	erties a California	Limited Parthership	y ne			
street & number	937 North Fair	fax Avenue	Darray Froit Costs				
city, town	West Hollywood	NA vicinity of	state C	alifornia 90046			
5. Loca	ation of Leg	al Description	on				
courthouse, regis	stry of deeds, etc. Offi	ce of the County Re	corder of Los Angel	es			
street & number	treet & number 320 West Temple Street						
city, town		Angeles		alifornia			
		in Existing S	Surveys				
	Angeles ural Heritage Board	has this prop	perty been determined elig	gible? X yes no			
date 1980			federal state	county X local			

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one		
X excellent good	deteriorated	unaltered	original site	September	1985
fair	unexposed				

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The El Greco Apartment, designed by F. Pierpont Davis and Walter S. Davis in 1929, is a rectangular two-story Mediterranean Revival style courtyard apartment house. The wood frame and stucco building was organized around a central patio containing a reflecting pool, brick paving, and planting areas. The twelve single and one bedroom apartments featured open beam ceilings. decorative tiles, and French doors leading to the courtyard or exterior balconies. Modifications to the apartment house were confined primarily to kitchen and bathroom alterations. The site also contained a 1930 one-story four-car garage that was modified in 1940 with the addition of a second floor containing two apartments and a one-story two-car garage that appears to date from the 1950s. In 1985, the apartment house was moved to a new site and the two garage buildings were demolished. The apartment building, courtyard, and entrance terrace have been restored preserving the extant original fabric. Modifications include the addition of a second entrance passage to the courtyard and orientation of the building so that it now faces east rather than west.

The El Greco was originally built on a 70' x 161' lot at 1028 Tiverton Street in the Westwood section of Los Angeles. The building was situated near the front of the lot separated from the sidewalk by a narrow planting strip and raised brick terrace. A narrow sidewalk separated the south side of the building from the adjacent apartment house. A single lane concrete driveway located on the north side of the structure led to a concrete paved automobile court and garages that took up the remaining space at the back of the lot. Landscaping was limited to planting strips in the courtyard and along the facade walls.

The El Greco was composed of three two-story wings and a one-story wing organized around a central rectangular courtyard. The one- and two-story apartment units opened directly to the patio on the ground level or from the balconies and stairhalls on the second floor. The entrance facade featured symmetrically arranged doors and windows on either side of a round headed archway. A passage with a cross vaulted ceiling connected the entrance to the courtyard. The facades around the central patio were arranged in an informal manner utilizing wood balconies, a one-story "ell" and a symmetrically arranged door and windows gave a picturesque flavor to the composition. A long rectangular pool on axis with the entrance passage was the focal point of the courtyard. The patio floor was paved with bricks laid in a flat basket weave pattern. The landscaping featured small planting strips around the perimeter of the court and containers of flowers and leafy plants arranged informally around the pool. The exterior walls along the sides and the back were simple stucco walls punctuated by steel frame windows.

8. Significance

1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric agricultureX architecture art commerce communications		law literature military music	re religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	1929	Builder/Architect F.	Pierpont and Walter	S. Davis

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The El Greco Apartment is a significant example of the courtyard apartment house that was developed in Los Angeles in the 1920s and the 1930s. It is one of a small number of courtyard apartments that were designed by well known architects of the time. The Spanish style used for the building was an important facet of the Mediterranean Rivival style that was the dominant architectural motif employed during the period between World War I and World War II in Southern California. The architects of the building, F. Pierpont Davis and Walter S. Davis in their combined and separate practices were influential architects in Los Angeles. They were known for their interest in developing new forms of multi-family housing that were suitable for California, their advocacy of using architectural motifs from the Mediterranean world as being the most appropriate form for Southern California architecture (known as the California style) and their involvement in the design of prominent public and religious structures from the 1920s to the 1940s.

The courtyard apartments that were built in Los Angeles in the 1920s and 1930s were a unique response to the problem of providing low rise medium density housing appropriate to Southern California. It is one aspect of the many contributions that Southern California architects have made to exploring new forms of residential architecture in the twentieth century. The courtyard apartment is related to the development of the bungalow court that emerged during the first decade of the twentieth century as a way to organize single or semi-detached residences around a central open space. While these early attempts were often built to provide residences for winter visitors to Southern California, the form was also used for modest worker and middle class housing. As the format was adapted to single or double lots, it was found that greater density could be achieved by building a continuous one-story or two-story building around a central open space. Although courtyard housing was built primarily by contractors, a few prominent Southern California architects, such as F. Pierpont Davis and Walter S. Davis, were retained to design these buildings.

The development of the mature courtyard apartment form coincided with the emergence of the Mediterranean Revival (California style) in the 1920s. Although the California style drew upon the whole body of architecture from the Mediterranean world, the preferred architectural (CONTINUED)

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

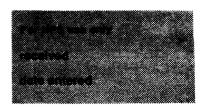
10. Geographica	l Data		
Acreage of nominated property1 Quadrangle nameHollywood, C	3 acres alifornia		Quadrangle scale 1:24000
.	2 3 7 0 g	Zone Easting D	Northing
Verbai boundary description and j Lots 76 and 77 of Tract No. in Office of County Recorde	4891, as shown		in Book 52, Page 57 of Maps, bject property.
List ail states and counties for pro	operties overlapping	state or county be	oundaries
state N/A	code co	unty	code
state	code co	unty	code
11. Form Prepare	ed By		
name/title Martin Eli Weil for	Janet Witkin, E	xecutive Direct	or
organization Alternative Livin			cember 15, 1987
street & number 937 North Fair	fax Avenue	telephone	(213) 650-7988
city or town West Hollywood	1	state Ça	lifornia 90046
12. State Histori	c Preserva	ation Offic	cer Certification
The evaluated significance of this prop	erty within the state is:		
national	state	al	
As the designated State Historic Prese 665), I hereby nominate this property fo according to the criteria and procedure	or inclusion in the Natio	nal Register and cert	
State Historic Preservation Officer sign	nature fall	un Sue	elien
title State Historic Preserva	tion Officer	0	date 9/13/88
Carolie	The s		: -//-3-#%.
Keeper of the National Register			The state of the s

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _	6	Page	2			

The property has been determined eligible for listing under a Tax Act certification review.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 2

(Description of Physical Appearance continued)

The Spanish flavor of the composition was reinforced through the use of clay roof tiles, polychrome glazed tiles in the stairs, terra cotta screens in selected window openings, decorative brick and plaster chimneys, wrought iron balcony railings, turned wood balusters on the balcony, and wood roof rafters with decorative ends.

Within the apartment units special features included beam ceilings, polychrome tiled fireplaces, two story spaces in various livingrooms, vaulted plaster ceilings and built-in dining tables and benches in the kitchen, and glazed tiles in the bathrooms.

The original site contained a one story four car garage that was built in 1930. In 1940 a second floor containing two apartments was added to the wood frame and stucco stucture. At a later date, possibly in the 1950's, a one story two car garage was erected on the site. Neither building was moved to the new site.

The area in which the El Greco was built contained numerous apartment houses. By the late 1970's the buildings were being purchased by developers who were assembling land packages to erect much larger apartment structures. In 1979 Richard Selby and Company was negotiating with the owners of the El Greco and the adjacent apartment house for the purpose of obtaining the two lots, demolishing the two buildings and erecting a 26-unit condominium. The tenants of the El Greco formed the El Greco Preservation Group and nominated the building for designation by the City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Board on December 13, Unknown to the preservation group, Selby and Company had obtained a demolition permit for the building a few days earlier although they did not take title to the building until January 1980. Given the critical threat to the building, the Cultural Heritage Board acted on the nomination at their December 19, 1979 meeting and initiated the procedures for designating the El Greco. The building was designated Cultural Monument No. 231 by the City Council on June 30, 1980.

When the City of Los Angeles Planning Commission approved the tract map for the new condominium project in September 1980 they stipulated that the El Greco could not be demolished. They required that the building be moved to another site and maintained as rental units for a minimum of five years. In November 1981 the Selby Company advised the City that they would move the apartment to 523 West 127th

OMB No. 1024-0018 Exp. 10-31-84

NPS Form 10-900-a

United States Department of the InteriorNational Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

Page -

(Description of Physical Appearance continued)

Street in the Athens Height district of Los Angeles. Despite the year of intense activity the Selby Company did not proceed with their plans to move the El Greco or build the condominium.

In July 1984 the Selby Company advised the Cultural Heritage Board that they had applied for another demolition permit for the El Greco and that the Cultural Heritage Board had 180 days to show cause why the demolition permit should not be acted upon. Since it was clear that the Selby Company had no intention of saving the apartment on its original site the El Greco Preservation Group initiated a search to find a group that would preserve the building by moving it to another site. In September 1984 they advised the Cultural Heritage Board that through the efforts of Councilman Zev Yaroslavsky they had found a group, Alternative Living for the Aging ("ALA"), interested in restoring the building for elderly housing.

Although ALA wanted to keep the building on the original site, the Selby Company reiterated that they wanted the lot on which the building stood as part of a larger land package for a new apartment project. They advised Councilman Yaroslavsky and ALA that they would not consider selling the lot to the non-profit group. The Selby Company made it clear that the only way that the building could be preserved would be to move it to a new site.

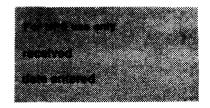
ALA began its search for land in September 1984. The time constraint caused by the scheduled expiration of the demolition moratorium on February 2, 1985 required ALA to select and purchase a site within a very short period. ALA began to look for a site in the Hollywood/Fairfax area where the organization carries out its programs. They required a flat double lot in a neighborhood that was secure and close to public transportation, health facilities, shopping and community services for the elderly. In addition, ALA wanted to locate the building in a neighborhood where the other buildings would be sympathetic to the scale, configuration and style of the El Greco.

ALA also constrained its search to property that was already vacant. While private developers seeking project sites often assemble sufficient land by purchasing improved property, and relocating tenants and demolishing existing housing, this would have been contrary to ALA policy as well as that of the City of Los Angeles (through whom funding was being sought). Although vacant double lots are very scarce

NPS Form 10-900-a (3-82)

United States Department of the InteriorNational Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 4

(Description of Physical Appearance continued)

in this older and densely built area of Los Angeles they were able to find a few sites that were large enough for the building.

ALA evaluated these lots against various criteria, including property at the corner of Fairfax and Fountain, 1212 N. Gower, and 817 N. Hayworth. Cost and heavy traffic concerns caused ALA to eliminate consideration of the Fairfax/Fountain property. The Gower property appeared promising at the time of submission of ALA's proposal to the City of Los Angeles for consideration under the State Historic Preservation Grant Program. However, as many buildings in this neighborhood are marked by graffiti, this property was dropped due to concern over its safety for seniors, and the impact that the neighborhood could have on the physical structure, its marketability, and its ability to command sufficient rents to insure financial feasibility of the project.

The Gower site would have allowed the apartment building to be oriented in the same direction as the original location, however, the surrounding area was not architecturally compatible to the El Greco. The only remaining site, the Hayworth property in the Fairfax district, had none of the limitations of the Gower site. The area is friendly for seniors and the surrounding streets contained houses and multi-family residential units that had been built in the 1920's in the Mediterranean Revival style. While the orientation of the site was different from the Tiverton location, given the impending expiration of the moratorium, ALA selected this lot since it fulfilled all of their other requirements. They paid a premium for the land due to the scarcity of double lots in the area.

In a meeting on December 31, 1984, with a new site secured, ALA met with the Selby Company and were able to convince them that relocation of the El Greco was viable. As a result, Selby Company agreed not to oppose ALA's request to the Cultural Heritage Board for additional time in which to complete the actual move of the El Greco. This gave ALA the opportunity to prepare architectural drawings, secure needed variances, obtain funding, solicit and receive contractors' bids, etc. If ALA had not been able to demonstrate that it had secured a site at this time, it is doubtful that it would have been able to obtain this critical extension. In January of 1985, the Cultural Heritage Commission granted an additional 180 day demolition moratorium, and the El Greco was saved from the wrecking ball.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 5

(Description of Physical Appearance continued)

The new site, which measures 100 feet x 132 feet, was wider and shorter than the original location. Since the new site was 29 feet shorter than the original lot, ALA was required to place the parking to one side of the building and obtain variances in order to locate the building and the entrance terrace in the same relationship to the Hayworth Street as it had on Tiverton Street. The eleven parking places which fit on the new lot did not meet City requirements and, hence, additional variances were required in order to eliminate the need for an underground parking garage beneath the building. The new parking lot is located behind a stucco covered wall. Plant materials appropriate to the period have been selected for the planting strips adjacent to the building and paved areas.

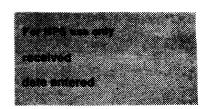
In order to move the building, the four sides were cut apart, the roof tiles and roof framing were taken apart, all of the brick from the entrance terrace and patio were salvaged, and the wood balcony was dismantled. The interiors of the apartments were not disturbed.

The building has been restored utilizing all of the extant intact fabric and the salvagable materials. Plaster and stucco finishes have been reconstructed where necessary. New HVAC, plumbing and electrical systems have been installed. While changes to the building have been minimal, they were generally required by code or designed to meet special consideration requirements for elderly housing. The most major change has been the required addition of the second exit from the courtyard. The passage is located on the north side of the building. Wrought iron railings have been installed at the entrances to the apartments for seniors' safety and a wrought iron security gate has been added at the entrance.

Note: The use of the past tense in this description does not indicate that the property has been altered in ways other than described specifically in this section.

Resource Count: 1 contributing building

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number $\, {f {\it \mathcal S}} \,$

Page 2

(Statement of Significance continued)

source for courtyard apartments like the El Greco was Spanish architecture. The vernacular architectural details, materials and composition of the Andalusian casa de vecinos (apartments), urban patio houses, urban callejon (dead-end streets) and rural haciendas (freestanding form complexes) provided the vocabulary for many of the California courtyard apartment projects including the El Greco. In the case of the El Greco Apartments, the name selected for the composition was meant to reinforce the style of the building.

Although the designers of the courtyard apartments turned to the past to provide the architectural vocabulary for their buildings, their plans responded to the contemporary requirements for the Industrial Age. By the 1920's the automobile was becoming an important factor in the design of low rise medium density housing. Although automobile parking was not provided for all tenants, projects such as the El Greco included off street parking facilities as part of the site development plan. At the El Greco the automobile court and garage at the back of the site took up most all of the site that was not covered by the apartment.

After World War II the courtyard apartment form was investigated by a new generation of architects and builders. Through the 1940's and 1950's the preferred architectural motif for the courtyard apartment was International Style Modern. The courtyard fountain was replaced by the swimming pool and the automible played an increasingly significant role in the design of the building and the site. By the mid 1960's the courtyard apartment format was no longer a prominent architectural form in Southern California housing.

F. Pierpont Davis (1884-1953) and Walter S. Davis (1887-1973), the architects of the El Greco were the sons of a Baltimore architect, Henry Davis. F. Pierpont Davis studied with his father and came to Los Angeles to practice architecture in 1905. Walter S. Davis studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and graduated in 1911. He received an MIT traveling fellowship and spent the year 1911-1912 traveling in Spain, France and Italy. At the end of his fellowship he came to Los Angeles to join his brother. They established a joint practice in 1915.

Inspired by the Garden City concept, Walter S. Davis, along with his brother Henry, a landscape architect, H. Scott Gerity and

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page 3

(Statement of Significance continued)

Loyale F. Wilson wrote <u>California Garden City Houses</u>. The 1915 book articulated architectural concepts that would appear later in the work of the Davis brothers. The book contained plans to bungalow court housing, houses built around patios and called for the development of a new California architectural style based on the architecture of the Mediterranean world.

During the next fifteen years the work by F. Pierpont Davis and Walter S. Davis brought to fruition many of the ideas expressed in that book and its subsequent editions such as Ideal Homes in Garden Communities: A book of House Plans. Their interest in promoting the Mediterranean Revival style can be seen in such buildings as the Eltinge House (1916) in the Silverlake area and the award winning La Venta Inn (1923) in Palos Verdes. When the brothers designed St. John's Episcopal Church (1921-1923) they turned to Italian Romanesque for the major reinforced concrete ecclesiastical structure.

The interest of the Davis Brothers in multi-family housing and the use of Mediterranean details came together in the three major courtyard apartments they designed in the 1920's: Roman Gardens (Hollywood 1926), the Villa d'Este (West Hollywodd 1928) and the El Greco (Westwood 1929). Both the El Greco and the Villa d'Este were published in the Architect and Engineer as the example of the innovations in Southern California housing. Both apartments are considered among the most important examples of courtyard apartment buildings in Los Angeles.

F. Pierpont Davis joined Myron Hunt, Summer P. Hunt, William Richards and Edward Bergstrom to form Allied Architects of Los Angeles. Their work included a Beaux Artes site proposal for the Los Angeles Civic Center (1924) and the designs for the Hall of Justice (1925), Patriotic Hall (1926), the Los Angeles County/USC Medical Center (1928-1933), and the Music Shell for the Hollywood Bowl (1929). Walter S. Davis' interest in multi-family housing continued throughout his career. In 1941, he worked with a team of architects that included Lloyd Wright, Ralph C. Flewelling, Eugene Weston and George G. Adams to design Ramona Gardens. This 610 unit complex was the first public housing prospect built in Los Angeles utilizing funds created by the 1937 Lanham Act. From 1941 to 1953 the same team designed Aliso Village, one of the largest public housing projects at the time in Los Angeles.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

9

Page 2

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

9

Page

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NPS Form 10-900-a

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



9 Page

Continuation sheet

(Bibliography continued)

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April 16, 1920, p. 11. F. Pierpont and Walter S. Davis receive citation for the residence and garden at 2114 Estrella Avenue, Los Angeles; residence at 1907 Highland Avenue, Hollywood, residence at 230 North Rigewood Avenue, Los Angeles; Holliday Residence, Santa Monica and Eltinge Residence, Los Angeles.

item number

November 4, 1921; page 12, illus. F. Pierpont and Walter S. Davis win competition for St. John's Episcopal Church, Los Angeles.

March 28, 1924, p. 46. F. Pierpont Davis served as judge for Santa Barbara Planning Commission.

February 20, 1925, p. 45. Residence for Ann Desmond, 1823 Courtney, West Hollywood wins local AIA Award.

March 21, 1930, p. 32. Plans for La Venta Inn, Palos Verde win AIA Award.

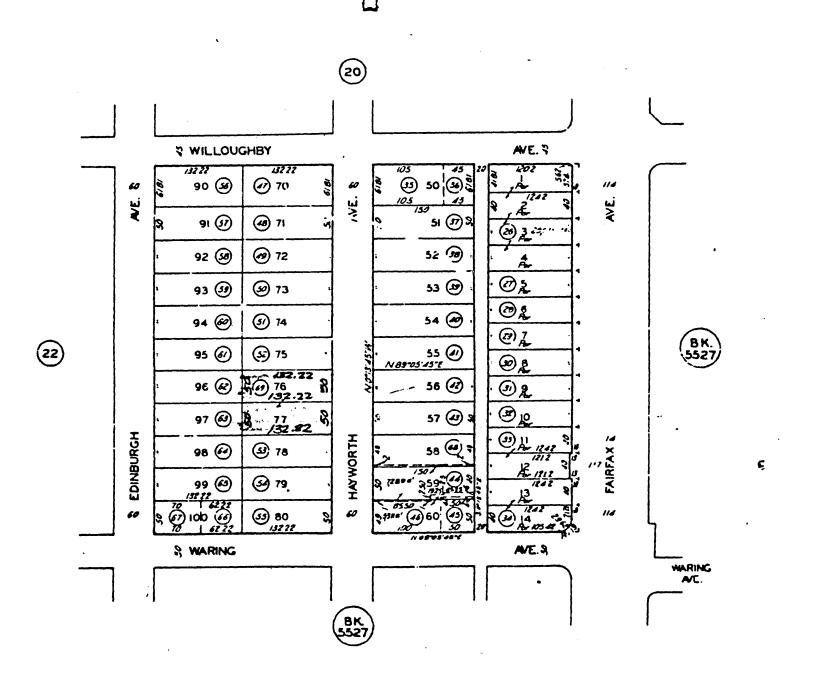
INTERVIEWS

The information on the preservation efforts of the El Greco was obtained from the files of the Cultural Heritage Board, Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles; interviews with Janet Witkin, Executive Director, Alternative Living for the Aging; and interviews with Adam Nemory, a member of the El Greco Preservation Group and Board member of Alternative Living for the Aging;

Information on the restoration of the building was obtained from interviews with Stephanos Polyzoides, partner of the firm Polyzoides and DeBrettville, the architects for the project.

Information on F. Pierpont Davis and Walter S. Davis was obtained in interviews with Dr. Robert Winter, Occidental College and Allison Clark, Librarian, Architecture and Fine Arts Library, University of Southern California.

THE EL GRECO Apartment
817 North Hayworth Alle.
Los Angeles, CA
Los Angeles County



National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

Photo Log

Page

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs 1--15 were taken when the building in 1985 at the original site 1028 Tiverton Street

- 1. El Greco Apartments 1028 Tiverton Street
- 2. Los Angeles, California
- 3. Stephanos Polyzoides, Photographer
- 4. 1985
- 5. Collection of the Alternative Living for the Aging.
- 1. West facade of building (Tiverton Street facade)
- East facade of building
- 3. North facade of building
- 4. South facade of building
- 5. Later two car garage
- 6. Original four car garage
- 7. Entrance passage to courtyard
- 8. Ell on west side of courtyard
- 9. Second story balcony in courtyard
- 10. North wall of courtyard
- 11. Staircase to second floor
- 12. Livingroom fireplace
- 13. Open beam ceiling in two story living room
- 14. Sink and cabinets in kitchen
- 15. Lavatory and tile floor in bathroom

Photographs 16-39 were taken in 1987 at the present site at 817 North Hayworth Avenue.

- 1. El Greco Apartments 817 North Hayworth Street
- 2. Los Angeles, California
- 3. Steve Wolf, Photographer
- 4. 1987
- 5. Collection of the Alternative Living for the Aging

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

item number

Photo Log

Page 2

(Photographs continued)

- 16. Looking north on Hayworth Street
- 17. Restored Hayworth Street facade (east)
- 18. Northwest corner of building and wall of new parking lot.
- 19. North facade and parking lot
- 20. North facade
- 21. South facade
- 22. West facade
- 23. Entrance to courtyard
- 24. New wrought iron gate in entrance
- 25. Northwest corner of courtyard and new entrance passage on north wall
- 26. New entrance passage on north wall
- 27. Southeast corner of courtyard
- 28. West facade of courtyard
- 29. Stairs to second floor
- 30. Restored wood balcony on second floor
- 31. Restored wrought iron balcony on second floor
- 32. Restored terra cotta grille
- 33. Two story living room with open beam ceiling
- 34. Livingroom fireplace
- 35. Bathroom with original tiles and fixtures. New safety bar.
- 36. Bathroom with original tiles and fixtures
- 37. Kitchen with original cabinets and tiles
- 38. Kitchen with original cabinets
- 39. Kitchen with original built-in table and benches

Photographs 40-41 were taken at 817 North Hayworth Avenue

- 1. El Greco Apartment 817 North Hayworth Street Los Angeles, CA
- 2. Steve Wolf, Photographer
- 3, 1988
- 4, Collection of the Alternative Living for the Aging
- 40. Main elevation, facing west
- 41. Main elevation, facing west