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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This survey report presents the results of a historic resources survey of the Holmby Westwood neighborhood, conducted by Historic Resources Group between October 2013 and November 2014. This survey was completed on behalf of the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning’s Office of Historic Resources (OHR), and the Holmby Westwood Property Owners Association (HWPOA).

In October 2013, the HWPOA asked Historic Resources Group to conduct a historic resources survey of the Holmby Westwood neighborhood, for the purpose of determining the area’s eligibility for local designation as a historic district, or Los Angeles Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ). The survey was completed in conjunction with SurveyLA, the City’s ongoing citywide survey project. SurveyLA is managed by the Office of Historic Resources with funding support from the J. Paul Getty Trust. The HWPOA provided additional funding in order to supplement the work being completed as part of SurveyLA, for the purpose of an application for HPOZ designation.

Historic Resources Group worked closely with the staff of the Office of Historic Resources, including OHR Manager Ken Bernstein and Deputy Manager Janet Hansen, to develop a thorough yet streamlined survey methodology that would provide all of the required information for an HPOZ application, while also conforming to established SurveyLA methodologies. The result is a comprehensive survey of the Holmby Westwood neighborhood, including a historic context statement, detailed field documentation, and complete property and district evaluations.

This project was conducted by Historic Resources Group, including Kari Michele Fowler, Senior Preservation Planner; Christy Johnson McAvoy, Founding Principal; Christine Lazzaretto, Principal; Paul Travis, Principal; Heather Goers, Architectural Historian; and Robby Aranguren, Planning Associate; all of whom meet the Secretary of the Interior’s qualifications for professionals in historic preservation. Additional assistance was provided by interns Emily Williams and Chris Taylor. The project was managed by Kari Michele Fowler. Community outreach for this project, including all contact with Holmby Westwood owners and residents, was managed by Susan Reuben of the Holmby Westwood Property Owners Associations.

This historic resources survey has determined that the Holmby Westwood neighborhood is eligible for designation as a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (1) as an excellent example of residential suburban planning and development from the early automobile era in West Los Angeles, and (2) as a cohesive collection of predominantly Period Revival residential architecture in Westwood. The period of significance identified for this proposed HPOZ is 1925 to 1959, comprising the area’s primary period of development. The district is generally bounded by Sunset Boulevard to the north, S. Beverly Glen Boulevard and Comstock Avenue to the east, Lindbrook Avenue to the south, and Malcom Avenue and Hilgard Avenue to the west. The Holmby Westwood proposed HPOZ contains 1044 parcels. Of these, 513 have been evaluated as Contributors to the district (approximately 49%), and 139 as Altered Contributors (approximately 13%), for a combined contribution rate of 62 percent. An additional 373 properties were evaluated as Non-Contributors due to extensive alterations or construction outside the period of significance. Nineteen properties are not visible from the public right-of-way.

HISTORICRESOURCESURVEY

Holmby Westwood
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
PROJECT OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

In October 2013, the Holmby Westwood Home Owners Association (HWPOA) asked Historic Resources Group to conduct a historic resources survey of the Holmby Westwood neighborhood, for the purpose of determining the area’s eligibility for local designation as a historic district, or Los Angeles Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ). A group of local residents had become alarmed by the incremental yet substantial changes they were witnessing in their neighborhood. In recent years, Holmby Westwood has experienced a sharp increase in the number of extensive alterations and complete demolitions of original residences, often resulting in new construction that is substantially incompatible in style, scale and massing with the existing architecture. Concerned that the cumulative effect of these changes could irrevocably alter the established character of the neighborhood, the HWPOA approached the Office of Historic Resources and Historic Resources Group about establishing a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone in Holmby Westwood.

This survey report presents the results of the historic resources survey of the Holmby Westwood neighborhood, completed by Historic Resources Group. This report contains a detailed description of the survey area; an overview of the survey methodology; a neighborhood-specific historic context statement; an illustrated guide to architectural styles; a map of the survey results; and a complete list of all recorded resources with evaluations.

SURVEY AREA

Holmby Westwood is an early 20th-century residential subdivision located in the Westwood area of Los Angeles. Comprising just over 1,000 parcels, the area is bounded by Sunset Boulevard to the north, S. Beverly Glen Boulevard and Comstock Avenue to the east, and Malcom and Hilgard avenues to the west. The southern boundary is formed by the rear lot lines of properties on the south side of Lindbrook Avenue. The multi-family residences on east side of Hilgard Avenue between Weyburn and Westholme are not part of the survey area.

Holmby Westwood is uniquely situated at the foot of the Santa Monica Mountains, between the campus of UCLA to the west, and the Los Angeles Country Club to the east. The neighborhood features gently-sloping topography. The curvilinear interior street pattern follows the natural contours of the site and forms irregularly-shaped blocks. Lots vary widely in size and shape, with parcels generally ranging from 0.15 acres to 1.2 acres. Development in the survey area is almost exclusively residential, consisting of one- and two-story single-family houses. Non-residential improvements include an elementary school, a fire station, a temple, and a church.
The neighborhood’s earliest residences date from mid-1920s, just as the area was first being subdivided by the Janss Corporation, with the vast majority of the neighborhood developed between the late-1920s through the 1950s. Approximately 91% of extant buildings in Holmby Westwood were constructed during this period. These residences were predominately designed in one of the period revival styles popular at the time. Some 30% of extant residences in Holmby Westwood exhibit the American Colonial Revival style, with an additional 20% designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The remaining residences from the period are a diverse mix of other period revival styles, including Tudor Revival, Monterey Revival, Mediterranean Revival, French Norman Revival, and Neo classical; as well as more modern styles, such as Minimal Traditional, Ranch, and Mid-Century Modern.

Residential lots feature uniform front setbacks and typically display mature, well-tended landscaping. Properties often include masonry staircases constructed of brick or stone leading to an elevated entrance, masonry retaining walls, and ornamental lamp posts in the front yard. Garages are typically two-car and are often attached or integrated into the design of the residence. On gently-sloping lots, this may result in a split-level building configuration; on steeper lots the garage may be set at the street with the residence elevated to the rear. Porte cocheres and carports are also common.

Neighborhood features include concrete sidewalks, curbs and driveways; there are no alleys. Streets are lined with grassy parkways containing period streetlights and mature street trees dating from the neighborhood’s original period of development. Extant species include camphor, carob, carrotwood, Chinese elm, American elm, jacaranda, magnolia, silky oak, Aleppo pine, and Canary Island pine. Many of the street trees reflect the subdivision’s unified street tree plan, which called for a different ornamental tree on each street. This tree plan is particularly evident on Bainbridge Avenue (Indian Laurel), Dalehurst Avenue (Aleppo Pine), Loring and Warner avenues (Sweetgum), and Woodruff Avenue (Canary Island Pine).
Holmby Westwood Survey Area.

Map provided by the Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources.
RESEARCH

Historic Resources Group conducted a wide range of research on the development history of Holmby Westwood. Tasks included an examination of both primary and secondary literature, including published local histories of Westwood, as well as period newspaper articles, city directories, and historical photographs. These materials were analyzed in conjunction with tract maps, Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, and promotional maps from the period to gain a comprehensive understanding of the historical patterns and events which shaped the development of Holmby Westwood over time.\(^1\) Property-specific research was conducted as needed, including City buildings permits and County tax assessor data. Relevant City documents, such as municipal codes, regulations, and planning reports were also reviewed.\(^2\)

Historic Resources Group’s research was greatly enhanced by the work of the Holmby Westwood Property Owners Association. Over time, the HWPOA has compiled detailed lists of architects whose work is represented within the neighborhood, as well as important residents who have called Holmby Westwood home throughout the decades. This information has been incorporated into the survey as a supplement to the research conducted by Historic Resources Group, and provides a depth of knowledge about Holmby Westwood that can only come from those who live there.

Based upon all of this research, Historic Resources Group developed a historic context statement for Holmby Westwood. The purpose of the historic context statement is to assist in the identification, evaluation, and preservation of sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are important to the development of the neighborhood. The historic context statement provides a narrative development history of the area that analyzes historical trends, development patterns, property types, and architectural styles that have influenced the existing character of Holmby Westwood.

FIELDWORK

Historic Resources Group conducted a detailed, property-by-property field survey of the Holmby Westwood survey area. Fieldwork was conducted between February and April of 2014. All fieldwork was conducted from the public right-of-way. Integrity assessments were made based upon visual observation, and digital photographs were taken of each property. Only the primary building on each parcel (the building that fronts the public right-of-way) was surveyed.

All properties were documented and evaluated in the field according to SurveyLA methodology, including the use of the SurveyLA Historic Context Statement and the Field Guide Survey System (FiGSS).\(^3\) The FiGSS is the City’s custom mobile application designed for use in the field on tablet or laptop PCs. The FiGSS uses Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping software and is preloaded

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1 For Holmby Westwood tract maps, see Appendix A. For Holmby Westwood Sanborn maps, see Appendix B.
2 Sanborn map and building permit research was conducted as needed to develop the historic context statement and to complete property evaluations. Sanborn and permit research was not conducted for every property.
3 For a more detailed discussion of SurveyLA methodology, see the SurveyLA Field Results Master Report, available at www.surveyle.org.
with current maps and aerial photographs of survey areas; baseline parcel data; and information relating to designated, previously surveyed and potentially significant historic resources. Also contained in the FiGSS is the SurveyLA Historic Context Statement, organized by context, theme and property type (CTP).

**EVALUATION**

Holmby Westwood was evaluated according to established contexts, themes, and property types (CTPs) outlined in the SurveyLA Historic Context Statement. The SurveyLA Historic Context Statement has identified hundreds of potential CTPs combinations, each with associated eligibility standards, character-defining features and integrity thresholds. For Holmby Westwood, this historic resources survey considered its historic significance under two CTPs:

- **Context: Residential Development & Suburbanization, 1880-1980**
  - Theme: Automobile Suburbanization, 1908-1937
  - Sub-Theme: Suburban Planning & Development, 1908-1937
  - Property Type: Automobile Suburb

- **Context: Architecture & Engineering, 1850-1980**
  - Theme: Housing the Masses, 1880-1975
  - Sub-Theme: Period Revival Neighborhoods, 1918-1942
  - Property Type: Automobile Suburb

Using these CTPs, this survey evaluated Holmby Westwood’s eligibility for local designation as a Los Angeles Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ). Recognizing the need to identify and protect neighborhoods with distinct architectural and cultural resources, the City of Los Angeles has developed an expansive program of HPOZs, commonly known as historic districts. The City Council adopted the ordinance enabling the creation of HPOZs in 1979. Today, the City of Los Angeles has 29 designated HPOZs, with many more under consideration. HPOZs range in size from several blocks to entire neighborhoods. HPOZs are established and administered by the Los Angeles Department of City Planning, in concert with the City Council.

As outlined in Section 12.20.3 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code, properties identified as contributors (or altered contributors) to an HPOZ must meet one or more of the following criteria:

1) Adds to the historic architectural qualities or historic associations for which a property is significant because it was present during the period of significance, and possesses historic integrity reflecting its character at that time; or

2) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, represents an established feature of the neighborhood, community or city; or

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4 For the purposes of SurveyLA, Holmby Westwood was also evaluated for eligibility for the California Register of Historical Resources and the National Register of Historic Places.
3) Retaining the site, building, structure, or object would contribute to the preservation and protection of an historic place or area of historic interest in the City.

Each property within the Holmby Westwood survey area has been evaluated as a Contributor, Altered Contributor, Non-Contributor, or Not Visible. In addition to meeting one of more of the above criteria, a property identified as a contributor (or altered contributor) to an HPOZ must retain its historic integrity. Historic integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance as evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics and materials that existed during the property’s historic period. The following integrity thresholds have been established for the evaluation of properties in Holmby Westwood:

- **Contributors** are those properties that are essentially unaltered. Acceptable alterations may include replacement of the front door, replacement the garage door, replacement of one window, addition of security bars, addition of handrails, etc.

- **Altered Contributors** are those properties with some major alterations but which still remain substantially intact. Acceptable alterations may include replacement of windows in original openings, replacement of some wall cladding, small side additions, porch enclosures if the original porch is still discernable, replacement of roof cladding, etc.

- **Non-Contributors** are those properties that have been substantially altered or were constructed outside the period of significance. Substantial alterations include replacement of wall cladding, alteration of window openings, alteration of door openings, large side additions, second-story additions, addition or removal of porch, etc. Vacant lots and parking lots are evaluated as Non-Contributors.

- **Not Visible** has been assigned to those properties that are not sufficiently visible from the public right-of-way to complete the evaluation.

**DOCUMENTATION**

Per SurveyLA methodology, all field data for each property in the Holmby Westwood survey area has been entered into the Field Guide Survey System (FiGSS), the City’s custom mobile application. This data has been provided in its entirety to the Office of Historic Resources (OHR). In this format, the information can be searched and sorted, and can be easily linked with the City’s internal databases and mapping systems.

At present, the City is only able to generate a summary data report, which contains the following data fields for each surveyed property:

- Thumbnail of the primary field photograph
- Parcel address

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5 For the purposes of SurveyLA, properties in Holmby Westwood were also evaluated for eligibility for individual designation.

6 For a proposed HPOZ, Altered Contributors are counted as contributing resources to the historic district.

**HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY**

**Holmby Westwood**

**Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)**
OHR is currently in the process of developing the capability of generating more detailed data reports which will display all of the information gathered for each property as part of the historic resources survey. Ultimately, the City will be able to generate a separate data sheet for each documented property which displays all of the FiGSS data fields. These data sheets would approximate the information typically included in a California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 forms. No DPR forms will be generated.

The following information has been gathered for Holmby Westwood and is currently available to the City in the FiGSS. This information would be included in the City’s detailed data report.

**Historic District Record**
- Multiple district field photographs
- Narrative district description
- Narrative district significance statement
- Contexts, themes and property types (CTPs)
- Eligibility standards, character-defining features and integrity aspects for each CTP
- Reason statement
- District map

**Individual Property Records**
- Multiple field photographs
- Alternate addresses
- Architect (if known)
- Original owner (if known)
- Historic property names
- Common property names
- Historic use
- Current use
- Additional architectural style
- Major alterations
- Related features
- For non-contributors, reason for the evaluation (ex. extensive alterations; outside the period of significance)
- Bullet-point architectural description as generating by the FiGSS’ architectural description tool

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7 Per SurveyLA methodology, only major alterations visible from the public right-of-way are noted in FiGSS. Properties that have numerous major alterations have been assessed as “Extensively altered.”

8 Architectural descriptions were developed only for properties constructed within the historic district’s period of significance, 1925-1959. Properties built outside the period of significance, as well as properties not visible from the public right-of-way, do not have architectural descriptions. For properties that are only partially visible from the public right-of-way, the architectural description may be incomplete.
HISTORIC CONTEXT

PURPOSE

The following is a historic context statement for the neighborhood of Holmby Westwood. A historic context statement analyzes the historical development of an area according to guidelines written by the National Park Service and specified in National Register Bulletin 16A. It contains information about historical trends and patterns, organized by important themes during particular periods of development. In this way, a historic context statement provides a framework for understanding the potential significance of a property or group of properties.9

A historic context statement is not a comprehensive history of an area. Rather, it is intended to highlight broad historical trends that help to explain why the built environment evolved in the way that it did. The purpose of this historic context statement is to assist in the identification, evaluation, and preservation of significant historic sites, buildings, structures and objects that are important within the context of the development of Holmby Westwood. Many of the historical trends identified in Holmby Westwood are discussed within the larger context of Westwood and Los Angeles generally. The narrative is organized into chronological periods of development, from Holmby Westwood’s earliest known settlement to the present, with an emphasis on the 1920s through the 1950s.

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

A. Settlement of the West Los Angeles Area

Native American Period

The land comprising present-day Holmby Westwood was first settled by the native Tongva tribe. The Tongva people, whose population numbered in the thousands, were hunter-gatherers who established a network of villages throughout the Los Angeles basin and the Southern Channel Islands. Following the establishment of the San Gabriel Mission, the Tongva people became known as the Gabrielinos, a name imposed by the Spaniards who first colonized the area.10

Spanish Period (1542-1820)

On a discovery expedition for Spain in 1542, Portuguese navigator Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo became the first European to explore what is now the West Coast of the United States. On a subsequent mapping expedition for the Spanish government in 1602, navigator Sebastian Vizcaino further

10 There are no extant built resources from this period in Holmby Westwood.

HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY

Holmby Westwood Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
investigated the region, following Cabrillo’s path up the coast and renaming the places first identified by Cabrillo.

In 1769, the Spanish government dispatched an expedition led by Gaspar de Portola, the newly appointed governor of Baja California, to establish a presidio, or garrison, against Russian expansion in Alta California. Additionally, a system of Catholic missions was to be founded for the conversion of the native people along the western coast. Portola sailed into San Diego Bay on April 29, 1769, and soon set out on an overland expedition with Father Junipero Serra along what would become known as El Camino Real (“The King’s Road”).

By the 1770s, Spain had dominated California’s Pacific Coast for over 200 years. Over the next several decades, various Franciscan missions, military presidios and pueblos would be established throughout Alta California, from San Diego to Sonoma. The San Gabriel Mission was established in 1771, the fourth of the twenty-one missions established by Spanish Catholics of the Franciscan Order between 1769 and 1823, led by Junipero Serra. The Mission was originally sited on the banks of the San Gabriel River, called Rio de los Temblores (“River of the Earthquakes”), in what is now the City of Montebello. In 1776, after severe flooding, the Mission was relocated to higher ground in present-day San Gabriel. El Pueblo de la Reina de Los Angeles was founded on September 4th, 1781, the second town created during the Spanish colonization of what was then known as Alta California.

Many of the soldiers from Portola’s and subsequent expeditions decided to stay in Alta California when their enlistments were up or when they reached retirement age; as a reward for their service, the Spanish crown allowed them to apply for permission to use parcels of land for grazing and agriculture. According to historian Jan Loomis, “the soldiers had a preference for land as far as possible from the missions and pueblos (towns). The priests and pueblos had a reputation for interference and confrontations with those living close to them.” As a result, a number of Spanish soldiers received concessions or grants of land around Santa Monica Bay and in the present-day West Los Angeles area.

**Mexican Period (1821-1850)**

In 1821, Mexico won its independence from Spain, making Alta California part of Mexico. Around this time, the land comprising what is now the Westwood area of Los Angeles was granted to retiring Spanish soldier José Maximo Alanis. Alanis had been one of the Spanish soldiers who escorted the Rivera & Moncada expedition to found the pueblo of Los Angeles in 1781. The land grant consisted of a single league of approximately 4,400 acres and was bordered by the foothills of the Santa Monica Mountains to the north, the boundary of the present-day City of Beverly Hills to the east, present-day Pico Boulevard to the south, and present-day Sepulveda Boulevard to the west. Alanis received legal title to the land in 1843 from the Mexican governor of California after complaining about

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12 Loomis, 16.
13 Loomis, 16. There are no extant built resources from this period in Holmby Westwood.

**HISTORICRESOURCESURVEY**

**Holmby Westwood**

**Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)**
encroachment by the Sepulvedas on his property. He dubbed the property the Rancho San Buenos Ayres – the “ranch of the beautiful breezes” – and farmed the land, grazing cattle and horses, until his death on the ranch in 1851.

**American Period (1851-1918)**

At the time of Alanis’ death, the rancho was valued at only $600. It remained a working ranch through several changes in ownership. In 1852, Benjamin D. Wilson purchased half of the ranch for the bargain price of $662.75; growing inflation compelled Wilson to pay $16,000 for the other half of the ranch when he purchased it six years later. In 1884, the ranch was purchased by John Wolfskill, a rancher-turned-politician who purchased the property for ten dollars an acre. Three years later, during the height of the land boom, Wolfskill sold Rancho San Jose de Buenos Ayres to the Santa Monica Land & Water Company for one hundred dollars an acre.

In an effort to capitalize on the land boom, the Santa Monica Land & Water Company planned to subdivide the ranch and create a townsite called Sunset, whose boundaries included present-day Holmby Westwood. Eight hundred lots were platted for the town. Planned development included the construction of a railroad line, a hotel at the corner of present-day Wilshire and Beverly Glen boulevards, and a cemetery. Author Hadley Meares notes that “there is some conjecture that it was a burial ground as early as the 1820s, when the area was part of the Rancho San Jose de Buenos Ayres. Burials were almost certainly taking place by the 1880s.” In 1904, the cemetery was legally established as the Sunset Cemetery; the first recorded burial took place in 1905. The original cemetery grounds now comprise a portion of the Pierce Brothers Westwood Village Memorial Park; the site stands today as the only extant example of development from the Town of Sunset.

According to author and real estate historian Michael Gross, the Town of Sunset exemplified the development trend of the land boom years for “paper towns,” created by developers whose “dreams went far beyond what could be done, and most would never be built.” Sixty similar so-called paper towns were planned to cover almost 80,000 acres of the Southland. However, by 1888 some 79,350 lots were occupied by a mere 2,351 people. The Town of Sunset failed when the Santa Monica Land & Water Company went bankrupt. In 1891, the Rancho San Jose de Buenos Ayres was returned through foreclosure proceedings to John Wolfskill, who resumed farming the land until his death in 1913. Wolfskill sold off several smaller parcels of the ranch in the years before his death; however,
the majority of the land remained intact. Upon his death, Wolfskill’s ranch was the single most valuable property between Beverly Hills and the Pacific Ocean.

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22 One of these sales of smaller parcels was to the Los Angeles Country Club, which purchased 300 acres from Wolfskill in 1902 to develop their new facilities. Marina Dundjerski, *UCLA: The First Century* (Los Angeles: Third Millennium Publishing Limited, 2011), 272.


HISTORICRESOURCESURVEY

Holmby Westwood
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
B. Development of Holmby Westwood

*Theme: Planning and Development of Westwood and Holmby Westwood (1919-1929)*

The Letts Tract

The Wolfskill Ranch remained undeveloped for several years. John Wolfskill’s heirs held out against prospective developers, believing that as high-end development pushed further westward their ranch land would become more valuable.\(^\text{24}\) Finally, in 1919, the Wolfskill family was approached by Arthur Letts. Letts was born in 1862 in Holdenby, Northamptonshire, England. Holdenby had been the Letts family seat for generations, and throughout his life Arthur Letts retained a deep affection for his birthplace. The parish of Holdenby was frequently referred to familiarly as “Holmby,” a name that would figure prominently in Letts’s real estate dealings as he sought to honor his ancestral home.

As the second-eldest son, however, Arthur Letts knew that he would never inherit the family estate. After working as an apprentice in a dry goods store for three years, Letts departed for Quebec, Canada with his younger brother, Frank. With his previous retail experience, Letts found steady work in mercantile establishments, but over time he began to believe that America offered greater opportunities. Following a brief stint in the military, Letts decamped to Seattle after his discharge, where he worked in another store until it burned down in the citywide fire of 1889, “prompting him to pitch a tent nearby and open one of his own.”\(^\text{25}\) Letts had married Florence Philip in 1886, and the couple went on to have three children: Edna, Gladys, and Arthur, Jr.

In 1895, Arthur Letts relocated to Los Angeles, where his timing proved to be serendipitous. The J.A. Williams dry goods store at 4th Street and Broadway in downtown Los Angeles had just gone bankrupt, and creditors had asked for a public auction of the store’s stock. Letts sensed an opportunity. While at the time Broadway was not located within the city’s main business district, he believed that business activity would eventually expand in that direction.\(^\text{26}\) His winning bid at the auction netted him the store’s stock for just over half of its estimated value, and he used this inventory of goods to establish what would become the Broadway Department Store.

Letts introduced many innovations with his new retail venture, and he found almost immediate success.\(^\text{27}\) The Letts family quickly joined the ranks of Los Angeles society, and both of Letts’s daughters made particularly advantageous matches: Edna married Malcolm McNaghten, a Broadway Department Store executive, in 1912; Gladys married Harold Janss, a real estate developer, in 1911. Within several years, Arthur Letts began to use his newfound wealth to dabble in real estate

\(^{24}\) Hyland, 157.

\(^{25}\) Gross, 120.


\(^{27}\) As detailed in “Arthur M. Letts – Holmby House,” Letts was also a financial partner in the establishment of a second department store, Bullock’s. In 1906, the Broadway lease was about to expire. In a protective move, Letts took on a second lease in a partially-completed new building at 7th and Broadway. Broadway employee John G. Bullock was chosen to organize a company and save the location in the event it would be needed for The Broadway, which was rapidly outgrowing its current location. “Bullock’s” was opened in March 1907; it became such a success that Arthur decided to keep both stores, empowering Bullock to organize the business. Upon Letts’s passing the business of Bullock’s, which had been started with $250,000 in capital, was valued at $7,000,000.

**HISTORICRESOURCESSURVEY**

**Holmby Westwood**

**Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)**
development. His independent access to his own significant capital gave him the edge over consortiums of real estate developers who relied on shareholders or outside investors. Ultimately, Letts’ wealth positioned him to be uniquely qualified to acquire the Wolfskill Ranch.

In the six years since John Wolfskill’s death, many suitors had approached his family, seeking to buy and subdivide what remained of Rancho San Jose de Buenos Ayres. But the Wolfskill heirs were “difficult to approach and hard to please,” according to Letts’s biographer. “Besides, they wanted all cash.” In 1919, in a lightning raid, Letts secured a deal for the land with a $500,000 certified check and a promise to pay three times that amount on transfer of title.28

Newspapers rejoiced in the acquisition, declaring that the “merchant prince” had provided the missing link in the chain of development from downtown Los Angeles to the Pacific Ocean. “The Wolfskill Ranch has long been the key to the city-to-sea development ambitions of Los Angeles,” declared the Los Angeles Times. “Mr. Letts has never given a more convincing demonstration of his faith in Los Angeles and its future than in the purchase of this land domain standing between Los Angeles and its destiny. Just as he foresaw the vast growth in population of this city and section and built a business house to meet the needs of a city of a million, he has now looked ahead and visioned the progress of Los Angeles to the sea.”29

Arthur Letts stated that he would immediately set about improving the tract, and made it clear that his plans included a substantial residential development.30 The Los Angeles Times declared that the area was so primed for construction the neighborhood could almost build itself: “Because of the natural slopes the homesite subdivisions will not interfere with nor detract from each other...Practically every

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28 Gross, 121.
acre of the land acquired by Mr. Letts is of a topographical fitness for residential subdivision.” In addition, the tract boasted two existing paved thoroughfares, Wilshire and Santa Monica boulevards, as well as a third proposed route, Beverly Boulevard (now Sunset Boulevard). The tract also claimed a Pacific Electric Railway line, an established natural gas main, and electricity and telephone connections. The only utility that remained to be installed was water; in that regard, the new development was seen as a solution to the problem of “aqueduct surplus” from Owens Valley.

While Letts planned to develop the land as a residential subdivision, he also envisioned additional improvements for the area, which were conceived in part due to the influence of other interested parties. According to UCLA historian Marina Dundjerski, in 1923 Letts’ plans came to the attention of University of California regent Edward Dickson:

Amid reports that part of the land was to be subdivided, Dickson paid Letts a visit to discuss his idea. “My thought was that if enough acreage could be secured for our future campus needs, we would locate our new University in the very center of this virgin area,” Dickson said. “The owner could then build up about it an ideal college town – complete with a business section, student housing, and restricted residential area.”

Dundjerski notes that Letts was enthusiastic about Dickson’s idea, but died of pneumonia in May 1923 shortly after their meeting. While Arthur Letts did not live to see his plans for the tract materialize, his initial vision would ultimately define the character of the area and guide the course of future development.

The Janss Investment Corporation

While the Los Angeles Times was heralding the imminent arrival of Letts’ new subdivision as early as 1919, development activity did not begin until 1922. During the interim Arthur Letts transferred the Wolfskill acreage to the Janss Investment Corporation, which was co-owned by his son-in-law, Harold Janss. The transfer may have been a strategic move on Letts’ part, as “the Janss company had been in the subdivision business in and around L.A. for two decades and had experience Letts lacked,” notes historian Michael Gross. The company had originally been founded by Peter Janss, a Danish-born doctor who settled in Los Angeles with his family in 1893. Within several years, Peter Janss had begun to invest in real estate, focusing on the sale and subdivision of land. He was soon joined by his brother, Herman Janss, who became a specialist in farmland, a move which allowed the business to

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31 “Arthur Letts Buys the Wolfskill Ranch for Two Millions Cash,” Los Angeles Times, April 15, 1919.
33 Dundjerski, 273.
34 Dundjerski, 273.
35 Gross, 121. Michael Gross gives the date of the transfer as 1920; although most historical accounts claim that Letts sold all of the Wolfskill property south of Wilshire Boulevard to the Janss interests in 1922 and the remainder of the property soon after, Gross notes that deed records indicate that Letts retained a stake in the land, while letting the Janss family oversee its development. See also Gross, 123.
36 Gross, 121.
37 Richard Longstreth, City Center to Regional Mall: Architecture, the Automobile, and Retailing in Los Angeles, 1920-1950 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), 160.
expand.\textsuperscript{38} The family operated under several business entities over time, including the Janss Company, the Janss Investment Company, and the Janss Investment Corporation.\textsuperscript{39} In 1906, Peter Janss asked his son, Edwin, also a doctor, to move to Los Angeles and join the family business. Edwin’s success in guiding the company through the economic troubles that resulted from the Panic of 1907 convinced him to give up medicine for business.\textsuperscript{40} Edwin’s younger brother, Harold, soon quit college, also joining the family business.

By 1911, the Janss Investment Corporation recorded revenues of $1.5 million.\textsuperscript{41} Over time, the firm became perhaps the largest developer of residential real estate in Southern California, platting nearly 100,000 acres by 1929.\textsuperscript{42} Historian Richard Longstreth credits several factors for the family’s success:

\begin{quote}
The company’s growth stemmed from atypical practices. The tracts purchased were unusually large – Belvedere Heights had 6,000 lots – they were improved by the company in short order, and the selling price was low. Through one of the most aggressive newspaper advertising campaigns in Los Angeles, Janss sold lots fast – 1,000 in Belvedere Gardens in the first ten months. The benefits derived from this economy of scale were targeted to the lower-middle and prosperous working classes, who found the quality of the sites and prospects for quick growth of a full-fledged residential area appealing. Much like those of the Los Angeles Investment Company, Janss’s undertakings could reach epic proportions because of capital derived from an army of shareholders (25,000 in 1922).\textsuperscript{43}
\end{quote}

Further incentives were offered to prospective working-class homebuyers in the form of low down payments, which were accompanied by installment plans costing families as little as five dollars a month. As a result, by the time the Jansses assumed control of the Letts tract, they had already become well-known for developing some of the region’s largest and most significant subdivisions, including Belvedere Gardens and Belvedere Heights (now a part of Boyle Heights), Ramona Acres (now known as Monterey Park), Sierra Park (now part of El Sereno), Yorba Linda, and the 47,000-acre Van Nuys-Lankershim ranch. As Jeffrey Hyland explains, all signs pointed to a similar accomplishment with the Letts tract:

\begin{quote}
The Janss Investment Co. had every reasonable expectation of success. The Southern California economy was booming in the early 1920s, thanks to increased manufacturing activity, the expanding movie business, and a surge in oil production. The city’s population jumped from 576,673 in 1920 to 1,238,048 in 1930. Nearly
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{38} Gross, 122.
\textsuperscript{39} Wanamaker, 17. Although it is known that the Janss Investment Corporation succeeded the business of the Janss Investment Company in 1929, the dates and details of operation under each business name are unclear. To avoid confusion, the Janss family business is referred to throughout this report as the Janss Investment Corporation.
\textsuperscript{40} Gross, 122.
\textsuperscript{41} Gross, 122.
\textsuperscript{42} Longstreth, \textit{City Center to Regional Mall}, 160.
\textsuperscript{43} Longstreth, \textit{City Center to Regional Mall}, 160.

\textbf{HISTORICRESOURCETOURNEY}

\textbf{Holmby Westwood Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)}
400,000 of these new residents moved to Los Angeles in a single five-year period, from 1920 to 1924.\(^{44}\)

According to Richard Longstreth, the Jansses began to develop the Letts tract in much the same way as they had with earlier ventures: making basic improvements to, then feverishly promoting, land subdivisions. “No comprehensive plan was prepared, nor was the final product envisioned as a distinct community…Indeed, there was little cohesiveness to the whole.”\(^{45}\) This may have been due in part to the piecemeal fashion in which the brothers acquired the land from Letts; A. H. Wilkins, former sales manager for Jansses, later recalled that the brothers purchased the land in parcels from Letts, starting at Pico and working north.\(^{46}\) However, as Longstreth acknowledges, the company’s tendency to secrecy makes an analysis of their plans difficult, as “the company seldom revealed its intentions except on a piecemeal basis when the sale of property was about to commence.”\(^{47}\)

The Westwood Unit

In October 1922, the Los Angeles Times announced the first subdivision of the Letts tract with the opening of the Westwood unit.\(^{48}\) The original Westwood unit was located in the southern portion of the Letts land and was bounded by Santa Monica Boulevard to the north, Beverly Glen Boulevard to the east, Pico Boulevard to the south, and Sepulveda Boulevard to the west.\(^{49}\) Restricting initial development to the “flats” in the southern area of the tract offered several advantages. First, the area was already bisected by several well-established thoroughfares including Wilshire, Santa Monica, and Pico boulevards. Perhaps more importantly, the uniform topography of the flats easily lent itself to the establishment of modest residential subdivisions planned around an orthogonal street grid, accommodating relatively small lots sized for working-class bungalows.\(^{50}\) This allowed the company to maximize their profit margin through the sale of large numbers of lots. Reported the Times, “While this is not the largest project, in point of acreage, handled by the Janss Investment Corporation, it will exceed, in retail value, by several millions of dollars any subdivision activity heretofore undertaken.”\(^{51}\)

Between 1922 and 1925, the Westwood tract was further subdivided into smaller “units.” In keeping with the Janss business model, the development of these units was announced only when lot sales were opened to the public. Due to the Janss Investment Corporation’s skilled promotional placements in the Los Angeles Times—which were unwaveringly positive in their endorsement of the area and its offerings—development activity in Westwood was well-publicized at the time. However, due to the general tendency towards hyperbole in discussions of real estate development during the period, it is unclear whether the development of Westwood in its early years actually met with the Janss brothers’ expectations. Modern-day analyses of the Janss Investment Corporation’s efforts in Westwood, such as

\(^{44}\) Hyland, 158.
\(^{45}\) Longstreth, City Center to Regional Mall, 160.
\(^{47}\) Longstreth, City Center to Regional Mall, 162.
\(^{49}\) Wanamaker, 24.
\(^{50}\) Hyland, 158.
\(^{51}\) “Historic Rancho to be Subdivided Soon,” Los Angeles Times, October 15, 1922.
those made by Longstreth, acknowledge that the company’s initial attempts at commercial development in the area faltered. If newspaper accounts are to be believed, residential development efforts were generally more successful. However, the most significant impetus for development in the area did not arrive until March 1925, when it was announced that the University of California would establish its new Southern Branch campus in Westwood.

52 Although the subdivision was intended to be largely residential in character, provisions had also been made for commercial development along Santa Monica and Westwood boulevards. In an effort to entice motion picture studios to relocate to the area, Janss dubbed the development “the Second Hollywood,” where it was hoped a business center could be developed “similar in scale and function to the burgeoning one on Hollywood Boulevard.” Due to geographic and topographic challenges, however, a cohesive commercial presence was not truly realized until the subsequent development of Westwood Village. See Longstreth, City Center to Regional Mall, 162.

53 For a detailed discussion of the selection process and the choice of Westwood as the site of the Southern Branch campus, see Dundjerski, 34-42. See also Gross, 123-124.

HISTORICRESOURCESURVEY

Holmby Westwood
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
The Southern Branch Campus

The University of California’s commitment to build in Westwood was a hard-won success for the Janss brothers, who had campaigned vigorously along with sixteen other communities including Burbank, Fullerton, Palos Verdes, and Pasadena. Author Michael Gross recounts how the Janss brothers worked to secure their good fortune:

There are several versions of the story of how they won the school, but they differ only in detail. “It was probably Harold because Ed wouldn’t have been this clever and conniving,” says Larry Janss. “He had a friend, Tanner, who owned a livery company. He’d got wind that the regents were looking for property for a second university and they were coming to look at one in Pasadena and one in Palos Verdes, both superb. So, Mr. Janss concocted a plan and called Tanner, who’d be providing limousines, and plotted to rent them for the day. Tanner provided uniforms, Janss provided drivers.”

En route to Pasadena, the driver interrupted the regents, and told them how wise they were to choose Pasadena, where the weather was great nine months a year. What about the other months, the regents asked. Summers are really hot, said the driver. “Then on to Palos Verdes,” says Janss, where the driver explained that winters there were cold, blustery, and foggy…En route to the train back to San Francisco, the driver suggested the regents might want to stop at the Letts ranch. The only difference there, he said, “the sun shines at just the right angle so the weather is perfect twelve months a year,” Larry Janss continues. “The driver asked if they wanted him to find out who owned it now and the hook was set.” Thus UCLA came to the Rancho San Jose de Buenos Ayres.

Harold and Edwin Janss recognized the value that the presence of the university would add to their development plans for Westwood. Plainly put, “There was no reason to move there,” a Janss descendant later recalled, “so [their] concept was that the university would create jobs and be the basis for a community.” The brothers told university officials that they would work with them “in every way to promote the development of a University campus and any territory around it so that any and all objectionable features would be eliminated.” As a further incentive, the Janss Investment Corporation offered to sell the portion of the Westwood land comprising the proposed site of the campus to the University at a price which was substantially below market value. Although the Janss brothers’ loss on the sale of the land figured in the millions of dollars, their gamble paid off:

At 3 o’clock in the afternoon of March 21, 1925, Robert Sproul, then vice-president and comptroller for the University, announced at Berkeley the choice was Westwood…By five o’clock that same afternoon L.A. papers had extras out, and the
next day thousands of Angelenos came out to see what was this “Westwood.” [Janss executives] were ready for them with picnics.58

The Janss Investment Corporation sold more than $600,000 in homesites in the first twenty-four hours following the announcement. The company immediately opened up a second unit of the subdivision for sale south of Wilshire Boulevard; it sold out within forty-eight hours. Within four days of the announcement, Janss had sold roughly 275 lots totaling $1 million – what the company had previously been making per month for the last year.59

The presence of the University in Westwood would remain the driving force of the company’s development efforts throughout the 1920s. A substantial component of the Janss promotional campaigns from 1925 onward focused on the proximity of their subdivisions to the nearby campus and the many amenities offered that were particularly conducive to family life.60 One promotional brochure published by the Westwood Hills Press, the publishing arm of the Janss Investment Corporation, urged parents to consider their children’s futures:

We believe we are doing every family a service when we urge them to locate where they will want to live today, next year or twenty years hence. Families with children cannot logically put off the choice of a home site, for here you may have your youngsters with you from kindergarten, through public or private schools, to graduation from the University. You, as the head of a family, are urged to locate your home now, where progress should assist toward financial independence.61

The new university campus was to be located in the northern portion of the Letts tract, bounded by Beverly (now Sunset) Boulevard to the north, Hilgard Avenue to the east, and Gayley and Veteran avenues to the west. A planned commercial development, Westwood Village, would be located north of Wilshire Boulevard. The shopping center was envisioned as a “village within a city”62 and would provide the physical and symbolic link between the southern entrance to the campus at Le Conte Avenue and the major thoroughfares and existing residential neighborhoods further south.

The establishment of Westwood Village as well as the University campus represented the culmination of development efforts spanning nearly a decade. First conceived by Arthur Letts and Edward Dickson, the idea of a community including residential, commercial, and institutional resources developed on “virgin” land ultimately came to fruition under the stewardship of the Janss Investment Company. While the company would garner attention for the cohesive aesthetic, distinctive character, and comprehensive planning of the commercial and institutional components of the neighborhood, it was the development of the surrounding residential areas which played the greatest role in shaping the landscape of Westwood.

59 “Investment Reserve of City Proved: Westwood Lot Sales Are $1,000,000 After Site for University is Chosen,” Los Angeles Times, March 25, 1925.
60 John Steven McGroarty, “‘A Year and a Day’: Westwood Village and Westwood Hills,” published by the Janss Investment Corporation to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the opening of Westwood Village (Los Angeles: Westwood Hills Press, 1930).
61 John Steven McGroarty, “‘A Year and a Day’: Westwood Village and Westwood Hills,” published by the Janss Investment Corporation to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the opening of Westwood Village (Los Angeles: Westwood Hills Press, 1930).

HISTORICRESOURCESURVEY
Holmby Westwood Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
Westwood Hills

At the time, the land to the north, east, and west of the proposed campus remained undeveloped. However, “the university was seen as a major stimulus to surrounding development,” writes Longstreth, “attracting not just faculty but many persons of means who believed proximity to an institution of higher learning enhanced land values.” The land directly to the east of the university campus – then dubbed “Westwood Hills” – was poised to become especially desirable. This extent includes the area that would become the community of Holmby Westwood.

There were several factors that contributed to this area’s appeal specifically as an upper-middle-class neighborhood. Chief among them was its proximity not only to the university campus, but to more exclusive upscale residential neighborhoods as well. Indeed, the area was distinguished by its neighbors. The City of Beverly Hills was situated just on the other side of the Los Angeles Country Club. Bel-Air, established by Alphonzo Bell, Sr. in 1923, was located just north of Sunset Boulevard, as

63 Longstreth, City Center to Regional Mall, 162-163.
64 The area then called “Westwood Hills” extended from Sunset Boulevard on the north, Wilshire Boulevard on the south, Hilgard Avenue on the west, and the Los Angeles Country Club on the east. This area comprises present-day Holmby Westwood and a portion of Holmby Hills.

HISTORICRESOURCESURVEY

Holmby Westwood
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
Additionally, the landscape of the area east of the proposed campus proved more appropriate for a lower density of housing than that found south of Wilshire Boulevard. The Janss brothers could not recreate the success of their large-scale, working-class subdivisions in the southern “flats” portion of the Letts tract, in part because the hilly topography of the northern portion of the tract would not allow for it. However, the gently sloping hills created a distinctive landscape that lent itself to the creation of large, irregularly shaped lots planned around curving streets that followed the natural contours of the land. All in all, the area was well-positioned to offer the unique character, space, privacy, and prestige sought by upper-middle-class homebuyers.

In May 1925, less than two months after the University of California’s decision, the Janss Investment Corporation announced the opening of its first subdivision east of the proposed campus, overlooking the Los Angeles Country Club. “You’ve been waiting for this opening!” declared a Los Angeles Times display ad. That same day, the newspaper carried an interview with Harold Janss, who described the company’s plans for the area:

Comprising rolling knoll property north of Wilshire Boulevard, Westwood Hills will be placed on the market by the Janss Investment Company, according to an announcement by Harold Janss. The property is bounded on the east by the Los Angeles Country Club and on the west by Beverly Glen Boulevard...We are creating in Westwood Hills,” says Mr. Janss, “our finest residential district. The property enjoys a view overlooking Beverly Hills, Hollywood and downtown Los Angeles. Present plans include underground conduits and ornamental electrolyzers as well as a public park.”

This initial subdivision, Tract No. 8422, occupies the southeastern corner of what would become Holmby Westwood, and today is the only portion of neighborhood that directly overlooks the Los Angeles Country Club. Janss swiftly subdivided eight additional tracts – sometimes referred to in promotional materials and newspaper articles as “units” – to complete their development of Holmby

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65 Gross, 129-130.
67 “Westwood Hills to be Marketed by Janss Firm,” Los Angeles Times, May 17, 1925.
Westwood. A comparison of survey dates as noted on tract maps filed with the County Recorder, with promotional announcements in the *Los Angeles Times*, indicates that the Janss Investment Corporation was opening tracts almost as quickly as they could be surveyed. In many instances, subdivisions were opened even before the tract maps were officially recorded. The company was working at capacity to meet demand; according to the *Los Angeles Times*, the first two units of Holmby Westwood sold out before they could even be announced to the public. In March 1926, the *Los Angeles Times* declared the opening of Holmby Westwood’s final tract as another opportunity for the neighborhood “to establish itself as one of the outstanding community developments of the city.”

The Times continued:

> Even without the university site location in the project, this property would undoubtedly become one of the most rapidly developed districts of the city, because of its central location and typically Californian contour as well as its exceptional view feature. Improvement work on the property, which is just getting underway, shows that its natural attractiveness is being protected in every respect in the improvement plans of the subdividers.

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<th>Tract in Holmby Westwood (1925-1927)</th>
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<td>February 1927</td>
<td>April 1927</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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68 “First Unit at Campus Site Open,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 28, 1926.
69 “New Westwood Unit Offered,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 21, 1926.
70 “New Westwood Unit Offered,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 21, 1926.
71 For Holmby Westwood tract maps, see Appendix A.
Holmby Westwood
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
The demand for lots in the area, which had already peaked following the announcement of the opening of the Southern Branch campus, was likely further compounded by the forthcoming extension of Beverly Glen Boulevard north from Wilshire Boulevard. The new boulevard would provide Westwood residents with a “direct connection with all routes north without having to drive through congested traffic areas.”\(^{72}\) As a result, after several months of record-breaking sales, Harold Janss acknowledged that units in Westwood Hills were “being opened for public sale as rapidly as available from our engineering department.”\(^{73}\)

Wide, winding roads followed the natural contours of the land and preserved the views and vistas which figured so heavily in the promotion of the development. The Janss company asked University of California engineer Herbert B. Foster to survey and preparing a map of the area surrounding the campus. In a nod to the adjacent University of California campus, several of the streets were named after distinguished Berkeley professors:

> When the map was completed, the roads were denoted with a letters, such as “A” or “B.” Foster thought the alphabetical scheme a little too dry, and took the liberty of writing in some names on his own. “I took my hydraulic course from ‘Little Joe’ Le Conte,” he recounted. “So I put down ‘Le Conte Avenue’ on the map.” He added: “Then I worked with Dean Eugene W. Hilgard on some of his books, so I put his name down. … I took the Great Books course from Gayley, so I added his name.” The names would stick, much to the annoyance of those who would have preferred names not associated with Berkeley.\(^{74}\)

Electrical and telephone wires were concealed in underground conduits, so as not to disturb the landscape. The neighborhood was further defined through a unified street tree program, which called for ornamental trees to be planted throughout the area.\(^{75}\) As Edward Janss noted, “This is an added attractive feature which in years to come will undoubtedly reflect greatly to the benefit of the men who are now planning the community of Westwood Hills, as it will exist in the future.”\(^{76}\) According to the Holmby Westwood Property Owners Association, the street tree plan was fully implemented. Over the decades, some trees have been lost due to disease, damage, or nearby construction. However, the area still boasts many mature street trees, most of which likely date from the period of initial development. Extant species include camphor, carob, carrotwood, Chinese elm, American elm, jacaranda, magnolia, silky oak, Aleppo pine, and Canary Island pine. Streets where the tree plan is particularly evident include Bainbridge Avenue (Indian Laurel), Dalehurst Avenue (Aleppo Pine), Loring and Warner Avenues (Sweetgum), and Woodruff Avenue (Canary Island Pine).

Although the Westwood Hills area recorded strong sales from the start, the Janss Investment Corporation did not rely on the attractiveness of the tract alone to induce potential buyers. The Letts and Janss families constructed several homes in the area, which Jeffrey Hyland notes not only served

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\(^{72}\) “Boulevard to Cut Distance,” Los Angeles Times, March 14, 1926.

\(^{73}\) “School Area to Be Modern,” Los Angeles Times, February 21, 1926.

\(^{74}\) Dundjerski, 38-39.

\(^{75}\) See “Community Development: New Westwood Unit Offered,” Los Angeles Times, March 21, 1926, and “First Unit at Campus Site Open,” Los Angeles Times, March 28, 1926.

\(^{76}\) “New Westwood Unit Offered,” Los Angeles Times, March 21, 1926.

HISTORICRESOURCESSURVEY

Holmby Westwood
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
as “a vote of confidence” in the area, but “also established an important standard of quality and style.” Occupying a prominent location on the crest of a hill in what is now Holmby Hills, by 1932 the family’s concentration of properties created what Michael Gross called “a virtual Janss-Letts family compound wrapping around the entire north end of the Los Angeles Country Club.” Five properties were developed in this area by the two families and included homes for Edwin Janss (10060 Sunset; subsequently demolished); his mother Emma Janss (10190 Sunset); Florence Letts, Arthur Letts’s widow (141 South Carolwood); her daughter Edna Letts McNaghten (594 South Mapleton; subsequently demolished); and her son, Arthur Letts, Jr. (10236 Charing Cross). While two of the homes were eventually demolished, the Arthur Letts, Jr. residence would become the most well-known of the dwellings. One of the earliest Letts-Janss family homes to be constructed, the house was designed by master architect Arthur Kelly and completed in 1927. The home remained in the family until Arthur Letts, Jr. died in 1959. It was subsequently sold and eventually purchased in 1971 for the then-record-breaking price of $1.05 million. The buyer was Playboy Enterprises, publisher of the sophisticated and successful men’s magazine created by Hugh Hefner. The estate was transformed into the ultimate bachelor pad, and the “ever-so-proper mansion of the previous owners became a thirty-room ode to the Playboy lifestyle.” The Playboy Mansion, as it is now known, has been supplemented with the construction of many additional features, including a swimming pool, tennis courts, pool house, and perhaps most notably, a private zoo.

Promotional activities also figured heavily in the Janss program. The company erected an observation tower at the northeast corner of Wilshire and Beverly Glen boulevards. The tower stood 420 feet above sea level, making it the highest point along Wilshire Boulevard during this period. Although potential homebuyers were allowed to climb the tower to get a bird’s-eye view of their new home, the tower was primarily utilized as a landmark advertisement; at night, its decorative lightning bolts were illuminated, along with a large sign reading “WESTWOOD,” in a display which could be seen for miles.

The company also hosted promotional events for its various subdivisions. For Holmby Hills, they hosted a Model Estate Show featuring representations of proposed estates carved from large blocks of soap. Similarly, Westwood Village and the surrounding

78 Gross, 131.
79 The three remaining Janss-Letts homes are located just northeast of present-day Holmby Westwood.
80 Hyland, 196.
81 Hyland, 198.
82 Hyland, 198.
84 Hyland, 186.
The remaining home was designed in the Monterey Revival style. It is likely that this trend can be attributed at least in part to the construction of speculative and “model” housing by Janss. The company adopted the style for both residential and commercial construction in the Westwood area in an effort to create a cohesive aesthetic; it was believed that the “loosely defined spectrum of historical

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85 “Magic City Exposition Will Open: Transition of University Area to Be Shown in Display Next Week,” Los Angeles Times, July 8, 1928.
86 Both model homes are extant and located in Holmby Westwood.
87 “Many Inspect Model Home in Westwood Area,” Los Angeles Times, June 27, 1926.
89 “Model Home is to Be Erected,” Los Angeles Times, February 21, 1926.
91 The remaining home was designed in the Monterey Revival style.

HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY
Holmby Westwood Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
sources associated with Mediterranean Europe” would complement the Italian and Romanesque architecture of the adjacent university campus.\(^9^2\)

The examples set forth by the company were clearly successful. As development continued through the late 1920s, residences constructed in Holmby Westwood were almost universally designed in the Spanish Colonial or Mediterranean Revival styles. While prospective homeowners were not required to select a home designed by Janss and could commission their own architect – provided the design met the company’s architectural design guidelines – many residents nevertheless opted for the Mediterranean styles espoused by Janss. Typical features of the style – including red clay tile roofs, smooth stucco walls, asymmetrical facades, wooden casement or double-hung windows, arched openings, balconies, patios, and ornamental tile or iron work – remain evident within the district today.

\(^{92}\) Longstreth, City Center to Regional Mall, 166.
The style prevailed in Holmby Westwood throughout the late 1920s. Although many homes were constructed by the Janss company during these initial years of development, several were designed by noted architects of the period. One of the most prominent was Wallace Neff, who was an early and active proponent of the “California style”, which drew heavily from Spanish and Mediterranean influences. Eric Black, another early practitioner who also designed many homes in Beverly Hills, designed at least three early residences in Holmby Westwood in the Spanish Colonial Revival style in 1928 and 1929. Other architects designing homes in Holmby Westwood in the late 1920s included: F.A. Hanson, E.A. Kaiser, H.P. Shart, and E.S. Sommers.

In addition to residential construction, the community evolved in other ways during this period. In 1926, the Janss company ceded an 8.5-acre parcel of land to the city of Los Angeles for the establishment of a public park. Situated between the Holmby Westwood and Holmby Hills, this site was ideal for a park as an underground river made it a poor building site for additional homes. Holmby Park opened to the public in 1927. The design of the park has been attributed to Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., a noted landscape architect and wildlife conservationist. The park features a variety

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93 Holmby Park is bounded by Beverly Glen Boulevard to the west, Club View Drive to the north and east, and Comstock Avenue to the south. The park is located immediately outside the boundaries of present-day Holmby Westwood.

94 Olmsted, Jr., was the son of prominent landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, who designed New York City’s Central Park. Olmsted, Jr. formed a successor firm, Olmsted Brothers, with his brother John C. Olmsted and devoted his career to wildlife and environmental conservation and the preservation of America’s national parks.

**HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY**

**Holmby Westwood**

**Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)**
of native and exotic trees, including California redwood, Montezuma cypress, Canary Island pine, New Zealand Christmas Tree, camphor, Moreton Bay fig, and African tulip. Olmsted’s original blueprints called for a pony golf course where an 18-hole, par-54 golf course stands today.95 The course is named for Armand Hammer, former head of Occidental Petroleum, who arranged annual funding through his foundation to help maintain the golf course in perpetuity. A lawn bowling green and clubhouse at the south end of the park played host to the Holmby Park Lawn Bowling Club, established in 1927. Bowler and philanthropist Marcellus Joslyn paid for an extension to the clubhouse in 1955. In 1958, a second bowling green was added where there had originally been a duck pond. All of the park buildings were designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, reflecting the early aesthetic of the adjacent neighborhoods.

Also during the late 1920s, Holmby Westwood became the site of the University’s Sorority Row.96 Developed along the east side of Hilgard Avenue between Westholme and Le Conte avenues, the row of sorority houses provided a buffer between the University campus and the exclusively single-family residential neighborhood beyond. The earliest sorority houses were constructed in 1928; by 1935, a total of 21 sororities had purchased property along Hilgard Avenue. These buildings, too, reflected the architectural aesthetic of the neighborhood. Many were designed in the Mediterranean Revival styles favored by Janss – and stipulated by the University for all state-built structures. In keeping with the upscale character of the neighborhood, as well as the University’s tendency to engage prominent architects for its early buildings, many of the sorority houses were designed by noted practitioners. Designers of sorority houses from this period included Paul Revere Williams, Percy Parke Lewis, Allen Ruoff, Pierpont & Walter Davis, and Marston & Maybury.

Although Holmby Westwood Hills development was heavily publicized and, according to the Los Angeles Times, extremely profitable for the Janss Investment Corporation, residential construction activity remained decidedly sluggish in comparison to lot sales. By 1929, less than fifteen percent of the lots in Westwood Hills had been improved.

Theme: Depression-Era Growth (1930-1939)

The stock market crash in October of 1929 and subsequent economic depression had an immediate and substantial impact on rapidly-growing communities throughout the United States. However, despite the struggling national economy, development in Holmby Westwood in the early 1930s proceeded at its pre-Depression pace. Although the Holmby Westwood tracts had opened several years earlier, for many the motivation to build did not arrive until the university campus and Westwood Village both officially opened in 1929.97 As a result, the 1930s marked the most active decade for construction activity in Holmby Westwood. Among existing residences within the present-day neighborhood boundaries, approximately half were developed between 1930 and 1939.98

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95 The designer of the golf course has not been confirmed. Information regarding Olmsted’s plans for Holmby Park was provided by the Holmby Westwood Property Owners Association.
96 The blocks of Hilgard Avenue occupied by Sorority Row have been drawn out of the current boundary for Holmby Westwood.
97 The Southern Branch campus was officially renamed the University of California at Los Angeles in 1927.
98 This statistic has been estimated based on an inventory of residences extant in Holmby Westwood today.

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Holmby Westwood
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
This statistic has been estimated based on an inventory of residences extant in Holmby Westwood today.  

**HISTORICRESOURCESURVEY**

**Holmby Westwood**

**Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)**
detailing, such as pediments, porticos, and pilasters. Over time, however, as architectural tastes evolved towards a more simplified aesthetic, the style became more restrained, often including only minimal detailing which merely referenced the character-defining features of the style.

Other Period Revival styles constructed during this period included the perennially popular Mediterranean Revival and Monterey Revival styles, as well as Neoclassical, Tudor Revival, French Norman Revival, Georgian Revival, and Dutch Colonial styles. Architects of the period were well-versed in these historicist styles, and Holmby Westwood stood out for its association with several leading practitioners. Among the prominent architects who designed residences in Holmby Westwood during this period were Paul Revere Williams, Allen Ruoff, Percy Parke Lewis, H. Roy Kelley, Eric Black, Wallace Neff, John Byers, William Gage, Allen Siple, and Leland Bryant. Many of these architects had already garnered attention for their work, including Paul Revere Williams and Eric Black, as noted above. Percy Parke Lewis was a prolific in-house architect for the Janss company. Leland Bryant was well-known for his elaborate apartment buildings, including the Romanesque Villa in West Hollywood, and upscale hotels such as the Sunset Tower. Allen Ruoff was noted not only for his institutional work, such as his Italian Renaissance design for the Los Angeles Public Library, but also for his frequent commentary in the Los Angeles Times. John Byers and Wallace Neff were both known for theirdistinctively regional interpretations of architectural styles, with Byers frequently employing adobe construction techniques.

In 1933, the Ranch style was introduced to Holmby Westwood, marking a turning point in the evolution of architectural character in the neighborhood towards a more modern aesthetic. Ranch houses were frequently one story in height with an emphasis on horizontal massing. Homes were typically informal in composition, with an open floor plan, an attached garage, and a close relationship to the yard. These features reflected some of the trends evidenced in other Modern architectural styles of the mid-20th century; the earliest examples of Ranch houses in the area, however, still referenced more conventional architectural styles in their aesthetic, including examples of the Traditional, Hacienda, and American Colonial Ranch styles.

While the character of Holmby Westwood remained strictly residential, as the neighborhood population increased throughout the 1930s several institutional improvements were introduced in response to the growing community. A school was established in the middle of the residential development, located on the block bounded by Loring Avenue to the north, Holmby Avenue to the east, Woodruff Avenue to the south, and Warner Avenue to the west. The school, called simply Warner Avenue School, was also known as the University Elementary Training School. This institution had previously been situated near the University’s Vermont Avenue campus, and was relocated in response to the opening of the Westwood campus. Ten bungalows were relocated to the site, with the city school department furnishing the land and buildings. The responsibility for supplying teachers and the operation of the school was assumed by the University.

In 1931, St. Alban’s Chapel, was constructed on Hilgard Avenue, immediately across from the University campus. Designed by noted architect Reginald D. Johnson, the building was constructed as

100 Architectural styles are discussed in greater detail in the following section.
101 “Ten Bungalows Being Moved to Campus School,” Los Angeles Times, September 8, 1929.

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a memorial to his father, the late Bishop Joseph Horsfall Johnson, who served as the first Bishop of Los Angeles. The chapel also served as a mission for the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles. In 1940, the chapel was expanded to include a larger church building designed by Janss architect Percy Parke Lewis. The architecture of the church buildings proved to be a decided departure from the aesthetic of Holmby Westwood; designed in a combination of the Romanesque and Gothic Revival styles, the buildings were constructed of brick with rough mortar and stone trim and featured a narthex window designed by Judson Studios.

As the community of Holmby Westwood began to grow, it acquired a reputation as an elite residential enclave. Although many of Hollywood’s biggest stars had already settled in the surrounding neighborhoods of Beverly Hills, Bel-Air, and Holmby Hills, Holmby Westwood offered an attractive alternative for less-established stars, particularly those who might just be starting out in the burgeoning entertainment business or who had recently relocated to Los Angeles. By the 1930s and 1940s, residents included films stars such as Spencer Tracy, Marlene Dietrich, Olivia de Havilland, Cary Grant, Clark Gable and Gene Tierney. The early presence of these Hollywood stars played a critical role in establishing Holmby Westwood’s reputation as a neighborhood of distinction and glamour.

Theme: World War II and Postwar Development (1940-1959)

The War Years

The robust construction economy which had defined Holmby Westwood in the 1930s continued through the early 1940s. The tradition of high-style architecture was maintained throughout this period, when new residences were designed by Harwell Hamilton Harris, Richard Neutra, Sumner Spaulding, and others. By 1942, approximately seventy-five percent of the lots in Holmby Westwood had been improved with single-family residences. That same year, however, construction in the area ground to a virtual halt. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 marked the United States’ entrance into World War II, which effectively ended the Great Depression in California and boosted the regional economy. Residential development ceased as building materials were commandeered for the war effort; California received almost twelve percent of the government war contracts and produced seventeen percent of all war supplies. California also acquired more military installations than any other state by a wide margin, and military bases were opened throughout the state. Aircraft, shipbuilding, and numerous other industries were booming due to the war effort, and unemployment was virtually eliminated. World War II ended in 1945, and residential construction throughout the region, including Holmby Westwood, resumed the following year.

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102 For a representative list of important residents of Holmby Westwood, see Appendix B. Information regarding past and current residents of Holmby Westwood was provided by the Holmby Westwood Property Owners Association. Dates and periods of residency could not be confirmed for each individual.

103 This statistic has been estimated based on an inventory of residences extant in Holmby Westwood today.


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Holmby Westwood
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Postwar Development

In the years immediately following World War II, the population of Southern California grew exponentially, with veterans returning from the war and settling in the area, and those already stationed at West Coast military bases deciding to stay permanently. At the same time, personal automobile ownership skyrocketed. The economic prosperity brought about by wartime spending meant that private automobiles were within financial reach of more Americans. In the 1940s, the rate of automobile ownership increased dramatically, primarily among the middle and upper-middle classes, while streetcar ridership declined sharply. The Arroyo Seco Parkway – California’s first freeway – opened in 1940, providing a dedicated link between Pasadena and Los Angeles and ushering in an era of great highway construction for the West Coast. Between 1945 and 1955, the number of cars on American roads doubled, and by 1958, about seventy percent of all American families owned an automobile, an increase of nearly twenty percent from the beginning of the decade.

Holmby Westwood was a prescient indicator of this trend. Given its proximity to major thoroughfares, the neighborhood exemplified the development of automobile suburbs in the first half of the 20th century. From its inception, the neighborhood was envisioned not as a streetcar suburb, but as an automobile suburb. All of the residences included multi-car garages, which were often integrated directly into the design of the house.

Like many communities in Southern California, Holmby Westwood experienced a surge of development activity during the postwar era. A notable example of non-residential development during this period was the construction of a fire station for Engine Company No. 71 at the southwest corner of Sunset and Beverly Glen Boulevards. Station No. 71, designed by the architectural firm of Austin, Field, Fry & Criz and completed in 1947, was described by the Los Angeles Times as “a fire station with only a slight resemblance to a fire station,” which was “designed to harmonize with surrounding structures…Even the tower, a necessity at every station for drying hoses, will be blended into the structural lines.”

Although renewed residential building efforts were initially sluggish in the years following the war, the number of new homes constructed in Holmby Westwood increased steadily beginning in 1946 for the next several years. Development activity peaked in 1948, when approximately thirty new residences were completed. However, as the area was largely built out by this point in time, the neighborhood never experienced the same exponential rate of growth or widespread development seen in other communities. Instead, improvements occurred in a piecemeal fashion and at a markedly slower pace. Based on an analysis of extant resources, it is estimated that less than twenty new residences were constructed each year after 1949. By 1959, only one new residence was constructed, marking the end of the active period of development in Holmby Westwood.

Just as development patterns had changed, architectural tastes, too, had evolved during the war. While the design of some of the earliest postwar homes in Holmby Westwood reflected the Period Revival

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105 The area’s identity as an automobile suburb was further confirmed when the 405 Freeway opened in 1962, providing residents with a more efficient alternative to the nearby Sepulveda Boulevard.

106 “Fire Station to Blend With Modern Ideas,” Los Angeles Times, April 14, 1947.

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trends that had dominated prewar construction in the area, by the 1950s residential architecture reflected the public’s growing interest in more modern styles. Although the American Colonial Revival style remained a perennial favorite, overall the Ranch style prevailed, with several examples each of the Traditional, American Colonial, Cape Cod, and Minimal variations constructed during the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s. The Minimal Traditional style also gained in popularity during this period. The style’s simple massing and plan, coupled with understated Period details, served as an approachable alternative to the more progressive Mid-Century Modern style, which also began to appear in earnest during this period.

Mid-Century Modernism, with its simple geometric forms and emphasis on natural materials and expressed construction, was a severe departure from the more traditional Period Revival styles which had once dominated the landscape of Holmby Westwood. Richard Neutra was one of the most prominent practitioners of the style, and he worked extensively in the Westwood area. Neutra designed a number of both single-family and multi-family residences in Westwood; there are three single-family homes designed by Neutra within the present-day boundaries of Holmby Westwood.

The established tradition of prominent architects working in Holmby Westwood continued throughout the postwar era, with architects such as Jones & Emmons, and William Stephenson designing homes in the neighborhood. The partnership of A. Quincy Jones and Frederick Emmons lasted eighteen years, during which time the firm produced designs for thousands of tract homes constructed by pioneering real estate developer Joseph Eichler. The pair later participated in John Entenza’s Case Study housing initiative, creating the program’s only tract house design for Case Study #24 in 1961. Stephenson garnered significant attention during this period for his 1955 design for Ronald Reagan’s “General Electric Showcase House” on San Onofre Drive in the Pacific Palisades. He played a significant role in promoting the Ranch style and designed several high-style examples throughout Bel-Air and Beverly Hills. Other architects noted on building permits in the 1950s included G. C. Anderson, Maurice Fleishman, and John Kewell.

By the 1950s, Holmby Westwood had reached its apogee as an elite residential enclave, which was due in part to the rise of television as an entertainment medium. As television personalities became more successful, they relocated to upper-class neighborhoods like Holmby Westwood. In the 1950s and 1960s, the neighborhood could claim numerous film and television personalities, including Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis, and John Astin and Patty Duke. Entertainment moguls, screenwriters, and industry observers also made their homes in the area, including Billy Wilder, Edward A. Kaufmann, Howard West, Gil Cates, and Robert Evans. Journalists and authors such as Army Archerd, Erich Maria Remarque, and Louis L’Amour also called Holmby Westwood home.

The caché of the area’s residents extended to other fields as well. Business moguls living in the area included George Gregson, a Janss family member and Janss Investment Corporation executive; Armand Hammer, the CEO of Occidental Petroleum and founder of the Hammer Museum; George A. Ralphs, founder of the Ralphs grocery store chain; and Max Palevsky, founder of Intel.167 The

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167 For a representative list of important residents of Holmby Westwood, see Appendix B. Information regarding past and current residents of Holmby Westwood was provided by the Holmby Westwood Property Owners Association. Dates and periods of residency could not be confirmed for each individual.

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neighborhood’s proximity to campus also prompted several prominent UCLA administrators to settle in the neighborhood over time. Residents included David Saxon, a longtime UCLA professor and administrator who eventually became president of the University of California; and Edward Dickson, a pioneering member of the University of California Board of Regents who helped establish the Westwood campus.

With a wide array of upscale homes designed by prominent architects and inhabited by famous residents, it was not surprising that homes in Holmby Westwood frequently appeared in national publications and were recognized for their award-winning architecture. As early as the 1930s, Holmby Westwood residences were appearing in such publications as *House Beautiful*, *Architectural Digest*, and *Arts & Architecture*. This trend has continued up to the present day, with homes being featured in various magazines (including *Traditional Home Magazine*, *Los Angeles Times Home & Garden Magazine*, *Sunset Magazine*) and television shows (HGTV’s *Beautiful Homes*, ABC’s *Beautiful Homes & Great Estates*, NBC’s *Designer Living*).

**Conclusion (1960 – Present)**

Beginning in the 1960s, Holmby Westwood began to see redevelopment of some properties, with original residences being demolished and replaced with often insensitive development. It was during this period that residents formed the Holmby Westwood Property Owners Association (HWPOA). The impetus for the formation of the homeowners association occurred in 1960, when the Los Angeles City Planning Department proposed a substantial increase in zoning as a part of the Westwood Master Plan. The City also proposed an elevated east-west roadway – dubbed the “Beverly Hills Freeway” – which would have cut through the heart of Holmby Westwood. There was substantial community opposition to the project, which was eventually removed from CALTRANS plans in the early 1970s. However, property owners were motivated to organize, and the Holmby Westwood Property Owners Association was formally incorporated in April 1962.  

Today, in addition to working with City officials and sponsoring neighborhood events, the Holmby Westwood Property Owners Association works to maintain the architectural integrity of Holmby Westwood and continues to oversee those properties with renewed covenants, conditions, and restrictions (CC&Rs). The CC&Rs, which had first been implemented by the Janss Investment Company, were valid for a 50-year period. When the covenants expired in the 1970s, some interested homeowners renewed their CC&Rs. Approximately half of the properties in Holmby Westwood are currently subject to CC&Rs; these properties are subject to design review by the Holmby Westwood Property Owners Association.

Despite some changes to the neighborhood’s physical fabric, Holmby Westwood has largely retained its reputation as an upscale residential enclave. The area continues to boast a strong association with the entertainment industry. A number of entertainers currently reside or have recently resided in Holmby Westwood, including producer and director Vince Gilligan, producer and director Ridley...

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108 Information regarding the formation of the HWPOA was provided by the Holmby Westwood Property Owners Association.

109 Information regarding the CC&R program in Holmby Westwood was provided by the Holmby Westwood Property Owners Association.

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Scott, producer and screenwriter Christopher Lloyd, television executive Suzanna Daniels, actress Jaclyn Smith, actress and comedienne Maya Rudolph, actress Valerie Harper, actor Timothy Olyphant, television newscaster Stan Chambers, musician Brian Bell, musician Frank Mansuco, and acting dynasties such as the Lloyd Bridges and Kirk Douglas families.\textsuperscript{110} Similarly, Holmby Westwood has retained many of its design characteristics as an early 20\textsuperscript{th}-century automobile suburb. This is due to the retention and maintenance of many residences dating from the 1920s through the 1950s, as well as the preservation of its distinctive landscape and planning features which continue to evoke the original intent of the Janss brothers.

\textsuperscript{110} For a more detailed list of important Holmby Westwood residents, past and present, see Appendix D.

\textbf{HISTORICRESOURCESURVEY}

\textbf{Holmby Westwood}

\textbf{Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)}
Holmby Westwood Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
SELECTED CHRONOLOGY

Spanish Period

1771  The San Gabriel Mission is established along the banks of the San Gabriel River, the fourth of 21 missions founded by Spanish led by Father Junipero Serra.

1776  Due to severe flooding, the Mission is relocated to higher ground in present-day San Gabriel.

1781  El Pueblo de la Reina de Los Angeles is founded on September 4th, the second town created during the Spanish colonization of what was then known as Alta California.

Mexican Period

1821  Mexico wins independence from Spain, making Alta California part of Mexico.

The area now occupied by Holmby Westwood is a farm granted to former Spanish soldier Jose Maximo Alanis.

1834  The California Missions are secularized and the extensive land holdings are granted by the Spanish government to private individuals who establish ranchos.

1843  Alanis receives legal title to the land, which he has dubbed the Rancho San Buenos Ayres – the “ranch of the beautiful breezes.”

American Period

1850  California is admitted to the Union as its 31st state. California’s rancho days are soon ended as a new gold-based economy replaces the hide-and-tallow trade, and former land grants are divided into smaller agricultural ranches.

1851  Jose Maximo Alanis dies at the ranch. Upon his passing, the ranch land is valued at $600.

The land continues to serve as a working ranch through several changes in ownership.

1852  Half of the Rancho San Buenos Ayres acreage is purchased by Benjamin D. Wilson for $662.75.

1858  Wilson purchases the remaining half of Rancho San Buenos Ayres. Due to growing inflation, this time he pays $16,000.

1884  The rancho is purchased by John Wolfskill for ten dollars an acre.

1887  John Wolfskill sells the Rancho San Buenos Ayres – now known as the Wolfskill Ranch – to the Santa Monica Land and Water Company for one hundred dollars an acre.

1891  The Santa Monica Land and Water Company goes bankrupt. The ranch is returned to John Wolfskill through foreclosure proceedings.
1913  John Wolfskill dies. At the time of his death, the Wolfskill Ranch is considered the single most valuable property between Beverly Hills and the Pacific Ocean.

Planning and Development of Westwood and Holmby Westwood

1919  Retail magnate and real estate developer Arthur Letts purchases the Wolfskill Ranch in April and immediately announces plans to subdivide the land for residential development. Soon thereafter, Letts transfers the Wolfskill acreage to the Janss Investment Corporation, which is co-owned by his son-in-law, Harold Janss.

1922  In October, the Los Angeles Times announces the first subdivision of the Letts tract with the opening of the Westwood unit, located in the southern portion of the Letts property.

1925  On March 21\textsuperscript{st}, the University of California announces that school officials have selected Westwood as the location for its new Southern Branch campus.

In May, the Janss Investment Corporation announces the opening of its first subdivision to the east of the proposed campus, in the area then called “Westwood Hills.”

1927  The University of California Board of Regents officially changes the name of the Southern Branch campus to the University of California at Los Angeles.

Westwood Village opens its first commercial establishments.

1929  The University of California’s Southern Branch campus officially opens in September.

Despite heavy publicity by Janss and high demand from potential homebuyers, less than fifteen percent of the lots in Holmby Westwood have been developed by the end of the year.

1933  The first Ranch-style homes are constructed in Holmby Westwood, marking a shift in the aesthetic of the neighborhood.

1935  Construction activity peaks in Holmby Westwood, with nearly one hundred buildings completed this year.

1941  The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor marks the United States’ entrance into World War II, effectively ending the Great Depression in California.

1942  The last new homes in Holmby Westwood are completed before residential construction is halted and building materials are redirected to the war effort.

1945  In the immediate aftermath of World War II, the population of Southern California increases exponentially, with veterans returning from the war and settling in the area and those already stationed at West Coast military bases deciding to stay permanently.

1946  Single-family residential construction resumes in Holmby Westwood following the end of World War II. The number of homes completed annually increases steadily for the next several years.

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1948  Postwar construction numbers peak in Holmby Westwood, with approximately thirty homes completed this year.

1959  Only one new residence is constructed in Holmby Westwood this year, marking the end of active development activity.

1960  The Los Angeles City Planning Department proposes a substantial increase in zoning for Holmby Westwood as a part of the Westwood Master Plan.

1962  The Holmby Westwood Property Owners Association is established.
This section describes architectural styles currently represented among identified historic resources in the Holmby Westwood survey area. Listed below are the most common architectural styles exhibited in Holmby Westwood dating from the period of significance, 1925-1959, listed in chronological order.

- Neoclassical
- American Colonial Revival
- Spanish Colonial Revival
- Mediterranean Revival
- Monterey Revival
- Tudor Revival
- Minimal Traditional
- Mid-Century Modern
- Traditional Ranch
- American Colonial Ranch

The following pages contain a brief discussion of each of these styles, including its historical origins, its presence in the survey area, a list of character-defining features, and field photographs of representative examples in Holmby Westwood.

Additional styles represented in Holmby Westwood from the period of significance, but less common in number, including Georgian Revival, Dutch Colonial Revival, French Norman Revival, Hacienda Ranch, Pueblo Revival, Romanesque Revival, Early Modern, Streamline Moderne, Late Moderne, Hollywood Regency, Minimal Ranch, Cape Cod Ranch, and Contemporary Ranch. Additional properties may not display a historic architectural style, typically because they have been substantially altered or were constructed outside the period of significance.

Architectural Styles in Holmby Westwood (1925-1959)
Neoclassical

The Neoclassical style includes elements of the late-18th century Classical Revival and Federal styles, as well as the early-19th century Greek Revival style, sometimes combining them in the same building. The Classical Revival style was influenced by the work of the 16th century Italian architect Andrea Palladio, who adapted Roman temple forms to residential design. The style is characterized by a dominant entrance portico, usually full height, with classical columns supporting a pediment, and the frequent use of the tripartite Venetian (Palladian) window as a focal point. In the United States, the Classical Revival style was championed by Thomas Jefferson, whose designs for the Virginia state capitol, the University of Virginia, and his own home at Monticello, are among the finest American examples of the style.

Neoclassical styles did not achieve the broader popularity of their related American Colonial Revival contemporary in the 1920s and 1930s. The style is best identified by its symmetrical façade, typically dominated by a full-height porch with the roof supported by classical columns. Later examples begin to show influences of the Regency Revival, including attenuated columns. Like the Renaissance Revival, the Neoclassical style was widely used for imposing civic buildings, institutional buildings, and banks, as well as residential designs. In Holmby Westwood, the Neoclassical style enjoyed only a brief period of popularity. Extant examples of the style date primarily from the late 1930s through the early 1940s.

Character-defining features:

- Symmetrical façade
- Rectangular plan, sometimes with side wings
- Low-pitched hipped or side-gable roof
- Exterior walls clad in masonry veneer or horizontal wood siding
- Paneled wood entrance door with sidelights, transom light, and classical surround
- Double-hung, divided-light wood windows, sometimes with louvered wood shutters
- Venetian (Palladian) window or round or elliptical accent windows
- Semicircular or elliptical fanlights over entrance doors
- Pedimented entrance portico, usually full height, supported on classical columns
- Wide classical entablatures
- Roof balustrade
Holmby Westwood Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
American Colonial Revival

American Colonial Revival describes a varied style that combines a number of architectural features found throughout the American Colonies, particularly in New England. The style has neither the strict formality of the Georgian Revival nor the decorative embellishments of the Neoclassical style, although it sometimes incorporates elements of both. It also adapts elements of Dutch colonial architecture, such as the gambrel roof. American Colonial Revival buildings are typically one or two stories in height, and often symmetrically balanced. They typically feature side- or cross-gable roofs, sometimes with gabled dormers. Exterior walls are clad in horizontal wood siding and occasionally brick. Fenestration is usually composed of double-hung, divided-light wood windows, often with louvered wood shutters. Other features include prominent brick chimneys; paneled wood doors, sometimes with sidelights, transom lights, or fanlights; and restrained use of Classical details. Some American Colonial Revival houses have small, recessed porches with exaggerated surrounds, while others have shed-roofed porches supported on wood posts.

The U.S. Centennial Exposition of 1876 fostered an interest in the styles of the Colonial era. Early examples of a revival style in the late-19th century were rarely accurate reproductions, but were instead free interpretations with details inspired by colonial precedents, while later examples shifted to more historically correct proportions and details. The American Colonial Revival style was popular for grand homes in the early 20th century, and by the 1920s was being applied to more modest homes. The restoration of Colonial Williamsburg in the 1930s refueled interest in the style, and it remained popular into the post-World War II era.

American Colonial Revival is the most frequently exhibited architectural style in Holmby Westwood, comprising approximately 30% of extant residences dating from the period of significance. The style was most popular here from the late 1920s into the 1940s, when the neighborhood was experiencing its greatest period of growth. Holmby Westwood contains an excellent collection of extant examples in various iterations. Some residences represent a high-style interpretation of the style – with multiple Colonial details, such as porticos, pediments, and pilasters – while other examples display a more restrained interpretation of the style, with minimal detailing.

Character-defining features:

- Side-gable or cross-gable roof
- Asymmetrical or symmetrical façade composition
- Horizontal wood siding, masonry veneer, or a combination
- Paneled wood entry door, often sometimes with sidelights, transom light, or fanlight
- Double-hung, divided-light wood windows
- Paneled or louvered wood shutters
- Small recessed entry porch with exaggerated surrounds
- Gabled roof or wall dormers
- Prominent brick chimney, typically on a side façade
- Colonial details, such as porticos, pediments, and pilasters

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Holmby Westwood
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
Holmby Westwood
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
Holmby Westwood Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
Spanish Colonial Revival

The Spanish Colonial Revival style attained widespread popularity throughout Southern California following the 1915 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego, designed by chief architect Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue in the late Baroque Churrigueresque style of Spain and Mexico. The Churrigueresque style features areas of intricate ornamentation juxtaposed against plain stucco wall surfaces and accented with towers and domes. While this style lent itself to monumental public edifices, churches, and theaters, it was less suited to residential or smaller scale commercial architecture. For those, architects drew inspiration from provincial Spain, particularly the arid southern region of Andalusia. The resulting style was based on infinitely creative combinations of plaster, tile, wood, and iron. The Spanish Colonial Revival style was a deliberate attempt to develop a “native” California architectural style that romanticized the area’s colonial past, though it bore little resemblance to the missions and rustic adobe ranch houses that comprised the state’s actual colonial-era buildings.

The popularity of the Spanish Colonial Revival style extended across nearly all property types – including residential, commercial, and institutional buildings – and coincided with Southern California’s population boom of the 1920s. The style shaped the region’s expansion for nearly two decades, reaching a high point in 1929 and tapering off through the 1930s as the Great Depression gradually took hold. Like other revival styles, Spanish Colonial Revival was often simplified, reduced to its signature elements, or creatively combined with design features of other Mediterranean regions such as Italy, southern France, and North Africa.

The Spanish Colonial Revival style was widely adopted throughout Holmby Westwood. The Janss Investment Corporation favored this style, along with the Mediterranean Revival style, for Holmby Westwood, as it harmonized with both the nearby university campus buildings as well as the buildings of Westwood Village. As a result, many of the homes constructed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style date from Holmby Westwood’s earliest period of development, when many of the houses were built by Janss Corporation architects. Today, it is the second most frequently exhibited style within the neighborhood, after American Colonial Revival, comprising approximately 20% of extant residences dating from the period of significance.

Character-defining features:

- Asymmetrical façade
- Irregular plan and complex horizontal massing
- Varied gable or hipped roofs, low pitched, with clay barrel tiles
- Plastered exterior walls forming wide, uninterrupted expanses
- Divided-light wood double-hung or casement windows
- Round, pointed, or parabolic arched openings
- Arcades or colonnades
- Decorative grilles of wood, wrought iron, or plaster
- Balconies, patios or towers
- Decorative terra cotta or glazed ceramic tile work

HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY
Holmby Westwood
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
Holmby Westwood
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
Holmby Westwood Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
Mediterranean Revival

The Mediterranean Revival style is distinguished by its eclectic mix of architectural elements from several regions around the Mediterranean Sea, including Spain, Italy, southern France, and North Africa. Much of the American architecture of the late-19th and early-20th centuries can be broadly classified as Mediterranean in origin, including the Beaux Arts, Mission Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, and Italian Renaissance Revival styles. By the 1920s, the lines between these individual styles were frequently blurred and their distinguishing characteristics blended by architects who drew inspiration from throughout the Mediterranean region. These imaginative combinations of details from varied architectural traditions resulted in the emergence of a distinct Mediterranean Revival style.

In contrast to the more literal interpretations from the region, such as the Spanish Colonial Revival and Italian Renaissance Revival styles, the broader Mediterranean Revival style frequently incorporated elements of Italian and Spanish Renaissance, Provençal, Venetian Gothic, and Moorish architecture into a single design. The Mediterranean Revival style is sometimes more formal and usually more elaborately composed and ornamented than the simpler, more rustic Spanish Colonial Revival style, and often more flamboyant than the sober Italian Renaissance Revival style. Typical features of the Mediterranean Revival style include arched entrance doorways with richly detailed surrounds; arcades and loggias; stairways and terraces with cast stone balustrades; and Classical decorative elements in cast stone or plaster, including architraves, stringcourses, cornices, pilasters, columns, and quoins.

In Holmby Westwood, the Mediterranean Revival style never experienced the same level of popularity as did the closely related Spanish Colonial Revival style. However, the neighborhood retains numerous intact examples of the style dating from the late-1920s through the mid-1930s.

Character-defining features include:

- Symmetrical façade
- Two stories and rectangular plan
- Low-pitched hipped roof with clay barrel tiles, with boxed or bracketed eaves
- Exterior walls typically clad in smooth plaster, occasionally masonry veneer
- Wood casement windows, typically with divided lights; sometimes double-hung
- Rounded arch door or window openings
- Elaborate entries or door surrounds
- Arcades, colonnades, or loggias
- Cast stone or plaster decorative elements including architraves, stringcourses, cornices, pilasters, columns, quoins, and balustrades
- Decorative grilles of wood, wrought iron, or plaster
- Balconies, patios or towers
- Decorative terra cotta or glazed ceramic tile work
Holmby Westwood
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
Monterey Revival

The Monterey Revival style is based upon the distinctive style of residential architecture that developed in California beginning in the 1830s, as more and more Yankee merchants and settlers arrived in Alta California and adapted the Anglo building traditions of the East Coast to local Hispanic customs. As its name implies, the style developed in and around Monterey and combined vernacular adobe construction with elements of American Federal and Greek Revival architecture, including divided-light wood sash windows, louvered shutters, paneled doors, and Classical details executed in wood. The style’s most distinguishing characteristic is a prominent second-floor covered wood balcony, often cantilevered, extending along most or all of the primary façade.

The style was revived beginning in the mid-1920s and was favored by architects and homeowners who perhaps found the fantastical Spanish and Mediterranean revivals too exotic and too different from the building traditions familiar to most Americans. The Monterey Revival style originally replaced adobe construction with wood framed walls veneered in smooth plaster and devoid of surface ornament, and featured second-story balconies, low-pitched gable or hipped roofs, and double-hung wood windows.

In Holmby Westwood, the Monterey Revival style appeared primarily during the 1930s and 1940s. Today, the neighborhood retains numerous intact examples, exhibiting both the American Colonial Revival and the Spanish Colonial Revival versions of the style.

Character-defining features:

- Usually asymmetrical façade
- Two-story height with rectangular or L-shaped plan
- Low-pitched hipped or side-gable roofs, with wood shakes or clay tiles
- Wood, plaster or masonry veneer exterior walls
- Prominent, covered second-story wood balcony, typically cantilevered, typically with simple wood posts and wood or metal railing
- Wood double-hung windows, typically with divided lights
- Louvered or paneled wood shutters
- Recessed entrances with paneled wood doors
Historic Resources Survey
Holmby Westwood
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
Tudor Revival

The Tudor Revival style is loosely based on a variety of late medieval English building traditions including Gothic, Tudor, Elizabethan, and Jacobean. It has its origins in the late-19th century English Arts and Crafts movement, whose leaders drew inspiration from English domestic architecture of the 16th and 17th centuries, because of its picturesque qualities and sympathetic relationship to the natural landscape. The earliest examples of the style appeared in the United States in large estates of the 1890s. The Tudor Revival style grew in favor after World War I and reached its peak of popularity in the 1920s and 1930s, as architects and developers adapted it to the country’s rapidly growing suburban residential communities. Advancements in masonry veneering techniques allowed even the most modest examples to emulate the brick and stone exteriors of English prototypes.

High-style Tudor Revival houses are typically two and sometimes three stories in height with steeply-pitched, multi-gable roofs. Slate roof shingles are found in the finer examples, but wood shakes and composition shingles are also common. At least one front-facing gable is almost universally present as a dominant façade element. The buildings are usually rambling compositions of multiple volumes in a variety of sizes and shapes. Exterior walls are veneered in a combination of brick, stone, or plaster, and feature decorative half-timbering which mimics the appearance of medieval construction techniques. Tall, narrow casement windows, sometimes with leaded diamond-shaped lights, are frequently set in horizontal groupings or projecting bays. Main entrances are frequently set in crenellated turrets or under secondary gables with cat slides, and feature paneled wood doors framed by four-centered pointed arches. Projecting exterior chimneys with multiple flues and elaborate brickwork are sometimes located on the primary façade.

Holmby Westwood contains numerous examples of the Tudor Revival style dating from the late 1920s through the 1940s, with many examples dating from the neighborhood’s earliest years of construction. Today, it is the third most popular architecture style in Holmby Westwood, after American Colonial Revival and Spanish Colonial Revival.

Character-defining features:

- Asymmetrical façade and irregular massing
- Steeply-pitched multi-gabled roof with a prominent front-facing gable
- Slate, wood shake, or composition roofing
- Brick, stone or plaster exterior wall cladding, typically with decorative wood half-timbering
- Tall, narrow divided-light windows, usually casement, often grouped horizontally or in bays; may have leaded diamond-shaped lights
- Entrance set in turret or under secondary gable
- Pointed or segmental arch openings
- Prominent chimney with elaborate brickwork, often on the primary façade; may have multiple chimney pots
Holmby Westwood Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY

Holmby Westwood Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)

10557 W. Wyton Drive, 1936.

372 S. Hilgard Avenue, 1931.

237 S. Woodruff Avenue, 1932.

253 S. Conway Avenue, 1929.

706 S. Thayer Avenue, 1930.

10531 W. Garwood Place, 1929.
Minimal Traditional

The Minimal Traditional style is defined by simple exterior forms and a restrained use of traditional architectural detailing. The Minimal Traditional house was immensely popular in large suburban residential developments throughout the United States during the 1940s and early 1950s. The style had its origins in the principles of the Modern movement and the requirements of the FHA and other Federal programs of the 1930s. Its open plan reflected the developer’s desire for greater efficiency. Modern construction methods addressed the builder’s need to reduce costs and keep homes affordable to the middle class. Conventional detailing appealed to conservative home buyers and mortgage companies. In Southern California, the style is closely associated with large-scale residential developments of the World War II and postwar periods. Primarily associated with the detached single family house, Minimal Traditional detailing may also be applied to two-story houses and apartment buildings of the same period.

In Holmby Westwood, the Minimal Traditional style first appeared in the late 1930s and remained a popular choice through the 1940s and into the 1950s, exemplifying the transition from earlier period revival styles to the more modern styles of the postwar era. The Minimal Traditional style frequently adopted some degree of American Colonial Revival detailing, resulting in a more restrained version of the style.

Character-defining features:

- Simple massing and rectangular plan
- Medium or low-pitched hip or side-gable roof with shallow eaves
- Smooth stucco wall cladding, often with wood lap or stone veneer accents
- Divided-light windows, typically double-hung wood, but occasionally steel casement; may also have a picture window or projecting three-sided oriel
- Louvered wood shutters
- Shallow entry porch with slender wood supports
- Absence of decorative exterior detailing
Holmby Westwood Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
Mid-Century Modern

Mid-Century Modern is a term used to describe the post-World War II iteration of the International Style in both residential and commercial design. The International Style was characterized by geometric forms, smooth wall surfaces, and an absence of exterior decoration. Mid-Century Modern represents the adaptation of these elements to the local climate and topography, as well as to the postwar need for efficiently-built, moderately-priced homes. In Southern California, this often meant the use of wood post-and-beam construction. Mid-Century Modernism is often characterized by a clear expression of structure and materials, large expanses of glass, and open interior plans.

The roots of the style can be traced to early Modernists like Richard Neutra and Rudolph Schindler, whose local work inspired “second generation” Modern architects like Gregory Ain, Craig Ellwood, Harwell Hamilton Harris, Pierre Koenig, Raphael Soriano, and many more. These postwar architects developed an indigenous Modernism that was born from the International Style but matured into a fundamentally regional style, fostered in part by Art & Architecture magazine’s pivotal Case Study Program which operated from 1945 to 1966. The style gained popularity because its use of standardized, prefabricated materials permitted quick and economical construction.

In Holmby Westwood, the Mid-Century Modern style was first adopted in the 1940s, and remained one of the most prevailing aesthetics adopted by postwar development into the 1960s. The neighborhood retains numerous examples of the style dating primarily from the late-1940s through the mid-1950s.

Character-defining features:

- Horizontal massing
- Simple geometric forms
- Expressed post-and-beam construction, in wood or steel
- Flat roof or low-pitched gable roof with wide overhanging eaves and cantilevered canopies
- Wood, plaster, brick or stone used as exterior wall panels or accent materials
- Flush-mounted metal frame windows and sliding doors; sometimes clerestory windows
- Exterior staircases, decks, patios and balconies
- Unadorned wall surfaces with little or no exterior decorative detailing

HISTORICRESOURCESURVEY

Holmby Westwood
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
Holmby Westwood Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
Ranch (Traditional, American Colonial Revival)

The Ranch house is connected to many trends in California architecture since 1900, including the evolution of a regional architecture and the development of mass production for houses. California played a major role in the creation of the ranch house, beginning before World War II. In Los Angeles, the Ranch style’s major impact came in its use in mass-produced housing tracts of the 1940s through the 1960s, particularly on the city’s Westside and in the San Fernando Valley, although it is also seen in custom home design as well.

Informal in composition, the Ranch style included many of the same spatial and structural tendencies seen in other Modern residential architecture of the period, though in a more moderate manner. It responded to the development and lifestyle of modern suburbia permitted by the automobile, to the mid-century economy which encouraged single-family homes, as well as the leisure-oriented indoor-outdoor lifestyle those homes allowed. Innovations in construction materials and building technology allowed Ranch-style homes to be constructed with an open floor plan. The style was also easily adaptable to include elements of Period Revival or historical vernacular detailing, which resulted in many variations of the basic Ranch style.

Holmby Westwood exhibits examples of numerous Ranch style, most commonly the Traditional Ranch and the American Colonial Revival Ranch styles. The earliest examples date to the mid-1930s, and versions the style remained popular through the 1950s.

Character-defining features:

- Low, horizontal massing with the wider façade oriented toward the street
- Low-pitch hipped and cross-gable roofs, often with wood shingles or shakes
- Wide open eaves with exposed rafter tails
- Mix of wall cladding materials, including stucco, wood board and batten, wood clapboard, and brick veneer
- Divided-light, double-hung wood windows, often with diamond panes; may also have a picture window
- Wide front porch with wood posts
- Brick or stone chimney
- Decorative wood details, including dovecotes, cupolas, bargeboards, and shutters
- Attached garage, accentuating the horizontal emphasis
- Colonial Revival type may incorporates various Colonial features, such as roof dormers, boxed eaves and column porch supports
HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY

Holmby Westwood
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)

10480 W. Sunset Boulevard, 1953.
521 S. Loring Avenue, 1941.
201 S. Conway Avenue, 1950.
10414 W. Lindbrook Drive, 1935.
241 S. Loring Avenue, 1952.
272 S. Woodruff Avenue, 1937.
This historic resources survey has determined that the Holmby Westwood survey area is eligible for designation as a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (1) as an excellent example of residential suburban planning and development from the early automobile era in West Los Angeles, and (2) as a cohesive collection of predominantly Period Revival residential architecture in Westwood.\footnote{111}

Specifically, Holmby Westwood has been evaluated as significant under the following context/theme/property type (CTP) combinations, as established by SurveyLA:

- Context: Residential Development & Suburbanization, 1880-1980
  Theme: Automobile Suburbanization, 1908-1937
  Sub-Theme: Suburban Planning & Development, 1908-1937
  Property Type: Automobile Suburb

- Context: Architecture & Engineering, 1850-1980
  Theme: Housing the Masses, 1880-1975
  Sub-Theme: Period Revival Neighborhoods, 1918-1942
  Property Type: Automobile Suburb

The period of significance for the proposed HPOZ is 1925 to 1959, comprising the area’s primary period of development. The proposed HPOZ’s boundaries conform with those of the Holmby Westwood survey area, bounded by Sunset Boulevard to the north, S. Beverly Glen Boulevard and Comstock Avenue to the east, and Malcom and Hilgard avenues to the west. The southern boundary is formed by the rear lot lines of properties on the south side of Lindbrook Avenue. The multi-family residences on east side of Hilgard Avenue between Weyburn and Westholme are not part of the survey area.

Properties evaluated as contributing to the proposed HPOZ, either as Contributors or Altered Contributors, add to the historic architectural qualities and/or historic associations for which the survey area is significant; were present during the survey area’s identified period of significance; and possess historic integrity reflecting their character at that time. Retention of these properties would therefore contribute to the preservation and protection of Holmby Westwood, an area of historic interest in the City of Los Angeles. As such, these properties meet the City’s criteria for contributing properties to a proposed HPOZ, as outlined in Section 12.20.3 the Municipal Code.

The Holmby Westwood Proposed HPOZ contains 1044 parcels. Of these, 513 have been evaluated as Contributors to the district (approximately 49%), and 139 as Altered Contributors (approximately 13%), for a combined district contribution rate of 62 percent. An additional 373 properties were evaluated as Non-Contributors due to extensive alterations or construction outside the period of significance. Nineteen properties are not visible from the public right-of-way.

\footnote{111}{For the purposes of SurveyLA, the Holmby Westwood survey area was also evaluated as appearing eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources and the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district. Additionally, several properties were also evaluated as individually eligible, including St. Alban’s Church, Fire Station No. 1, and a number of residences designed by noted architects.}

HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY

Holmby Westwood
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
Character-defining features of the Holmby Westwood Proposed HPOZ which should be protected and preserved include:

- Gently-sloping topography
- Curvilinear interior street pattern
- Existing lot sizes
- Existing single-family residential zoning
- Overall size, scale and massing of individual residences
- Uniform front and side setbacks
- Existing architectural character, composed of various period revival and Modern styles of the 1920s through 1950s
- Concrete sidewalks, curbs and driveways
- Landscaped parkways
- Mature street trees, particularly those dating from the original period of development
- Period streetlights

For a complete list of all properties evaluated within the Holmby Westwood survey area, see the Summary of Survey Results in Appendix E.
Holmby Westwood Context Views.

W. Charing Cross Road, southeast view.

S. Loring Avenue, southeast view.

S. Woodruff Avenue at W. Wyton Drive, west view.

S. Loring Avenue at W. Wyton Drive, south view.

S. Woodruff Avenue at W. Charing Cross Road, north view.

S. Comstock Avenue at S. Loring Avenue, southwest view.

HISTORICRESOURCESURVEY
Holmby Westwood Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
Holmby Westwood
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
Map of Survey Results.

Holmby Westwood Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)

Evaluations
- 513 Contributors
- 139 Altered Contributors
- 373 Non-Contributors
- 19 Not Sure/Not Visible

Percentages
- 49% Contributors
- 13% Altered Contributors
- 36% Non-Contributors
- 2% Not Sure/Not Visible
RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations for the designation and protection of the Holmby Westwood Proposed HPOZ. These recommendations are based upon standard preservation guidelines and practices as reflected in technical publications from the National Park Service, the California Office of Historic Preservation, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

- **Apply for HPOZ Designation** – With this historic resources survey report, a formal application for local historic district designation as a Los Angeles Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) should be made through the Department of City Planning. The Planning Department reviews the application for completeness and accuracy, and holds public workshops and hearings in the community before taking the HPOZ through the adoption process. An HPOZ becomes effective only after the completed historic resources survey is certified by the Cultural Heritage Commission. Because the HPOZ includes changes to zoning within the proposed area, it must be adopted as an ordinance by the Planning Commission and the City Council.

- **Develop a Preservation Plan** – Prepared as part of the HPOZ adoption process, the purpose of a preservation plan is to ensure the protection of the neighborhood’s historic resources while allowing for compatible new development. A preservation plan is specific to a particular HPOZ and clarifies and elaborate upon the review criteria established under the HPOZ Ordinance. Through its goals and objectives, as well as its design guidelines, a preservation plan creates a predictable set of expectations as to the design and review of proposed projects within the HPOZ.

- **Establish a Historic Preservation Board** – Established as part of the HPOZ adoption process, the historic preservation board administers the HPOZ and makes recommendations to the Cultural Heritage Commission, Planning Commission, and City Council. The board is comprised of five members, at least three of whom must be owners or renters who reside in the HPOZ.

- **Ensure Consistency of Existing Design Review** – Currently, the HWPOA has an architectural review committee which has jurisdiction over approximately half of the properties within the Holmby Westwood survey area with renewed CC&Rs. The committee’s design review process should be reviewed for consistency with standard preservation practice, the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, and the HPOZ preservation plan.

- **Encourage the Use of Financial Incentives** – Designation of a historic district is known to enhance property values and stabilize neighborhoods and/or communities. In addition, historic designation can make properties eligible for a wide range of financial and other incentives, including the Mills Act program, preservation easements, and fee waivers. The board should consider developing educational materials to encourage property owners and residents to take advantage of these incentive programs.
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following terms describe established historic preservation concepts that are based in cultural resources law at the Federal, state, and local levels. These concepts have been codified in standards and guidelines developed by the National Park Service, the Department of the Interior, and professional practitioners, including historians, architects, archeologists, and urban planners. These concepts are defined below.

ALTERATION is any exterior change or modification to a site, building, structure, or object within a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone, including but not limited to changing exterior paint color, removal of significant trees or landscaping, installation or removal of fencing, street features, furniture or fixtures.

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES are the essential physical features that enable a site, building, structure, or object to convey its significance. It is not necessary for a property to retain all of its historic physical features or characteristics. However, the property must retain sufficient physical features such that it conveys why it is historically significant.

CONTRIBUTOR is any site, building, structure, or object identified in a historic resources survey as contributing to the historic significance of a historic district, including one which has been altered, where the nature and extent of the alterations are determined reversible by the historic resources survey.

DESIGNATION is the act of recognizing, labeling, or listing a property as being historic. Properties may be designated at the Federal level, as a National Historic Landmark or listed in the National Register of Historic Places; at the state level, as a California Historical Landmark or Point of Interest or listed in the California Register of Historical Resources; or at the local level. Designation formally establishes by law or ordinance that a building or site has significance.

HISTORIC CONTEXT is the area or domain within which a property has historic significance. Historic contexts allow for an understanding of how the property is a part of an important historic development or event. A historic context statement is a narrative development history of an area tied to its extant built resources.

HISTORIC DISTRICT is a significant concentration, linkage or continuity of sites, buildings, structures or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.

HISTORIC INTEGRITY is the ability of a property to convey its significance. It is the authenticity of a property’s historic identity as evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics and materials that existed during the property’s historic period. The National Park Service has defined seven aspects of integrity: Location, Design, Setting, materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association.

HISTORIC PROPERTY or HISTORIC RESOURCE is a site, building, structure, object or district that has been determined to be historically significant and to retain integrity.

HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY is the process by which a community’s historic resources are identified and documented. A reconnaissance-level survey is a cursory look at an area with some general background research, used to broadly characterize the types of resources that would be found in an area in order to

Holmby Westwood
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
guide future survey efforts. An intensive-level survey is a close and careful inspection of an area in order to precisely identify all historic resources.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE is the reason a property is important to the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture of a community, state, or the nation. A property may be significant for its association with an event, person, or an important development trend; or as a notable example of particular building type or architectural style. Significance is defined by the area of history in which the property made an important contribution and by the period of time when these contributions were made. Establishing historic significance is necessary to demonstrate that a property has been evaluated within the proper historic context and according to appropriate criteria, such as those required for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, or a local designation program.

NON-CONTRIBUTOR is any site, building, structure or object identified in a historic resources survey as not contributing to the historic significance of a historic district, or not listed in a historic resources survey. Generally, non-contributors are those properties that have been extensively altered, were constructed outside the period of significance defined for the historic district, or do not represent the historic contexts and themes for which the historic district has been evaluated as historically significant.

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE is the span of time during which a property was associated with important events, activities, or persons, or attained the characteristics that qualify it as historic.

PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY is the dedicated area that includes roadways, medians and/or sidewalks.

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR’S STANDARDS & GUIDELINES are used in the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, or reconstruction of historic properties. The Standards delineate accepted treatments for the protection and rehabilitation of historic materials.

SURVEY REPORT is a document which presents the results of a historic resources survey, typically including a description of the survey area, survey methodology, historic context statement, field observations, detailed background research, and thorough documentation of all surveyed properties.
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