United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



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

1. Nan	ne			
historic LO	S ANGELES PACIFIC C	OMPANY IVY PARK SUBS	TATION	<u> </u>
and/or common	Pacific Electric	Railway Company Cul	ver Substation	
2. Loc	ation			
street & numbe	OOJE Hamina Da	3/uD , ulevard		not for publication
city, town	Los Angeles	vicinity of	congressional district	23
state	California co	de <sup>06</sup> county	Los Angeles	<b>code</b> 037
3. Clas	ssification			
Category district _XX building(s) structure site object	Ownership  XX public private both Public Acquisition in process being considered	Status occupied unoccupied work in progress Accessible yes: restricted yes: unrestricted no	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park private residence religious scientific transportation x other: vacant
4. Ow	ner of Prope	erty		
name City	of Los Angeles (At	tention: Board of I	Public Works)	
street & numbe	200 North Spr	ring Street	·	
city, town	Los Angeles	vicinity of	state	CA 90012
5. Loc	ation of Leg	al Descripti	on	
courthouse, reg	gistry of deeds, etc. $oxdot$	os Angeles County <sup>H</sup> a	ll of Records	
street & numbe	r 227 North Broad	lway		
city, town	Los Angeles		state	CA 90012
6. Rep	resentation	in Existing	Surveys	
title Hist	toric-Cultural Monur	ments of the City of	Jos Angeles	gible? yes n
	ruary 1, 1978			county <u>x</u> loca
depository for s	survey records Cultura	l Heritage Board of		
	Los Angeles		state	CA

T. Dest	ription			
Condition excellent good fair	deteriorated ruins unexposed	Check one unaltered _X_ altered	Check one _X_ original site moved date	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Ivy Park Substation is located at the former junction of two major interurban electric railway lines in the western part of the city of Los Angeles. It stands on a roughly triangular plot of land formed by the intersection of Venice and Culver Boulevards and the northeastern boundary of Media Park. The building was constructed in 1907 as a power substation to house equipment for converting electricity from high voltage alternating current to 600-volt direct current for distribution by feeder and trolley wire to elect**ric** railway cars and locomotives. It is a free-standing building, one story in height and rectangular in plan, built in the Mission Revival style which was popular in California at that time. The building is constructed of brick faced with a buff-colored stucco. The roof is a medium gable with a monitor section containing skylights which runs five-sevenths of the length of the roof; the roof terminates at the scalloped parapets, or "espadañas", of the Mission Revival at the northeast and southwest ends. The ends of the building are virtually identical; the symmetrical design centers upon a large central round-arched doorway flanked by two tall narrow windows on either side with round-arched heads. A string course begins at the spring of the arch of the central doorway, and encircles the building. A set of three arched ventilator openings containing louvers appears above the main entrance in the upper portion of the wall. Each end wall is capped by the Mission Revival parapets. The side walls are divided into seven bays separated by piers. Each bay contains a tall, round-arch headed window identical to those at the ends of the building. Iugsills project slightly at the base of each window. While the integrity of exterior design remains unaltered, the building has experienced some deterioration due to lack of maintenance and the destruction of windows by vandalism; windows are boarded at the present time. The electrical equipment was removed from the building about 1954 after the termination of electric railway passenger and freight service.

The substation is the only feature on the otherwise bare lot. A fountain, which was located immediately south of the building (probably used in connection with the transformer cooling system), no longer exists. Originally the parcel, while roughly the same shape as at present, was somewhat more extensive due to the absence of adjoining streets. At that time, the parcel was bounded by the main line rights-of-way of the Los Angeles Pacific's Palms and Del Rey divisions, which became the Pacific Electric Railway's Venice Short Line and Redondo Beach via Playa del Rey Line. In about 1931 or 1932, the eastbound roadway of Venice Boulevard was opened across the parcel in question, passing to the southeast of the substation. During 1980, however, Venice Boulevard was reconstructed and widened, occupying the former railway right-of-way which formerly separated the two roadways. The eastbound roadway now passes to the northwest of the substation and no longer separates the building from the adjacent park. This change is shown on the attached maps.

### 8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899 XX 1900–	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric agriculture xx architecture art commerce communications	community planning conservation economics education engineering exploration/settlement	landscape architecture law literature military music philosophy politics/government	religion cup science cup sculpture cup social/ humanitarian cup theater xx transportation cup other (specify)
Specific dates	Circa July, 1907	Builder/Architect		

#### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

#### Summary

The Los Angeles Pacific Company Ivy Park Substation (later known as the Pacific Electric Railway Company Culver Substation) is a building that possesses integrity of location, design, materials and workmanship, that made a significant contribution to the history of transportation in the Los Angeles area, and that embodies the distinctive characteristics of Mission Revival styling applied to a utilitarian structure.

### Detailed Statement of Significance and History:

The Substation is believed to be the only remaining major structure built by the Los Angeles Pacific Company, a major predecessor of the Pacific Electric Railway Company (the greatest suburban mass transit system ever to exist in California), to survive with a substantially unaltered exterior. It is one of the least-altered electric railway substation buildings to survive in Southern California. It is also believed to be one of the few Mission Revival style industrial buildings in Los Angeles County to survive with a substantially unaltered exterior.

The building is a good example of the Mission Revival architecture of the early 20th century. In addition to the Ivy Park Substation, two other Los Angeles Pacific substation buildings survive: The Bush Street Substation, at West Venice Boulevard and South Burlington Avenue, and the West Olive Substation, at West Sunset Boulevard and Ellett Place. They are both Mission Revival style structures, but unlike the Ivy Park Substation, they have been at least partially altered. The Ivy Park Substation remains as the best surviving example of its type and period.

The Ivy Park Substation was built by the Los Angeles Pacific in 1907, replacing an earlier smaller structure nearby. Its construction was one of a number of improvements made possible by the acquisition of a 51% interest in the company by Southern Pacific interests from the LAP's founders, M. H. Sherman and E. P. Clark, in early 1906. Following this, the SP invested large sums of money in upgrading the system, including converting it from narrow (42-inch) to standard (56%-inch) gauge and acquiring fifty new multiple-unit passenger cars intended for use in the never-built Vineyard Subway. Prior to this, most of the company's cars weighed some twenty to twenty-five tons. Many of the cars had only two motors, for a total of little more than a hundred horsepower, while some of the rest had four motors. The new 700-class cars weighed some thirty-seven tons and each had four more powerful motors totalling three hundred horsepower. The new Ivy Park Substation thus was essential to supply the electrical power needed for this heavier rolling stock, and continued in importance after the LAP was merged into the Pacific Electric in 1911. The Substation was reported to have contained two thirteen-hundred kilowat motor-generator sets during the PE era.

The Ivy Park Substation served the LAP's Palms Division (known under the PE as the Venice Short Line, and abandoned in 1950), the Redondo Division (known under the PE as the Redondo Beach via Playa del Rey Line, passenger service converted to bus in 1940, freight operations continuing as far as the junction with the Venice-Inglewood Line at Alla), and the Southern Pacific Division (known under the PE as the Santa Monica Air Line). The Substation was last used to furnish current for the Santa Monica Air Line, whose one daily round trip passenger run was discontinued in 1953; at about the same time, the electric locomotives used for freight service on the line were replaced by diesel-electrics, and the Substation was

retired from use as such and all electrical equipment removed.

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FHR-8-300A (11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED FEB 1 9 1981

DATE ENTERED. MAR 2 5 1981

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

6

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

The building is listed in A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles and Southern California, by David Gebhard and Robert Winter, Peregrine Smith, Inc., Salt Lake City, 1977.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

FEB 1 9 1981

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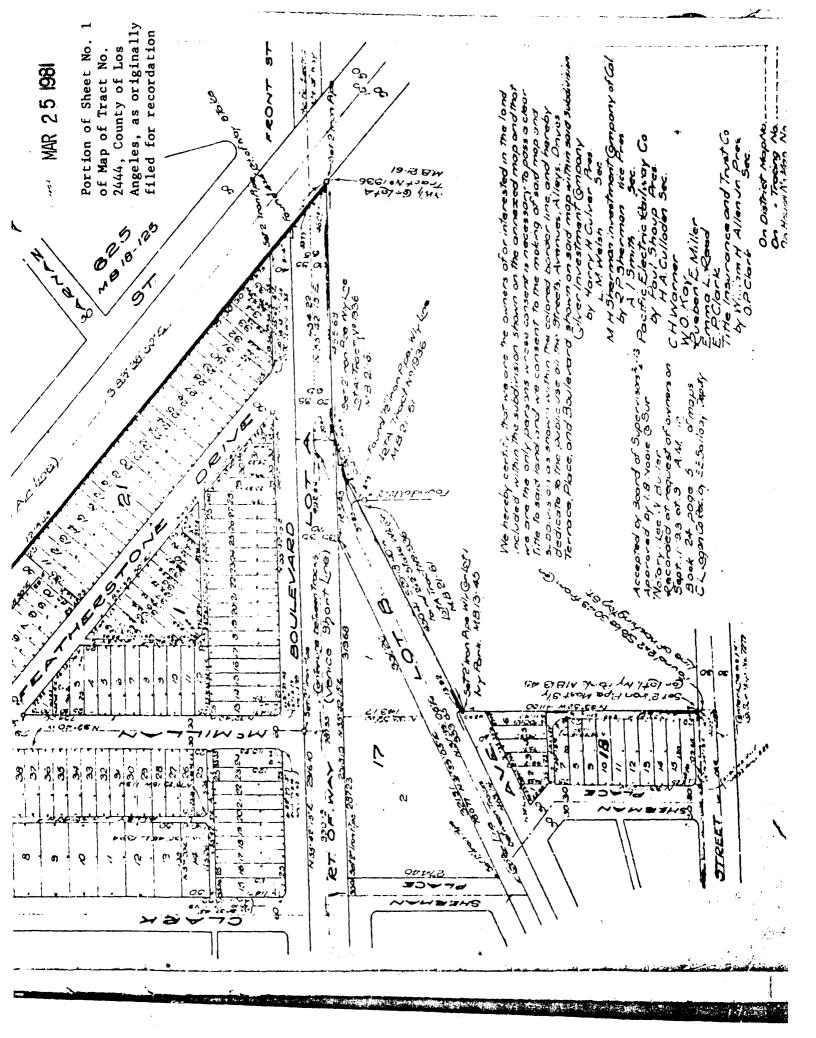
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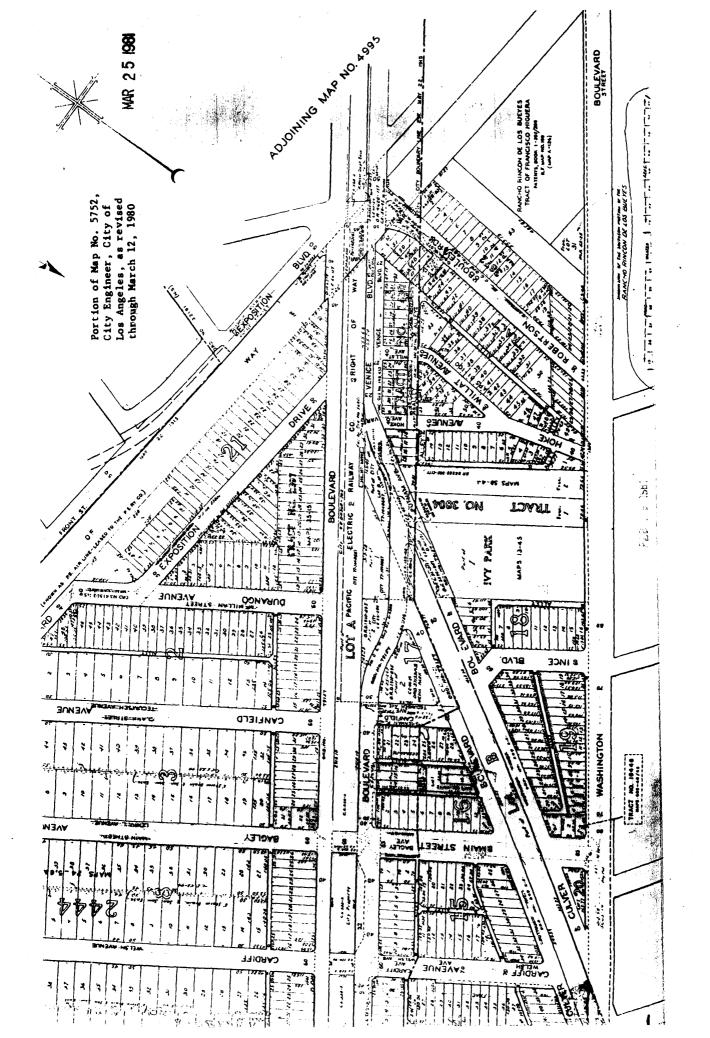
Item 9 - Major Bibliographic References:

Anon. "Interurban Electric Work Around Los Angeles." Street Railway Journal, v. XXX, No. 1: 32 (1907)

Item 10: Geographical Data

the eastern boundary of Media Park, which is the same as the northeast edge of Durango Avenue, extended.





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### itional Register of Historic Places intinuation Sheet

ction 8 Page 2

Los Altos Apartments Los Angeles, California

e Los Altos, like the other buildings in this context, attracted tenants through its elegant riod revival design, high-quality materials and workmanship, spacious apartments, and the tenities offered to residents. A brochure advertising the Los Altos after 1937 described its commodious bedrooms with an abundance of light, air and closet space," a roof solarium, tennis turts, a fine restaurant which was located in the east wing, and a "100-car, land-level garage the wide entrances."

ne apartment-hotel residential arrangement at the Los Altos was similar to that of similar nildings throughout Southern California, and in many other areas of the country. Apartments in nese buildings could be rented by the month or by the week and featured modern architectural anovations, in addition to being equipped to appeal to tenants' desire for luxury. Popular menities in such buildings during the 1920s included parking facilities, gracious lobby spaces, spensive detailing in both the interior and exterior of the building, varied and customized partment plans, and attentive management. Often, maid service was offered, as were full arnishings in rental units.

he concentration of apartment houses in Hancock Park was rivaled only by that in Hollywood. By the 920s, the film industry was involved in an enormous period of growth. The growth of the rest of he city kept pace as well. The demographics of the typical Hollywood apartment-hotel or of djoining residential neighborhoods such as Whitley Heights were likely to include many celebrities r people involved in the movie industry. However, the wealth of Hancock Park residents was more ikely to have come from traditional businesses such as finance, publishing, manufacturing or other ndustries located in the traditional power base of downtown. Therefore, the list of past occupants f the Los Altos is somewhat unusual in Hancock Park, as it includes such Hollywood celebrities as lara Bow, Ava Gardner, and Judy Garland. This presence over the years made the Los Altos a bridge etween Hollywood and the Wilshire corridor.

he most famous inhabitant of the Los Altos was Marion Davies, a popular screen actress and consort o publisher William Randolph Hearst. Davies resided there beginning in 1934. Davies lived in a ,500-square-foot corner apartment on the second floor which was specially redecorated for her. The uite had been formed by combining units 206 and 207 in 1928 for Charles F. Wren, president of the lickwick Corporation. Wren moved out of the building in 1934, which is most likely when the spartment was redecorated for Davies. This suite is currently in poor condition, but retains its sistoric materials and workmanship. The apartment has an elaborate front door with a decorative surround. The entrance foyer is paved in a checkerboard of marble and has a barrel vaulted ceiling of carved and inlaid wood. Several bedrooms, a library, a kitchen with a large pantry, and a dining soom are located off of the foyer. Each bathroom is fully tiled in a different color of California tile, and each bedroom has an elaborate plaster crown molding.

The dining room of the Hearst suite has a highly ornamented, coffered plaster ceiling and wood paneling on the walls. This apartment has long been rumored to be a design of Julia Morgan, the architect of Hearst Castle in San Simeon and many other works, both major and minor, for the Hearst family. However, no documented evidence has been found to support any connection to Morgan.

The owners of the Los Altos went bankrupt during the Depression, at which point the cooperative apartments became a hotel-apartment building. The building was purchased by Andrew C. Weisburg of Chicago in 1937. Currently the Los Altos is used as rental apartments, after a period of use as offices and apartments. Some of the units have been set aside as affordable housing, while the remainder are market rate.

#### The Spanish Colonial Revival Style

The Los Altos is a particularly fine example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The Spanish Colonial Revival was part of an attempt to define a regional architecture which would be appropriate to the climate, landscape, and cultural history of Southern California. The style was also one of many exotic revivals made popular in Los Angeles by the phenomenon of the film

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### **National Register of Historic Places**Continuation Sheet

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Los Altos Apartments Los Angeles, California

industry. It was the Spanish Colonial Revival, however (as opposed to English Tudor, Islamic, Georgian, or other such revival styles), that had at least some basis in the American fashioning of the region through history and literature.

The roots of the Spanish Colonial Revival style can be traced to an interest in the California missions which began during the land boom of the 1880s. While this surge in economic growth brought about prosperity for many, it also resulted in a radical change in the California landscape and a more urbanized way of life. The belief that early Californians had a more relaxed existence brought about a renewed interest in history and local historical architecture. This misconception was put forth by a variety of sources including local boosters and entrepreneurs who touted California's exoticism to tourists, many of whom became permanent residents. It was in the writings of Helen Hunt Jackson that the architecture of the missions and haciendas, and the way of life they represented to Americans, were permanently enshrined. Her novel Ramona, published in 1884, was a romanticized version of life in Southern California during the Mexican period, set in rambling adobe homes surrounded by verandas and garden walks. Writer Charles Fletcher Lummis, who had also adopted Los Angeles as his home, founded the Landmarks Club of Southern California in 1895 for the purpose of preserving the state's missions. In his attempts to help Los Angeles craft an image of itself in the emerging American period of settlement and urbanization, Lummis relied heavily on the Spanish and Mexican periods for an historical base on which to build the emerging American culture (n) 3outhern California.

The Spanish Colonial Revival style became the dominant architectural mode in Southern California during the 1920s. By this time, the style contained a greater element of fantasy and was less of a scholarly examination of what the buildings of the Spanish colonists had looked like. The buildings were often composed of details and elements drawn directly from the buildings of Spain and other countries of the Mediterranean (in this case, Italy), more often than from the actual Spanish Colonial buildings remaining in the region such as the simple adobes or the California missions. At the Los Altos these character-defining features of the style include the exterior courtyards, tiled roofs, Churrigueresque (Spanish Baroque) ornamentation, slightly rustic exterior plaster finish, wrought iron details, pierced stucco screens, fountains, and decorative glazed tile (the last three being Islamic elements seen in Spanish architecture).

The public spaces of the Los Altos are an elegant Spanish Colonial Revival stage set on which the lives of its residents were to play out. The tone of the building - luxurious details, appeal to the senses, and grand public spaces - is set by the entry sequence. One first enters a deep courtyard with a fountain, lush plantings, and stone paths. This environment is much cooler, quieter, and softer than the busy streetscape of Wilshire Boulevard, to which it provides an immediate antidote as one approaches the front door. For those within the apartments, the courtyard provides romantic vistas and magnifies the sound of splashing water in the fountain below. Beyond the glass and wood double doors, the large lobby has a high, beamed ceiling supported by piers with plaster relief decoration, and features a flight of stairs descending to the main level, highlighted by an ornamental wrought iron balustrade and framed by an arcade. Such large, elaborate public spaces served two purposes: the lobby provided a public space where the residents could receive and entertain guests in a grand atmosphere. The lobby and courtyard also set an elegant tone which increases the prestige of the building.

While there are countless Spanish Colonial Revival style domestic buildings throughout Southern California, there are few of the size and scale of the Los Altos. The U-shaped, multistory urban apartment building is also not unusual in this district of Los Angeles along Wilshire Boulevard. But the Los Altos is the only one in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The character-defining features of the exterior include the stucco finish, red clay barrel tile roof, ironwork balconies, entrance courtyard, and arched entryways. A number of the windows are covered by perforated stucco screens. The massing and towered roof line of the building are excellent examples of the style. Original fenestration is in place. Both interior and exterior decorative plaster detailing are especially fine examples of the art (though the most elaborate examples, in the Hearst Suite, are deteriorated).

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Los Altos Apartments Los Angeles, California

#### Edward B. Rust, Architect of the Los Altos

E. B. Rust served as secretary of Ye Planry Building Company in Los Angeles before starting his own architectural firm in 1913. Like that of many architects of the period, Rust's early work was mostly single family residences and bungalows, much of it in the Craftsman style. He then designed a series of hotel and apartment buildings for Mayo in Los Angeles from 1922-1927 including: 975 Ingraham Street, 633 Bixel Street, 521 Union Drive, 1051-65 Vine Street, 1901-15 W. 6th Street, 4121 Wilshire Boulevard (the Los Altos), and 5272 Hollywood Boulevard. From 1924-1926, Rust designed five, four-story apartment buildings along both sides of the 700 block of Mariposa Avenue.

Other hotel-apartments in the Hollywood and Mid-Wilshire areas include three, five-story buildings, the Fleur de Lis apartments at 1825 Whitley Avenue, William Penn Hotel at 2208 W. 8th Street, and an apartment building at 3198 W. 7th Street. Although Rust designed many apartments and hotels in Los Angeles, the Los Altos remains the largest, most elaborate, and most intact example of his work.

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 10

Page 1

Los Altos Apartments Los Angeles, California

**SECTION 10** 

### **VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The property is bounded by Wilshire Boulevard in the north, South Bronson Avenue in the west, and the south wall of the parking garage in the south. The northern part of the east boundary runs along the west wall of the neighboring building. The southern part of the east boundary runs along the east wall of the parking garage.

The property was historically described as Lots 1, 2 and 3 of Henry J. Brown's Wilshire Terrace Tract, which includes both historic buildings on the property: the apartment building and the garage.

### **VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

These are the historic and current boundaries of the property.

4PS FORM 10-900-a Aug. 1986) UNB NO. 1024-00108

### Jnited States Department of the Interior Vational Park Service

### **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section Additional Documentation

Page 1

Los Altos Apartments Los Angeles, California

#### **PHOTOGRAPHS**

Name: Los Altos Apartments

Location: 4121 Wilshire Boulevard

Los Angeles

Los Angeles County, California

Photographer: Jennifer Minasian, Historic Resources Group

Date of Photographs: September, 1998

Location of Negatives: Historic Resources Group

1728 Whitley Avenue Los Angeles CA 90028

- 1. View northwest of setting
- 2. View north, Wilshire Boulevard facade
- 3. West facade, view east
- 4. West tower and roof sign
- 5. Detail of wrought iron window grille and exterior stucco texture, west facade
- 6. View southeast of north (rear) facade
- 7. Detail of sidewalk entrance gateway
- 8. View south of entrance courtyard from above
- 9. View south of entrance courtyard from entrance vestibule
- 10. Entrance courtyard, view northeast
- 11. Courtyard, detail of balconets, pierced stucco screens, and wrought iron grilles
- 12. Rear courtyard, view northeast
- 13. Garage, second contributing structure. View northeast from S. Bronson Avenue
- 14. Interior of garage
- 15. Lobby, general view from main entrance
- 16. Lobby, view of main entrance
- 17. Orchestra and bellboy balconies on east elevation of lobby
- 18. Staircase on west elevation of lobby
- 19. Staircase adjacent to west side of lobby
- 20. Windows and coved ceiling in southwest corner living room
- 21. Typical bay window in west facade
- 22. Detail of window; typical rope molding found throughout building; exterior awning
- 23. Typical restored closet doors with original hardware, present in most units
- 24. Example of a unique fireplace
- 25. Decorative, painted ceiling beams
- 26. Dressing area, original built-in cabinets

### United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Additional Documentation Page 2

Los Altos Apartments Los Angeles, California

### PHOTOGRAPHS, continued

- 27. Original kitchen
- 28. Bathroom with original tile and fixtures
- 29. William Randolph Hearst Suite: entrance hall
- 30. Hearst Suite: Staircase to second level
- 31. Hearst Suite: Dining room, plaster ceiling and wood paneling

#### SKETCH MAP

#### **WILSHIRE BOULEVARD**

