

Communication from Public

Name: George Pappy

Date Submitted: 03/29/2025 05:57 PM

Council File No: 25-0179

Comments for Public Posting: Dear PLUM Committee Members, I was a tenant at the subject apartments for about 2.5 years between 2009 and 2011 (while I was a graduate film student at California State University Northridge). Having always been a huge fan of these old single-story triplexes built in the post-WWII era, I was thrilled to find a vacant unit posted on Craigslist, and after touring this extremely well-preserved gem, I immediately laid down a deposit. Having been raised in the San Fernando Valley of the 1960s - 1980s, I counted myself extremely lucky to have landed in one of the genuine Mellenthin Birdhouse buildings (I've been a fan of these for my entire life). I hadn't realized at the time how rare these are in the apartment (as opposed to single-family home) realm. I found my time there to be immensely pleasant and enjoyable because of how quiet, spacious, well-crafted, lushly-landscaped and communal the place was (aided by the fact that we all had screen doors and nice outdoor porches). I knew all of my neighbors, and it was the kind of atmosphere where we looked out for each other (something I cannot say for any of the high-density rental experiences I've had elsewhere over the years - situations where I knew nobody despite having lived there for considerable periods of time). We even had some wonderful all-tenant barbecues. In contrast to the constantly overcrowded street parking conditions created by the large apartment buildings on the same block, we were all able to park multiple vehicles (both our own and visitors') on the spacious grounds, and it was even possible to do hobby work in your own garage (a luxury typically reserved only for homeowners). Because of the good relationship I had with all of the tenants, I was even able to shoot some significant portions of a feature film (which ran for several years on Showtime) at this location while living there. The film, "Few Options, All Bad," is listed on IMDB: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1721494/>. I'm also making it free to stream in case anyone reading this would like to see how we captured the property to get a sense of the place (it's the apartment complex where Rainn Wilson's character lives and where the main character sleeps in a garage for much of the film): <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/93828807> In a time and place where the beautiful historic architecture of Los Angeles is systematically bought up, torn down and replaced with

noise/traffic-generating high-density structures, I think it would be a tragic loss to see this rare and fantastic little complex disappear in the name of progress. I sincerely hope that you will grant this truly unique William Mellenthin Birdhouse property a historic designation. Yours Truly, George A. Pappy Jr.
310.467.0111

Communication from Public

Name: Russell Gallaher
Date Submitted: 03/29/2025 04:51 PM
Council File No: 25-0179
Comments for Public Posting: Please see attached.

Dear Planning and Land Use Management Committee Members,

I've been a tenant at the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments for over 21 years, and I strongly support its historic designation.

When I first called the ad in The Recycler to schedule a showing, the man on the phone said, "Meet you in front, it has a birdhouse on the roof." I thought, "Okay, that's a little weird." Upon arriving, I was confused because it looked more like a house than an apartment building. Once I toured the unit, I fell in love! It had its own porch, a yard, hardwood floors, and windows where you could actually see grass, flowers, and trees. I couldn't believe I'd found such a perfect home, right in the middle of Los Angeles.

From day one, I was welcomed by the other tenants and quickly realized I hadn't just found a great home - I'd found a community. I didn't just get neighbors; I gained friends. Many people have moved on over the years, but I'm still in contact with several. We all decorate for the holidays, and we have gatherings, including an annual pumpkin carving contest every Halloween.

Our community has had quite a creative collective over the years, with musicians, filmmakers, an artist, a writer, a PR manager, and even an audiobook narrator. We collaborate, there's always a project going on and always someone to bounce an idea off. It is truly a community of Angelenos that make this city what it's known for.

One of the most magical aspects of this property is its wildlife. We have dozens of bird species - hummingbirds, sparrows, finches, and more. Mourning doves build their haphazard nests under our porch eaves. A hawk roosts in the tall pine tree out front, and at night, you'll occasionally see the large owl fly over. There's a family of racoons that come for an occasional nighttime raid, possums visit to eat the snails under the bushes, and in the past few years we have had lizards!

Several years ago, I noticed a man taking photos of the property. When I asked why, he told me he was writing a book about William Mellenthin, the builder of this property and others like it, he was known for the birdhouses on the roof. He also mentioned how rare our complex is, as Mellenthin built very few multi-family homes, most of which have been altered or destroyed. When the book was published, I was so proud to see our beloved property featured! It was a moment to brag to my friends: I live in a William Mellenthin home! I was truly proud.

Learning about Mellenthin's legacy and influence on Los Angeles architecture has been a privilege. I think it quite admirable and shows his character that he would build a few of these courtyard apartments so renters could live in what feels like a home and enjoy the details of his craft. Whether or not he knew it at the time, I feel the layout may be the most important feature of this property, it creates a community and an oasis for its residents.

This nomination represents an opportunity to recognize one of L.A.'s master builders and preserve his last remaining intact multi-family creation. Historic designation will ensure future renters can experience the same charm and warmth I've enjoyed for over two decades. It will also serve as a monument to Mellenthin's legacy (not just some pictures in a book), hopefully inspiring future generations of architects and builders.

Sincerely,
Russell Gallaher