

**WILLIAM MELLENTHIN**  
**BIRDHOUSE APARTMENTS**  
5922-5930 N. Buffalo Avenue  
CHC-2024-6156-HCM  
ENV-2024-6157-CE

Agenda packet includes:

1. [Final Determination Staff Recommendation Report](#)
2. [Commission/ Staff Site Inspection Photos—November 14, 2024](#)
3. [Categorical Exemption](#)
4. [Under Consideration Staff Recommendation Report](#)
5. [Historic-Cultural Monument Application](#)

Please click on each document to be directly taken to the corresponding page of the PDF.

# Los Angeles Department of City Planning

## RECOMMENDATION REPORT

**CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION**

**CASE NO.: CHC-2024-6156-HCM  
ENV-2024-6157-CE**

**HEARING DATE:** February 6, 2025  
**TIME:** 10:00 AM  
**PLACE:** City Hall, Room 1010  
200 North Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
and via Teleconference (see  
agenda for login information)

Location: 5922-5930 N. Buffalo Avenue  
Council District: 2 – Nazarian  
Community Plan Area: Van Nuys - North  
Sherman Oaks  
Land Use Designation: Low Medium II  
Residential  
Zoning: [Q]RD1.5-1  
Area Planning Commission: South Valley  
Neighborhood Council: Greater Valley Glen  
Legal Description: Tract 5949, Arb 2 of Lot 13 and  
Arbs 2-3 of Lot FR 14

**EXPIRATION DATE: March 1, 2025**

**PROJECT:** Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the  
WILLIAM MELLENTIN BIRDHOUSE APARTMENTS

**REQUEST:** Declare the property an Historic-Cultural Monument

**OWNER:** Roozbeh T. Alizadeh  
Maryam Zavareh  
25140 Steinbeck Avenue, Unit A  
Stevenson Ranch, CA 91381

**APPLICANT:** Frank Richter  
P.O. Box 1602  
Canyon Country, CA 91386

**RECOMMENDATION**      **That the Cultural Heritage Commission:**

1. **Declare the subject property** an Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.7.
2. **Adopt** the staff report and findings.

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP  
Director of Planning

**[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]**

Ken Bernstein, AICP, Principal City Planner  
Office of Historic Resources

**[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]**

Melissa Jones, City Planner  
Office of Historic Resources

**[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]**

Lambert M. Giessinger, Senior Architect  
Office of Historic Resources

**[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]**

Andrez Parra, Planning Assistant  
Office of Historic Resources

Attachments: Commission/Staff Site Inspection Photos–November 14, 2024  
Historic-Cultural Monument Application

## **FINDINGS**

- The William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments "embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction," and "represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age" as a rare and excellent example of a Mid-century, one-story court in the Traditional Ranch architectural style designed and constructed by master builder William Mellenthin.

## **CRITERIA**

The criterion is the Cultural Heritage Ordinance which defines a historical or cultural monument as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon), building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles if it meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. Is identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community;
2. Is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history; or
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.

## **SUMMARY**

The William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments is a courtyard apartment complex consisting of two triplexes and two detached garages located on the east side of Buffalo Avenue between Califa Street and Oxnard Street in the Valley Glen neighborhood of Los Angeles. It was constructed in 1954 by builder/designer William Mellenthin in the Traditional Ranch architectural style to serve as apartment buildings.

The Traditional Ranch architectural style developed in the 1920s-40s, but proliferated after World War II, when they became the preferred residential design in many suburbs and cities including Los Angeles. While predominantly constructed as single-family ranch houses, the Ranch architectural style was occasionally applied to multi-family residences, commercial buildings, and public and private institutional buildings. The style traced its lineage to the vernacular residential buildings that arose across the American West and Southwest such as the haciendas of Southern California and American farmhouses. Traditional Ranch architecture emphasizes a number of essential physical characteristics: informality and asymmetry, low-pitched roofs, and a variety of facade treatments that typically included wood board-and-batten siding, picture windows, and the application of historicist or modern ornament and details. Ranch Houses and the Traditional Ranch architectural style began to fall out of favor beginning in 1975.

The subject property is symmetrical in plan and consists of two rectangular triplexes of wood-frame construction clad in stucco and vertical wood siding. The roofs are cross hipped with composition shingle cladding and have overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails. Down the center of the property is an asphalt driveway that leads to two detached rear garages. Each garage features two single-car bays, stucco cladding, and a hipped composition shingle roof with overhanging eaves



and exposed rafter tails. A white fence gate connects the two garages. Fronting the two triplexes is a fenced yard with mature pine trees.

The west-facing elevation of the subject property depicts “birdhouses” above the gable of each triplex: a stout cupola structure with a pyramidal-hipped roof and tall finial above connected to the gable end via wood supports. The gable ends and birdhouses feature dovescotes. Metal awnings cover the windows of the triplexes’ western facades. Beneath large picture windows are wood plant shelves. The southern triplex also features a protruding box window. The primary facades of the two triplexes face inward, toward the central driveway, and mirror one another. They each have three unevenly spaced entrances accessed via small porches enclosed by boxwood hedges. Each entrance is slightly recessed and features a wood door with a multi-lite window covered by a wood screen door with metal detailing. The east-facing facades of the buildings and northern and southern elevations are largely utilitarian aside from rear secondary entrances to the units. Fenestration across the buildings consists of tripartite picture windows with multi-lite center windows flanked by single hung windows; wood diamond-paned windows –some of which feature wood plant shelves; wood single hung multi-lite windows; and aluminum sliding multi-lite windows.

Interior features of some of the units within the subject property include wood built-ins; wood paneled doors; wood paneled sliding pocket doors; wainscoting; and original tiling in the kitchens and bathrooms.

William Mellenthin was born in 1896 in Sleepy Eye, Minnesota as one of five children of German immigrants. He later attended the University of Minnesota and received a degree in economics in 1918. By 1920, Mellenthin moved to Los Angeles and married Mary Ode Faulconer. He built his first home in 1923 and continued to build dozens of homes across Silver Lake and Los Feliz. By the mid-1930s, Mellenthin began to develop properties in the San Fernando Valley. Although he was not a licensed architect, Mellenthin frequently partnered with architects such as Leo F. Bachman. With the help of one of Bachman’s draftsmen, Frank S. Hickman, Mellenthin developed his “birdhouse” design, likely inspired by the farmhouses of his native Minnesota. By the 1950s-60s, Mellenthin was recognized as a prolific builder across the San Fernando Valley and greater Los Angeles area, developing over 3,000 properties, including a 12-acre suburban development in Sherman Oaks – many of which were built to suit and featured his signature Birdhouse Ranch architectural style. Mellenthin died in 1979 at the age of 83.

The subject property has experienced minimal alterations aside from the replacement of some wood windows with aluminum sliding windows at unknown dates.

## **DISCUSSION**

The William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments meets one of the Historic-Cultural Monument criteria.

The subject property “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction,” and “represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age” as a rare and excellent example of a Mid-century, one-story court in the Traditional Ranch architectural style designed and constructed by master builder William Mellenthin.

Stemming from the design of bungalow courts in Southern California, courtyard apartments were first built in the 1910s and continued to evolve in form and style through the 1960s. The 1950s and 1960s marked a significant shift in the development of courtyard housing complexes. This postwar period

witnessed a new boom in apartment construction and land values typically dictated higher densities, with buildings sometimes reaching three stories in height, and frequently developed on two or more residential lots. However, at this same time another type of courtyard housing emerged– the Mid-century, one-story court–which, as exemplified by the subject property, offered a more modest, lower-density alternative to the typical courtyard housing developments. As demonstrated by the subject property, the one-story courts have a single-story configuration and a limited number of units, typically three to five attached units per building arranged in a linear or L-shaped plan. Mid-century, one-story courts, like the subject property, are composed of a pair of residential buildings facing each other, creating a minimal common space between the two structures that may be landscaped or paved, or accommodate a driveway leading to detached garages at the rear of the site. This configuration also provides each unit direct access to the outdoors not found in high-density multi-family housing types. As exemplified by the subject property, one-story courts were designed in modest versions of popular residential architectural styles of the period, including Streamline Moderne, Minimal Traditional, and Traditional/California Ranch and were mostly builder designed, not employing an architect. Mid-century, one-story courts never experienced widespread popularity as a stand-alone residential development type; however, they were a critical component of early planned, postwar, suburban developments in Los Angeles.

SurveyLA, Los Angeles’s citywide historic resources survey, established eligibility standards and integrity considerations for evaluating Mid-century, one-story courts in Los Angeles as follow:

*Eligibility Standards*

- One story in height
- An excellent example of the type
- Was constructed during the period of significance
- Represents an intact court plan from the period of construction

*Integrity Considerations*

- Should retain integrity of Location, Design, Materials, Setting (must retain the relationship between the units and the common area), and Feeling
- Some original materials may have been altered or removed
- Replacement of some windows may be acceptable if the openings have not been changed or resized
- Security bars may have been added
- Original landscaping may have been altered or removed
- Surrounding buildings and land uses may have changed
- Mid-century one-story courts are relatively rare, therefore a greater degree of alteration or fewer character-defining features may be acceptable
- Where this property type is associated with an adjacent single-family residential neighborhood, it may also be significant under the Postwar Suburbanization theme; indicators include several examples in a row situated along a major arterial street
- Where this property type is situated within a grouping of multi-family residences, it may also be significant as a contributor to a multi-family residential district. A grouping may be composed of a single property type or a variety of types

There are only approximately 15 Mid-century, one-story courts across the city that were identified as eligible for designation in SurveyLA, none of which are designed in the Traditional Ranch architectural style.

According to the National Register Bulletin, “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation” published by the National Park Service, for evaluating a property’s significance under

Criterion C (“Properties may be eligible for the National Register if they...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”), the term “master” is defined as: “a figure of generally recognized greatness in a field, a known craftsman of consummate skill, or an anonymous craftsman whose work is distinguishable from others by its characteristic style and quality.” Based on this definition, William Mellenthin is a master builder.

Mellenthin is recognized for the proliferation and quality of residential buildings he constructed in the San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles and surrounding communities in the Traditional Ranch architectural style with his distinctive birdhouse and dovecote designs. He is also known for being very influential in the postwar residential development of Sherman Oaks. As demand for his signature birdhouse cupolas increased, other builders imitated Mellenthin’s Traditional Ranch architectural style and approach, which can be seen throughout the San Fernando Valley and across Southern California. In addition to custom built residences, William Mellenthin developed large residential subdivisions, some of which were identified as potential historic districts within SurveyLA, including the Ethel Avenue-Otsego Street Residential Historic District; the Hidden Woods Residential Historic District; the Longridge Avenue-Atoll Avenue Residential Historic District; and the Wortser Avenue-Ethel Avenue Residential Historic District. These potential historic districts were identified as being significant as intact 1950s subdivisions developed by notable Valley developer William Mellenthin.

The guidelines in the above-referenced National Register Bulletin for applying National Register Criterion C (significance as the work of a master) notes that, “The property must express a particular phase in the development of the master’s career, an aspect of his or her work, or a particular idea or theme in his or her craft.”

While Mellenthin constructed over 3,000 known buildings –primarily single-family and some multi-family– across the Los Angeles area, the subject property is the only known extant example of a courtyard apartment complex designed by Mellenthin featuring his distinctive Traditional Ranch style design with dovecotes.

Although the subject property has experienced some exterior and interior alterations, the subject property retains a high level of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to convey its significance.

### **CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (“CEQA”) FINDINGS**

State of California CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 “*consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment.*”

State of California CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Section 15331, Class 31 “*consists of projects limited to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic buildings.*”

The designation of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments as an Historic-Cultural Monument in accordance with Chapter 9, Article 1, of The City of Los Angeles Administrative Code (“LAAC”) will ensure that future construction activities involving the subject property are regulated in accordance

with Section 22.171.14 of the LAAC. The purpose of the designation is to prevent significant impacts to an Historic-Cultural Monument through the application of the standards set forth in the LAAC. Without the regulation imposed by way of the pending designation, the historic significance and integrity of the subject property could be lost through incompatible alterations and new construction and the demolition of an irreplaceable historic site/open space. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are expressly incorporated into the LAAC and provide standards concerning the historically appropriate construction activities which will ensure the continued preservation of the subject property.

The City of Los Angeles has determined based on the whole of the administrative record, that substantial evidence supports that the Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 and Class 31, and none of the exceptions to a categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 applies. The project was found to be exempt based on the following:

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 8 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals of maintaining, restoring, enhancing, and protecting the environment through the imposition of regulations designed to prevent the degradation of Historic-Cultural Monuments.

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 31 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals relating to the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction of historic buildings and sites in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Categorical Exemption ENV-2024-6157-CE was prepared on November 15, 2024.

## **BACKGROUND**

On September 24, 2024, the Director of Planning determined that the application for the proposed designation of the subject property as an Historic-Cultural Monument was complete. On October 17, 2024, the Cultural Heritage Commission voted to take the subject property under consideration as a potential Historic-Cultural Monument. On November 14, 2024, a subcommittee of the Commission consisting of Commissioners Kanner and Kennard conducted a site inspection of the property, accompanied by staff from the Office of Historic Resources. In accordance with Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 22.171.10 (e), on November 18, 2024, the property owner requested up to a 60-day extension to the time for the Commission to act.













































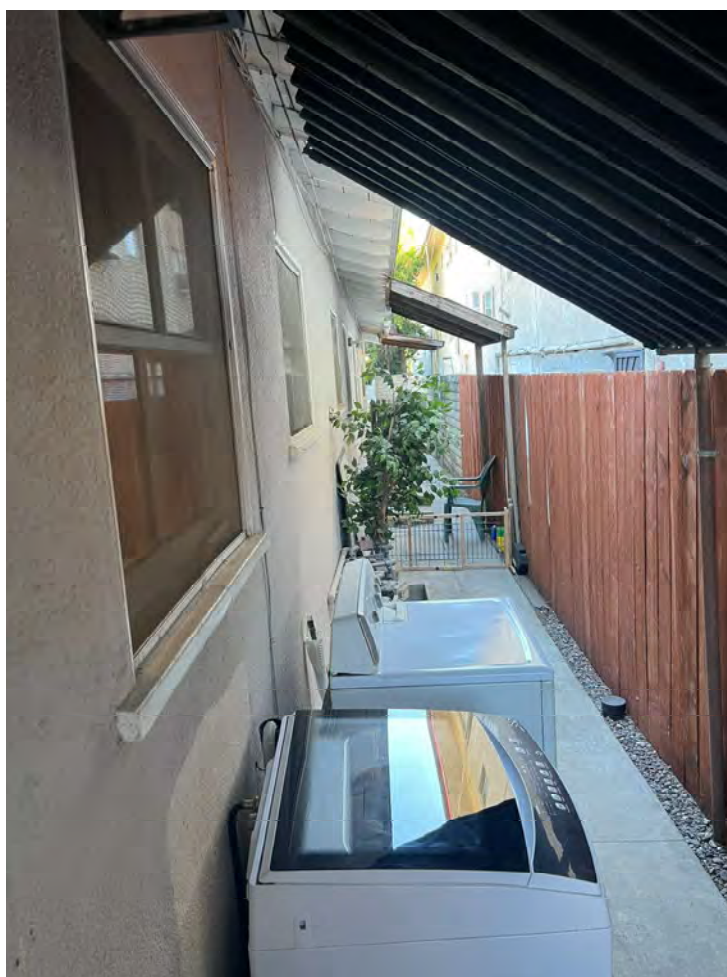




























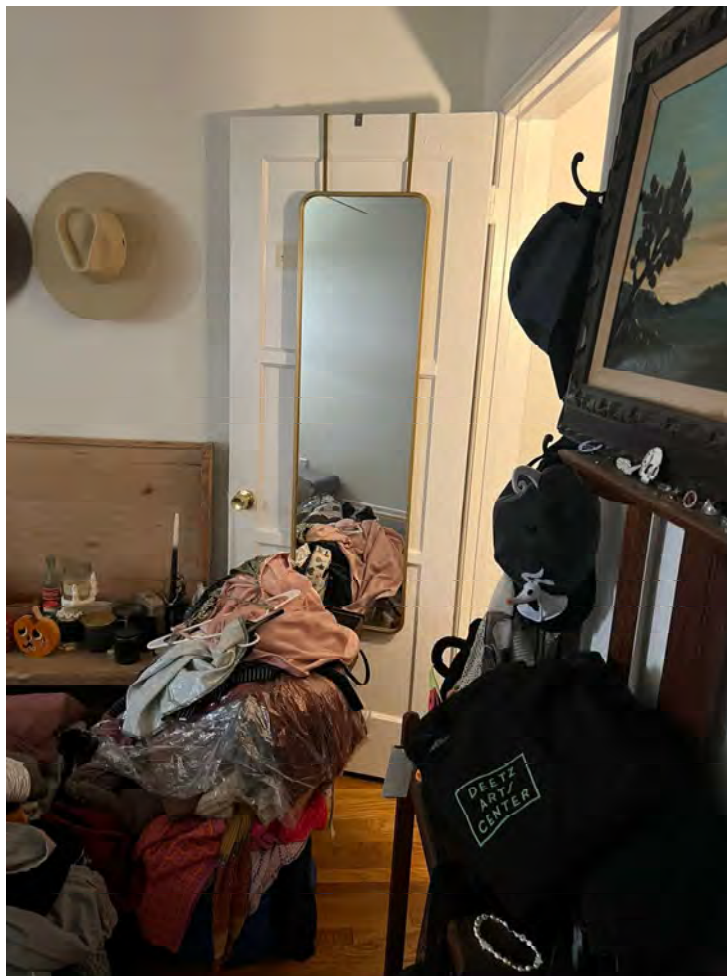














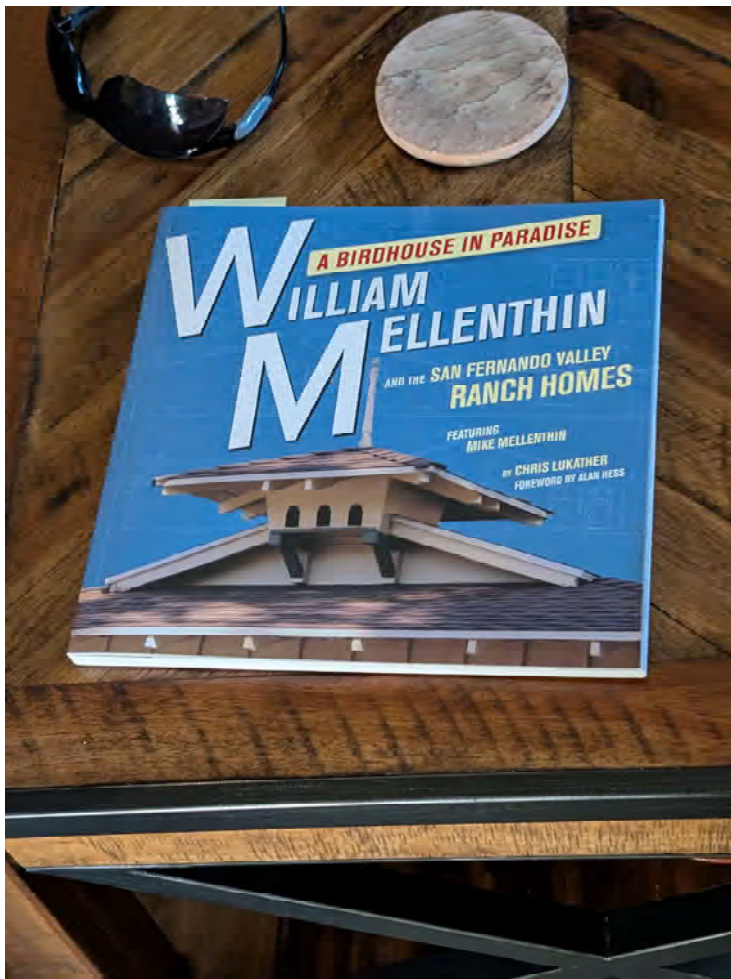


















## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

(PRC Section 21152; CEQA Guidelines Section 15062)

Filing of this form is optional. If filed, the form shall be filed with the County Clerk, 12400 E. Imperial Highway, Norwalk, CA 90650, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21152(b) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15062. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21167 (d), the posting of this notice starts a 35-day statute of limitations on court challenges to reliance on an exemption for the project. Failure to file this notice as provided above, results in the statute of limitations being extended to 180 days.

PARENT CASE NUMBER(S) / REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

CHC-2024-6156-HCM

LEAD CITY AGENCY

City of Los Angeles (Department of City Planning)

CASE NUMBER

ENV-2024-6157-CE

PROJECT TITLE

William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments

COUNCIL DISTRICT

2

PROJECT LOCATION (Street Address and Cross Streets and/or Attached Map)

5922-5930 N. Buffalo Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 91401

☐ Map attached.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Designation of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments as an Historic-Cultural Monument.

☐ Additional page(s) attached.

NAME OF APPLICANT / OWNER:

N/A

CONTACT PERSON (If different from Applicant/Owner above)

Andrez Parra

(AREA CODE) TELEPHONE NUMBER

(213) 756-1698

EXT.

EXEMPT STATUS: (Check all boxes, and include all exemptions, that apply and provide relevant citations.)

## STATE CEQA STATUTE &amp; GUIDELINES

☐ STATUTORY EXEMPTION(S)

Public Resources Code Section(s) \_\_\_\_\_

☒ CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION(S) (State CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15301-15333 / Class 1-Class 33)CEQA Guideline Section(s) / Class(es) 8 and 31☐ OTHER BASIS FOR EXEMPTION (E.g., CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) or (b)(4) or Section 15378(b) )

JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT EXEMPTION:

☐ Additional page(s) attached

Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 of the State's Guidelines applies to where project's consists of "actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment." Class 31 applies "to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Buildings." Designation of the **William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments** as an Historic-Cultural Monument will assure the protection of the environment by the enactment of project review regulations based on the Secretary of Interior's Standards to maintain and preserve the historic site.

☒ None of the exceptions in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 to the categorical exemption(s) apply to the Project.☐ The project is identified in one or more of the list of activities in the City of Los Angeles CEQA Guidelines as cited in the justification.

IF FILED BY APPLICANT, ATTACH CERTIFIED DOCUMENT ISSUED BY THE CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT STATING THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAS FOUND THE PROJECT TO BE EXEMPT.

If different from the applicant, the identity of the person undertaking the project.

## CITY STAFF USE ONLY:

CITY STAFF NAME AND SIGNATURE

Andrez Parra

[SIGNED COPY IN FILE]

STAFF TITLE

Planning Assistant

ENTITLEMENTS APPROVED

N/A

FEE:

N/A

RECEIPT NO.

N/A

REC'D. BY (DCP DSC STAFF NAME)

N/A

DISTRIBUTION: County Clerk, Agency Record

Rev. 3-27-2019

# Los Angeles Department of City Planning

## RECOMMENDATION REPORT

### CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

**CASE NO.:** CHC-2024-6156-HCM  
ENV-2024-6157-CE

**HEARING DATE:** October 17, 2024  
**TIME:** 10:00 AM  
**PLACE:** City Hall, Room 1010  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
and teleconference (see  
agenda for login  
information)

Location: 5922-5930 N. Buffalo Avenue  
Council District: 2 – Krekorian  
Community Plan Area: Van Nuys - North  
Sherman Oaks  
Land Use Designation: Low Medium II  
Residential  
Zoning: [Q]RD1.5-1  
Area Planning Commission: South Valley  
Neighborhood Council: Greater Valley Glen  
Legal Description: Tract 5949, Arb 2 of Lot 13  
and Arbs 2-3 of Lot FR 14

**EXPIRATION DATE:** October 24, 2024

**PROJECT:** Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the  
WILLIAM MELLENTIN BIRDHOUSE APARTMENTS

**REQUEST:** Declare the property an Historic-Cultural Monument

**OWNERS:** Roozbeh T. Alizadeh  
Maryam Zavareh Nd  
25140 Steinbeck Avenue, Unit A  
Stevenson Ranch, CA 91381

Kenneth W. Ross, Trustee  
Ross Myles Family Trust  
4335 Angostura Place  
Tarzana, CA 91356

Kenneth W. Ross, Trustee  
Kenneth W. Ross Living Trust of 2006  
c/o Jackson and Associates  
4804 Laurel Canyon Boulevard  
Valley Village, CA 91607

**APPLICANT:** Frank Richter  
P.O. Box 1602  
Canyon Country, CA 91386



## RECOMMENDATION

**That the Cultural Heritage Commission:**

1. **Take the property under consideration** as an Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.10 because the application and accompanying photo documentation suggest the submittal warrants further investigation.
2. **Adopt** the report findings.

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP  
Director of Planning

**[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]**

Ken Bernstein, AICP, Principal City Planner  
Office of Historic Resources

**[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]**

Melissa Jones, City Planner  
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[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Lambert M. Giessinger, Senior Architect  
Office of Historic Resources

**[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]**

Andrez Parra, Planning Assistant  
Office of Historic Resources

Attachment: Historic-Cultural Monument Application

## **SUMMARY**

The William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments is a courtyard apartment complex consisting of two triplexes and two detached garages located on the east side of Buffalo Avenue between Califa Street and Oxnard Street in the Valley Glen neighborhood of Los Angeles. It was constructed in 1954 by builder/designer William Mellenthin in the Traditional Ranch architectural style to serve as apartment buildings.

The Traditional Ranch architectural style developed in the 1920s-40s, but proliferated after World War II, when they became the preferred residential design in many suburbs and cities including Los Angeles. While predominantly constructed as single-family ranch houses, the Ranch architectural style was occasionally applied to multi-family residences, commercial buildings, and public and private institutional buildings. The style traced its lineage to the vernacular residential buildings that arose across the American West and Southwest such as the haciendas of Southern California and American farmhouses. Traditional Ranch architecture emphasizes a number of essential physical characteristics: informality and asymmetry, low-pitched roofs, and a variety of facade treatments that typically included wood board-and-batten siding, picture windows, and the application of historicist or modern ornament and details. Ranch Houses and the Traditional Ranch architectural style began to fall out of favor beginning in 1975.

The subject property is symmetrical in plan and consists of two rectangular triplexes of wood-frame construction clad in stucco and vertical wood siding. The roofs are cross-hipped with composition shingle cladding and have overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails. Down the center of the property is an asphalt driveway that leads to two detached rear garages. Each garage features two, single-car bays, stucco cladding, and a hipped composition shingle roof with overhanging eaves and exposed rafter tails. A white fence gate connects the two garages. Fronting the two triplexes is a fenced yard with mature pine trees.

The west-facing elevation of the subject property depicts “birdhouses” above the gable of each triplex: a stout cupola structure with a pyramidal-hipped roof and tall finial above connected to the gable end via wood supports. The gable ends and birdhouses feature dovecotes. Metal awnings cover the windows of the triplexes’ western facades. Beneath large picture windows are wood plant shelves. The southern triplex also features a protruding box window. The primary facades of the two triplexes face inward, toward the central driveway, and mirror one another. They each have three unevenly spaced entrances accessed via small porches enclosed by boxwood hedges. Each entrance is slightly recessed and features a wood door with a multi-lite window covered by a wood screen door with metal detailings. The east-facing facades of the buildings and northern and southern elevations are largely utilitarian aside from rear secondary entrances to the units. Fenestration across the buildings consists of tripartite picture windows with multi-lite center windows flanked by single hung windows; wood diamond-paned windows –some of which feature wood plant shelves; wood single hung multi-lite windows; and aluminum sliding multi-lite windows.

Interior features of some of the units within the subject property include wood built-ins; wood paneled doors; wood paneled sliding pocket doors; wainscotting; and original tiling in the kitchens and bathrooms.

William Mellenthin was born in 1896 in Sleepy Eye, Minnesota as one of five children of German immigrants. He later attended the University of Minnesota and received a degree in economics in 1918. By 1920, Mellenthin moved to Los Angeles and married Mary Ode Faulconer. He built his first home in 1923 and continued to build dozens of homes across Silver Lake and Los Feliz. By the mid-1930s, Mellenthin began to develop properties in the San Fernando Valley. Although he was not a licensed



architect, Mellenthin frequently partnered with architects such as Leo F. Bachman. With the help of one of Bachman's draftsmen, Frank S. Hickman, Mellenthin developed his "birdhouse" design, likely inspired by the farmhouses of his native Minnesota. By the 1950s-60s, Mellenthin was recognized as a prolific builder across the San Fernando Valley and greater Los Angeles area, developing over 3,000 properties, including a 12-acre suburban development in Sherman Oaks – many of which were built to suit and featured his signature Birdhouse Ranch architectural style. Mellenthin died in 1979 at the age of 83.

The subject property has experienced minimal apparent alterations aside from the replacement of some wood windows with aluminum sliding windows at unknown dates.

### **CRITERIA**

The criterion is the Cultural Heritage Ordinance which defines a historical or cultural monument as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon), building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles if it meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. Is identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community;
2. Is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history; or
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.

### **FINDINGS**

Based on the facts set forth in the summary and application, the Commission determines that the application is complete and that the property may be significant enough to warrant further investigation as a potential Historic-Cultural Monument.

### **BACKGROUND**

On September 24, 2024, the Director of Planning determined that the application for the proposed designation of the subject property as an Historic-Cultural Monument was complete.

# HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM



## 1. PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION

Proposed Monument Name: William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments		Notable architect/builder	
Other Associated Names:			
Street Address: 5920 Buffalo Avenue		Zip: 91401	Council District: 2
Range of Addresses on Property: 5920 through 5930 - even #s only		Community Name: Valley Glen	
Assessor Parcel Number: 2343-001-020	Tract: 5949	Block:	Lot: 13
Identification cont'd: also 2343-001-020 Tr5949 Lot 14			
Proposed Monument Property Type:	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Building	<input type="radio"/> Structure	<input type="radio"/> Object
		<input type="radio"/> Site/Open Space	<input type="radio"/> Natural Feature
Describe any additional resources located on the property to be included in the nomination, here:			
2 adjacent parcels, each with a 3 unit multi-family dwelling			

## 2. CONSTRUCTION HISTORY & CURRENT STATUS

Year built: 1954	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Factual <input type="radio"/> Estimated	Threatened? Private Development
Architect/Designer: William Mellenthin	Contractor: Wm. Mellenthin Inc.	
Original Use: Multi-family Residential	Present Use: Multi-family Residential	
Is the Proposed Monument on its Original Site?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No (explain in section 7) <input type="radio"/> Unknown (explain in section 7)	

## 3. STYLE & MATERIALS

Architectural Style: Ranch, Traditional		Stories: 1	Plan Shape: Rectangular
FEATURE	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	
CONSTRUCTION	Type: Wood	Type: Select	
CLADDING	Material: Stucco, smooth	Material: Wood tongue-and-groove	
ROOF	Type: Hipped	Type: Hipped	
	Material: Composition shingle	Material: Composition shingle	
WINDOWS	Type: Single-hung	Type: Sliding	
	Material: Wood	Material: Aluminum	
ENTRY	Style: Off-center	Style: Off-center	
DOOR	Type: Paneled, glazed	Type: Paneled, glazed	



# HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM



## 4. ALTERATION HISTORY

List date and write a brief description of any major alterations or additions. This section may also be completed on a separate document. Include copies of permits in the nomination packet. Make sure to list any major alterations for which there are no permits, as well.

2020	New roof shingles (no permit)
2020	Exterior paint
2003	Original single-hung multi-pane windows (6) next to each unit's front door were replaced with matching style aluminum windows. (no permit)

## 5. EXISTING HISTORIC RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION (if known)

<input type="checkbox"/> Listed in the National Register of Historic Places	
<input type="checkbox"/> Listed in the California Register of Historical Resources	
<input type="checkbox"/> Formally determined eligible for the National and/or California Registers	
<input type="checkbox"/> Located in an Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)	<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing feature <input type="checkbox"/> Non-contributing feature
<input type="checkbox"/> Determined eligible for national, state, or local landmark status by an historic resources survey(s)	Survey Name(s):
Other historical or cultural resource designations:	

## 6. APPLICABLE HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT CRITERIA

The proposed monument exemplifies the following Cultural Heritage Ordinance Criteria (Section 22.171.7):	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Is identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.

# HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM



## 7. WRITTEN STATEMENTS

*This section allows you to discuss at length the significance of the proposed monument and why it should be designated an Historic-Cultural Monument. Type your response on separate documents and attach them to this form.*

**A. Proposed Monument Description** - Describe the proposed monument's physical characteristics and relationship to its surrounding environment. Expand on sections 2 and 3 with a more detailed description of the site. Expand on section 4 and discuss the construction/alteration history in detail if that is necessary to explain the proposed monument's current form. Identify and describe any character-defining elements, structures, interior spaces, or landscape features.

**B. Statement of Significance** - Address the proposed monument's historic, cultural, and/or architectural significance by discussing how it satisfies the HCM criteria you selected in Section 6. You must support your argument with substantial evidence and analysis. The Statement of Significance is your main argument for designation so it is important to substantiate any claims you make with supporting documentation and research.

## 8. CONTACT INFORMATION

### Applicant

Name: Frank Richter		Company:	
Street Address: P.O. Box 1602		City: Canyon Country	State: CA
Zip: 91386	Phone Number: 818 823 7281	Email: info@mansoned.com	

### Property Owner

Is the owner in support of the nomination? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown

Name: Ross Toorani		Company:	
Street Address: 25140 Steinbeck Ave Unit A		City: Stevenson Ranch	State: CA
Zip: 91381	Phone Number: Stevenson Ranch	Email: rosstoorani@yahoo.com	

### Nomination Preparer/Applicant's Representative

Name:		Company:	
Street Address:		City:	State:
Zip:	Phone Number:	Email:	





# HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

## 9. SUBMITTAL

When you have completed preparing your nomination, compile all materials in the order specified below. Although the entire packet must not exceed 100 pages, you may send additional material on a CD or flash drive.

### APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nomination Form  | 5. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Copies of Primary/Secondary Documentation  |
| 2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Written Statements A and B   | 6. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Copies of Building Permits for Major Alterations<br>(include first construction permits) |
| 3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bibliography   | 7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional, Contemporary Photos  |
| 4. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Two Primary Photos of Exterior/Main Facade<br>(8x10, the main photo of the proposed monument. Also<br>email a digital copy of the main photo to:<br>planning.ohr@lacity.org) | 8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historical Photos  |
|   | 9. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zimas Parcel Report for all Nominated Parcels<br>(including map)                         |

## 10. RELEASE

Please read each statement and check the corresponding boxes to indicate that you agree with the statement, then sign below in the provided space. Either the applicant or preparer may sign.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I acknowledge that all documents submitted will become public records under the California Public Records Act, and understand that the documents will be made available upon request to members of the public for inspection and copying.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I acknowledge that all photographs and images submitted as part of this application will become the property of the City of Los Angeles, and understand that permission is granted for use of the photographs and images by the City without any expectation of compensation.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I acknowledge that I have the right to submit or have obtained the appropriate permission to submit all information contained in this application.

FRANK RICHTER 9/23/24 

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Mail your Historic-Cultural Monument Submittal to the Office of Historic Resources.

Office of Historic Resources  
Department of City Planning  
221 N. Figueroa St., Ste. 1350  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Phone: 213-874-3679  
Website: [preservation.lacity.org](http://preservation.lacity.org)

**William Mellenthin (1896-1979) Home Builder & Developer, San Fernando Valley  
5920-30 Buffalo Avenue I Mid Century Court Triplexes  
Historical Cultural Monument  
Nomination Form**

By Frank Richter

**7A. Proposed Monument Description**

5920-5930 Buffalo Avenue is significant as a rare and intact Ranch-Style Courtyard Apartment designed by William Mellenthin, consisting of two linear triplexes joined in single rows by common walls, on a level rectangular lot. It is bordered by its residential buildings to the north and south, oriented onto a paved center driveway, which leads to two individual detached 3 car garages that are bordering against the eastern property line.

Built in 1954 by notable master builder and developer Mellenthin, the property incorporates all of his highly recognizable trademark 'Birdhouse' features, otherwise only found in Mellenthin's single family homes.

With no existing sidewalk, standing at the entrance to the gateless open driveway which divides the two triplexes, one immediately notices the full size famed 'birdhouse' dovecotes, prominently adorning each building's low pitched gabled roof overlooking Buffalo Avenue.

Upon entering the property, many traditional Mellenthin features are on display: The buildings are clad with tongue & groove exterior wooden sidings, there are wide, down sloped porch eaves with tongue and groove soffits, porch columns with curved corbels, most of its original diamond pane windows, and wooden X-pattern, 6-pane glass farmhouse style doors. Each unit features a small semi private patio enclosed by low profile hedges, with its entrance way opening directly onto the common area, with all landscaping intact throughout as originally designed, consisting of a variety of shrubs and bushes. Some windows are complimented by surface mounted planter shelvings, while the two rear larger size dwellings feature additional brick ledge accents.

Although the entrance door accompanying porch windows were replaced, they maintain the integrity of the character. The living room's street facing picture windows are still original, and so are all of the original glazed double hung sash and sliding windows around the building. Smaller glazed diamond shape sliding windows are used for the bedrooms for more privacy. All wooden diamond pane glazed ranch-style front doors are in their original condition complete with brass door knobs, brass mail slots and their corresponding screen doors. The original door 2-tone doorbell system still functions with all its electrical components.



Both detached 3-car garages at the end of the center driveway are preserved as built clad with stucco, and matching the main building's low pinched roof and down sloped soffits. They are separated by 6 feet, to accommodate for a fenced utility area accommodating trash receptacles.

Out of the six units, the four front apartments have one bedroom, while the two rear units have 2 bedrooms, resulting in slightly different layouts. All 6 have retained most of their original accents and features. Upon entering, you are greeted by the warm glow of #2 common oak flooring, which continues throughout the entire unit, and partially wainscoted walls and using knotty pine, also used for all door frames - a preferred signature material used by William Mellenthin. Pine Earth binder plaster walls and ceilings are used throughout. The front unit's large window opening has the size and feel of a picture window letting in plenty of light, but using double hung sash windows with a four pane fixed center window for practical purposes instead. Off to the side against the wall, the natural gas floor finis heating system vents can be seen, and the system still operates today just like when it was built. A solid oak door to the rear left of the living room splits off to a small hallway, leading to the unit's bathroom and bedroom(s). Interestingly enough, for the bedroom Mellenthin opted for a smaller and elevated sliding window for more privacy. Heading straight forward at the end of the living room, a solid oak sliding 'pocket' door leads to the kitchen. All knotty pine cabinetry, pink ceramic tile counter, ceramic sink and hardware are intact, except for a newer stove and redone vinyl flooring. A rear door leads out from each unit's kitchen to the back into an about 6 ft wide common area, connecting the entire length of the building.

Just like the kitchen, the bathroom also retains its original design, featuring a large, ceramic inset sink, enclosed in a more shallow than expected, green ceramic tile counter to allow for more space. It has a larger than expected original double sash sliding window, while the floor was updated with linoleum flooring. A sliding glass door with aluminum frame was added to the original bathtub. The original 2-tone doorbell system also still works, distinguishing between front and back doors.

Overall, the property retains most of the character-defining features of the period, with the addition of William Mellenthin's personal custom accents, and the alterations made do not compromise the structure's authenticity. At some point, small, low profile A/C units were installed, there's some added awnings, ceiling fan light fixtures replaced some of the original lighting, a few interior doors and walls were thoughtfully repainted, appliances updated, and some kitchen and bath flooring replaced that needed to be repaired.

To much delight, the previous owners invested in a complete roof repair and exterior repaint, which also included the cupolas broken finials, rendering complete once again a wonderful example of William Mellenthin's legacy.

**Character-defining/associative features include :**

- Two rows of three units, arranged in linear configuration
- 3-hole 'Birdhouse' cupolas with finials
- Low pitched gabled roof with additional 5 bird/dove hole face
- Street facing, builder's 'custom' version of picture windows
- Sloped, wide porch eaves and porch columns with curved corbels
- Original diamond pane windows
- Wooden 6-pane glass farmhouse style doors
- Units oriented onto a paved driveway
- Semi private patios enclosed by low profile hedges opening directly onto the common area
- Two detached garages in rear for one triplex each
- Excellent example of a significant builder and developer
- Associated with type 4, mid-century one story court architectural style

**Integrity considerations:**

- Retains integrity of design, material, setting and feeling, as originally built
- Some original materials have been altered or removed
- Mid-century one-story courts are relatively rare, therefore alterations may be acceptable



## 7B Statement Of Significance

5920-5930 Buffalo Avenue meets criterion 3 for designation as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.

Specifically, the property:

‘Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period or method of construction, or represents notable work of master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age’.

The Ranch-Style Courtyard Apartments with their corresponding two detached garages at 5920-30 Buffalo Avenue were permitted in, and received their certificate of occupancy 1954. They were designed and built by master builder and designer William Mellenthin. The buildings are significant as a Ranch Style Courtyard Apartment, retaining their original form, detailing and integrity. Amongst the many single family homes that William Mellenthin built during the postwar suburbanization building boom, there were only a few court-style multi-family dwellings he developed, and the site at Buffalo Avenue appears to be the only one story court remaining in existence today.

## ABOUT RANCH HOUSES

The Ranch House as a twentieth century suburban phenomenon is a cousin of the Ranch House of the nineteenth century prairie. The latter was a practical, often ad hoc utilitarian shelter using the materialist hand in a particular locale, and with no particular style. Twentieth century media and design transformed this rugged vernacular building into an identifiable and marketable type. Hollywood movies engraved the look and the symbolism of the the Ranch into popular consciousness: usually one story, with gabled roofs, often board and batten or brick siding, and the suggestion of a front porch from which to greet your neighbors strolling by.

Almost every architect and builder in California worth their name designed and built a ranch House at some point. Beginning in the 1920's, the houses that Mellenthin built fit the type. Whatever size the house was, it was anchored in a comfortably recognizable historical story: Rural ranch, Colonial, American colonial, Cape Cod. A Mellenthin house might feature neatly cropped eaves on a hipped roof, and French Quarter canopies over a front door flanked by criss-crossed columns that doubled as vine trellises. Yet none of these variations were historical replicas. In plan, amenities and the style they were modernizing, even if they had not yet actually reached the point of being ‘modern’. They kept one foot in the past, and one in the future - likely where the majority of the population wanted to live.

As a San Fernando Valley builder after the war, Mellenthin kept pace with the democratizing influence of the Ranch House. The dovecote, or bird house, was incorporated prominently into gables facing the public street reinforced the straight-shooting, representing unpretentious utilitarianism and friendly rural values that the suburbs and their builders, developers and architects clamored to reflect.

## DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY OF THE VAN NUYS/NORTH SHERMAN OAKS COMMUNITY

Van Nuys is located on the central floor of the San Fernando Valley, north of the Santa Monica Mountains. No major land formations define the area. Aside from gradual changes in elevation, the area is generally flat. Van Nuys is bound and shaped by human-made or human-altered features, including the Southern Pacific rail line at its northern end and the 101 and 405 Freeways to the south and west. At the eastern edge is the Pacoima Wash, a channelized tributary of the Tujunga Wash. The channelized Los Angeles River runs through the southwest corner.

Like the rest of the San Fernando Valley, the land currently occupied by Van Nuys was originally inhabited by members of the Tongva tribe.

*From tongvapeople.org: The Tongva, later known as the Fernandeño-Gabrieño Mission Indians after colonization, and the Tataviam to the north and Chumash to the west, had lived and thrived in the Valley and its arroyos for over 8,000 years. They had numerous settlements, and trading and hunting camps, before the Spanish arrived and took their homeland in 1797 for the Mission San Fernando Rey de España and Las Californias ranchos.*

In 1797, the Spanish established Mission San Fernando, from which the valley would derive its name. When Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821, existing Spanish land grants in the San Fernando Valley were re-divided into a number of ranchos, including Rancho Ex-Mission, Van Nuy, North Sherman Oaks, Community Plan Area 8 Fernando, Rancho Cahuenga, Rancho Los Encinos, and Rancho Tujunga. By the mid-19th century, many of Southern California's rancho owners were beginning to sell off portions of their lands, and those in the Valley were no exception.

In 1874 Isaac Newton Van Nuys moved to California and became a stockholder in the San Fernando Valley Homestead Association. Soon after, he became a business partner and son-in-law of Isaac Lankershim. Van Nuys played a large role in mapping the Valley and establishing boundaries between the Lankershim, Maclay and Porter townships. What became known as the Lankershim-Van Nuys ranch extended across the Valley, from present-day Roscoe Boulevard south to present-day Mulholland Drive.

Construction of the Southern Pacific Railroad in the early 20th century connected Los Angeles and San Francisco via a route that bisected the San Fernando Valley and crossed over the Santa Susana Pass. Also, the completion of the Los Angeles Aqueduct, which brought water to Los Angeles from the Owens Valley supplied water to the area, which attracted many homesteaders and businessmen seeking a new life and fortune in the West. The prospect of a secure water source and improved infrastructure aided a major real estate boom, as the last of



the vast Spanish ranchos gave way to smaller agricultural lots, fledgling commercial centers, and early residential subdivisions.

As the Valley moved away from its agricultural roots in the 1920s through the early 1940s, the Survey Area became an automobile-oriented suburban community.

As the San Fernando Valley's population more than doubled to over 400,000 between 1945 and 1950, housing developers could barely keep up with the demand.

'Builders catered to a variety of income levels, ranging from developments of economical tract houses to communities of custom-designed residences sitting on large, half-acre lots. Many of the new developments offered GI financing for veterans. Thousands of new houses were designed in various iterations of the Ranch style, which was immensely popular at the time and also paid homage to the community's rural roots and historically rustic culture. The new developments included notable neighborhoods like Hidden Woods (developed by William Mellenthin) and Hillview Park Estates (developed by Julian Weinstock, an architect as well as developer). The influence of Mellenthin and Weinstock is seen throughout the Valley but is especially strong in Van Nuys, the area now known as Valley Glen, and Sherman Oaks. Both developers were well known for building large neighborhoods of single-family houses during the 1950s, predominantly featuring Traditional Ranch designs with rustic decorative elements evoking the Valley's idealized rural past. Mellenthin's developments were particularly well known for their houses with exaggerated dovecotes, which earned them the nickname "birdhouses".'

- from: *SurveyLA, Historic resources report Van Nuys-North Sherman Oaks, July 2015*

## WILLIAM MELLENTHIN AND THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

William Mellenthin originally hailed from Sleepy Eye, Minnesota. He attended the University of Minnesota, where he received a degree in economics in 1918. Shortly after his graduation, he married his wife Mary, and a year later they moved to the Los Angeles. They joined several family members who already lived in the area, including two brothers who were working as a successful banker and the other as a prominent doctor. William soon built his first home in 1923 on Citrus Ave in Los Angeles. Prior to his projects in the Valley, he completed dozens of homes in and around the Silver Lake and Los Feliz area of Los Angeles. These are referred to as 'Pre-Birdhouse' era.

As the City of Los Angeles had become well developed by the late 1940's, room for expansion became limited, while land was at a premium. The San Fernando Valley on the other hand had plenty of open spaced undeveloped land. With newly constructed roads and highways, the Valley was promoted as a suburban paradise with proximity to the city. It was a place where your family could live comfortably, while still driving a reasonable commute to downtown Los Angeles for work or culture. Naturally, builders and architects flocked to the Valley in hopes of capitalizing on all that undeveloped land. To further encourage this exodus, the US government provided financial incentives for both builder and buyer. During this post war suburbanization

boom, the San Fernando Valley grew from around 150,000 in 1940, to 850,000 by 1960. Tract homes soon filled large sections of the valley, and within these tracts the Ranch home style was a popular choice for young couples and families starting out.

*'Many of these houses were modest in size and appearance, and adhered to one of several basic floor plans; these floor plans could then be manipulated in terms of orientation, materials, and ornament to provide each house with an individual flavor without compromising their economy or disrupting the continuity of the tract. Several prominent developers, including Julian Weinstock and William Mellenthin, became well-known for their role in developing Ranch house neighborhoods in Los Angeles; Mellenthin, who was active in the San Fernando Valley, is known for designing Ranch tract houses that incorporated exaggerated dove-cotes and other expressive features associated with Traditional Ranch style architecture'*

- Survey LA, 'Ranch House Neighborhoods 1938-1975', 2015

In 1934, William Mellenthin migrated his design and development ambitions across the Hollywood Hills and into the Valley, where he started collaborating with architect Leo F. Bachman, whose 'Monterey-style' homes were a popular design of the 30's and 40's. It was around that time, when Mellenthin enlisted one of Bachmann's draftsmen, Frank S. Hickman, in designing what would become the 'Birdhouse design'. When asked about his inspiration for this, he indicated that it was likely the Minnesota farmhouses of his childhood.

Like his later contemporary Joseph Eichler, Mellenthin built homes that were a cut above the standard cookie cutter tract house - his homes were of uncompromising high quality in both architectural design and in the materials used therein, while employing only the best and highly skilled craftsmen.

Subsequently, almost 3000 of these homes were designed and built all over the Valley, as far as Santa Barbara to the north and Manhattan Beach to the south, between 1940-1960. The small wooden 'Birdhouse' design was built into the roof of the home, usually above the living room, bedroom or garage. In addition, many of them also had 3-5 bird-nest like holes cut into the side of the house. This style quickly became so popular, that other builders began to imitate these features.

With high demand for housing and plenty of competition Mellenthin strived to maintain an 'edge' by checking the daily newspaper for land that was for sale, and then offer 'all cash' the same day to make a deal. Amongst the many properties he acquired, he most famously developed the former Buck Jones Estate, comprising 12 acres of land in the heart of Sherman Oaks for \$130,000 cash. First, 'model homes' were constructed along Magnolia Avenue, which were furnished by local department stores. Then potential buyers would attend open houses on weekends, pick out their desired home, even the street where it would be constructed. As soon as legal papers were signed and the concrete foundation was poured, Mellenthin would get paid.



Striving to built homes 'built to suit', William offered substantial 'customizations' to the buyer, being involved in the selection of the interior furnishings supplied free of charge by Barker Bros., the option of a pool for his more affluent buyers, and in some cases, even omitting the 'Birdhouse' cupola. While catering predominantly to middle class families, he also delivered many homes to the 'rich and famous' - actors, doctors, lawyers and public officials.

- William Mellenthin 'A Birdhouse In Paradise', 2017

## MELLENTHIN COURTYARD APARTMENTS

While almost all of Mellenthin's designs consisted of single family homes, he found an interest in developing multi-family dwellings by the early 1950's. Whether this can be associated with purely personal ambitions, or perhaps the increasing population density challenges - his venturing into the rental market remains a mystery. Research conducted has found that these rental dwellings were strewn randomly around the Valley. They were not part of any tracts, clusters, single homes or neighboring 'courts'. At best, it can be speculated that they were 'filling out' completed clusters of homes - but in any case, almost all of them ended up being torn to be replaced by higher density apartment complexes, or in one case, a parking lot ...

Former tenants, as well as eye witness accounts produced few findings of such 'Mid-Century' Mellenthin Courts:

- 12067 Guerin Street: demolished and replaced by an apartment complex
- 4243 Mammoth Street: demolished and replace by apartment complex
- 5814 Woodman Ave: still standing, but lacking expressive character defining features, and built by a different architect (as per original permit)
- 4669 Laurel Canyon Blvd: demolished and replaced by a PARKING LOT

The proposed monument at 5920-30 Buffalo Avenue is what appears to be the last remaining Triplex Court standing by master builder and developer William Mellenthin.

It is located in the southeast corner of the central floor the San Fernando Valley, which has been well established as the epicenter of William Mellenthin's home building legacy.

The proposed monument is in close proximity to large clusters of Mellenthin homes surrounding it. Despite this being a 'rental' development, Mellenthin applied the same rigid and high quality standards and character defining features, otherwise only found in his home building. It almost

seems like William wanted to share his wildly popular and expressive designs with folks who could simply not afford the price of a house, yet yearned the quaint luxury and joy of living in a 'Country-Style' setting, yet in an 'apartment' that felt like an actual 'home'. With the exception of fireplaces, these units very much represent an all around 'miniature model' and homage to Mellenthin's full size iconic 'Birdhouses'.

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When I sent a photoset of the proposed monument 'William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments' to Alan Hess, Architect, author of 'Ranch House', 2004, and one of the foremost authorities on the Twentieth Century American Home, he promptly responded:

On Tuesday, September 17, 2024, 06:23:37 PM PDT, Alan Hess <alanhes@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Frank—

Here are some responses to the photos.

Well maintained and still expressing its historic characteristics as a Mellenthin design. Chris Lukather's books establish his significance as part of 20th c LA architecture and housing, Though he built many custom homes this shows his capabilities in smaller, multi-family designs, and so it is important to be retained for that reason: quality, architectural character for a less expensive home. This is a good model for us to follow today, too — a reason to preserve this intact example.

The key Mellenthin design elements are here, evoking the comfort, intentionally modest character, welcoming look of the Ranch House (then popular because of the popularity of the Western in Hollywood, John Wayne, Roy Rogers etc.). it is seen in the porches to sit outside and greet neighbors, the diamond pane windows, the vertical board siding, white picket fences (are they original or are they plastic and newer?), dovescotes, plant shelves below windows, simple post and beam porch structure.

Note the distinctive dovescote detail that conveys the rugged, friendly, Western character of the popular Ranch House, and which Mellenthin became identified with.

The landscaping is a key part of the design, providing privacy as well as nature for each unit. This is especially important because of its modest nature, set along a concrete drive and car garages — the planting softens and humanizes the homes in this setting. This is a good lesson for new housing to follow — thus it is important to preserve good examples of housing like this.

Interior: note exposed hardwood floors, sliding wood pocket doors (for efficiency in a small space), wood wainscoting. The interiors look very close to the original with wood trim. Are they? The kitchen looks original — the exposed wood cabinets are original and left unpainted thank goodness — conveys the rustic homey character of the Western style, Even the cabinet pulls are original I suspect — rare to find this example in such good shape, Diagonally set counter top tile is original, and the sink, and tile trim (a darker color — colors and materials are original, distinctive to the period.

Bathroom fixtures likewise mostly original — color of tile and darker trim tile, Sink, tub (though glass enclosure may or may not be original.)



Overall a remarkably well preserved example of one popular LA response to the housing crisis after World War II; small, affordable, but with a character appealing to consumers at the time: the Western Ranch, displaying in its rustic details hospitality, democratic qualities (everyone is equal and deserving a decent home even if it is modest), close to nature, good quality materials on interior. This was a type — there are other Ranch style apartments in the Valley especially, though they are threatened type and deserve protection.

Open interiors, large windows looking out on the landscaping. Do they have a sense of privacy from unity to unit?

Hope this helps, Good luck!

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[section=resource&resourceid=1917426415&currentIndex=0&view=fullDetailsDetailsTab](https://ls2pac.lapl.org/?section=resource&resourceid=1917426415&currentIndex=0&view=fullDetailsDetailsTab)

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*By AM Interior Design And Vintage Goods*

<https://www.pinterest.com/akmdesign/mellenthin-homes/>

## PRIMARY PHOTOS OF EXTERIOR



8/28/2024





8/28/2024





# CONTEMPORARY PHOTOS

ALL CONTEMPORARY PHOTOS TAKEN BY FRANK RICHTER IN SEPTEMBER OF 2024













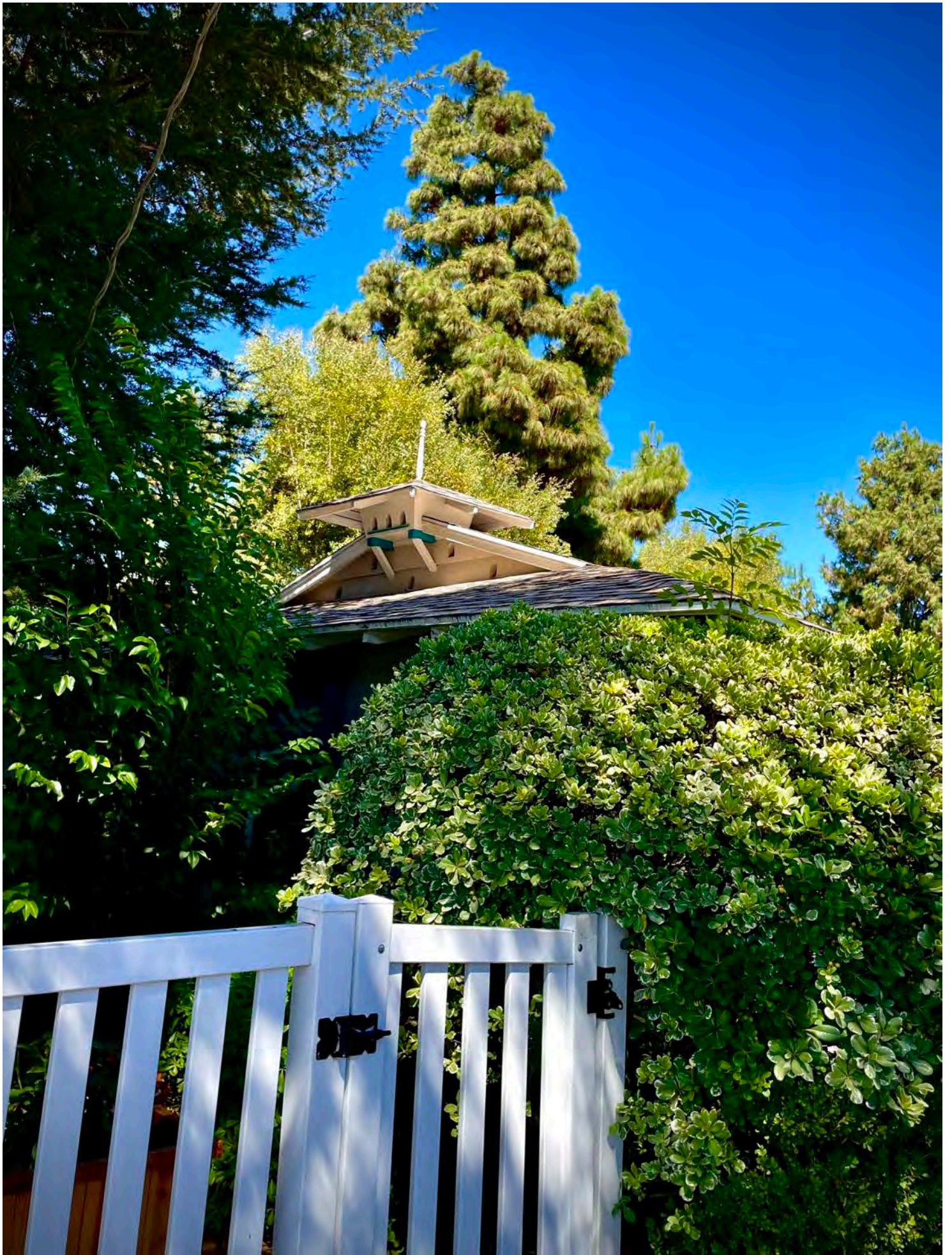










































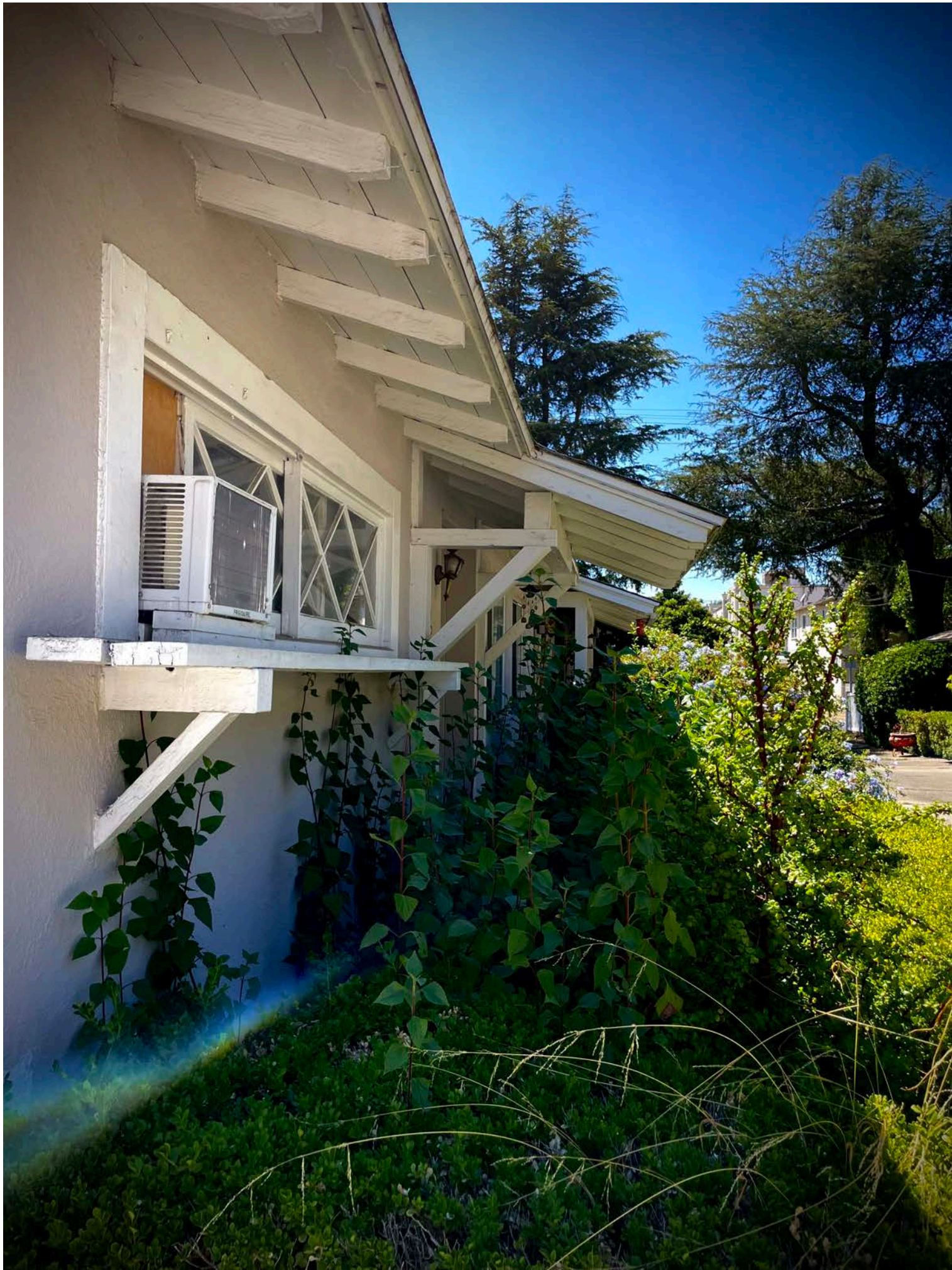




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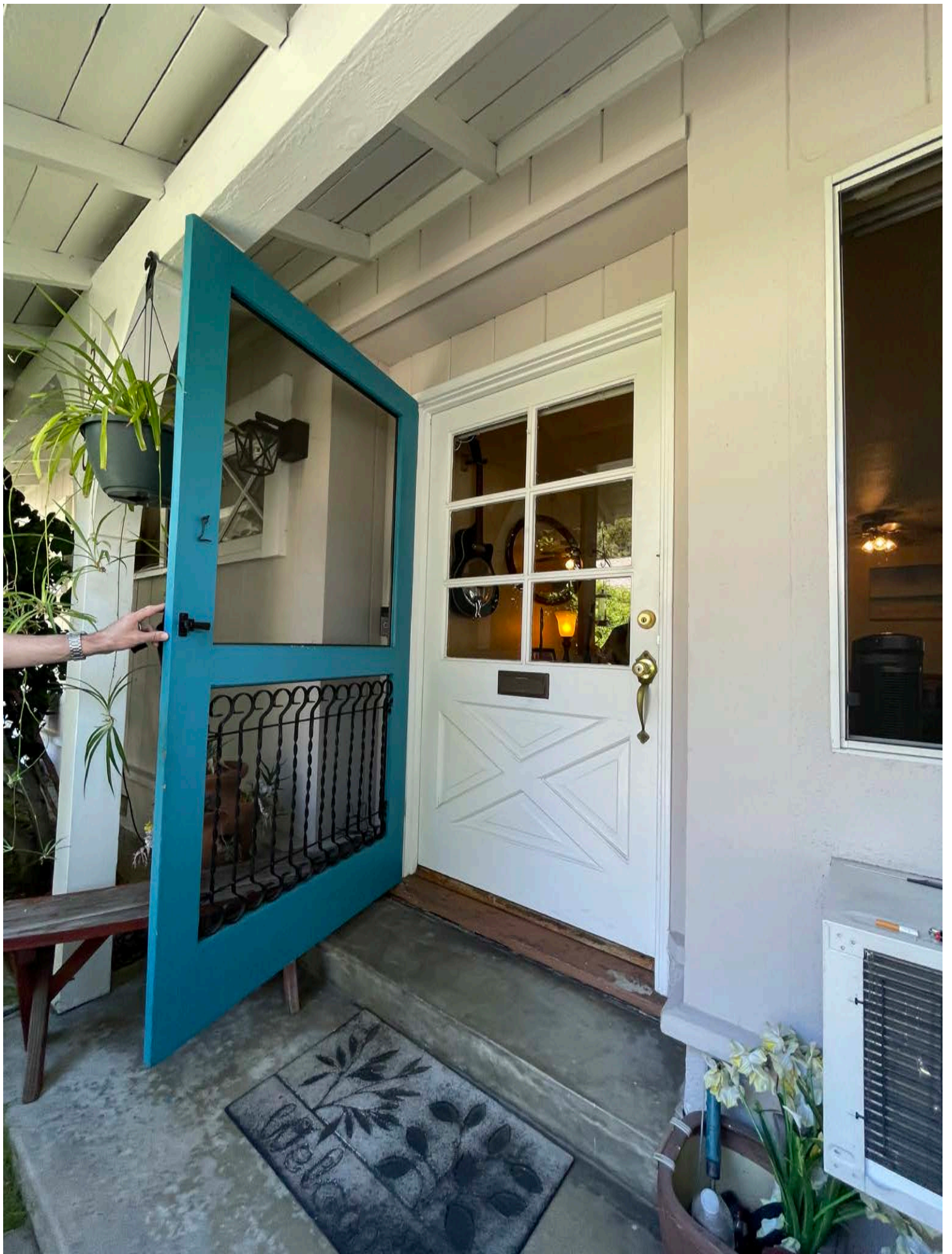








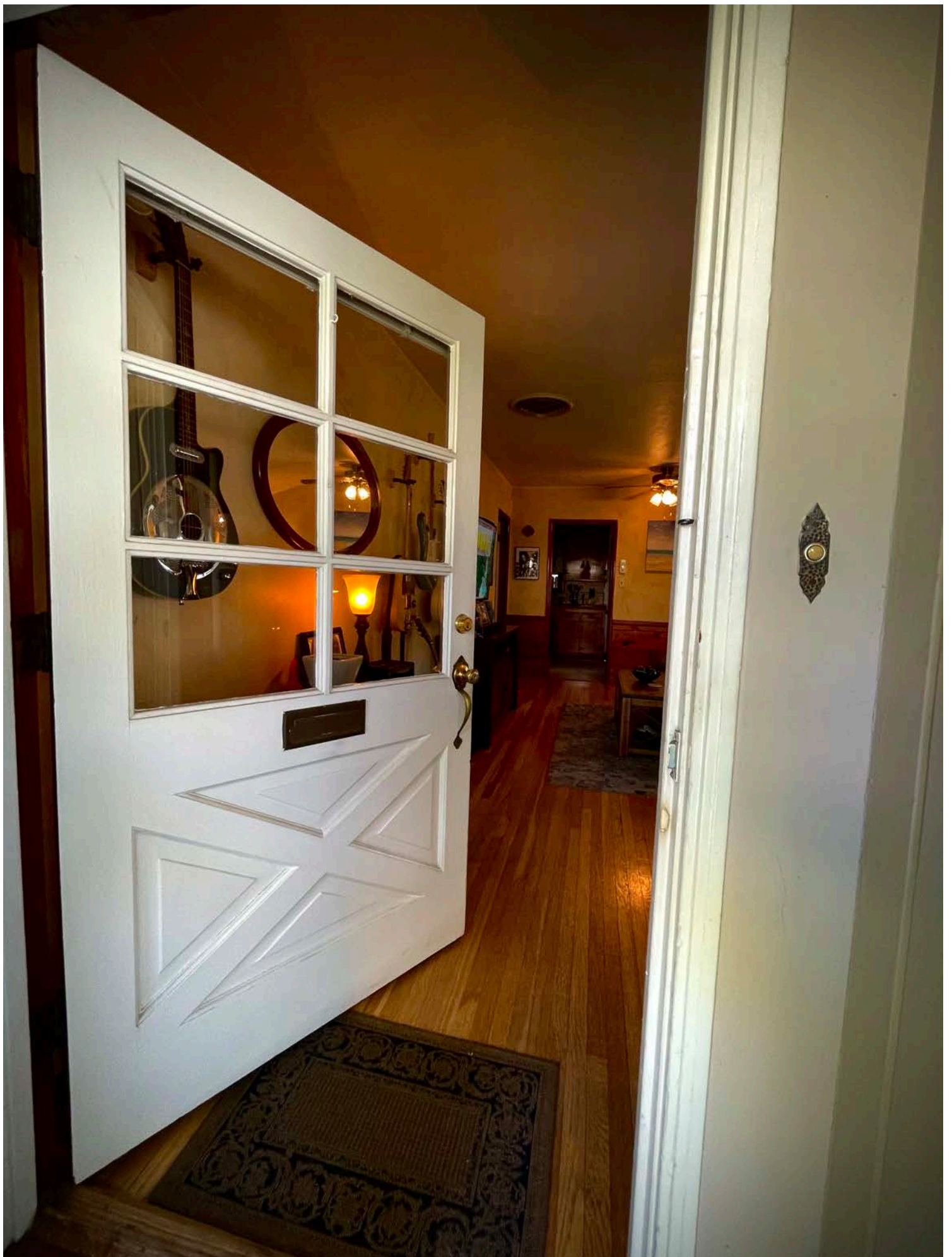










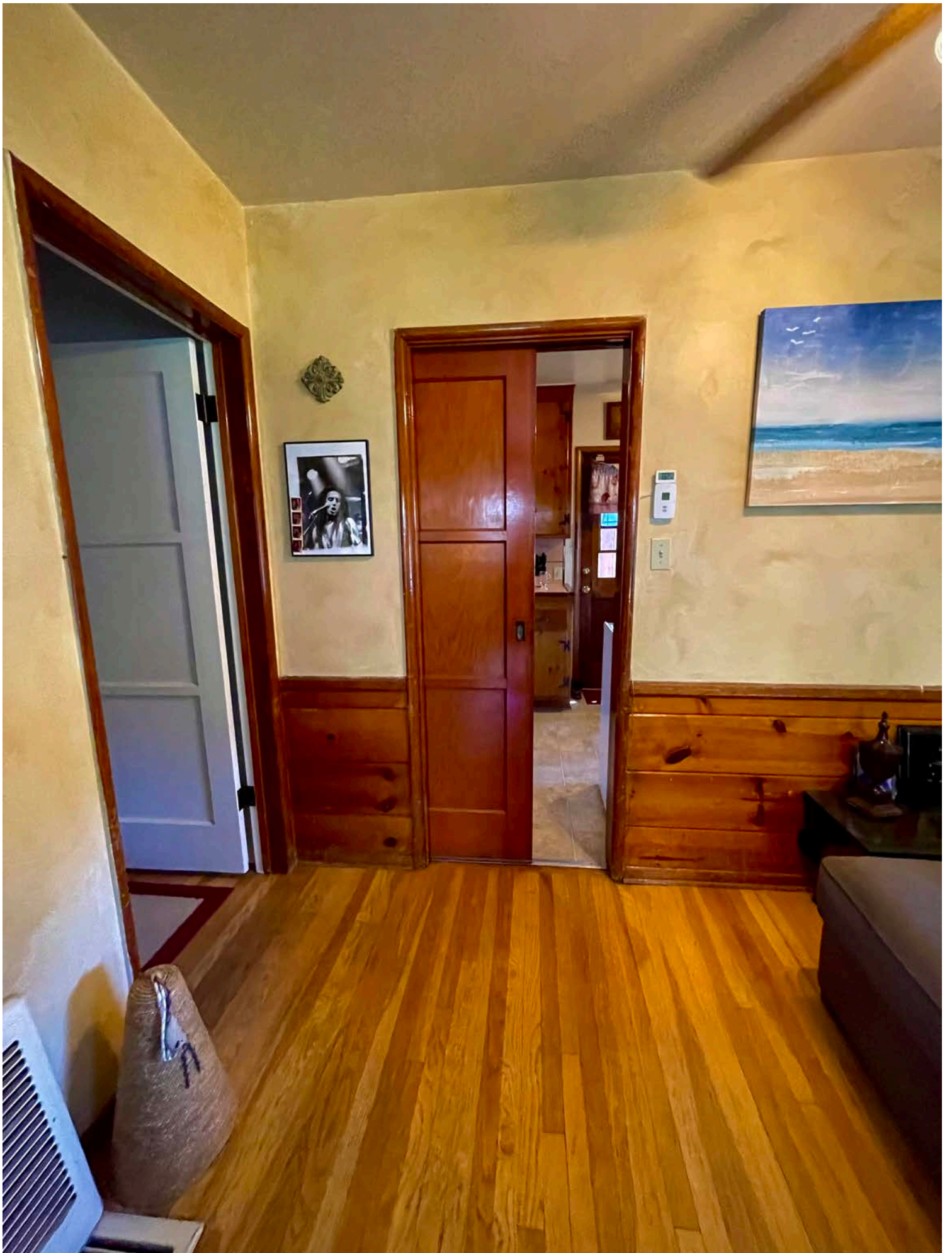












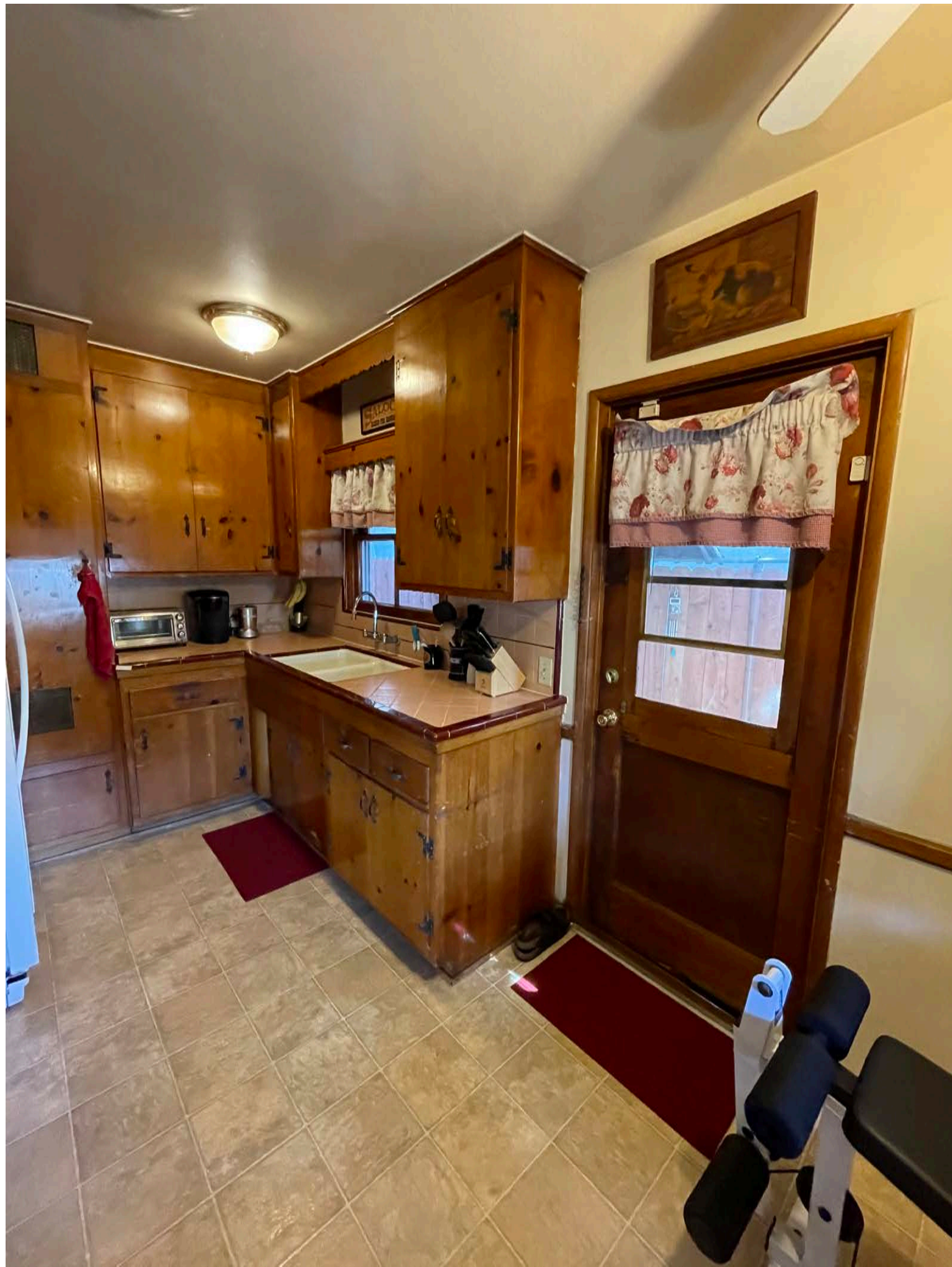




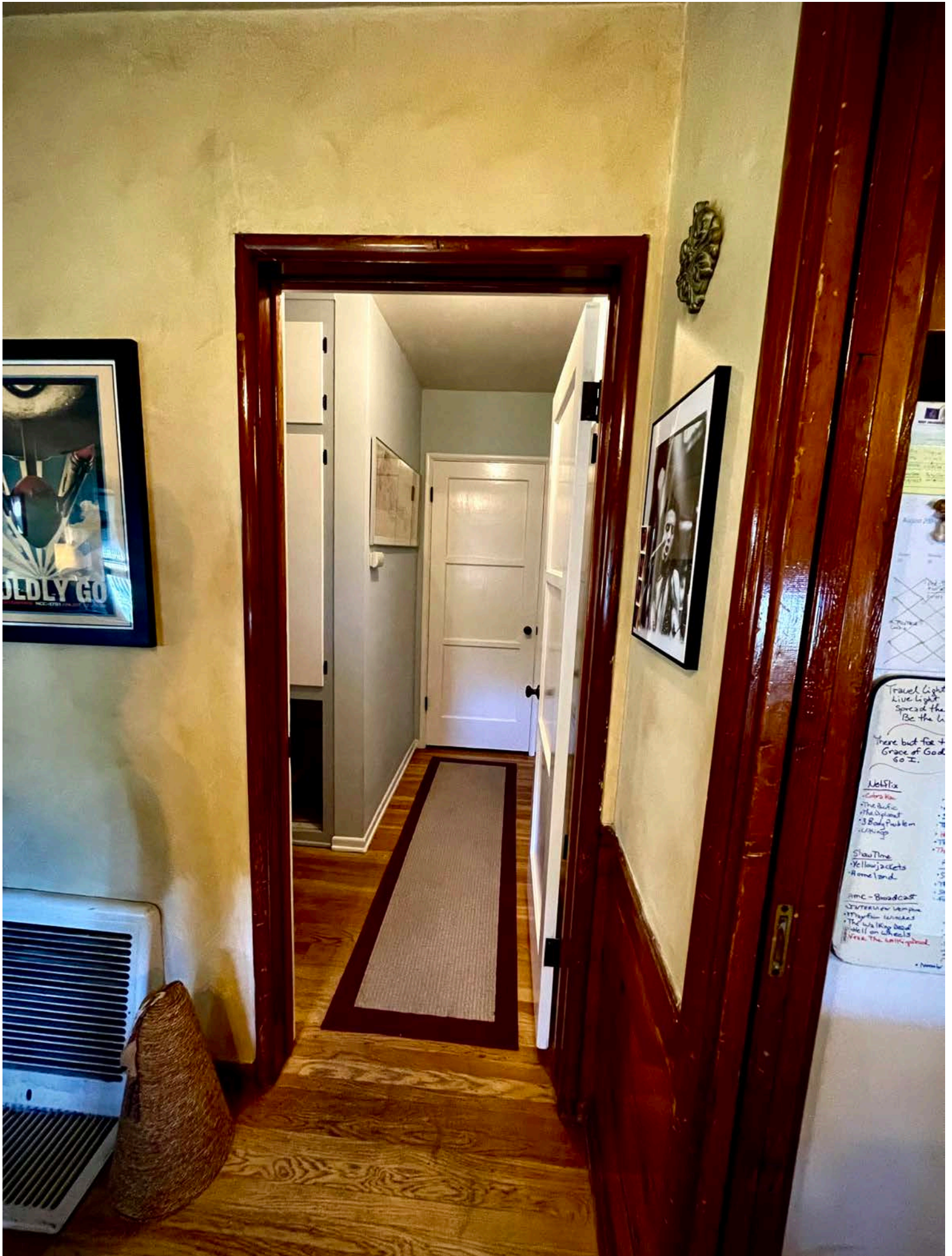












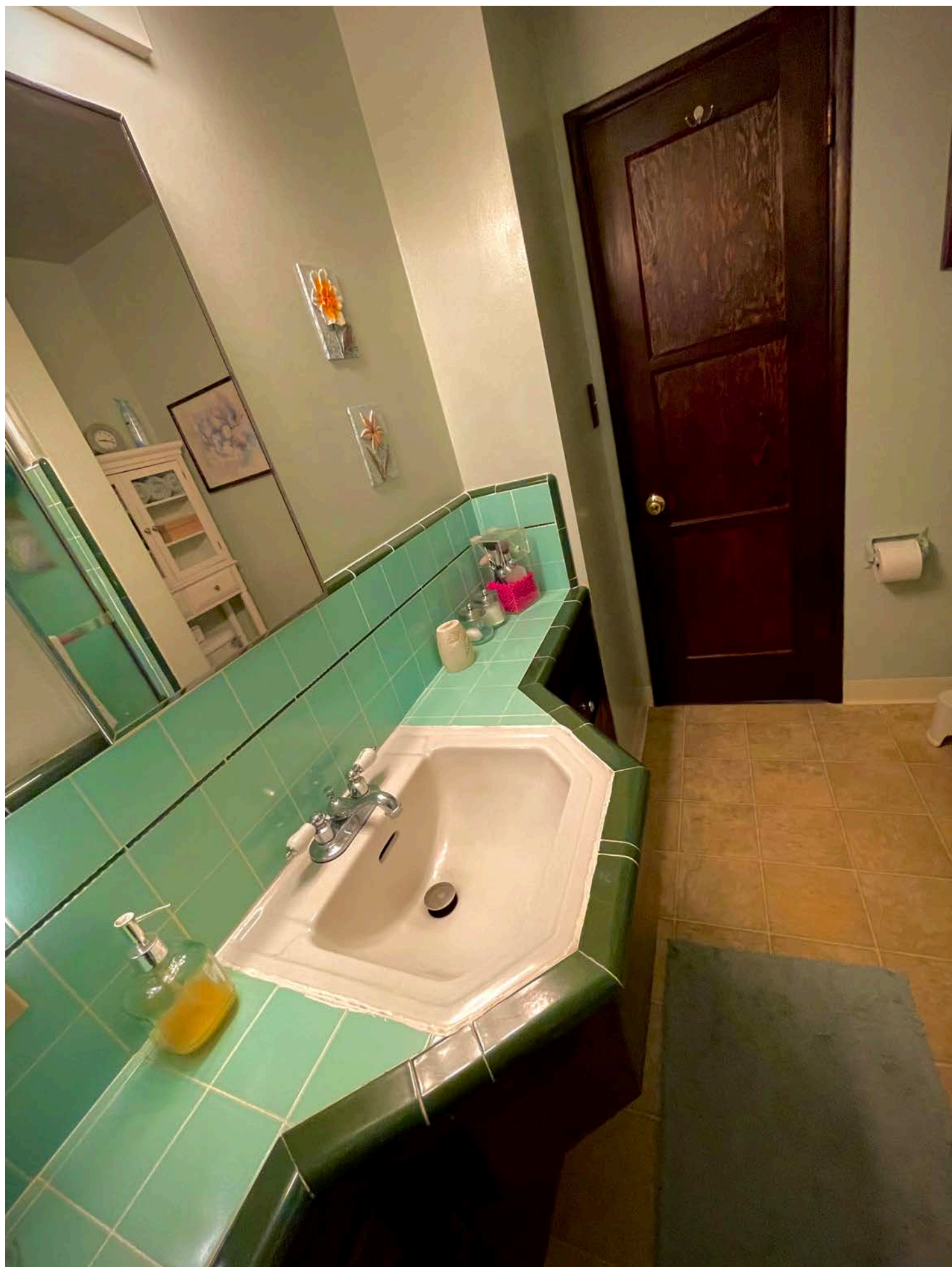
Travel Light  
Live Light  
Spread the  
Be the li  
There but for +  
Grace of God  
Go I.  
Netflix  
Colors  
The Book  
The Diplomat  
3 Body Problem  
The Rings  
ShowTime  
Yellowjackets  
Home Land  
ABC - Broadcast  
Wednesday  
The Way Way Out  
The Way Way Out  
The Way Way Out



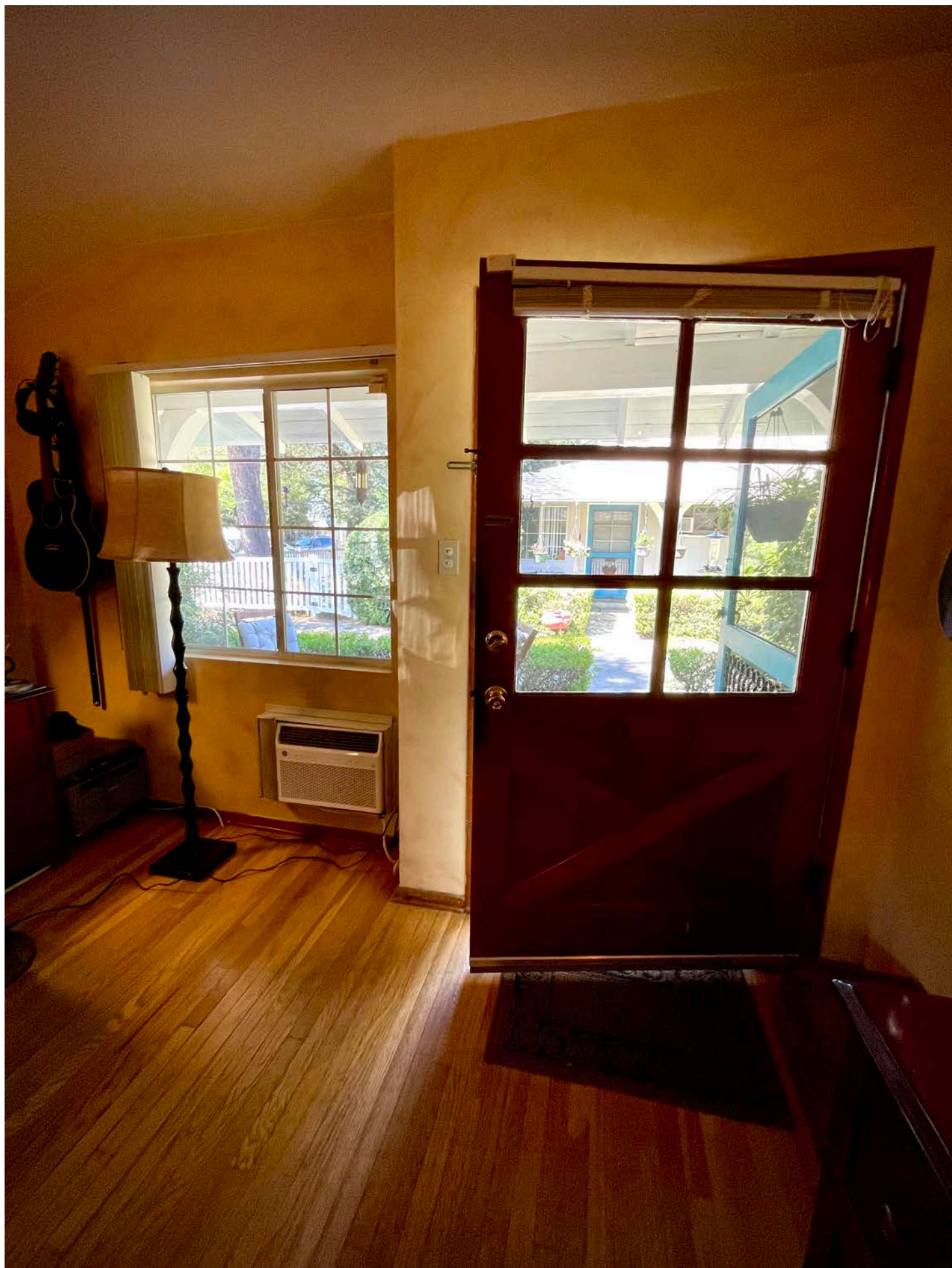








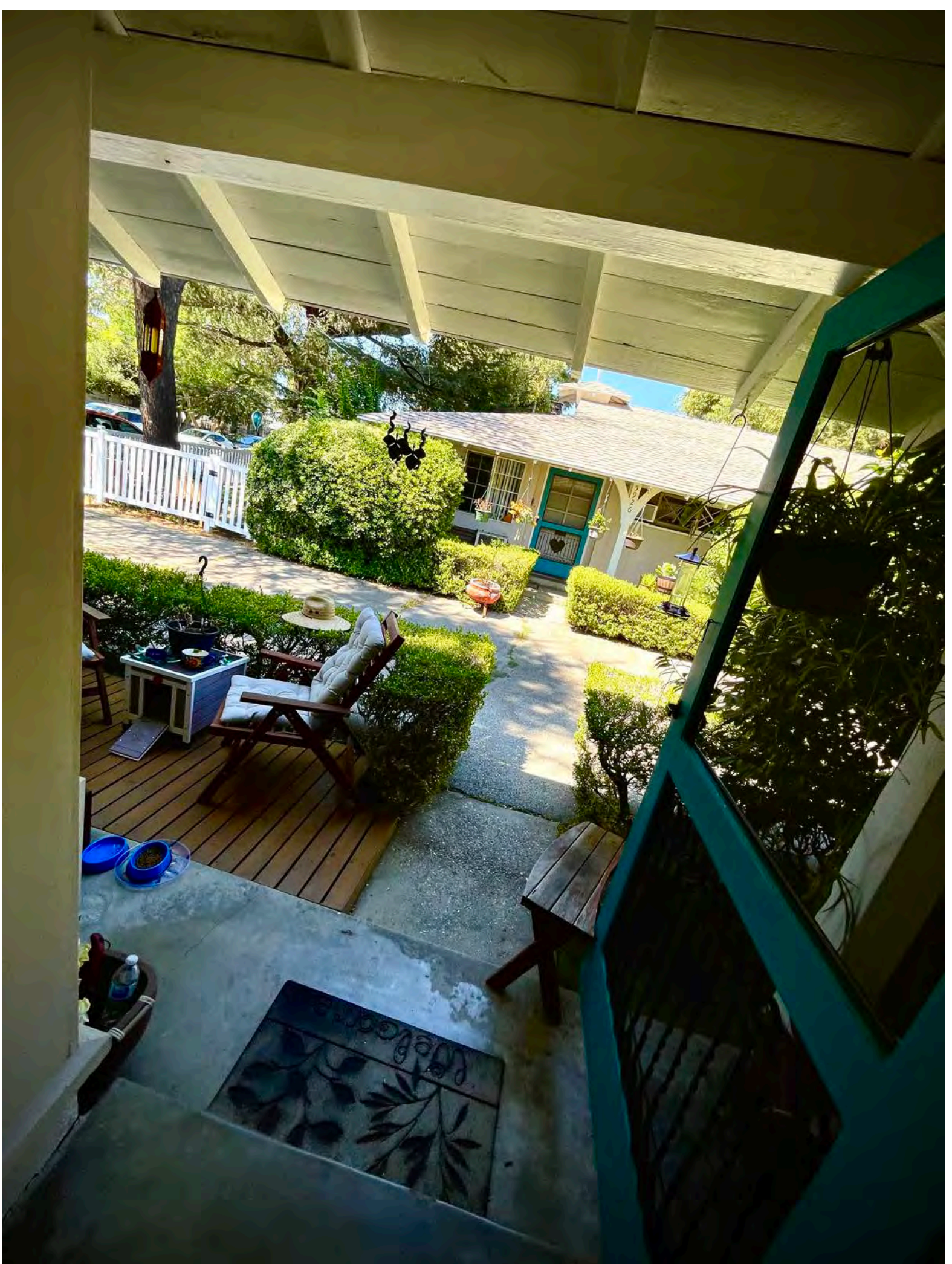
































# **HISTORICAL PHOTOS**

All following historical photos scanned from book  
'A Birdhouse In Paradise' by Chris Lukather,





William Mellenthin

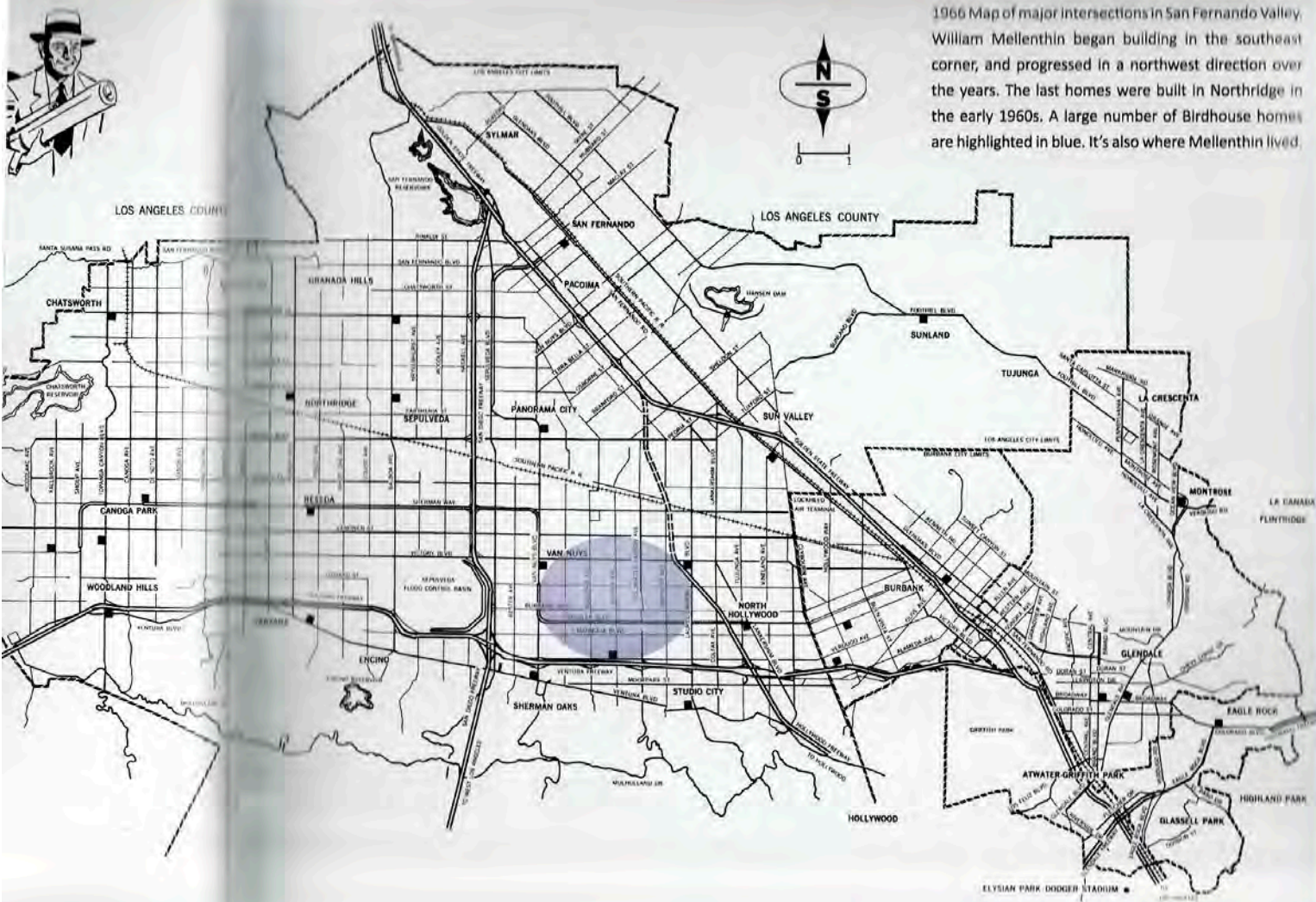
1896-1979





Built by Mellenthin about 1935 to look like a house, the office of Wm. Mellenthin Builder, at 12021 Ventura Blvd, in Studio City, CA.





1966 Map of major intersections in San Fernando Valley. William Mellenthin began building in the southeast corner, and progressed in a northwest direction over the years. The last homes were built in Northridge in the early 1960s. A large number of Birdhouse homes are highlighted in blue. It's also where Mellenthin lived.





Sign advertising Wm. Mellenthin Builder next to one of the first banks in Studio City.

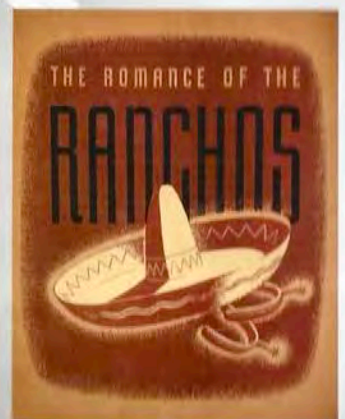




TOP: William Mellenthin built this home for his family in 1928. ABOVE: The home still stands today in a neighborhood near LACMA.



The San Fernando Valley grew rapidly after World War II, where there was plenty of sunshine and wide open land. Builders like William Mellenthin purchased large parcels of land to construct unique, quality ranch style homes. While there were plenty of tract homes for families to choose from, Mellenthin built unique touches into his homes, like birdhouses, dual fireplaces, high-beamed ceilings and diamond-paned windows, to enhance their curb appeal.



Hollywood Freeway heading north into the San Fernando Valley, 1950s





## WM. MELLENTHIN

### BUILDER

12021 Ventura Blvd., North Hollywood, Calif.

North Hollywood 2637

Gladstone 1830

Among the ninety-seven homes built for our clients during the past two years are the following:

#### North Hollywood "Sun-Record Home Beautiful"

	Magnolia Blvd., No. Hollywood
Barker Bros.' Budget Home . . .	Laurel Terrace Dr., No. Hollywood
Miss Gertrude Michael . . . . .	Bluffside Ave., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Pagano . . . . .	Densmore St., Encino
Mr. and Mrs. Edw. Sears, Jr. . . . .	So. Arden, Los Angeles
Mr. and Mrs. Neill Davis . . . . .	Moreno Dr., Moreno Highlands
Judge Oda Faulconer . . . . .	San Fernando Mission Blvd., San Fernando
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas O'Brien . . . . .	Laurel Terrace Dr., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Fellows . . . . .	Mound View Ave., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. John Swallow . . . . .	Ben Ave., No. Hollywood
Mr. Pete E. F. Burns . . . . .	Ben Ave., No. Hollywood
Mr. F. J. Merklings . . . . .	Fulton Ave., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. T. M. Bell . . . . .	Dixie Canyon Dr., No. Hollywood
Mrs. Charlotte Harriess . . . . .	Holly Glen Place, No. Hollywood
Mrs. Mary Reeves-Stolenwork . . . . .	Hillslope St., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. Howard Hensel . . . . .	Laurel Terrace Dr., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. Kolia Levenne . . . . .	Viewcrest Rd., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. W. P. Esrey . . . . .	Laurel Terrace Dr., No. Hollywood
Mrs. Florence Paulson . . . . .	Mound View Ave., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. Edward Churchill . . . . .	Hillslope St., No. Hollywood
Mr. Arthur N. Watson . . . . .	Mound View Ave., No. Hollywood
Miss Grace Mottram . . . . .	Addison St., No. Hollywood
Mr. J. D. Farquhar . . . . .	Laurel Terrace Dr., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. H. Anderson . . . . .	Laurel Terrace Dr., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph La Shelle . . . . .	Viewcrest Rd., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. C. Duncan Hutton . . . . .	Viewcrest Rd., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. John J. Schmitz . . . . .	Woodman Ave., Van Nuys
Mr. and Mrs. Roy V. Schwab . . . . .	Faculty Ave., Lakewood Village, L. B.
Mr. and Mrs. Jack West . . . . .	Bluebell St., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. Isadore Gross . . . . .	Laurel Terrace Dr., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Diebele . . . . .	Faculty Ave., Lakewood Village, Long Beach
Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Warren . . . . .	Gentry St., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Ernst . . . . .	Simpson St., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers O. Stout . . . . .	Kling St., No. Hollywood

Mr. and Mrs. Carl L. Sutton . . . . .	Viewcrest Rd., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. John Ewing . . . . .	Riverside Dr., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Pearsall . . . . .	Mound View Ave., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. Reeves Dutton . . . . .	Gloria St., Encino
Mr. and Mrs. John McKeon . . . . .	Laurel Terrace Dr., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. Frederick H. Starr . . . . .	Viewcrest Rd., No. Hollywood
Mrs. Alice Greenfield . . . . .	Maxwellton Rd., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Everson . . . . .	Mound View Ave., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. Louis Laughlin . . . . .	Ben Ave., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. Ira Rohland . . . . .	Mound View Ave., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Balch . . . . .	Ben Ave., No. Hollywood
Mrs. Virda Mann . . . . .	Yarmouth Ave., Encino
Mr. and Mrs. Wm. A. Godsoe . . . . .	So. Mariposa St., Burbank
Mr. and Mrs. John J. Kiely . . . . .	Fulton Ave., Van Nuys
Southwest Development Corp. . . . .	Fulton Ave., Monterey Village
Mr. and Mrs. John Peirce . . . . .	La Mirada Ave., San Marino
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Figgins . . . . .	Hillslope St., No. Hollywood
Mr. Roy Atwell . . . . .	Shady Glade Ave., No. Hollywood
Mr. Roy Culverwell . . . . .	Otsego St., Laurelhurst, No. Hollywood
Mrs. Helen L. White . . . . .	Shady Glade Ave., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. E. F. Franklin . . . . .	Visceno St., Glendale
Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Hess . . . . .	Valley Oak Dr., Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. Milton C. Brittain . . . . .	Holly Glen Pl., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. Roy H. Henry . . . . .	Whipple St., Toluca Lake
Mrs. Virginia Michael . . . . .	Hartsook St., Laurelhurst, No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. Floyd L. Knudtson . . . . .	Valley Heart Dr., Van Nuys
Mr. and Mrs. Clifford R. Gard . . . . .	Viewcrest Rd., No. Hollywood
Southwest Development Corp. . . . .	Van Noord St., Monterey Village
Mr. Robert W. Stanhope . . . . .	Otsego St., Laurelhurst, No. Hollywood
Mrs. Helen White . . . . .	Riverside Dr., Monterey Village
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Ward . . . . .	Valley Oak Drive, Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. O. W. Dickens . . . . .	Silverado Dr., Moreno Highlands
Mr. and Mrs. Ward Groshong . . . . .	Laurel Canyon Blvd., No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. Francis King . . . . .	Hartsook St., Laurelhurst, No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. Sam Bevis . . . . .	Otsego St., Laurelhurst, No. Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. C. R. Hauser . . . . .	Agnes St., No. Hollywood



1938

Opens Today – Another Model Home by Wm. Mellenthin

## “CALIFORNIA MODERN”

4257 Laurel Canyon Blvd.  
(In North Hollywood's Finest District)  
OPEN — 11 to 5 Daily; 11 to 6 Sundays

Interiors and Furnishings by  
**The BROADWAY'S**  
Home Furnishing Studio

The Broadway's Home Furnishing Studio once again proves that good taste need not be expensive. And that simple modern can be used effectively in a small home to make it look more spacious. Each of its five rooms is a masterpiece. You are cordially invited to come see for yourself!

**DIRECTIONS:** Drive out Ventura Blvd. to Laurel Canyon Blvd., then turn north 2 blocks to the model home. Only 10 minutes from Hollywood.



*Because this home has early California architectural lines with an unusually strong dash of modernity, it has been called the "California Modern" model home.*

### A partial list of 175 clients

Vierling Kersey	C.V. Bacwar
Geo. C. Mann	H.W. Smith
Neill Davis	M.C. Brittain
Rev. R.E. Marshall	"Sunny" O' Des
C.H. Bauman	John Swallow
R.W. Wilson	Arthur N. Watson
Harry Portman	Jos. Hopkins
Beri Harris	W.B. Crafty
Dr. Max Levine	Klarence F. Krens
Dr. L.J. Tragerman	Paul Kendall
Dr. Ernest Johnson	Wm. W. Watson
Tom O'Brien	Ben Krinnitt
Robert Agins	Kathleen Exley
Loran Andrews	C.A. Gabriel
Clarence "Pat" Fraley	John Peirce
Eugene O'Brien	John Ewing
W.L. Kietwer	Frank Figgins
W.E. Cole	Harvey A. Klitske

LEO F. BACHMAN, Architect

# Wm. Mellenthin

*Builder*

12021 Ventura Blvd. North Hollywood  
Telephones: GL. - 1830 or No. Holly. - 2637



The above advertisement credits Leo F. Bachman as the architect. Most of the pre-Birdhouse homes were designed by Leo Bachman and built by William Mellenthin. They worked together for many years, and remained friends even after they started working on their own individual projects. Leo Bachman wrote a book in 1947 titled, *Brick and Tile as Utilized in Modern American Architecture*.



**BARKER BROS.** *presents*

*ATTRACTIVE*

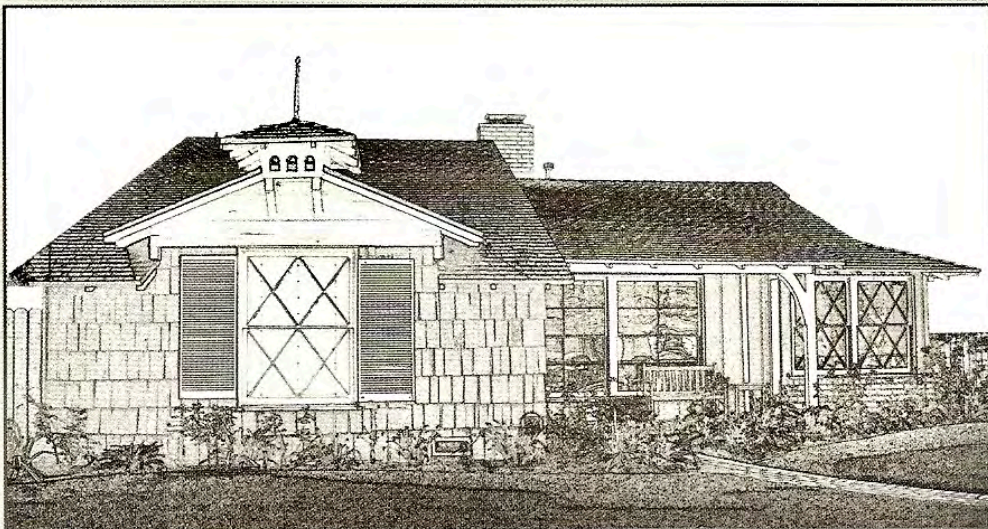
## **MODEL HOMES**

Completely and distinctively  
decorated and furnished by  
**BARKER BROS. DECORATORS**

Specialists in accomplishing wonders for small homes on a  
modest budget! Take advantage of the Doris Small Homes  
Studio decorating services ... no charge or obligation to you.

### **N. HOLLYWOOD "AMERICAN TRADITIONAL"**

On Riverside Drive (near Laurel Canyon Blvd.), North Hollywood. Built  
by Wm. Mellenthin, 4701 Laurel Canyon Blvd. Decorated by R. Sprague  
Hall, Barker's Hollywood. Coordinated by Martha Weaver. First model  
home furnished in "American Traditional."



Open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Watch for April issue of BETTER HOMES & GARDENS which  
features the "Pricesetter" model home described here.

# **BARKER BROS.**

SEVENTH STREET, FLOWER & FIGUEROA



**W<sup>M</sup>MELLENTHIN**  
**BUILDER**

SINCE 1923

# RANCH HOMES & APARTMENTS







ABOVE: Original sign placed on front lawns of Mellenthin homes for sale. BELOW: Bill's personal business card







Single family home, Built 1952 - Demolished 2016







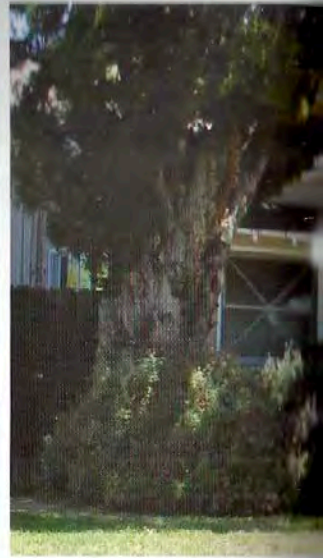
Mellenthin Single Family House



1957

The later Mellenthin homes were located in the north west Valley. They were built on a grander scale. The lots were often twice the size of a standard one, which would accommodate a larger home, a swimming pool, garden, and a long driveway.

Built 1958 - another story-and-a-half-home - with a bedroom above the garage.





## Ranch Style Courtyard Apartments





1941



Mellenthin complex built in Studio City. Historically noted as an excellent example of 1940s courtyard apartment in the traditional ranch style.

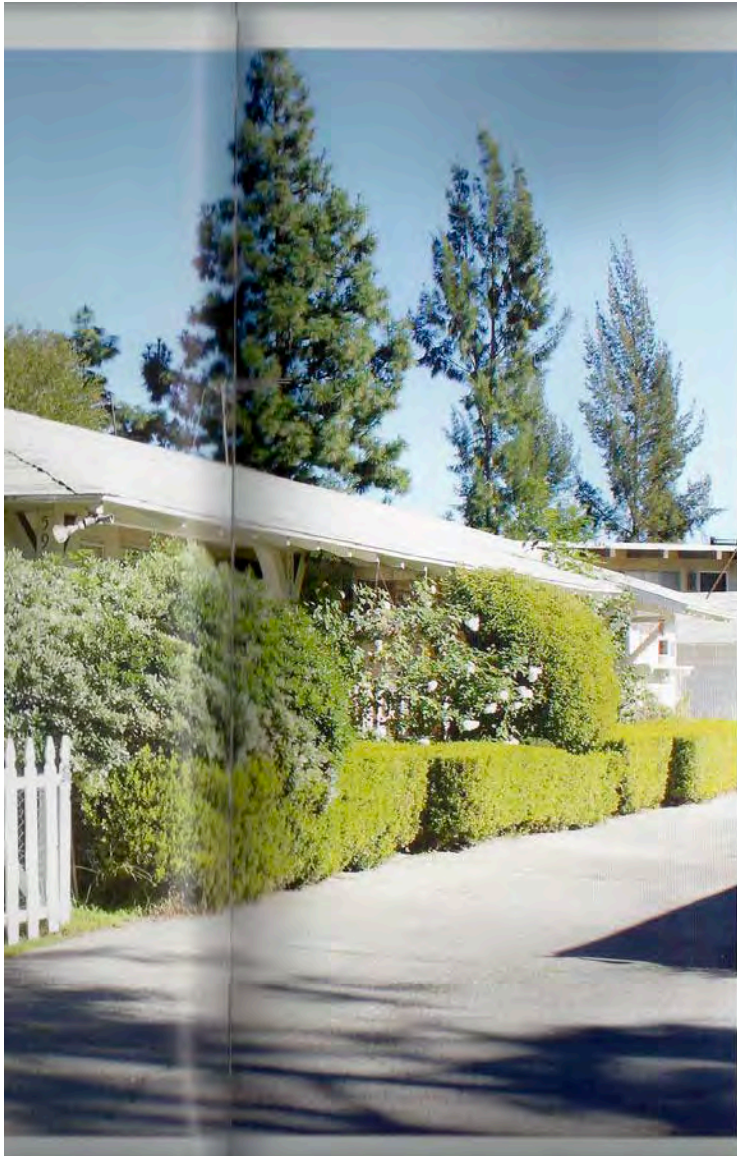


Ranch Style Triplex Apartments



If you can't afford to buy a Mellenthin home, you can look into renting at one of his uniquely designed apartment buildings.









In 1950, William Mellenthin built this custom Birdhouse ranch home for Barbara Hale and husband, Bill Williams. The two actors starred in both feature films and television shows. They met during the filming of *West of the Pecos* in 1945. Their son is actor, William Katt.



Architectural Digest  
Vol. IX, No. 3



The work of Builder, William Mellenthin, and Architect, Leo F. Bachman, featured in a 1937 issue of *Architectural Digest*, an issue that's apparently difficult to find.



CONTRACT  
with  
PARKVIEW CORPORATION  
4701 Laurel Canyon Boulevard  
North Hollywood, California

AGREEMENT made this 21st day of May, 1953, between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, hereinafter called "Owner", whose address is \_\_\_\_\_ 25th Street, Santa Monica, California, and Parkview Corporation, a California corporation, hereinafter called the "Corporation".

Owner agrees to purchase a lot, six (6) room residence and double garage at \_\_\_\_\_ Wortser Avenue, Sherman Oaks, California, the legal description of such property being Lot 4, Tract 18959, for the sum of Twenty Thousand Six Hundred Thirty-Six and No/100 (\$20,636.00) Dollars.

The Corporation agrees to furnish the above described lot to build thereon according to plans and specifications furnished by the Corporation, and hereby approved by Owner, and furnish all labor and materials for the said six (6) room residence and double garage for the sum stated above.

The Corporation hereby acknowledges receipt of Two Thousand and No/100 (\$2,000.00) Dollars from Owner to apply on the purchase price. Five Thousand Two Hundred Thirty-Six and No/100 (\$5,236.00) Dollars to be a Note secured by a First Trust Deed on Owner's property at \_\_\_\_\_ 25th Street, Santa Monica, California (Lot 11, Tract 11922) and a Second Trust Deed on property involved in this contract. Owner agrees to pay to the Corporation the balance due on the purchase price in cash and proceeds from Owner's building loan according to the following schedule:

Loan Company's usual order book payment plan.

The purchase price stated above is contingent upon starting construction by June 11, 1953, and in the event that start of construction shall be delayed by the fault of anyone other than the Corporation, Owner agrees, beyond such date, to pay such increased labor and material costs as may arise.

Owner \_\_\_\_\_

Owner \_\_\_\_\_

PARKVIEW CORPORATION  
The Corporation  
By *Sam McCallister*  
President



Buying a new home was easy for returning Veterans. All you needed was a job—sign the proper papers—and you could move right in. The United States government stepped in to make homes more affordable and easier to build. The fast pace of new home construction was set by high demand and a shortage of housing nationwide. The burgeoning San Fernando Valley saw its population increase dramatically after WWII.



CONTRACT  
with

HUSTON HOMES  
4701 Laurel Canyon Boulevard  
North Hollywood, California

AGREEMENT made this 28th day of January, 1953, between George N. and Twyla M. Crystal, hereinafter called "Owner", whose address is 432 Veteran Avenue, West Los Angeles, California, and Huston Homes, a California corporation, hereinafter called the "Corporation".

Owner agrees to purchase a lot, seven room residence and double garage at 4917 Wortser Avenue, Sherman Oaks, California, the legal description of such property being Lot 6, Tract 18294, for the sum of Nineteen Thousand Two Hundred Thirteen & No/100 Dollars (\$19,213.00).

The Corporation agrees to furnish the above described lot to build thereon according to plans and specifications furnished by the Corporation and hereby approved by Owner, and furnish all labor and materials for the said seven room residence and double garage for the sum stated above.

The Corporation hereby acknowledges receipt of One Thousand & No/100 Dollars (\$1,000.00) from Owner to apply on the purchase price and Owner agrees to pay the sum of Five Thousand Two Hundred Thirteen & No/100 Dollars (\$5,213.00) to the Corporation on or before February 4, 1953. Owner agrees to pay to the Corporation the balance due on the purchase price in cash and proceeds from Owner's building loan according to the following schedule:

Loan Company's usual order book payment plan.

The purchase price stated above is contingent upon starting construction by February 18, 1953, and in the event that start of construction shall be delayed by the fault of anyone other than the Corporation, Owner agrees, beyond such date, to pay such increased labor and material costs as may arise.

*George N. Crystal*  
Owner

HUSTON HOMES  
The Corporation

*Twyla M. Crystal*  
Owner

By *Wm. Mellenthin*  
President

**W<sup>M</sup> MELLENTHIN**  
**BUILDER**

12021 VENTURA BLVD.

**Sunset 2-2637**



OWNER'S DREAM HOME



**WILLIAM MELLENTHIN**  
FIRM

Architectural renderings like this one were created to help sell new homes. Thousands of them were thrown in the trash after the company closed.



# The Birdhouse

## Modern Birdhouse

There were three different design styles of the infamous Birdhouse—with slight variations. The homes sold by Wm. Mellenthin Builder were built to suit. Most people preferred the charm and craftsmanship of the birdhouse design—with the finial on top.





### 3-Hole Cupola

This was one of Mellenthin's favorite designs, with its three holes in front and finial on top. Many finials have fallen off over the years, but are often replaced with new ones. There were many builders who copied the Birdhouse design in the Valley, but none quite captured the charm of the original Mellenthin Birdhouse.









## 4-Hole Dovecote

This is one of the earlier Birdhouse designs, with its four holes in front and finial on top. It has a more dated feel than the other two, but still provides a great look for the front of the house.





## Deluxe Birdhouse

Another Mellenthin favorite. This home, tucked away in a neighborhood thick with trees and brush, is a little hard to notice at first glance. But it has some elegant and unique Mellenthin features. The camouflage look only helps to enhance its beauty and charm. It also keeps the looky-loos away.







BOOK 41042 PAGE 347

REVENUE STAMPS IN THIS SPACE

**Corporation Grant Deed** Affix I. R. S. \$ 4.95

Form 392-A 7-49 THIS FORM FURNISHED BY TITLE INSURANCE AND TRUST COMPANY

FOR A VALUABLE CONSIDERATION, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged,

HUSTON HOMES, a California corporation  
a corporation organized under the laws of the state of California, does hereby

GRANT to  
GEORGE N. CRYSTAL AND TWILA M. CRYSTAL, husband and wife  
the real property in the city of Los Angeles county of Los Angeles  
state of California, described as:

Lot 6, Tract 18294, as per map recorded in Book 4419,  
Pages 36 and 37 of Maps, in the office of the County  
Recorder of said County.

In Witness Whereof, said corporation has caused its corporate name and seal to be affixed hereto and  
this instrument to be executed by its President and Secretary  
thereunto duly authorized.

Dated: February 13, 1953

HUSTON HOMES,  
By: Helen Louise Mellenthin President  
By: William Louis Mellenthin Secretary

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF }  
Los Angeles } ss.  
On February 18, 1953  
before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public in  
and for said County and State, personally appeared  
Wm. Mellenthin  
known to me to be the President, and  
Helen Louise Mellenthin  
known to me to be the Secretary of  
the corporation that executed the within instrument, and  
knows to me to be the persons who executed the within  
instrument on behalf of the corporation therein named, and  
acknowledged to me that such corporation executed the same.

WITNESS my hand and official seal.

SPACE BELOW FOR RECORDER'S USE ONLY

DOCUMENT No. 754  
RECORDED AT REQUEST OF  
TITLE INSURANCE & TRUST CO.  
FEB 24 1953 AT 8 A.M.  
BOOK 41042 PAGE 347  
IN OFFICIAL RECORDS  
County of Los Angeles, California  
Fee \$ 1.75  
NAME & BEATTY, County Recorder  
By: Helen Louise Mellenthin Deputy



# A Neighborhood Story



1953









Sherman Oaks, 1952





# WILLIAM MELLENTHIN BUILDER



The day it snowed at the Mellenthin office in the San Fernando Valley, 1949

Photo by William Mellenthin, courtesy of Mary A. van Bogk





LECT DIV.	
OS. RECD.	
Appr. notw'd.	
At rec'd. permit	
Plans filed	

COVENANTS  
**APPLICATION TO  
 ERECT A NEW BUILDING  
 AND FOR A  
 Certificate of Occupancy**

Form B-1  
**CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
 DEPARTMENT  
 OF  
 BUILDING AND SAFETY  
 BUILDING DIVISION**

Lot No. THE WEST 138.50 FT. OF  
THE WEST 138.50 FT. OF THE  
THIS 33 FT. OF LOT 13, TR. 5949 - MEASURED

Tract ALONG WEST PROP. LINE

Location of Building 5922-24-24 1/2  
322-22-24 BUFFALO AVE.  
 (House Number and Street)

Approved by  
 City Engineer  
[Signature]  
 Deputy.

Between what cross streets? W. 11th & W. 12th

**USE INK OR INDELIBLE PENCIL**

1. Purpose of building APARTMENT HOUSES Families 7 Rooms 10  
 (Store, Dwelling, Apartment House, Hotel or other purpose)

2. Owner LAUREL VILITS CO. Phone [Number]  
 (Print Name)

3. Owner's Address 5701 LAUREL SAN. DL. P. O. N.H.

4. Certificated Architect [Name] State [State] License No. [Number] Phone [Number]

5. Licensed Engineer [Name] State [State] License No. [Number] Phone [Number]

6. Contractor W.M. MELLENTIN INC. State [State] License No. 170295 Phone 5412375

7. Contractor's Address 4701 LAUREL SAN. DL. P. O. N.H.

8. 2160 VALUATION OF PROPOSED WORK 17,400  
 (Including all labor and material and all permanent lighting, heating, ventilating, water supply, plumbing, fire sprinkler, electrical wiring and elevator equipment therein or thereon)

9. State how many buildings NOW on lot and give use of each. NONE  
 (Store, Dwelling, Apartment House, Hotel or other purpose)

10. Size of new building 30' x 72' 4" No. Stories 1 Height to highest point 14' Size lot 102' x 138.50'

11. Material Exterior Walls W.D. & STUCCO Type of Roofing COMP.

For Accessory Buildings and similar structures }  
 (a) Footing: Width 12" Depth in Ground 12" Width of Wall 6"  
 (b) Size of Studs 2" x 1" Material of Floor WOOD  
 (c) Size of Floor Joists 2" x 6" Size of Rafters 2" x 6"

I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief the above application is correct and that this building or construction work will comply with all laws, and that in the doing of the work authorized thereby I will not employ any person in violation of the Labor Code of the State of California relating to Workmen's Compensation Insurance.

DISTRICT OFFICE

Sign here W.M. MELLENTIN INC. (Owner or Authorized Agent)  
 By M.W. Muttin

FOR DEPARTMENT USE ONLY							
PLAN CHECKING				Investigation Fee \$ <u>20</u>			
Valuation \$ <u>17,400</u>		Fee \$ <u>250</u>		Bldg. Permit Fee \$ <u>53</u>		Total \$ <u>57</u>	
TYPE <u>D</u>	Maximum No. Occupants <u>10</u>	Inside Lot	Key Lot	Lot Size <u>102 x 138.5</u>	Ft. rear alley	Ft. side alley	Clerk
GROUP <u>H-2</u>	Plans and Specifications checked <u>[Signature]</u>	Corner Lot	Corner Lot Keyed <u>B-3</u>	Fire District <u>7415</u>	District Map No. <u>7415</u>		
For Plans See <u>[Signature]</u>	Correction Verified <u>[Signature]</u>	Bldg. Line	Street Widening	Application checked and approved <u>[Signature]</u>			Clerk
Filed with <u>[Signature]</u>	Plans, Specifications and Application rechecked and approved <u>[Signature]</u>	Continuous Inspection	SPRINKLER Specified—Required Valuation Included <u>Yes</u>	Inspector <u>[Signature]</u>			Clerk

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

TYPE OF RECEIPT	DATE ISSUED	TRACER NO. (M)	RECEIPT NO.	CODE	FEE PAID
Plan Checking	MAR 31 '54		26816		
Supplemental Plan Checking					
Building Permit	APR 30 '54		VN74229		



1

# APPLICATION TO ERECT A NEW BUILDING AND FOR A Certificate of Occupancy

Form B-1  
CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT  
OF  
BUILDING AND SAFETY  
BUILDING DIVISION

LEGAL THE WEST 138.50 FT. OF  
Lot No. THE W. 138.50 FT. OF LOT 14, TR 5949  
THE W. 138.50 FT. OF  
THE S. 33 FT. OF LOT 13, TR 5949  
Tract MEASURED ALONG WEST PROP. LINE  
Location of Building 5920-24-24 BUFFALO AVE,  
(House Number and Street)

Approved by  
City Engineer  
EP  
Deputy.

Between what cross streets? OLIVARD &

## USE INK OR INDELIBLE PENCIL

- Purpose of building GARAGE  
(Store, Dwelling, Apartment House, Hotel or other purpose) Families        Rooms
- Owner LAUREL UNITS CO.  
(Print Name) Phone
- Owner's Address 4701 LAUREL CAMP. O. N.H.
- Certificated Architect         
State        License No.        Phone
- Licensed Engineer         
State        License No.        Phone
- Contractor WM. MELEUTHIN INC.  
State        License No. 130295 Phone SD 1-5575
- Contractor's Address 4701 LAUREL CAMP. N.H.
- VALUATION OF PROPOSED WORK \$1,100  
(Including all labor and material and all permanent lighting, heating, ventilating, water supply, plumbing, fire sprinkler, electrical wiring and elevator equipment therein or thereon)
- State how many buildings NOW on lot and give use of each. NONE  
(Store, Dwelling, Apartment House, Hotel or other purpose)
- Size of new building 20 x 25 No. Stories 1 Height to highest point 14' Size lot 102 59.50
- Material Exterior Walls W.D. & STUCCO Type of Roofing COMP  
For Accessory Buildings and similar structures  
(a) Footing: Width 8" SLAB Depth in Ground 8" Width of Wall 6"  
(b) Size of Studs 2" x 4" Material of Floor SLAB  
(c) Size of Floor Joists        Size of Rafters 2" x 4"

I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief the above application is correct and that this building or construction work will comply with all laws, and that in the doing of the work authorized thereby I will not employ any person in violation of the Labor Code of the State of California relating to Workmen's Compensation Insurance.

Sign here WM. MELEUTHIN INC.  
By Manu M...  
(Owner or Authorized Agent)

DISTRICT  
OFFICE

3064 FOR DEPARTMENT USE ONLY					
PLAN CHECKING					
Valuation \$ <u>37,000.00</u>	Fee \$ <u>50.00</u>		Investigation Fee \$ <u>6.30</u>		Bldg. Permit Fee \$ <u>6.30</u>
Total \$ <u>56.30</u>					
TYPE <u>R</u>	Maximum No. Occupants <u>      </u>	Inside Lot <u>      </u>	Key Lot <u>      </u>	Lot Size <u>102 x 138.5</u>	Ft. rear alley <u>      </u>
GROUP <u>D-1</u>	Plans and Specifications checked <u>      </u>	Corner Lot <u>      </u>	Corner Lot Keyed <u>      </u>	Fire District <u>      </u>	Ft. side alley <u>      </u>
For Plans See <u>      </u>	Correction Verified <u>      </u>	Zone <u>R-3</u>	No. <u>      </u>	District Map No. <u>7415</u>	Application checked and approved <u>      </u>
Filed with <u>      </u>	Plans, Specifications and Application rechecked and approved <u>      </u>	Bldg. Line <u>      </u>	Continuous Inspection <u>      </u>	SPRINKLER Specified—Required Valuation Included <u>      </u>	Inspector <u>      </u>

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

TYPE OF RECEIPT	DATE ISSUED	TRACER NO. (M)	RECEIPT NO.	CODE	FEE PAID
Plan Checking	MAR 31 '54		26816		
Supplemental Plan Checking					
Building Permit	APR 30 '54		VN 74230		



CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND SAFETY

CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

NOTE: Any change of use or occupancy must be approved by the Department of Building and Safety.

Address of Building **5922-41 Buffalo Avenue**

Permit No. and Year **VM 74229.77303/54**

Certificate Issued **Nov. 23, 1954** 19.....

This certifies that, so far as ascertained by or made known to the undersigned, the building at above address complies with the applicable requirements of the Municipal Code, as follows: Ch. 1, as to permitted uses; Ch. 9, Arts. 1, 3, 4, and 5; and with applicable requirements of State Housing Act,—for following occupancies:

**1 Story, Type V, 32' x 72'4", Apartment House  
3 Apartments. H-2 Occupancy. 3 Required Parking  
Spaces**

Owner **Laurel Units**  
Owner's Address **4701 Laurel Canyon  
North Hollywood, Calif.**

**JOHN D. MILLER**  
**Richards**

Form B-95a—20M—5-54 G. E. MORRIS, Superintendent of Building By.....



Address & Building 5922-4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Buffalo Avenue

Permit No. and Year VN 74230/54

Certificate Issued Nov. 23, 1954 19.....

CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND SAFETY

**CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY**

**NOTE:** Any change of use or occupancy must be approved by the Department of Building and Safety.

This certifies that, so far as ascertained by or made known to the undersigned, the building at above address complies with the applicable requirements of the Municipal Code, as follows: Ch. 1, as to permitted uses; Ch. 9, Arts. 1, 3, 4, and 5; and with applicable requirements of State Housing Act,—for following occupancies:

**1 Story, Type V, 20' x 28', Garage  
J-1 Occupancy**

Owner Laurel Units  
Owner's Address 4701 Laurel Canyon  
North Hollywood, Calif.

**JOHN D. MILLER  
Richards**

Form B-95a—20M—5-54 G. E. MORRIS, Superintendent of Building By.....





# City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning

## 9/24/2024 PARCEL PROFILE REPORT

### PROPERTY ADDRESSES

5926 N BUFFALO AVE  
5924 N BUFFALO AVE  
5922 N BUFFALO AVE  
5924 1/2 N BUFFALO AVE

### ZIP CODES

91401

### RECENT ACTIVITY

PAR-2024-5538-VHCA-ED1  
PAR-2024-5378-CM-ED1  
PAR-2024-5275-AHRF-ED1

### CASE NUMBERS

CPC-1986-784-GPC  
ORD-167939-AREA9-SA51  
YD-17033  
ND-83-276-ZC-HD

### Address/Legal Information

PIN Number	177B157 958
Lot/Parcel Area (Calculated)	7,049.2 (sq ft)
Thomas Brothers Grid	PAGE 562 - GRID C1
Assessor Parcel No. (APN)	2343001021
Tract	TR 5949
Map Reference	M B 112-55
Block	None
Lot	FR 14
Arb (Lot Cut Reference)	3
Map Sheet	177B157

### Jurisdictional Information

Community Plan Area	Van Nuys - North Sherman Oaks
Area Planning Commission	South Valley
Neighborhood Council	Greater Valley Glen
Council District	CD 2 - Paul Krekorian
Census Tract #	1245.00
LADBS District Office	Van Nuys

### Permitting and Zoning Compliance Information

Administrative Review	None
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### Planning and Zoning Information

Special Notes	None
Zoning	[Q]RD1.5-1
Zoning Information (ZI)	ZI-2512 Housing Element Inventory of Sites ZI-1117 MTA Right-of-Way (ROW) Project Area ZI-2452 Transit Priority Area in the City of Los Angeles
General Plan Land Use	Low Medium II Residential
General Plan Note(s)	Yes
Hillside Area (Zoning Code)	No
Specific Plan Area	None
Subarea	None
Special Land Use / Zoning	None
Historic Preservation Review	No
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone	None
Other Historic Designations	None
Mills Act Contract	None
CDO: Community Design Overlay	None
CPIO: Community Plan Imp. Overlay	None
Subarea	None
CUGU: Clean Up-Green Up	None
HCR: Hillside Construction Regulation	No
NSO: Neighborhood Stabilization Overlay	No
POD: Pedestrian Oriented Districts	None
RBP: Restaurant Beverage Program Eligible Area	None
RFA: Residential Floor Area District	None
RIO: River Implementation Overlay	No
SN: Sign District	No

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(\*) - APN Area is provided "as is" from the Los Angeles County's Public Works, Flood Control, Benefit Assessment.



AB 2334: Very Low VMT	Yes
AB 2097: Reduced Parking Areas	Yes
Streetscape	No
Adaptive Reuse Incentive Area	None
Affordable Housing Linkage Fee	
Residential Market Area	Low
Non-Residential Market Area	Medium
Transit Oriented Communities (TOC)	Tier 3
ED 1 Eligibility	Review Eligibility
RPA: Redevelopment Project Area	None
Central City Parking	No
Downtown Parking	No
Building Line	None
500 Ft School Zone	None
500 Ft Park Zone	None
<b>Assessor Information</b>	
Assessor Parcel No. (APN)	2343001021
Ownership (Assessor)	
Owner1	ALIZADEH,ROOZBEH T ND,ZAVAREH,MARYAM
Address	25140 STEINBECK AVE UNIT A STEVENSON RANCH CA 91381
Ownership (Bureau of Engineering, Land Records)	
Owner	ROSS, KENNETH W. (TR) KENNETH W. ROSS LIVING TRUST OF 2006 C/O JACKSON & ASSOCIATES
Address	4804 LAUREL CANYON BLVD VALLEY VILLAGE CA 91607
APN Area (Co. Public Works)*	0.162 (ac)
Use Code	0300 - Residential - Three Units (Any Combination) - 4 Stories or Less
Assessed Land Val.	\$540,467
Assessed Improvement Val.	\$354,642
Last Owner Change	06/06/2024
Last Sale Amount	\$0
Tax Rate Area	13
Deed Ref No. (City Clerk)	71097-98
	7-276
	260194-5
	2522191
	251178-81
	1988378
	1950875
	1863412
	1509201-02
	1434102
	123790
	0-455
Building 1	
Year Built	1954
Building Class	D6
Number of Units	3
Number of Bedrooms	3
Number of Bathrooms	3
Building Square Footage	2,160.0 (sq ft)
Building 2	No data for building 2
Building 3	No data for building 3
Building 4	No data for building 4

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Building 5	No data for building 5
Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO)	Yes [APN: 2343001021]
<b>Additional Information</b>	
Airport Hazard	None
Coastal Zone	None
Farmland	Area Not Mapped
Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone	YES
Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone	No
Fire District No. 1	No
Flood Zone	Outside Flood Zone
Watercourse	No
Methane Hazard Site	None
High Wind Velocity Areas	No
Special Grading Area (BOE Basic Grid Map A-13372)	No
Wells	None
<b>Environmental</b>	
Santa Monica Mountains Zone	No
Biological Resource Potential	None
Mountain Lion Potential	None
Monarch Butterfly Potential	No
<b>Seismic Hazards</b>	
Active Fault Near-Source Zone	
Nearest Fault (Distance in km)	6.600444
Nearest Fault (Name)	Hollywood Fault
Region	Transverse Ranges and Los Angeles Basin
Fault Type	B
Slip Rate (mm/year)	1.00000000
Slip Geometry	Left Lateral - Reverse - Oblique
Slip Type	Poorly Constrained
Down Dip Width (km)	14.00000000
Rupture Top	0.00000000
Rupture Bottom	13.00000000
Dip Angle (degrees)	70.00000000
Maximum Magnitude	6.40000000
Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone	No
Landslide	No
Liquefaction	Yes
Preliminary Fault Rupture Study Area	None
Tsunami Hazard Area	No
<b>Economic Development Areas</b>	
Business Improvement District	None
Hubzone	Not Qualified
Jobs and Economic Development Incentive Zone (JEDI)	None
Opportunity Zone	No
Promise Zone	None
State Enterprise Zone	None
<b>Housing</b>	
Direct all Inquiries to	Los Angeles Housing Department
Telephone	(866) 557-7368
Website	<a href="https://housing.lacity.org">https://housing.lacity.org</a>
Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO)	Yes [APN: 2343001021]
Ellis Act Property	No
AB 1482: Tenant Protection Act	No

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Housing Crisis Act Replacement Review	Yes
Housing Element Sites	
HE Replacement Required	Yes
SB 166 Units	0.32 Units, Moderate
Housing Use within Prior 5 Years	Yes

### Public Safety

#### Police Information

Bureau	Valley
Division / Station	Van Nuys
Reporting District	948

#### Fire Information

Bureau	Valley
Battalion	14
District / Fire Station	102
Red Flag Restricted Parking	No



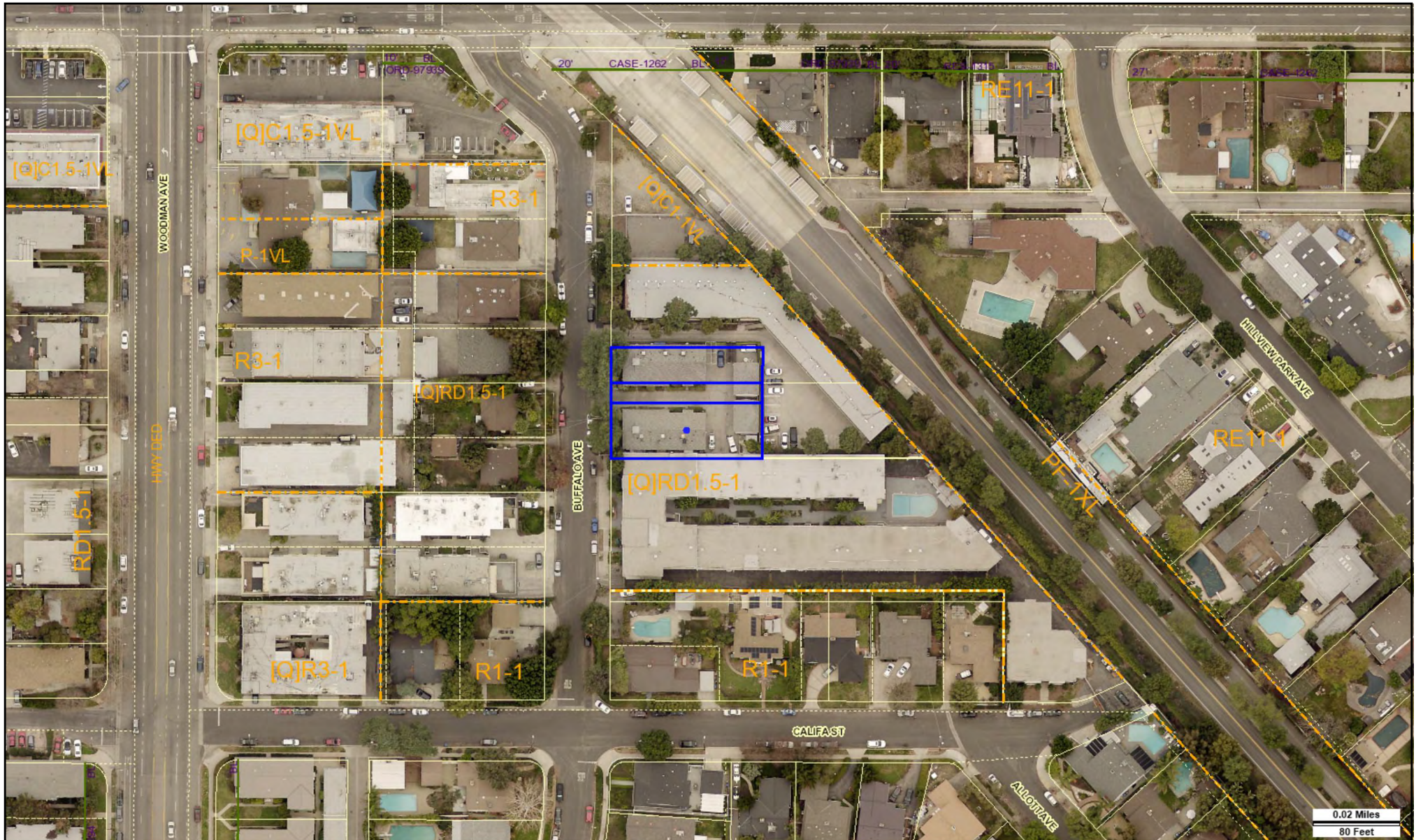
CASE SUMMARIES

Note: Information for case summaries is retrieved from the Planning Department's Plan Case Tracking System (PCTS) database.

Case Number:	CPC-1986-784-GPC
Required Action(s):	GPC-GENERAL PLAN/ZONING CONSISTENCY (AB283)
Project Descriptions(s):	AB-283 PROGRAM - GENERAL PLAN/ZONE CONSISTENCY - VAN NUYS - NORTH SHERMAN OAKS COMMUNITY PLAN AREA - COMMUNITY WIDE ZONE CHANGES AND COMMUNITY PLAN CHANGES TO BRING THE ZONING INTO CONSISTENCY WITH THE COMMUNITY PLAN. INCLUDES CHANGES OF HEIGHT AS NEEDED. REQUIRED BY COURT AS PART OF SETTLEMENT IN THE HILLSIDE FEDERATION LAWSUIT. (MIKE YOUNG)
Case Number:	ND-83-276-ZC-HD
Required Action(s):	ZC-ZONE CHANGE HD-HEIGHT DISTRICT
Project Descriptions(s):	Data Not Available

DATA NOT AVAILABLE

ORD-167939-AREA9-SA51  
YD-17033



Address: 5926 N BUFFALO AVE

APN: 2343001021

PIN #: 177B157 958

Tract: TR 5949

Block: None

Lot: FR 14

Arb: 3

Zoning: [Q]RD1.5-1

General Plan: Low Medium II Residential

