

TO: City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission

RE: The Westdale Village Courtyard Apartments

August 1, 2005

The Westdale Village Courtyard Apartments are simple buildings with a strong set of social and cultural implications and associations. Their merit for consideration as landmark buildings centers on the use of a building type normally reserved for single family ranch houses for use as multiple unit apartment buildings.

The understated style, typical of the 1940s, combines a long low pitched roof with wide eaves. It is the horizontality, the eaves low to the ground and the prominent open yards that give the buildings an appearance similar to ranchhouses of that era.

The ranch house had associations of rusticity, of unpretentious enjoyment of the outdoors and nature. The Westdale Village buildings mixed modern horizontal lines and steel frame windows, with period revival details such as the broad eaves and the use of shutters. These buildings are evocative of a precise moment in architectural history where pre-war period revival detailing mingled with more modern features such as the large steel picture windows. This detailing, in conjunction with the site plan, knits these apartment units together with the fabric of neighboring single family houses.

The design of fourplexes that looked like they could be single family houses allowed citizens who could not afford a single-family house to participate in the American Dream of suburban living.

These buildings are an example of a type of structure that is unlikely to ever be built again in the City of Los Angeles, one story fourplexes, each built in the manner of a single family house. The detailing, the siting and the massing of these buildings have all become a thing of the past, never to be replicated again.

The Westdale Village Courtyard is an example of the goals of community building of founder Paul Trousdale, of having all sections and categories of the citizenry exist in a thoughtful, cohesive relationship to one another.

Los Angeles is often cited as an example of a city without urban design, thoughtless planned. This is not a fair view of the city, and for that reason it is especially important to preserve those places in the city where there were attempts to design at the scale of a large community. These are the reasons that these buildings merit designation as landmarks.

Sincerely

John Chase
Urban Planner for the city of West Hollywood