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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUL 14 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Van Buren Place Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Most of the 2600 Block of Van Buren Place N/A not for publication

city, town Los Angeles N/A vicinity

state California code CA county Los Angeles code 017 zip code 90007

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
14	4 buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
14	4 Total

See Continuation for list of property owners
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Kathryn Quattrone
Signature of certifying official

7-11-89
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.

William Byrum

8/10/89

- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling
Secondary Structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling
Congregate Housing
Secondary Structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Shingle Style/Craftsman
Craftsman

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete; Brick
walls wood; shingles, overlap board
roof Asphalt Shingle
other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Van Buren Place Historic District is located in south central Los Angeles, approximately four miles southwest of Civic Center and one-half mile northwest of the western boundary of the campus of the University of Southern California (USC). The proposed district consists of a little less than a one-block long segment of a north-south residential street bounded on the north by West Adams Boulevard -- the main east-west thoroughfare through the subject neighborhood, and the historic core street of the larger West Adams community. The Van Buren Place Historic District contains 18 buildings (4 auxilliary structures and 14 principal residential buildings). Twelve of the fourteen principal residential buildings are fine, intact, and representative examples of Craftsman-inspired residential design from the period between 1903 and 1910, and which contribute to the arthitectoral significance of the district as a whole. The nicely detailed homes on this block show an imaginative coupling of Craftsman/Shingle Style sensibilities (viz., frame/shingle construction, broad widely-overhanging rooflines, and orientalia, etc.) with decorative elements borrowed from the Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival, and the Gothic Revival.

The proposed district is bounded on the south by the northerly curb line of West 27th Street, on the north by a traffic barrier cutting off through-traffic to and from Adams Boulevard, and on the east and west by the rear property lines of homes on both the east and west sides of Van Buren Place. Those rear property lines run approximately through the centers of the block between Van Buren Place and Budlong Avenue (on the east), and the block between Van Buren Place and Raymond Avenue (on the west).

The district consists entirely of residential buildings and related auxilliary buildings, such as two altered but original carriage houses (Sites #9 and 11), as well as newer non-contributing 1960s garage apartment units constructed at the rear of the principal residences (Sites #10 and 14). The other two non-contributing buildings (Sites #3 and 8) are rated as such because significant defining features, such as the roofs (Site #3) and/or window treatments, wall sheathing/texturing, or important defining decorative detail has been removed or replaced with elements of inappropriate design (Sites #3 and 8).

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Community Planning and Development

1903-1910

N/A

Architecture

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person

Clark, Percy H.

Architect/Builder

Clark, Percy H., Company, Inc.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Van Buren Place Historic District is significant in the area of community planning and development under criterion B for the association with Percy H. Clark, a distinguished real estate and investment broker in the Los Angeles area. Clark built roughly half of the houses in this district and resided in one of them. The district is also significant in the area of architecture under criterion C. As one of the most intact enclaves of single family residential buildings surviving in the Adams-Normandie neighborhood, it is highly reflective of local design conventions, tastes, and life styles of upper middle-class Los Angeles families during the period between 1903 and 1910.

Van Buren Place is part of the larger West Adams community which enjoyed the status from 1900 to roughly 1950 as one of Los Angeles's most prestigious residential neighborhoods. Within the Van Buren Place District, the affluence and social prominence of the residents is indicated by the occupations listed for them in the city directories of the period, and references in who's who and social directories such as the The Blue Book and Who's Who in the Pacific Southwest. All appear to have been doctors, dentists, business executives, including four prominent real estate developers: Percy H. Clark, George A. Cortelyou, Clarence Minton, and Morris A. Cadwalader (Sites #3, 13, 4, and 12, respectively).

Subdivided in December 1902 by developer George Woodbury Stimson of Pasadena and improved in large measure by the Percy H. Clark Company, Van Buren Place came into being as part of the West Adams Street Tract, a two block subdivision containing 40 parcels and extending from Budlong Avenue on the east to Raymond Avenue on the west (Adams and Twenty-Seventh Street forming the north and south boundaries, respectively). Clark constructed roughly half the homes on Van Buren Place.

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1. 2621 Van Buren Place
Thomas McCurnin and Jodi Siegner
2621 Van Buren Place
Los Angeles, California 90007

2. 2627 Van Buren Place
John and Virginia McGonigle
2627 Van Buren Place
Los Angeles, California 90007

3. 2633 Van Buren Place
Agatha and Adele Lang
2633 Van Buren Place
Los Angeles, California 90007

4. 2639 Van Buren Place
Edward Gordon and Norma R. Latimer
2639 Van Buren Place
Los Angeles, California 90007

5. 2645 Van Buren Place
Robert L. and Irene D. Grant
2645 Van Buren Place
Los Angeles, California 90007

6. 2651 Van Buren Place
World Impact, Inc.
2001 South Vermont Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90007

7. 2657 Van Buren Place
Leslie Evans and Jennifer Chernofsky
2657 Van Buren Place
Los Angeles, California 90007

8. 2620 Van Buren Place
Gedatsu Church of America
2620 Van Buren Place
Los Angeles, California 90007

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9. 2624 Van Buren Place
Sumiko Tsujimura
3011 Rio Lempa Drive
Hacienda Heights, California 91745

10. 2628 Van Buren Place
Kenneth Takemoto
2628 Van Buren Place
Los Angeles, California 90007

11. 2638 Van Buren Place
Bernard and Brenda Steppes
2638 Van Buren Place
Los Angeles, California 90007

12. 2642 Van Buren Place

13. 2650 Van Buren Place
World Impact, Inc.
2001 South Vermont Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90007

14. 2656 Van Buren Place
Celestie B. McKinney
2902 Wakeman
San Antonio, Texas 78247

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At least six of the 14 residences were constructed by the Percy H. Clark Company, the principal developer of the properties on the 2600 block of Van Buren Place (Sites #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, and 11), including Percy Clark's own home at 2639 Van Buren Place (Site #4). Notwithstanding the dominant presence of a single developer, there is an unusual diversity among the designs of the individual buildings. While some approach the expressiveness of the East Coast Shingle Style with their exuberant sweeping rooflines and massing (Sites #5 and 10), others combine Craftsman roof and window treatments with Tudor Revival/Gothic Revival design elements (Sites #3, 4, and 14), such as second-floor overhangs, use of diamond-paned glass, and grouped wood post porch supports (bracketed). Still others reflect a fusion of Craftsman and Late Victorian massing, such as 2624 (Site #9) and 2627 Van Buren Place (Site #2) -- two of the older homes on the block.

Although the buildings included within the proposed district are not unique architecturally, and were not architect-designed, Van Buren Place is noteworthy within the context of its Adams-Normandie neighborhood -- a neighborhood where many similar streetscapes have been obliterated by inappropriate alterations, demolitions, and/or intrusive new construction (e.g., Budlong Avenue).

The Adams-Normandie neighborhood, in which the Van Buren Place Historic District is located, is a segment of the larger West Adams community that stretches a distance of three miles from Figueroa Street on the east to Crenshaw Boulevard on the west. Van Buren Place is positioned roughly midway between the West Adams Heights Tract, historically one of the most prestigious neighborhoods within West Adams (and home to many wealthy and socially prominent families, 1900-1950), and North University Park -- an equally noteworthy enclave of historically significant Victorian and early 20th century homes. North University Park contains a Los Angeles municipal historic preservation overlay zone (much of which will be proposed shortly in a separate application for National Register Historic District designation) and the Menlo Avenue-West 29th Street National Register Historic District (1986). In addition, several of the buildings within North University Park are individually designated as municipal Cultural Heritage Landmarks. Three blocks to the east of the proposed district, is another (and fairly recent) Cultural Heritage Landmark -- First African Methodist Episcopal Zion Cathedral (declared 1986), at 1445-1449 (West) Adams Boulevard.

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The northern section of Adams-Normandie (i.e., north of Adams Boulevard and south of the Santa Monica Freeway) is a Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Area. Although a growing number of middle-income professional families (including Asian, African-American, and Hispanic families) live in or are moving into the neighborhood, it remains a predominantly poor-working class area. Economic disinvestment in the community is reflected in the under-utilized and deteriorated condition of many of the storefronts along Adams Boulevard. These buildings, built in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s lack both adequate off-street parking and the floor area desired by many of today's businesses. The problems of under-investment are compounded by the failure of many of the absentee landlords to properly supervise their tenants, and to maintain their buildings. There are a number of unsightly auto repair shops along this segment of Adams, a proliferation of unnecessary and unattractive business identification signage (Photos #17 and 18), and a number of poorly maintained large 1920's era apartment buildings as well. Where new development has occurred, such as the mini-mall shopping center at the southwest corner of Adams and Van Buren Place (adjoining the northern boundary of the proposed district), it has often been incompatible with the historic character of the abutting residential streets and has had an intrusive effect (Photo #19).

The residents of Van Buren Place have shown a spirited interest in revitalizing their neighborhood. As previously explained, the majority of the buildings within the proposed district are intact. Many have also undergone extensive renovation within the past six years, and the majority of the houses continue to be used as single-family residences (although a few now serve as congregate homes, and a handful of others have detached apartment units at the rear). The residents have formed a neighborhood organization, and successfully lobbied for traffic barricades, and for the down-zoning of their street. Working with a sympathetic real estate broker, they found new owners for a building on their street that had been a drug house. They are currently working with local business owners to create incentives for improved building maintenance along Adams Boulevard.

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In summary, the proposed Van Buren Place Historic District consists of 14 principal residential buildings and four auxiliary residential buildings. Of these, 14 (or 78%) are thought to contribute to the historic and architectural significance of the district, possessing mutually compatible design characteristics, scale, and use. Non-contributing resources are thought to have lost their architectural significance due to the substantial nature of the existing alterations and/or date of construction.

A list of the buildings making up the proposed Van Buren Place Historic District follows:

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1. Lane House
2621 Van Buren Place
1904

Contributing

This is a two-and-a-half story frame, gable-roof house of Craftsman design, with overlap board and shingle siding (first and second floors, respectively). The facade is asymmetrically organized and picturesque in feeling. The building is surmounted by a broad, steeply-pitched, widely-overhanging gable roof (side-gabled orientation) with exposed rafter tails. A porch extends across two-thirds of the facade (roofed under the cantilevered second floor). A polygonal bay with a flared and segmented conical roof abuts the porch on the south -- a Late Victorian feature. At the second floor-level, a gable-fronted rectangular bay, which has a roof with a longer rake on the south than on the north side, serves as a centralizing feature for the front facade. It features notched bargeboards with rounded tails. Window treatments consist of single, paired, and tripartite double-hung sash, all of which appears to be original. The upper sash features delicate pointed lights (wood muntins).

This house was constructed by the Percy H. Clark Company as a speculative venture for \$6,000. The first owner/residents were J. Lansing and Lida H. Lane according to the 1904 City Directory.

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2. Hutchason-Cheap House
2627 Van Buren Place
1904

Contributing

2627 is a two-and-a-half story frame, gable-roof Craftsman house with asbestos shingle siding. The facade is asymmetrically-organized, and is divided into two projecting bays, one of which is two-stories and gable-roofed, the second one of which occurs only at the second-floor level and is hip-roofed. A shed-roofed porch extends across two-thirds of the facade. Its roof is supported by massive, square, imitation stone concrete block piers. Notwithstanding the installation of newer siding, the original windows and window mouldings remain intact. Window treatments consist of paired and solitary multi-paned double-hung sash. A lovely leaded glass elliptical fanlight (first floor, front facade, north corner) is among the noteworthy window details. The glass is complemented by a curved hooded moulding above of unusual design.

This house was built by the Percy H. Clark Company as a speculative venture. The first owner/residents were Dr. and Mrs. Willis E. Hutchason. Dr. Hutchason was a dentist, according to the 1905 City Directory. During the late 1920s and 1930s, this was home to Albert and Alice Cheap and their seven children. The Cheaps were members of Los Angeles society. Their affiliations include the Duchesne, and History and Landmarks Clubs, Catholic Big Sisters, and the Henry Welch Guild, according to the 1935 Blue Book.

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3. Long House
2633 Van Buren Place
1904

Non-Contributing

This is a much-altered two-story frame house with an extremely low-raking (replacement) hip-roof, and square-shaped fiberglass siding. The facade is loosely symmetrical in its organization, and features an inset porch with a steeply-pitched front-gabled entrance supported by bracketed elephantine artificial stone (rusticated concrete block) piers. The porch has concrete steps and low stone sidewalls and is partially roofed by the overhang of the second floor. There are replacement aluminum sliding windows at the second-floor level on the front facade.

County Assessor records and the 1904 City Directory suggests that construction on the property began in 1903 but continued into 1904. The first owner/resident was Oath Long.

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4. Clark House
2639 Van Buren Place
1903

Contributing

2639 is an intact two-story, frame Craftsman house, with clapboard and shingle cladding (first and second floors, respectively). The front facade is loosely symmetrical in its organization. Identifying features include its steeply-pitched, widely-overhanging hipped roofline (with exposed notched rafter tails); inset porch, with an unusual fan-shaped and bracketed roof over its entrance; and a second-floor rectangular bay which is centered above the entrance to the house (the bay has a tripartite grouping of diamond-paned casement sash). Fenestration includes paired and tripartite sash (front facade), with solitary double-hung sash on the side elevations.

This house was constructed by the Percy H. Clark Company in 1903, possibly as a speculative venture, possibly for the express occupancy of Percy H. Clark. Clark, like George Stimson, assumed a significant role not only in the development of Van Buren Place, but of Southern California as a whole. He sold large tracts of pasture land in the Central Valley and Southern California, and was one of the developers of Beverly Hills. Clark was also president and vice-president of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce (1910-1912), as well as director of the Automobile Club of Southern California (1912).

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5. Minton House
2645 Van Buren Place
1904

Contributing

This is an imposing two-and-a-half story Craftsman Style home, of frame construction, with both overlap board and shingle cladding (first and second floors, respectively). The design is asymmetrically organized and is dominated by the steeply-pitched cross-gabled roofline. The roof widely overhangs the walls, and is supported by numerous kneebrace struts -- Craftsman features. The picturesque massing, use of shingling on the second floor and attic exterior, and sweeping roofline are in the late Shingle Style design tradition. An inset porch extends across two-thirds of the facade and is enclosed by low concrete block artificial stone sidewalls. Massive (square) concrete block piers support the second floor overhang that extends out above roughly half the porch. Fenestration is varied, adding a picturesqueness to the design. Window treatments include: A large picture window with a transom of small rectangular lights, paired and solitary double-hung sash, a polygonal bay window (second floor, directly above the entrance), a Palladian window with an elongated key (attic), and a prow-shaped bay window with diamond-paned sash. There are two brick exterior-end chimneys. The house is currently undergoing restoration.

This house was built in 1904 by the Percy H. Clark Company as a speculative venture. Its first owner/occupant was Clarence H. Minton, President of the Home Real Estate Company, according to the 1905 City Directory.

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6. Bowen House
2651 Van Buren Place
1907

Contributing

The Bowen House is a two story, frame/shingle, Craftsman design with a picturesque, cross-gabled roofline (widely-overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails). The front facade is asymmetrically organized. A shed-roof porch extends across approximately two-thirds of the facade. The porch has a concrete dais and steps, with high arroyo stone sidewalls. A single massive arroyo stone pier supports the front north end of the porch roof. Arroyo stone sheathing is also employed across the house's south bay at the first floor level. Other identifying features include an arroyo stone chimney which playfully figures in the front facade and in the south wall of the front porch, and the use of open decorative trusswork in the front gable end. The fenestration includes banked, paired, and solitary casement, sliding and double-hung sash. Replacement aluminum sliding sash and French doors (balcony) have been installed at the second-floor level.

Unlike the majority of the other houses on Van Buren Place, this design shows no Shingle Style features and is more representative of Craftsman design elsewhere in Southern California. The building was built in 1907 by H. M. Cowper as a speculative venture. The first owner/residents appear to have been William Alvin and Grace D. Bowen. Bowen, a prominent attorney, is profiled in A History of the Bench and Bar of Southern California (1909). A law graduate of the University of Maryland ('98), Bowen was an associate in the law firm of Flint and Barker (subsequently: Gray, Barker and Bowen).

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7. Johnson House
2657 Van Buren Place
1910

Contributing

The Johnson House is a two-and-a-half story frame Craftsman Style building of frame construction and overlap board and shingle cladding (first and second floors, respectively). It is surmounted by a moderately pitched, widely overhanging cross-gabled roof, with scroll-sawn kneebrace strut supports and decorative bargeboards. The front facade is asymmetrically organized. Important identifying features include a full-length porch with a combination shed and cross-gabled (north end) roof, and the offset-gabled articulation of the southmost, second-floor bay projection (polygonal). The front porch roof is supported by three massive artificial stone (concrete block) piers. A low concrete grid patterned balustrade encloses the porch. The side elevations are enlivened by the several different-sized rectangular and polygonal bay projections. Decorative details such as the strapwork on the bargeboards, faux half-timbering (gable peaks), and scroll-sawn bracket and strut supports suggest Tudor Revival influences. The fenestration consists primarily of tripartite, paired, and solitary double-hung sash.

This house was commissioned in 1910 by H. M. Cowper as a speculative venture and was probably constructed by the Los Angeles Building Company -- a firm which designed a couple other homes of similar design in the neighborhood.

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8. Klitten House
2620 Van Buren Place
1903

Non-Contributing

This is a two-story, flat-roofed, parapeted, much altered eclectic design. It is of frame construction, with replacement textured stucco sheathing. The front facade is symmetrically organized. A wide inset porch, and its rectangular portico (with a deck), serves as the principal centralizing feature on the front facade. Other alterations include the extensive installation of replacement windows, and a semicircular driveway that occupies much of the front yard setback.

The house was built in 1903 according to County Assessor records. The first owner/occupant appears to have been Martinus O. Klitten, according to city directories from the period.

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9. Daniels House
2624 Van Buren Place
1903

Contributing

The Daniels House is a two-story, frame, hipped-roof building of transitional design, with replacement fiberglass sheathing. The house has a square-shaped floor plan, and a loosely symmetrical front facade in which the center bay serves as the entrance. Principal identifying features include an entry-only gabled porch/portico with a wood dais and concrete steps, whose roof is supported by two squat columns (wood); the moderately-pitched, moderately-projecting roofline with its notched exposed rafter tails (a fusion of late Queen Anne and Craftsman elements); and the tent-roofed polygonal bay (first floor, north wall). Fenestration is varied and includes solitary and paired double-hung sash, as well as beautiful intact leaded glass transoms (bay windows, north wall). The original carriage house survives in the backyard (altered): It is a one-and-a half story gable-front frame/overlap board-sided structure (contemporary sash).

This house was built in 1903 according to Assessor records. Its first owner/residents were Dr. and Mrs. Jared W. Daniels. Dr. Daniels was a physician according to the 1904 City Directory.

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10. Guthery House
2628 Van Buren Place
1906

Contributing

This is an imposing two-and-a-half story cross-gabled frame house with both overlap board shingle cladding (the overlap board is used primarily on the first floor level). The picturesquely-massed design fuses Shingle Style, Craftsman and Tudor Revival elements with an eclectic exuberance. The dramatically-pitched, widely-overhanging roofline (kneebrace struts along the eaves) is the dominant architectural feature of the house. A diminutive hipped roof dormer and an offset gable-roofed polygonal bay (second floor) further animate the roofline (the polygonal bay has decorative open trusswork in its gable peaks -- a Tudor Revival feature). A hipped roof porch extends across two-thirds of the facade. Paired, bracketed wood piers atop low, artificial stone (concrete block) sidewalls support the porch roof. Fenestration is varied and adds a further picturesqueness to the overall design. Paired, tripartite, and solitary multi-paned double-hung sash is employed. There is a non-contributing two-story 1960's frame/stucco garage apartment building with a carport below at the rear of the property.

This house was built in 1906 by the Percy H. Clark Company as a speculative venture. Charlotte Guthery is the first owner of record, according to County Assessor records.

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11. Greenbaum House
2638 Van Buren Place
1905-1906

Contributing

This is a two-and-a-half story frame/overlap board Craftsman house, with a steeply-pitched, widely-overhanging cross-gabled roof (supported by kneebrace struts). The front facade is asymmetrically organized. Identifying features include an inset porch (which extends across roughly half the facade) with an unusual side-gabled roof treatment. The porch roof is supported by a large artificial stone (concrete block) pier at the north end, and by a kneebrace strut (south end). Other features include rectangular and polygonal bays (north and front walls, respectively). The distinctive bay window on the front facade is five-sided, and has five matching double-hung windows, and a flat, bracketed roofline.

The house's fenestration consists of solitary and paired double-hung sash. There is a contributing two-story, frame/overlap board carriage house with servant's quarters of simple design at the rear of the property.

The house was built in 1905-1906 by the Percy H. Clark Company as a speculative venture. The first owner of the property appears to have been Abraham Greenbaum, according to city directories of the period. Greenbaum, a salesman with the Harris and Frank Clothing Store, was listed in Condon's Blue Book of Wealth (1917), as one of the 8,500 wealthiest property owners in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties.

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12. Leeds-Cadwalader House
2642 Van Buren Place
1903

Contributing

2642 is a two-and-a-half story frame Craftsman house, with a steeply-pitched, moderately-projecting cross-gabled roof, and shingle, overlap board, and permastone sheathing (second floor, side elevations, and front facade, respectively). Nicely-molded kneebrace struts support the roof eaves. The facade is asymmetrically organized. Identifying features include a deeply-inset porch that extends across approximately one-half of the facade. The porch has a dramatically-pitched side-gabled roofline, with a second-floor balcony built into its slope above. Alterations include replacement metal sash at the attic level, and installation of permastone on the right bay of the front facade. Fenestration includes paired and solitary fixed and double-hung (8 over 1 lights) sash, most of which is original (with the exception noted above). The large fixed-sash window on the first floor (right bay), with its large tripartite multi-paned transom, and the paired second-floor windows above, tied together visually by a cornice moulding and a bracketed flower pot shelf, are noteworthy features.

The house was built in 1903. Its first owner/residents were W. R. and Anna F. Leeds. Mr. Leeds was an attorney. From at least as early as 1909 through the early 1920s the owners were George D. and Elizabeth R. Cadwalader. Mr. Cadwalader was the General Manager of the Los Angeles Brick Company. The sons, Morris A. and Theodore R., were partners in the real estate firm of the Cadwalader Brothers (established 1910), and lived with their parents at this address during the early 1910s.

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13. Cortelyou House
2650 Van Buren Place
1906

Contributing

This is a two-and-a-half story frame Craftsman Style house, with a moderately-pitched cross-gabled roof, and overlap board and shingle cladding (only the attic level of the house is shingled). The facade is symmetrically organized, the center bay (which projects forward slightly, and is front-gabled) providing entrance to the house and serving as the principal centralizing feature on the front facade. A shed-roof porch extends across the entire facade. The porch has a concrete dais/steps, with low brick sidewalls. Short, paired, panelled wood piers support the porch roof from atop the sidewalls. Entrance to the house is through a wide slab-type door (with 12 square-shaped lights), with wide, three-quarter length sidelights. The entrance is flanked by large fixed-sash windows. The center bay has a front-gabled orientation, with a fairly steeply-pitched roofline. The roof has a bellcast profile, a plain bargeboard, and a set of three paired kneebrace struts supporting its eaves. Fenestration consists of solitary fixed sash and paired casements. The second-floor windows have unusual sills with tapering ends. There is a brick exterior-end chimney (south wall).

This house was built in 1906 (Building Permit #8705) by the Los Angeles Building Company as a speculative venture. The first owner/residents appear to have been George A. Cortelyou, a real estate developer and broker, and his son, George, Jr. George Cadwalader's son, Morris, who lived next door at 2642, worked for Cortelyou, Sr. as a real estate salesman in 1909 before launching his own firm the following year.

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14. McKinney House
2656 Van Buren Place
1906

Contributing

This is an exuberantly eclectic two-and-a-half story frame Craftsman house, with a widely-projecting, cross-gabled (kneebrace strut-supported) roof, and overlap board, and shingle siding (shingling is used only at the attic level). The design is asymmetrically organized. It is three bays across, with the southernmost bay projecting forward slightly. A shed-roof porch extends across the entire facade. The porch roof is supported by paired wood piers with curved brackets -- a detail that along with the faux half timbering at the attic level (front facade, south bay) suggests Tudor Revival design sources. The flared treatment accorded the roofline of the south bay and the low-pitched dormer roof add a further picturesque touch to the overall design. Fenestration consists largely of solitary fixed and double-hung sash (some with metal security bars). There is a brick exterior end chimney on the south wall. An intrusive concrete block-and-metal security fence encloses the front yard. There is also a non-contributing 1940s era two-story frame/stucco gable-roofed garage apartment at the rear of the property (this apartment fronts 27th Street).

The house was built in 1906 by the Los Angeles Building Company as a speculative venture.

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Percy Clark (1860-1925) came to Los Angeles in 1890. Between 1892 and 1898 he served as manager of the lumberyards of the Stimson Mill Company. He then launched his own real estate and investment firm in 1898. His previous association with Stimson probably paved the way for a partnership in the development of Van Buren Place in 1903 and other possible collaborative ventures. Clark's distinguished career as a real estate and investment broker, as well as his civic involvements, are chronicled in an impressive number of publications, including The Press Reference Library: Notables of the Southwest (1912); Who's Who in the Pacific Southwest (1913); and Men of California, (1925-1926). Clark's business activities extended to Central as well as Southern California. A biographer described him as one of the busiest brokers in Southern California real estate -- handling more than 100,000 acres of farm and pastureland (as of 1912). Clark also played a significant role in the subdivision and development of Beverly Hills. Those contributions are noted in Eli Benedict's History of Beverly Hills. Percy Clark served as Director of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce (1911-1912) and as vice-president of that organization (1912). He lobbied vigorously for the improvement of Southern California streets and highways. In his capacity as Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce Committee on Boulevards, Parks, and Roads, and as Director of the Automobile Club of Southern California, Clark had a number of his recommendations acted upon by the City and County of Los Angeles. Clark lived at 2639 Van Buren Place (Site #4) between 1904 and 1911 in a home built by his construction/real estate firm. This association of Clark, as a resident, with the subdivision he largely developed strongly contributes to the historical significance of the district, as Clark was at the high point of his distinguished professional career during the years he resided on Van Buren Place.

The architecture of this district cogently reflects the local design conventions for upper middle-class housing during the period between 1903 and 1910 -- a building approach characterized by picturesque massing, sweeping, steeply-pitched, widely-overhanging rooflines, and frame construction, with the combined use of shingles with overlap board for exterior sheathing. These late Victorian traits, found in both the Shingle Style and Craftsman design then received an eclectic overlay of decorative elements meant to evoke picturesque associations with the Swiss chalet, English/Tudor Revival cottages, and Asian temple design -- half timbering, open trusswork at gable peaks, kneebrace struts, bracketed heavy-timber porch posts, bellcast or flared roof treatments. Only Van Buren Place and a small number of other streets within the Adams-Normandie neighborhood, including the 2600 block of Kenmore Avenue, and the 2600-2700 blocks of South Normandie Avenue have retained such fine intact groupings of this architectural type in the West Adams section of Los Angeles (Photos #20 and 21) -- the majority of the adjoining streets in this neighborhood have been largely denatured by inappropriate alterations, demolitions, and intrusive new construction.

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The zoning of the area for multi-family development where single-family residential uses exist provided absentee landlords an incentive to demolish homes like those on Van Buren Place and on other streets within the Adams-Normandie neighborhood. Rehab funds provided by the Community Redeveloped Agency were also used for a time to stucco wood-sided houses and for other inappropriate improvements. The design approaches reflected in the houses on Van Buren Place appear to have gone out of fashion by the time of World War I locally, and were supplanted by much more abundant examples of the American Colonial and Italian Renaissance Revival Styles starting in the mid-1910s, and by the Spanish eclectic cottage and other period revival cottages during the 1920s.

In summary, the Van Buren Place Historic District is a noteworthy intact enclave of single family residences in a largely denatured neighborhood that strongly reflects local design conventions for large homes during the period between 1903 and 1910, and the life styles of their upper middle-class inhabitants. The prominent developer of the district was a major figure in the development history of Los Angeles.

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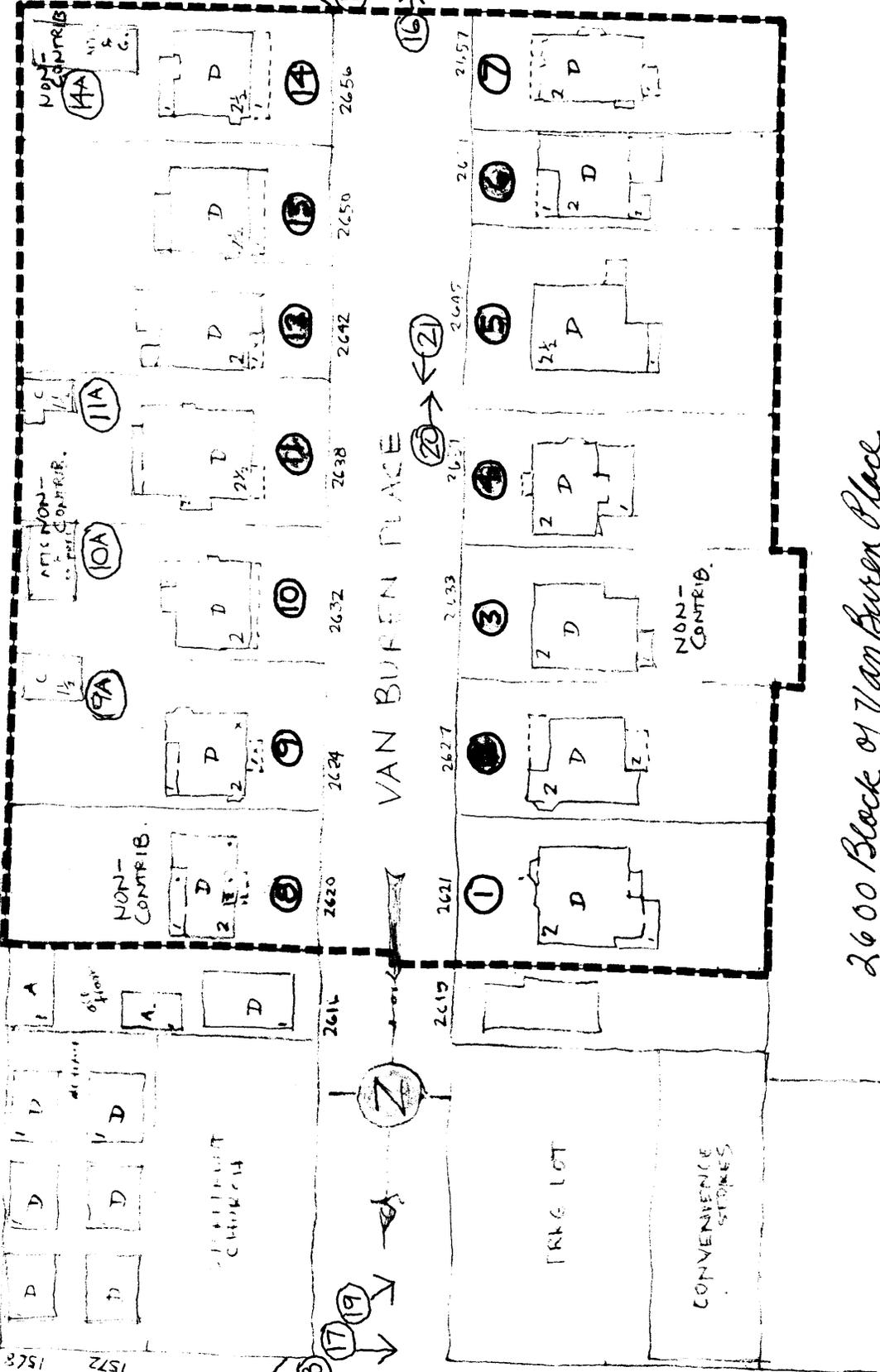
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OHP

DISTRICT BOUNDARIES INDICATED BY →

1 INCH = 50'

VAN BUREN PLACE HISTORIC DISTRICT LOS ANGELES, CA



*2600 Block of Van Buren Place
 Los Angeles, CA 90007
 Los Angeles County*

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