National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use	only				
received	FEB	1	ÿ	51 - 5 1 - 5 - 5	3
date enter	j be	M.		4	TRF.

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

4 Nama

I. Nall					
historic Ramo	na Street Arc	nitectural	District		
and/or common	Ramona Stre	et			
2. Loca	ation				
street & number	, 518 to 581 F	Ramona & 24	7 & 255 to 267	Hamilton N/	A not for publication
city, town	Palo Alto		N <u>/A</u> vicinity of		
state Cali	fornia	code 06	county	Santa Clara	code 085
3. Clas	sificatio	n			
Category _X_ district building(s) structure site object	Ownership public private both Public Acquisi in process being consi N/A	tion Act	itus _ occupied _ unoccupied _ work in progress cessible _ yes: restricted _ yes: unrestricted _ no	Present Use agriculture X commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park private residence religious scientific transportation other:
	continuation s				
city, town			vicinity of	state	
5. Loca	ation of	Legal I	Descripti	on	
courthouse, regi	istry of deeds, etc.	Santa Clara	a County Recor	ders Office	
street & number	70.11.1.1.1		-		
city, town	San Jose			state	California 95110
6. Rep	resentat	ion in	Existing	Surveys	
title see c	continuation s	heet	has this pr	operty been determined el	lgible? yes no
date				federal sta	te county local
depository for su	urvey records				
city, town				state	

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check
excellent	deteriorated	unaltered	_x ori
X_good	ruins	X_ altered	mo
fair	unexposed		

Check one ____ original site

moved date ___

N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Ramona Street Architectural District is located just south of the main downtown commercial street, University Avenue. The buildings are all in good to excellent condition. The 1920s Period Revival buildings draw heavily on Hispanic imagery and complement one another and together impart a unique character to the street. The syncopated rhythm of the streetscape is achieved by repetitive motifs of rooflines, balconies, arches, and recesses. The eight buildings form a cohesive area of special architectural character, planned and developed in the period 1924-1938; subsequent alterations are minimal.

The buildings' heights range from one to four stories and are of the Monterey Colonial and Spanish Colonial Revival style, except the Cardinal Hotel, which has Classic elements. All the buildings, except the hotel, are characterized by stucco walls in muted colors and Spanish tile roofs of yarying heights. Arches, balconies, wrought iron, and decorative glazed tiles are used throughout the district. Craftsman style woodworking details are present in both exteriors and interiors of several buildings in such elements as staircases and hand-adzed beamwork.

Building plans were executed by designer Pedro de Lemos and architects Birge Clark and William H. Weeks. While many of the buildings were designed for an owner's specific use (i.e., dress shop, savings and loan, housewares, professional offices, hotel), some were commissioned by the Palo Alto Improvement Company.

The block is well recognized, and the two contributions of de Lemos are typically cited. <u>A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California</u> (Revised 1976) by David Gebhardt et al. contains a separate entry for this block in p. 155 referring to this area as "A fine bit of commercial stage setting in the then-approved Spanish Colonial Revival Style . . . impressive for Northern California."

This application comes at a time when the City of Palo Alto is preparing both a new zoning ordinance for this downtown area, which will limit new growth and pressure property owners to maximize the allowable floor area ratio, and a seismic ordinance which could sunset non-conforming buildings. State and, eventually, national listings will aid preservation efforts.

NOTE: The buildings on the even-numbered side of Ramona Street will be discussed first. All buildings in the district are classified as contributing structures.

518-522 Ramona Street

This commercial structure was designed in 1925 by Pedro de Lemos and was built by Damant and Son, Contractors. The entire first floor housed an exclusive womens' clothing shop, the Gotham Shop.

8. Significance



Specific dates Between 1924 & 1938 Builder/ArchitectSee Statement of Significance below.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Summary

The significance of the Ramona Street Architectural District is that it represents an architecturally unified area of buildings which were built during a particular period (1924-1938). The buildings in the district remain largely unaltered, and the architectural district contains no intrusions. The total absence of intrusions in a district characterized by a single predominant architectural style makes this area quite unique. Not only are the individual structures attractive in their own right, their relationship with one another establishes the character of the street. The architecture of this street is reminiscent of an architecturally untutored Spanish village.

Context for Evaluation

Excellent examples of Monterey Colonial, Spanish Colonial Revival, and to a lesser extent, Craftsman Style architecture, line both sides of the tree-lined street. Although contemporary, Cardinal Hotel with its modified Neo-Classical elements is the one exception in the district that does not fall neatly into these other two categories. Nonetheless, the building is included in the district for two reasons. First, the structure is an important urban design element as it balances the four-story Medico-Dental building on the opposite corner. Second, the Cardinal Hotel, which is finished with many of the materials identical to those of the other buildings in the district, complements these other structures and reinforces the visual character of the street. These taller structures at the corner of Ramona Street and Hamilton Avenue complete the form of the street which is otherwise composed of one- to three-story structures.

A simple palette of materials, carefully executed details, comfortable massing, and inviting plans with interior courts of the various buildings give this area its friendly human-scale quality. Thick stucco walls with recessed openings, carved wood, wrought iron, ceramic tile, and tile roofing are composed in a variety of forms which gives diversity to this visually unified area. The relatively few alterations done to the buildings over the years have been sensitively handled and in no way detract from their original character.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10.	Geograp	hical Data			
Quadran	e of nominated propert ngle name Palo Al ferences	to <u>1/5 acres</u>		Quadrangle	scale 1:2400
A 1.0 Zone		4 11 4 4 3 6 0 Northing	B 1 Zon	Easting	l l l l
C E G			▫∟⊥ ₣└⊥⊥ ∺└⊥⊥		
of Ramo northwe It is	ona Street betwe est and southwes located on Asses	en University Avenu t corners of the in sor's Parcel No.s	ue and Hamil ntersection 120-26-(69,7	ton Avenue and the of Ramona Street a 0,71,72,67,66,65,7 architectural are	strict includes portion buildings at the and Hamilton Avenue. 73). Boundaries are eas and are shown on the tached site plan.
state	N/A	code N/A	county N/		code N/A
state	N/A	code N/A	county N/	Ά	code N/A
	number C/o Plann	Alto Historic Reso ing Dept/250 Hamilt		telephone (415) 329-	(c/o Planning -2441 Department) -0561
12.	State His	storic Prese	ervation	Officer Ce	rtification
As the d	national	ric Preservation Officer fo	L local	istoric Preservation Act o	of 1966 (Public Law 89-
accordin		roperty for inclusion in the procedures set forth by the ficer signature	National Park		
title S	State Historic P	reservation Office	r /	date 2	10186
	IPS use only lereby certify that this	property is included in the	Phillippid Ridgin		EUPS.
Koop	er of the National Re st:	da n			
-	of Registration				

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet #1

Item number 4 Owner of PropertyPage 1

RAMONA STREET ARCHITECTURAL DISTRICT PROPERTY OWNERS

Street Address	Assessor's Parcel Number	Property Owner
520 Ramona	120-26-069	de Lemos Properties P.O. Box 555 Palo Alto, CA 94302
528 Ramona	120-26-070	Frank Crist and Eugenie M. Trustee P.O. Box 90 550 Hamilton Avenue Palo Alto, CA 94301
535 Ramona	120-26-071	de Lemos Properties P.O. Box 555 Palo Alto, CA 94302
536 Ramona	120-26-067	Helwig, Norman C. and Jeanine C. 200 Lyell Street Los Altos, CA 94022
540 Ramona	120-26-072	Dukes, Darrel E. and Angelin M. et al. Fisher, Joseph and Armeda Darrel E. Dukes 1156 N. 45th Street San Jose, CA 95112
541 Ramona	120-26-066	Alhouse Realty 2450 El Camino Real Palo Alto, CA 94306
255 Hamilton	120-26-065	Alhouse Realty 2450 El Camino Real Palo Alto, CA 94306
231 Hamilton	120-26-073	Bjarne Dahl 1363 Arbor Los Altos, CA 94022

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet #2	ltem number 6 - Representati	on Page 1
Boghosian, Paula; Historical and Architect Resources of City of Palo Alto.	cural	No
February, 1979 and revised in 1982		Local
City of Palo Alto Main Library Palo Alto, California		
Santa Clara County Heritage Resources Invent	cory	No
1979		County
City of Palo Alto Main Library Palo Alto, California		
Historic American Buildings Survey		No
1980		Federal
National Park Service, Department of the Int Washington, D. C.	cerior	

1

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet #3

Item number 7 Description

Page

727 (YYS)

The building is an irregularly massed one- to three-story stucco clad "L" shaped complex in an eclectic Spanish Colonial Revival style. It was one of the first Bay Area buildings to integrate natural surroundings into its design with its central courtyard built around a large oak tree. The exterior incorporated architectural and decorative spoilia salvaged from various sources, including materials from the 1906 earthquake-damaged Stanford University buildings.

At the front of the building was a one-story section with a stone chimney and Spanish tiled hipped roof. At the south side of this front section was an arch-covered entry (later removed) courtyard. The entry court led to an outside stone staircase with wrought iron railing that terminated at a second floor landing on the three-story rear section. One-half of the first and second floors at this rear section projected forward and was capped by a tiled shed roof.

The third floor of this rear section sits under the Spanish tiled gable roof. Three strongly over-scaled dormers and a stucco-clad tapered chimney pierced the roof. Randomly placed fenestration of varying proportions heightened visual interest on the north alley facade.

Over the years, there have been various remodelings. Currently, the building is undergoing an extensive remodeling prompted by the removal of the diseased oak tree and the necessity of seismic upgrading. The one-story front section will return to its original facade composition with the entry door positioned in the center and the window returned to the south facade. The central courtyard will be filled in with a two-story Spanish tiled hipped roof addition, which will incorporate windows, doors, and wrought iron railings from the second floor facade of the rear section. The building has been continuously owned by descendants of the de Lemos family, and it is their intention to preserve the spirit of the original design in execution of the current remodeling.

526-530 Ramona Street

This two-story Monterey Colonial Building was designed in 1926 by architect Birge Clark as an expansion of the Gotham Shop. Wells Goodenough was the builder for Mr. Philip M. Lansdale, a banker, and Mr. Edward C. Thoits, councilman for forty years. The entrances of the new and old sections of the Gotham Shop shared a common courtyard. Large irregularly shaped stone pavers help to unify the entrances. The first floor facade consists of three large arched bays. At the second level, five pairs of French doors open to the wooden gallery which extends across the entire facade. Over the years, the interior alterations have included: second floor deck (1971), fireplace restoration (1972), enclosed balcony (1973), and a glass enclosure (1981).

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet #4

Item number 7 Description

Page 2

532-536 Ramona Street

This one- and two-story office/commercial building was built by Wells Goodenough in 1926 for the Palo Alto Improvement Company. It was designed by architect Birge Clark specifically to further establish the visual character of the street. The building contains three narrow shops which are entered through an arcade with two Gothic arches and one corbeled arch. The entrances are unified by irregular shaped concrete pavers which extend the full length of the arcade and continue to the next building at the south side. The two-story roofline steps down to one story, which reduces the bulk of the building and relates it to the neighboring south structure. Two finely detailed wrought iron balconies project out from the second story and are accessed by French doors. Mezzanines are reached by heavy planked stairways with banisters of wide, flat boards pierced by band-saw open work. Both the interiors and exteriors of the building are remarkably unchanged.

538-542 Ramona Street

This one- and two-story galleried retail/office structure was also designed by Birge Clark in 1926 and built by Wells Goodenough. The exterior organization was intended to have one structure appear as two, a scaled device typical of this district. The street level facade of the one-story section has a corbeled arch under which are two large tiled roof display cases which precede the recessed showcase window and entrance. The interior of the one-story section was designed for a specific tenant, a men's clothing store, Phelps-Turkel. The rough plaster walls are accented by a peaked beamed ceiling and numerous large wrought iron lighting fixtures. The rear half of the store is defined by a raised floor and arched entry with a brick and stucco fireplace as the focal point. This part of the store was the suit area, which the architect described as having a tweedy country club atmosphere with lounge chairs, a bowl of tobacco, and relatively little visible merchandise. The two-story section has two round arches on the street level facade and a recessed balcony trimmed with hand-adzed posts and beams at the second level. The interiors and exteriors remain substantially unchanged in both sections of the building.



National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet #5

Item number 7 Description

Page 3

Sele entered

231-247 Hamilton (556 Ramona Street)

The three-story Cardinal Hotel was designed by William H. Weeks in 1924 for the Palo Alto Improvement Company as part of its effort to bring commercial development to Hamilton Avenue. Birge Clark was the supervising architect. This stucco-clad three-story building is more formal and massive in appearance than the other district buildings because of its uniform roofline, regular fenestration, and classic elements.

The one-and-a-half ground floor elevation has entrances on Hamilton and Ramona Streets which are framed by decorative, terra-cotta marquees, pilasters, and spiraled columns with Corinthian capitals. Showcase windows on both streets are terminated by clerestorys delineated by wood spindles and narrow stained glass windows. These showcase windows have been partially altered by various tenants. Fenestration on the second and third floors is partially framed by decorative terra-cotta borders. Squares of terra-cotta with various motifs are inserted between windows at the second and third levels. Two wrought iron balconies define the base of second-level windows on Hamilton Street. The flat roof is terminated by Spanish tiles and an egg and dart cornice. Both stucco and terra-cotta on the top two floors have been painted a uniform cream color which alters the original palette.

Today, the original dining room is an antique store in which most of the original wall and ceiling stenciling is well preserved, as well as the Art Deco chandeliers and sconces. The lobby has seen the addition of a mezzanine staircase but still contains some of the early pieces of furniture, glazed tile floor, and all the large wrought iron sconces and torchieres. Lobby architectural pieces that remain are: columns, boxed beams, fireplace with massive mantel, and skylight. The original stenciling of columns and beams has been painted over, as has the gold leaf wall treatment.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet #6

Item number 7 Description

Page 4

255-267 Hamilton Avenue (551-581 Ramona)

The Medico-Dental building was designed by Birge Clark and built by Wells Goodenough in 1927 for the Palo Alto Improvement Company. In 1929, the City's first auto garage was constructed in the basement. The northern portion of the Hamilton Avenue frontage housed the United States Post Office until 1933.

This four-story stucco-faced building has intersecting Spanish tile hipped roofs. On both Hamilton and Ramona Streets, the ground level facades are composed of a series of arched openings. The second and third floors have evenly spaced rectangle casement windows with nearly continuous wrought iron balconies. The dominant motif at the fourth floor is a series of colonades, each having a unique column and capital treatment. A central recessed ten-foot-wide vertical slot on the Hamilton Street facade features an open arched entrance to an elevator and stair lobby which serves the upper floors. This entry is accented at the entire second floor by three full-story-high semi-circular birdcage-shaped wrought iron grills. Decorative glazed tile is used both in this entry as well as wainscotting at some ground level arches.

Minor alterations have only occurred to street-level facades and interiors to accommodate various tenants. The integrity of the original architectural design has not been compromised.

541-545 Ramona Street

This one- and two-story stucco-clad building was designed by Birge Clark in 1929 and built by Wells Goodenough. The building was designed for specific tenants, the Home Savings and Loan, and the Homeware Store (which featured speciality housewares).

The entire facade of the one-story building consists of a rounded arch whose upper portion is filled with an elaborate wrought iron grill. The building's facade has heavy Craftsman-type timbering at the second level. Significant alterations on the ground floor facade include covering of decorative glazed tiles and reducing the size of one showcase window.



National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet #7

Item number 7 Description

Page 5

535-537 Ramona Street

This two-story commercial/office building, designed and built in 1938 by Pedro de Lemos, echoes the eclectic Spanish Colonial Revival style of his earlier building across the street at 520 Ramona. The building is axial both in plan and elevation. The central three-story section is flanked by two-story sections. The central bay's open arched entrance is capped by a wrought iron balcony with a bracketed tile roof which leads to a large interior open courtyard with a continuous gallery at the second floor.

Colorful handmade tiles, quarry tile, decorative paving that includes textural uses of pebbles set in patterns, and delicate wrought iron work adds to the charm of the complex. Small fountains, niches, stair risers, window seats, and mailboxes are consistent in this decorative treatment. Recent (1984) modifications for handicapped access to the central patio area were thoughtfully made and do not spoil the building's integrity. Over the years, there have been minor interior and exterior changes to meet the needs of various tenants.

The property, located at 535-537 Ramona Street, known as the Courtyard Building, within the proposed architectural district was built in 1938. Nonetheless, it has been included in the district application as a building of exceptional importance, integral to the district. Its inclusion within the district is vital to its cohesion and completeness.

The designer, Pedro de Lemos, built the first structure within the district in 1926 at 518-520 Ramona Street and set the design precedent for the later buildings. This last building reaffirms this vision and contributes significantly to the architectural character of the district. It is one of the best buildings from a unique designer, whose style and philosophy made considerable impact within the Bay Area. The building is currently included in the Santa Clara County Heritage Resource Inventory and thus is included in the California Inventory of Historic Resources.



National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet #8

Item number 8 Significance

Page]

The regionally prominent designer Pedro de Lemos and architects Birge M. Clark and William H. Weeks designed the structures. Some of de Lemos' more notable works outside this district include the Allied Arts Guild in Menlo Park and his home in Palo Alto, "Waverly Oaks". Clark's more significant buildings of the era include the Dunker residence, the United States Post Office on Hamilton Avenue, and the Lou Henry Hoover house at Stanford (all listed on the National Register), the Palo Alto Community Center, the Kathleen Norris residence, and the Lucie Stern house. Weeks' architectural realizations are more common in Monterey County, although he designed several buildings in the Bay Area. The Masonic Hall on University Avenue in Palo Alto is one of his other local works. He was the architect of the Milias Hotel in Gilroy and, on the basis of that structure, presumably was commissioned to design the Cardinal Hotel.

The development of Ramona Street was an early successful attempt to expand laterally the central commercial district. De Lemos, a craftsman, graphic artist, and curator of the Stanford Museum, had been concerned with the larger scale, somewhat impersonal linear development along University Avenue. He felt that an informal architecture full of whimsy and integrated with nature was indeed compatible with commercial businesses. He, his family, and friends personally crafted many of his The apparent smaller scale buildings designed by de Lemos (and later, desians. Clark) adopted the then popular Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style. The four-story Medico-Dental building at the corner of Ramona Street and Hamilton Avenue reflects Clark's sensitivity to the human scale character of the street. The street level tenant spaces of this structure which, incidentally, was Palo Alto's first building to have below-grade parking, contain Gothic elliptical and corbeled arches all on the same facade. The attempt to grant a tenant his own identity through stylized differences was indeed successful and adds to the small scale ambience of this architectural district.

The district has been identified as architecturally significant in the local historical and architectural survey; it has also been adopted by the City of Palo Alto as a landmark district. The 500 Block of Ramona Street has been identified by David Gebhardt, et al. in <u>A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern</u> <u>California</u> and has been recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey.



National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number 9 Bibliography

Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AAUW. Exploring Palo Alto's Past. 1977.

Boghosian, Paula. Historical and Architectural Resources of the City of Palo Alto. February 1979. Rev. 1982.

Clark, Birge. Commercial Buildings in Palo Alto Designed by the Office of Birge M. Clark. 1976.

Clark, Birge. Memoirs: An Architect Grows Up in Palo Alto. 1983.

Historic American Buildings Survey. 1980. (HABS No. CA-2067.)

Miller, Guy C. Palo Alto Community Book. Palo Alto, CA., A. H. Cawson, 1952.

Palo Alto Times. 02/11/22, 11/02/22, 09/12/25, 10/15/25, 09/29/26, 02/10/34, 03/18/38, 10/28/52, 12/06/54.

Santa Clara County. Heritage Resource Inventory. San Jose, CA., June 1979.

Gebhardt, David, et al., A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California. Santa Barbara and Salt Lake City, 1973.

G-3439H

