

HISTORIC RESOURCES REPORT 1600 W. FIFTH STREET OXNARD, CA

18 February 2008

Prepared for:

Lauterbach & Associates, Architects
300 Montgomery Avenue
Oxnard, CA 93036

Prepared by:



1. Introduction

This report was prepared for the purpose of assisting the City of Oxnard in their compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as it relates to historic resources, in connection with the redevelopment of a property located at 1600 West Fifth Street. This project will result in the demolition of an existing apartment complex known as the Mira Loma Apartments, constructed in 1941 through 1963, and the construction of a new residential development. [Figure 1]

This report assesses the historical and architectural significance of potentially significant historic properties in accordance with the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) Criteria for Evaluation, and City of Oxnard evaluation standards. A determination will be made as to whether adverse environmental impacts on historic resources, as defined by CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, may occur as a consequence of the proposed project, and recommend the adoption of mitigation measures, as appropriate.

This report was prepared by San Buenaventura Research Associates of Santa Paula, California, Judy Triem, Historian; and Mitch Stone, Preservation Planner, for Lauterbach & Associates, Architects, and is based on a field investigation and research conducted in December 2007 through February 2008. The conclusions contained herein represent the professional opinions of San Buenaventura Research Associates, and are based on the factual data available at the time of its preparation, the application of the appropriate local, state and federal regulations, and best professional practices.

2. Administrative Setting

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires evaluation of project impacts on historic resources, including properties "listed in, or determined eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources [or] included in a local register of historical resources." A resource is eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources if it meets any of the criteria for listing, which are:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
2. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. (PRC §5024.1(c))

By definition, the California Register of Historical Resources also includes all "properties formally determined eligible for, or listed in, the National Register of Historic Places," and certain specified State Historical Landmarks. The majority of "formal determinations" of NRHP eligibility occur when properties are evaluated by the State Office of Historic Preservation in connection with federal environmental review procedures (Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966). Formal determinations of eligibility also occur when properties are nominated to the NRHP, but are not listed due to owner objection.

The criteria for determining eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) have been developed by the National Park Service. Eligible properties include districts, sites, buildings and structures,

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

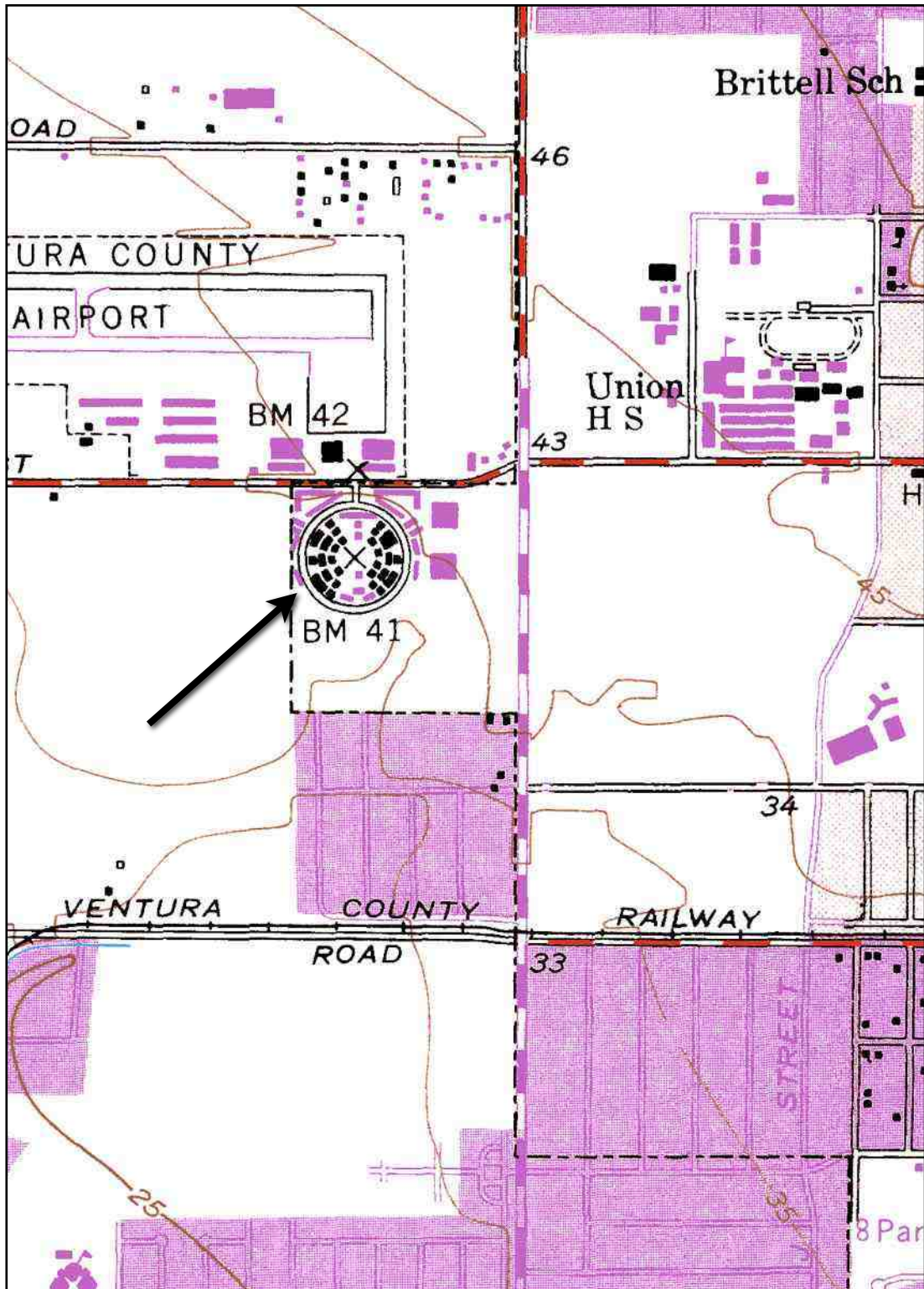


Figure 1. Site Location [USGS 7.5' Quadrangle, Oxnard, CA, 1949 rev 1967]

D. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

According to the National Register of Historic Places guidelines, the “essential physical features” of a property must be present for it to convey its significance. Further, in order to qualify for the NRHP, a resource must retain its integrity, or “the ability of a property to convey its significance.”

The seven aspects of integrity are: Location (the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred); Design (the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property); Setting (the physical environment of a historic property); Materials (the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property); Workmanship (the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period of history or prehistory); Feeling (a property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time), and; Association (the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property).

The relevant aspects of integrity depend upon the National Register criteria applied to a property. For example, a property nominated under Criterion A (events), would be likely to convey its significance primarily through integrity of location, setting and association. A property nominated solely under Criterion C (design) would usually rely primarily upon integrity of design, materials and workmanship. The California Register regulations include similar language with regard to integrity, but also state that “it is possible that historical resources may not retain sufficient integrity to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register, but they may still be eligible for listing in the California Register.” (CCR §4852 (c))

The minimum age criterion for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) is 50 years. Properties less than 50 years old may be eligible for listing on the NRHP if they can be regarded as “exceptional,” as defined by the NRHP procedures, or in terms of the CRHR, “if it can be demonstrated that sufficient time has passed to understand its historical importance” (Chapter 11, Title 14, §4842(d)(2))

Historic resources as defined by CEQA also includes properties listed in “local registers” of historic properties. A “local register of historic resources” is broadly defined in §5020.1 (k) of the Public Resources Code, as “a list of properties officially designated or recognized as historically significant by a local government pursuant to a local ordinance or resolution.” Local registers of historic properties come essentially in two forms: (1) surveys of historic resources conducted by a local agency in accordance with Office of Historic Preservation procedures and standards, adopted by the local agency and maintained as current, and (2) landmarks designated under local ordinances or resolutions. These properties are “presumed to be historically or culturally significant... unless the preponderance of the evidence demonstrates that the resource is not historically or culturally significant.” (Public Resources Code §§ 5024.1, 21804.1, 15064.5)

City of Oxnard Landmark Criteria

In April 1991, the City of Oxnard adopted the Ventura County Cultural Heritage ordinance (§§1360-1374, as amended) by resolution (City of Oxnard Resolution No. 10135), including eligibility criteria and procedures, substituting references in the ordinance to the County of Ventura with the City of Oxnard. Since that time, the Ventura County Cultural Heritage Board has acted as the city’s cultural heritage board. The criteria for designating properties for listing are:

1. It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the County's social, aesthetic, engineering, architectural or natural history;
2. It is identified with persons or events which are significant in national, state or local history;
3. It shows evidence of habitation, activity or the culture of prehistoric man;
4. It embodies elements of architectural design, details, materials or craftsmanship which represents a significant structural or architectural achievement or innovation;
5. It is representative of the work of a master builder, designer, architect or artist;
6. It is imbued with traditional or legendary lore;
7. It has a unique location or singular physical characteristics or is a view or vista representing an established and familiar feature associated with a neighborhood, community or the County of Ventura;
8. It is one of the few remaining examples in the County possessing distinguishing characteristics of an architectural or historical type or specimen.

Unlike the NRHP and CRHR, this resolution does not provide for a minimum age for listing, or criteria for the level of integrity required for a property to be eligible for landmark designation. However, the resolution does provide for designating a Point of Interest, which specifically includes altered properties which may not be eligible for landmark designation. A Point of Interest is defined as a property:

- A. That is the site of a building, structure or object that no longer exists but was associated with historic events, important persons or embodied a distinctive character or architectural style; or
- B. That has historic significance, but has been altered to the extent that the integrity of the original workmanship materials or style has been substantially compromised; or
- C. That is the site of a historic event which has no distinguishable characteristics other than that a historic event occurred at that site, and the site is not of sufficient historical significance to justify the establishment of a landmark.

Although the ordinance provides no specific analytical standards for determining the level of integrity required for the designation of local landmarks, read together, these two sets of designation criteria suggest that at least a general standard of design integrity should be applied to the designation of landmarks.

3. Impact Thresholds and Mitigation

According to PRC §21084.1, "a project that may cause a substantial change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment." The Public Resources Code broadly defines a threshold for determining if the impacts of a project on an historic property will be significant and adverse. By definition, a substantial adverse change means, "demolition, destruction, relocation, or alterations," such that the significance of an historical resource would be impaired (PRC §5020.1(6)). For purposes of NRHP eligibility, reductions in a resource's integrity (the ability of the property to convey its significance) should be regarded as potentially adverse impacts.

Further, according to the CEQA Guidelines, "an historical resource is materially impaired when a project... [d]emolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for, inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources [or] that account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources pursuant to section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code or its identification in an historical resources survey meeting the requirements of section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code, unless the public

agency reviewing the effects of the project establishes by a preponderance of evidence that the resource is not historically or culturally significant.”

The lead agency is responsible for the identification of “potentially feasible measures to mitigate significant adverse changes in the significance of an historical resource.” The specified methodology for determining if impacts are mitigated to less than significant levels are the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* and the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* (1995), publications of the National Park Service. (PRC §15064.5(b)(3-4))

4. Historical Setting

General Historical Context

Rancho El Rio de Santa Clara, otherwise known as La Colonia, was granted equally to eight soldiers who served the Mexican government during Governor Juan Alvarado’s term. The soldiers receiving the grant on September 28, 1840 were Valentin Cota, Vicente Feliz, Leandro Gonzalez, Rafael Gonzalez, Vicente Pico, Rafael Valdez, Jose Maria Valenzuela and Salvador Valenzuela. Its 44,883 acres covered most of what is now called the Oxnard Plain. (Hutchinson, 1965: 163)

During this period Rafael Gonzales appears to be the only soldier who resided on the grant. An adobe house was built and was referred to as the Gonzales adobe. Gonzales Boulevard recalls the approximate location of the land owned by the family. Land uses during the Rancho Period were characterized by the use of granted lands for low-intensity agriculture, particularly cattle and sheep grazing. The character and extent of human use of the land would have been largely unchanged from the Mission period, however, with only a minor increase in intensity and little or no increase in population.

In 1864 a large portion of Rancho La Colonia, 32,100 of the original 44,883 acres, had been sold to Pennsylvania capitalist Thomas Scott. The transaction was overseen by Scott’s agent in California, Thomas Bard, who also purchased several other Ventura County ranchos for the purpose of oil exploration. During the 1860s and 1870s, a few settlers began to lease or purchase land from Bard for raising grain or grazing sheep and cattle.

The first 160 acres was purchased from Scott in 1868 by Michael Kauffman. This parcel was located at the corner of Gonzales and Saviers roads. One of the largest transfers was a 5,000 acre parcel purchased by J.D. Patterson. By 1877 properties owners of portions of Rancho El Rio de Santa Clara included Bard, M. Kauffman, James Leonard, C. Borchard, D. McGrath, J.D. Pinnard, W.C. Wood, A. Hill, J. Maulhardt, John Scarlett, Wm. Rice, T.A. Rice, R.D. Barclay, P. Donlon, H.P. Flint, and G. Arnold among others. These individuals, largely immigrants from Ireland and Germany, owned at least 160 acres each and primarily raised grain and grazed stock. (Hutchinson, 1965: 152)

Thomas Bard, having purchased Rancho La Colonia from Thomas Scott, platted the town of Hueneme in 1869, in a location where he believed a natural deep water port could be established. The Hueneme wharf was completed in 1871 and provided local farmers with a place to ship grain. The Santa Clara Irrigation Company was established in 1871 and brought water along a twelve-mile-long canal from the Santa Clara River to Hueneme, supplementing a system of wells. Eucalyptus groves were planted as windbreaks, defining the boundaries between ranches, and acting as the first vertical relief on the virtually treeless plain. Thomas Bard planted the first eucalyptus and pepper trees in Hueneme in 1871. (Hutchinson, 1965: 197)

Historic Resources Report 1600 W. Fifth Street, Oxnard (Mira Loma Apartments)

During the 1880s and 1890s, farmers began to diversify and experiment with new crops. Among these were lima beans and sugar beets. Ranchers Johannes Borchard and Albert Maulhardt were the first to experiment with sugar beets, and they were to later prove instrumental in inducing the Oxnard Brothers to construct a sugar beet factory amidst the beet fields in 1898. The new townsite surrounding the factory came to be named after the four brothers.

With the success of this crop, farmers began rotating their barley and beans with sugar beets. The growth of the industry and incorporation of the town in 1903 helped bring two railroads to the Oxnard Plain: the Southern Pacific in 1898 and the Ventura County Railway, a local railroad company formed in 1907 by John Burson to service the farmers and the sugar beet industry. The main route ran down A Street to Wooley Road, where it branched west to the Patterson Ranch on Patterson Road and east to the sugar beet factory, then south to Hueneme Road and west to the wharf. (Bloom, 1959: 20)

In addition, spur routes were built to service the various farmers and beet dumps were constructed along the railroad tracks. The dump sites consisted primarily of wooden ramps, a hoist and crane that helped the farmer transfer a heavy load of sugar beets from a wagon to the railcars. The beet dumps and most of the auxiliary tracks were removed when the sugar beet factory closed in the 1950s. (Naumann, 11/10/94; Naumann, 1985: 11)

This period marked an introduction of a higher-intensity level of land cultivation with the construction of a massive sugar beet factory and an increase in population. Two new towns were established on the Oxnard Plain, Hueneme and Oxnard, in 1869 and 1903, respectively. Transportation routes were opened with the construction of the Hueneme Wharf in 1871 and the new railroad lines in 1898 and 1907.

The town of Oxnard enjoyed a steady growth, with a marked increase occurring during the regional boom period of the 1920s. Hueneme, on the other hand, actually lost population when many residents and businesses relocated to the new town of Oxnard. Agriculture continued to be the major economic industry with the continued planting of the "3 B's" as they became known—beans, beets and barley. During the 1920s and 1930s, the advent of refrigeration led to the introduction of new row crops, including celery, tomatoes and broccoli. In addition, lemon trees were planted, eventually resulting in the construction of several packing houses adjacent to the Ventura County Railroad tracks, and operated by Sunkist. (Naumann, 11/10/94)

Major physical changes occurred in Hueneme and Oxnard with the United States entrance into World War II. The deep water harbor at Port Hueneme had been completed in 1940, just two years prior to the establishment of the Naval Advanced Base Depot at Port Hueneme in 1942. On March 9, 1942, the Navy appropriated the harbor and 1,573 acres of surrounding farmland to establish the base that later became known as the Construction Battalion Center. The base served as a staging area for the shipment of construction materials to the Pacific and as a training center for the Seabees, builders of bases in the Pacific Islands. The creation of the Naval Base at Port Hueneme during World War II provided jobs for more than 10,000 civilians and 21,000 military personnel, resulting in significant population growth. (Triem, 1985: 134)

Following the war, many former servicemen and women remained to settle and work at the industries spawned by the Cold War. The Naval Air Missile Test Center was established at Point Mugu in 1946 followed by the Oxnard Air Force Base at Camarillo in 1952. The military's presence attracted many professionals including engineers, scientists, mathematicians and physicists.

A huge building boom ensued; housing tracts now sprouted on the fertile farmland. High technology Cold War industries establishing themselves in the area to accommodate the military-industrial establishment included

Historic Resources Report 1600 W. Fifth Street, Oxnard (Mira Loma Apartments)

firms such as Raytheon and Bendix Aviation. New schools and commercial shopping centers were built, expanding Oxnard south to Port Hueneme and east to Camarillo. Oxnard was to grow as a direct result of the military bases and related industries, as its population more than doubled from 8,519 in 1940 to 21,567 in 1950. In Hueneme, the population increased 300 in 1939 to 3,024 in 1950. (Triem, 1985: 135-36)

During the 1950s, the sugar beet factory closed, and farmers began to introduce new cash crops. Tree crops such as lemons were planted more heavily along with strawberries and flowers. Farmland was converted to new housing tracts, and commercial and industrial development occurred at a rapid rate, as both Oxnard and Port Hueneme continued to expand. The most recent trend is the replacement of farmland with large regional shopping centers, auto malls and housing tracts. The post-war era also marked a major period of transition for the downtown, reflecting not only the growth of the city as a whole, but its ambitions. Aggressive efforts were undertaken to improve the community's image. Residential uses in the downtown district, primarily south of Second Street and east of C Street, were steadily displaced by new commercial construction, eventually establishing A and B streets, along with Fifth Street, as the heart of the commercial district.

Site-Specific Context

The airport at Oxnard was established by the County of Ventura on farmland west of the city in 1934. The first improvements, which consisted of a 3,500 foot dirt runway, were completed with State Economic Recovery Act (SERA) funds. The runway was paved in 1938 and the first hangar constructed with Works Progress Administration (WPA) funds. The following year, the Oxnard Flying School was established on the airport.

With the Japanese invasion of China in 1938, the United States began to slowly rebuild its military capacity, which had withered after World War I and into the Great Depression. The West Coast was made a priority for new bases and shared disproportionately in Congressional defense appropriations. The German invasion of France in the Spring of 1940 resulted in a call by President Roosevelt for the expansion of aircraft production nearly tenfold from 1939 levels. With much of the military expansion over the previous two years centered on the West Coast, and a large segment of the aircraft industry already located in California, the impacts of this pre-wartime mobilization was profoundly felt in California even before the United States entered the war in December 1941. (Bean and Rawls, 1983: 366-8)

Not only was the capacity of the aircraft industry stretched to respond to this demand, so was the military's ability to train new pilots for the greatly expanded Navy and Army air services. Called upon to fill the gap were private flight schools, which worked under contract to the military to provide primary training for new pilots. Among these companies was the Cal-Aero Flight School, founded at the Glendale Grand Central Airport by Major Corliss Champion Moseley, a veteran World War I pilot who began his aviation career with the Army Signal Corp in 1917 and became involved with various aspects of commercial aviation after leaving the service. During the 1940s his company operated flight schools at airports in Glendale, Ontario, Lancaster, Chino and Oxnard. By the end of the war, Cal-Aero had was credited for training more than 25,000 pilots and 5,000 aircraft mechanics for the military. (*Los Angeles Times*, 6-19-1974)

In June 1940, Cal-Aero announced plans to quickly open flight schools at Ontario and Oxnard airports, and to expand their existing facilities in Glendale. The Oxnard school, which was named the Mira Loma Flight Academy, opened in early July 1940, with the arrival of the first class of 86 cadets. Housing was an immediate problem, which was solved temporarily by pressing the community center building, formerly the first Oxnard Union High School, into use as barracks. Major Robert L. Scott, Jr. was placed in command of the new school. (*Oxnard Press-Courier*, 6-21-1940, 7-2-1940, 10-5-1941)

Historic Resources Report 1600 W. Fifth Street, Oxnard (Mira Loma Apartments)

Ground was broken for the construction of purpose-built barracks in February 1941, on a 12 acre portion of a 40 acre bean field located on the south side of Fifth Street across from the airport. The \$300,000.00 private construction project took place on land leased by Cal-Aero from the Steinmiller estate and was designed to accommodate 270 Army Air Corps cadets, instructors and officers. The original plans called for the construction of 47 detached cottages to be grouped in three concentric circles around a central patio. The project also included the construction of an administration building, school classrooms, a recreation building, barracks, a kitchen and mess hall, and an infirmary. Construction was projected to take no more than 40 days to complete. At the same time, a second hanger was constructed on the airport at a cost of \$30,000.00.

The expansion made Mira Loma the second largest facility of its kind in Southern California, after Cal-Aero's flight school in Ontario. When the housing facility was completed in June 1941, only 36 of the 47 planned barracks buildings were reported as completed, but the number of cadets living in them was somewhat greater than originally planned. (*Oxnard Press-Courier*, 2-16-1941, 6-25-1941)

Over the next three years, cadets arrived regularly at the Mira Loma Flight School in groupings of more than one-hundred. The cadets graduated after ten weeks of intensive primary instruction, then were shipped off to complete their flight training programs at military facilities, on their way towards becoming second lieutenants in the Army Air Corps, and active service. The exact number of cadets trained at the Mira Loma Academy over the four years it was in operation is not currently known, but probably numbered in the thousands.

The training center became associated with individuals of note, including Hollywood film actor George Brent, a pilot who trained at Mira Loma Academy in 1942 to become a flight instructor. Later that year, Doris Williams became the first woman Army Air Corps flight instructor on the West Coast at Mira Loma. In 1943 actor Robert Cummings was hired as an instructor at the academy. Distinguished Service crosses were awarded to eleven graduates of Mira Loma and the Cal-Aero flight academies at Oxnard and Ontario for their participation in the 1942 Doolittle raid on Tokyo. (*Oxnard Press-Courier*, 6-7-1942, 9-9-1942, 7-7-1943, 12-2-1942)

The Navy took charge of the facility in 1944, and the name of was changed to the Naval Auxiliary Air Station Oxnard. The airport, and presumably the housing constructed for the academy, was used during this period to assemble carrier air groups. The Navy planned a major expansion of the base, including the construction of new housing, but when the Naval Air Station at Point Mugu was completed in 1945, the Navy vacated the airport and the housing, and they were returned to civilian use. The housing was declared surplus and offered for sale. (Ventura County Surveyor's Office Records, 1945)

The City of Oxnard investigated condemning the property to provide housing for veterans and potentially a city park. This effort failed, however, and in March 1946 the successful bidder for the property at auction was G. E. Kerns, a contractor from Long Beach. In June the new owner offered all of the buildings on the property for relocation. Despite active interest, it appears that few if any of the flight academy's buildings were relocated or demolished. In fact, for reasons which are presently unclear, the buildings remained vacant in the face of an acute housing shortage for the next five years. In 1951, Oxnard Industries, Inc. of Hollywood, evidently the new property owner by that time, announced that some of the existing buildings would be converted to apartments. The plan called for the alteration of the former barracks cottages to duplex rental units, at a cost of \$70,000.00. (*Oxnard Press-Courier*, 5-8-1945, 2-9-1946, 4-4-1946, 7-20-1951; Oxnard Building Permits)

In 1960 a pool replaced the patio formerly occupying the center of the complex, and in 1961, 44 new apartment units were added in fourteen new one-story buildings at a cost of \$193,000.00. Carports were also

added around the periphery of the complex. The architect for this work, which was completed in 1963, was Earl C. Rahm. By this time, or at this time, the remaining non-residential flight academy buildings within the complex were either demolished or relocated. The duplex units were re-stuccoed in 1966. The property remains in use as apartments currently. (*Oxnard Press-Courier*, 4-11-1961, 5-21-1962; Oxnard Building Permits)

5. Potential Historic Resources

General Development

The property consists of 62 buildings located on a nearly square, 17.17 acre parcel. Many of the buildings are organized in a roughly concentric circle plan. Of the total, 36 buildings were originally constructed in 1941 as barracks buildings for the Mira Loma Flight Academy. They are sited to the east and west of the center of the complex, which is defined by the pool, in three radiating arcs. These buildings were altered and converted into duplex residences in 1951. Two smaller buildings, probably also constructed in 1941, are located at the outside of these arcs on the east-west axis. Their original purpose is unknown; they are currently used as laundry rooms.

Located on the southern end of the north-south axis is the current office building and attached storage building. These buildings apparently represent the remaining portions of the substantially larger mess hall and galley building constructed in 1941. Located to the rear of this building are five, four-unit apartment buildings constructed in 1961-63. On the northern end of the north-south axis are two duplex apartment buildings, two four-unit apartment buildings, and one ten-unit apartment building, constructed in 1961-63. These buildings replaced the other non-residential Mira Loma Flight Academy buildings constructed in 1941, including the infirmary, administration, classrooms, and recreation building. This portion of the complex is embraced by a circular drive. Located on the northern-most quarter of the property are six additional apartment buildings of four to ten units each, constructed in 1961-63. Three carport buildings are located along both the eastern and western property line, also constructed in 1961-63. [Figure 2]

Office/Storage Building. This one-story building is currently used as an administrative office and storage building for the apartment complex. It represents the remaining portions of two buildings constructed in 1941 for the Mira Loma Flight Academy as the mess hall and galley. These buildings were later joined, and the balance of the pairing, approximately 70% in area, removed. The resulting building consists essentially of two rectangular plan buildings joined at the corners. The office portion of the building is stucco-clad and features a medium hipped roof with shallow, closed eaves, wood frame and aluminum windows, and a tall wrap-around open porch supported by thin posts. The triplet of windows on the northern elevation features a broken pediment over the center window. The storage building features a medium-pitched hipped and gable roof with no eaves. A wide, flat cornice band wraps around the building. Three courses of wide horizontal siding wrap the building below the window level. The balance of the building is stucco-clad, with the exception of the southern elevation, which features wide horizontal wood drop siding and a medium-pitched gable end. These details appears to represent a provisional treatment where the balance of the mess hall/galley building was previously attached. Windows are covered with plywood but appear to be wood frame surrounded by thin casings. Two large octagon windows flank the entry on the northern elevation. The double-door entry is topped with a pediment detail and covered with a shallow pent roof. The architectural style of these buildings is mildly Minimal Traditional. [Photos 2-3]

Duplex Units. These 36 one-story buildings are square in plan and feature medium hipped roofs and shallow, closed eaves and are clad in stucco. Most of the windows are modern aluminum sliders in altered windows openings. A small number of the original eight-over-eight wood sash window units remain on some of the

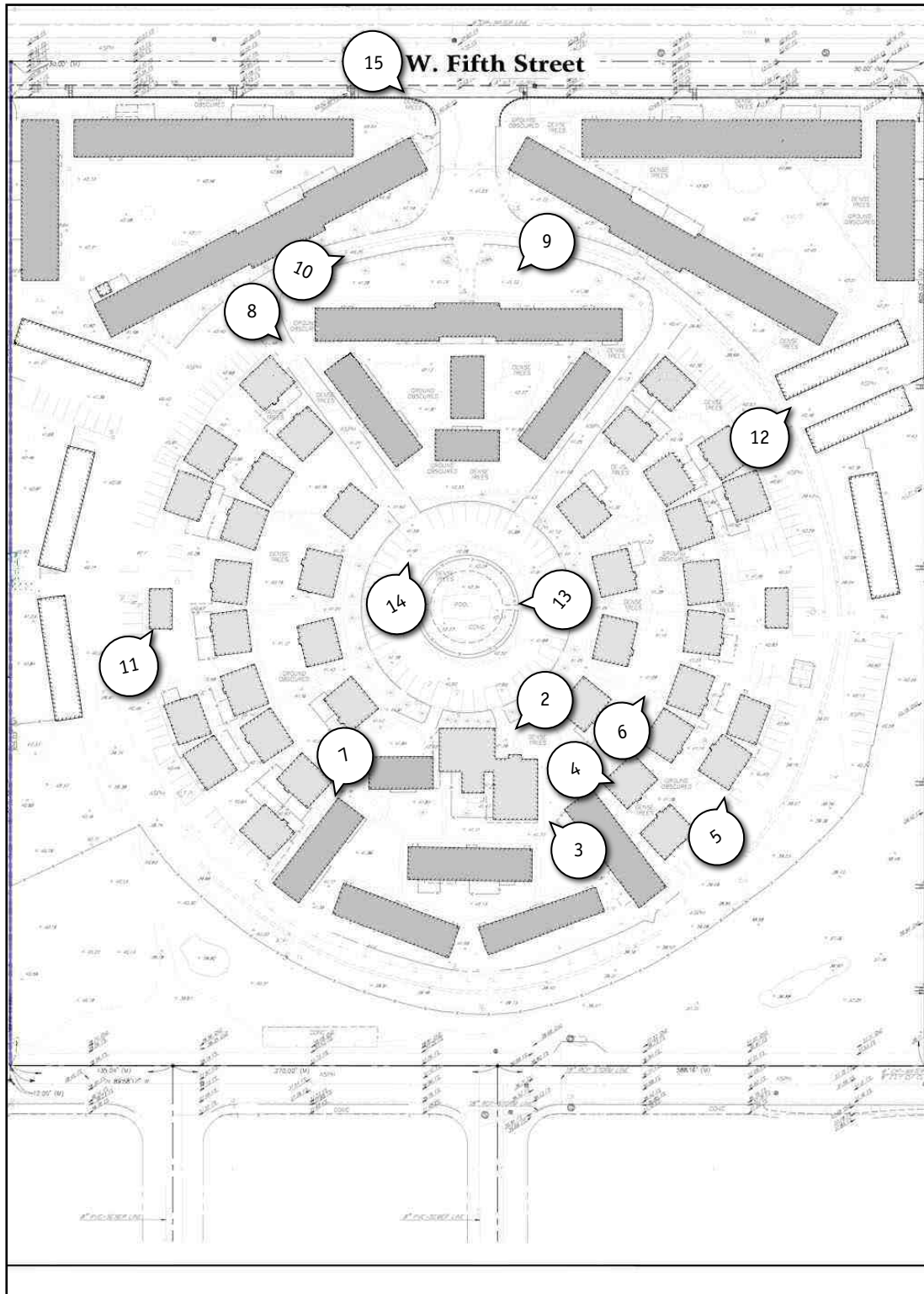


Figure 2. Site Plan and Photo Locations [Source: Lauterbach & Associates, Architects; San Buenaventura Research Associates]

buildings. Most of the buildings feature one, multi-pane octagon window. Doors are mainly solid-core contemporary units. These buildings were originally constructed in 1941 as barracks for the Mira Loma Flight Academy. They were altered to their present configuration as duplex residences in 1951. The original cladding material, which evidently was at least partially redwood clapboard, was probably replaced with stucco either at this time or in 1966. The windows and doors appear to have been altered over a period of decades. The limited available evidence suggests that these buildings also once featured open covered porches, which are now missing. [Photo 4-6]

Apartment Buildings. This category includes the balance of the residential buildings on the property constructed 1961-63, which are represented by two distinct design types. Scattered throughout the property, the first type is found in 14 one-story buildings ranging in size from two to eight units each. These buildings are stucco-clad, rectangular in plan and feature a low-pitched hipped roof with shallow boxed eaves. Windows are aluminum sliders. Some of the buildings feature two courses of wide horizontal lap siding wrapping around the elevations below the window level. Small patio areas enclosed with common red brick are located to the rears of the units. Most of the entry doors are common solid core units above low concrete stoops, but some are faux Dutch doors with decorative cornice casings. These buildings appear to range from essentially unaltered to somewhat altered. [Photos 7-8]

The second type is found in three, one story buildings, two of ten dwelling units each, and one of eleven units. These buildings are all located on the northern quarter of the property. They feature essentially rectangular plans and are characterized by central, hipped-roof sections with shallow, boxed eaves, and are clad with common red brick facing, engaged brick pilasters and an open pediment located over a pair of entry doors. Two of the three buildings feature cupolas centered on the ridge lines. Flanking these central building sections are stucco-clad wings featuring medium pitched, side-facing gable roofs and shallow, boxed eaves. Windows are aluminum sliders. The majority of the entry doors are common solid core units above low concrete stoops, but some are faux Dutch doors with decorative cornice casings. With the exception of the entry doors and the loss of one cupola, these buildings appears to be essentially unaltered. The architectural style of the apartment buildings, particularly the second type, is Minimal Traditional. [Photos 9-10]

Other Features. Additional building and landscape features of the property include the two, small stucco-clad buildings located on the edges of the east-west axis of the development. These buildings were apparently constructed in 1941 for the Mira Loma Flight Academy, for an uncertain purpose. They are presently used as laundry rooms, and exhibit evidence of enclosed doorways and other alterations. The six, stucco-clad carport buildings constructed in 1961-63 on the eastern and western edges of the property feature rectangular plans, low-pitched hipped roofs and shallow, closed eaves. The pool constructed in 1960 at the center of the property replaced the central patio area. The property also features a wide variety of mature ornamental plantings, including palm and Eucalyptus trees. These plantings were probably added to the property during the 1950s or 1960s, as they do not appear in an aerial photograph of the property taken during the 1940s. Driveways and other pavement circulation features, with the exception of the outer drive, were probably also introduced during the 1950s or 1960s. [Photos 1, 11-15]

6. Eligibility of Historic Resources

National and California Registers: Significance, Eligibility and Integrity

The property at 1600 W. Fifth Street may be eligible for the NRHP and CRHR under Criterion 1/A (historic events). This property, together with the airport, is closely associated with the historical theme of World War II mobilization in Ventura County, a period which had a profound impact on the form and development of the

county both during the war and into the immediate postwar period. The property contributed towards this theme as one of the earliest, if not the earliest, World War II military facility in Ventura County. The Mira Loma Flight Academy is also significant within the broader historical theme of World War II mobilization, as one of the most active primary flight training centers in Southern California, likely having provided training for thousands of cadets. The Mira Loma Flight Academy consisted of both the housing and training center located on the subject property, and the hangars on the airport.

This property may be eligible for listing on the NRHP and CRHR under Criterion 2/B (historically significant individuals). World War I aviation veteran Corliss C. Moseley owned and operated several Cal-Aero flight schools during World War II, which together were responsible for training 25,000 pilots and 5,000 aircraft mechanics for the war effort. After the war, he became involved with various aspects of commercial aviation, including the co-founding of Western Airlines. He also served as a director of the Curtiss-Wright and Douglas aircraft companies. (*Los Angeles Times*, 6-19-1974)

This property does not appear to be eligible for listing for the NRHP or CRHR under Criterion 3/C (design). Although the concentric ring plan used is unusual, the property displays few distinctive characteristics of an identifiable style or type of construction. The period of significance for the property is 1941-44, the years during which it functioned as a primary flight training center.

Properties Less Than 50 Years of Age

Properties less than 50 years of age may be eligible if they can be found to be “exceptional.” While no hard and fast definition for “exceptional” is provided in the NRHP literature, the special language developed to support nominating these properties was clearly intended to accommodate properties which demonstrate a level of importance such that their historical significance can be understood without the passage of time. In general, according to NRHP literature, eligible “exceptional” properties may include, “resources so fragile that survivors of any age are unusual. [Exceptionalness] may be a function of the relative age of a community and its perceptions of old and new. It may be represented by a building or structure whose developmental or design value is quickly recognized as historically significant by the architectural or engineering profession [or] it may be reflected in a range of resources for which the community has an unusually strong associative attachment.” None of the subject properties in the study area appear to rise to the exceptional level.

Integrity Discussion

The integrity of **location** for this property is intact. None of the extant buildings appear to have been moved. The integrity of **design** for the property is largely absent. All of the 36 barracks buildings constructed in 1941 have been extensively altered, including changes to siding, windows and doors, and the removal of porches. The large common buildings formerly located along the north-south axis, which were integral to the property's function as a flight school (administration building, classrooms, recreation building, galley, mess hall, infirmary) were removed, probably during the 1950s or 1960s, with the exception of a fragment of the mess hall and galley buildings. Extensive new construction occurred on the property in 1961-63, with addition of over 80 rental units in 18 buildings and six carport buildings. The central patio was replaced by a pool and parking. Driveways were added. All of these alterations occurred after the property's period of significance.

The **setting** for the property is somewhat intact. Although the vicinity of the property has urbanized substantially during the last 25 years, the property's historic relationship to the airport remains. To the extent that the buildings are altered, their integrity of **materials** and **workmanship** are also reduced. The integrity of

Historic Resources Report
1600 W. Fifth Street, Oxnard (Mira Loma Apartments)

feeling and **association** are also significantly reduced, as the flight school activity which characterized the historic use of the property is absent.

Conclusion

On a whole, this property appears to lack the integrity required for it to be eligible for listing on the NRHP or CRHR.

Local Significance and Eligibility

This property may be eligible for designation as a City of Oxnard Landmark under City of Oxnard Resolution No. 10135 Criterion 1 (exemplifies or reflects special elements of the County's social, aesthetic, engineering, architectural or natural history) and/or Criterion 2 (is identified with persons or events which are significant in national, state or local history). However, within the last 45 years the property "has been altered to the extent that the integrity of the original workmanship materials or style has been substantially compromised" (Oxnard Resolution 10135). The Oxnard Resolution provides for designation of historically significant properties exhibiting substantial levels of alterations, or which no longer exist, as a Point of Interest. This property appears to be eligible for designation as a Point of Interest.

Conclusion

The property does not appear to be eligible for listing on the NRHP or CRHR, or for designation as a City Landmark. However, it may be eligible for designation as a Point of Interest. The Point of Interest designation was established to provide for the listing of properties which lack integrity, or are no longer extant; therefore, the demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of a Point of Interest would not result in the impairment of its eligibility for this designation. Consequently, it appears that a property which is eligible for designation only as a Point of Interest should not be regarded as an historic resource for purposes of CEQA. An alternative view of the CEQA standards is that a Point of Interest should be regarded as an historic resource for purposes of CEQA, but that its demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration would not constitute a significant adverse change to the eligibility of the resource, and therefore that these activities should not be regarded as resulting in significant adverse environmental impacts.

7. Selected Sources

Bean, Walton and Rawls, James J. *California, An Interpretive History*. McGraw-Hill: New York, 1983.

Bloom, Verna. "Oxnard ... A Social History of the Early Years." *Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. IV, No. 2, February, 1959.

City of Oxnard Building Permits.

Hutchinson, W.H. *Oil Land and Politics: The California Career of Thomas Robert Bard*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965.

Los Angeles Times, 6-19-1974.

National Register Bulletin 15: *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Interagency Resources Division, nd.

Naumann, Robert G. *Ocean View Odyssey: the Life and History of Robert G. Naumann*. Oxnard, Ca.: Robert Naumann, 1985.

Naumann, Robert G. Telephone communication with Judy Triem, 11/10/94.

Oxnard Press-Courier. 6-21-1940, 7-2-1940, 2-16-1941, 6-25-1941, 10-5-1941, 6-7-1942, 9-9-1942, 12-2-1942, 7-7-1943, 5-8-1945, 2-9-1946, 4-4-1946, 7-20-1951, 4-11-1961, 5-21-1962

Triem Judith, P. *Ventura County, Land of Good Fortune: An Illustrated History*. Chatsworth, California: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1985.

Ventura County Surveyor's Office Records. 615 Const Batt. Maint Unit, Port Hueneme Calif. NAAS Oxnard California, Area - C, April, 1945.

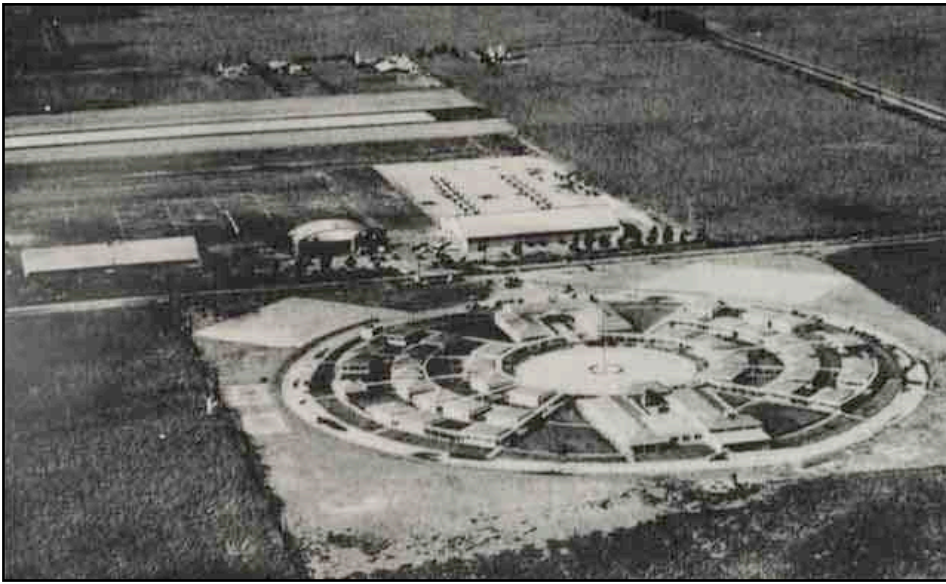


Photo 1. Mira Loma Flight Academy, oblique aerial view from south, circa 1942 [Oxnard Public Library collection]

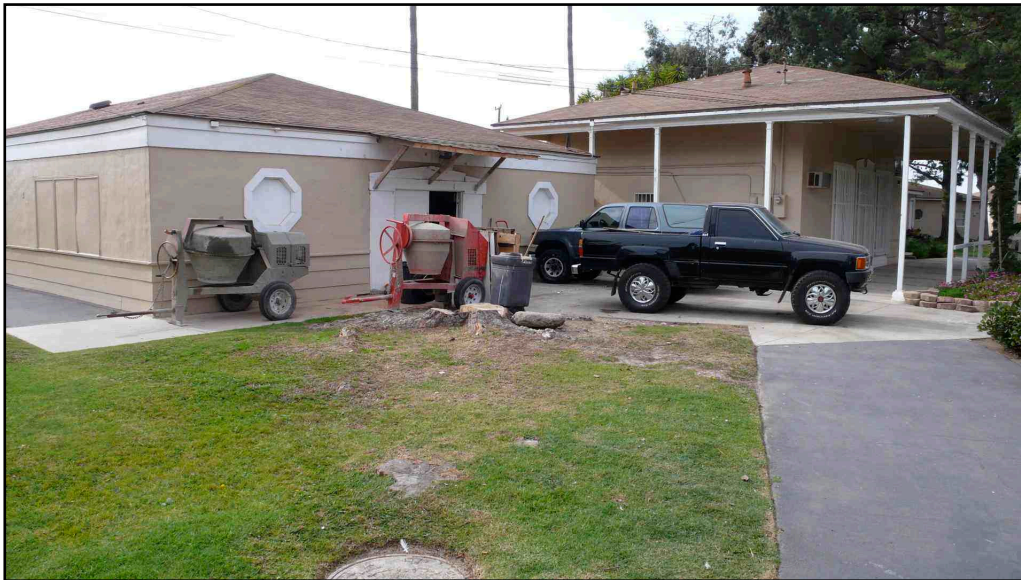


Photo 2. Administration and storage building, eastern and northern elevations. [5 December 2007]



Photo 3. Storage building, southern and eastern elevations. [5 December 2007]



Photo 4. Duplex unit, typical. [5 December 2007]



Photo 5. Duplex unit, typical (showing original wood sash window) [5 December 2007]



Photo 6. Duplex unit arrangement, typical. [5 December 2007]

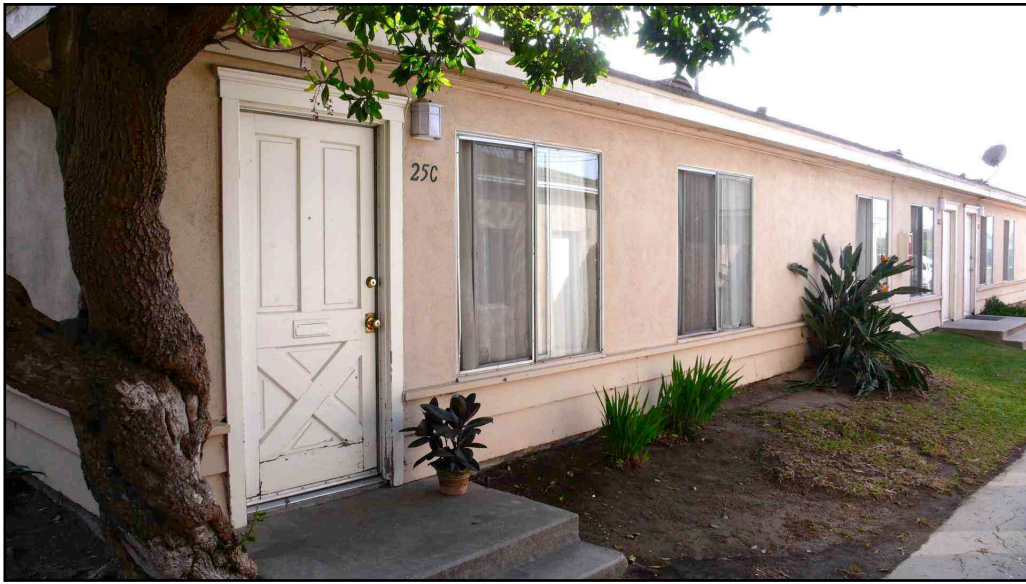


Photo 7. Type 1 apartment building, typical. [5 December 2007]



Photo 8. Type 1 apartment building on left, duplex unit on right, driveway viewing southeast. [5 December 2007]



Photo 9. Type 2 apartment building, typical main elevation. [5 December 2007]

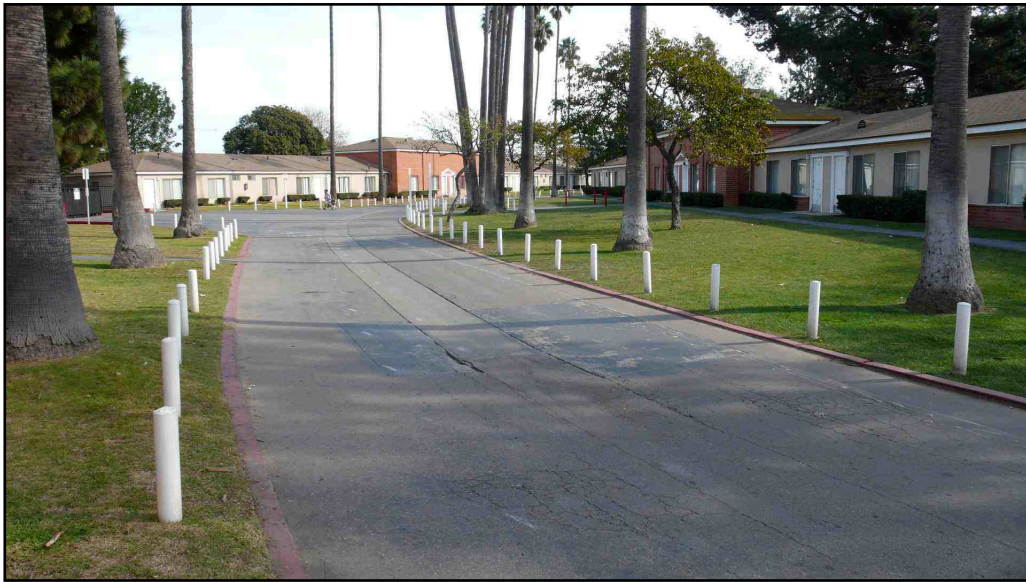


Photo 10. Type 2 apartment building, view along main circular drive towards east. [5 December 2007]



Photo 11. Laundry room building. [5 December 2007]



Photo 12. Carport buildings, typical. [5 December 2007]



Photo 13. Pool, view toward west. [5 December 2007]



Photo 14. Type 1 apartments and landscaping, view towards north. [5 December 2007]

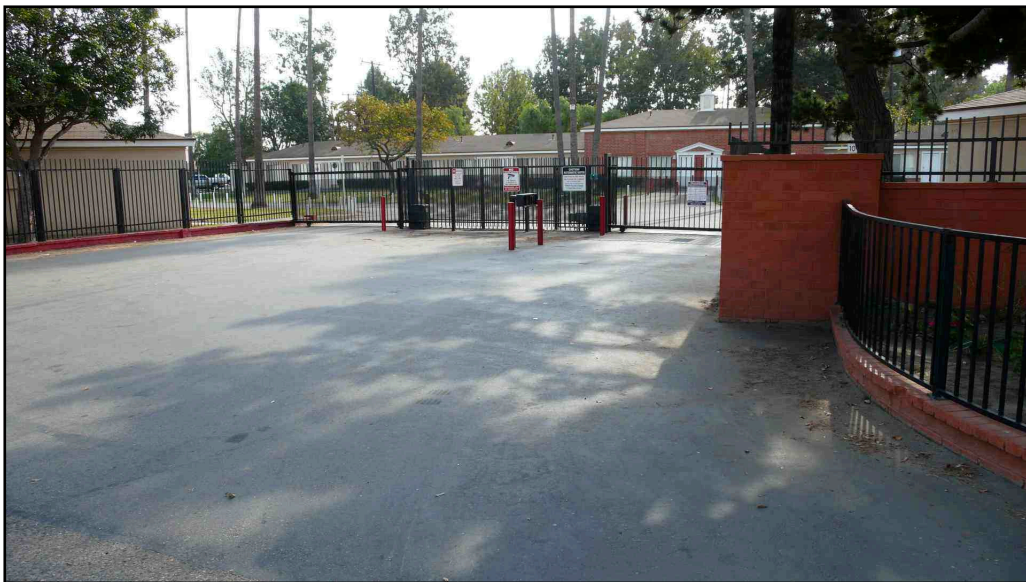


Photo 15. Entry gates, viewed towards southeast. [5 December 2007]