

Communication from Public

Name: Paris Matic

Date Submitted: 04/02/2025 10:23 PM

Council File No: 25-0179

Comments for Public Posting: Dear PLUM Committee Members, The Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments are home to a lovely community located in Van Nuys, California. I have had the pleasure of visiting this space on multiple occasions, enjoying the company of friends and being warmly greeted by their neighbors. This property and the tenants have always welcomed me with a sense of serenity and comfort. In addition to the accented doors and matching awnings, the landscaping and foliage hold the dwellings together quite nicely. It would be a great loss for the community to lose such a charming, rare property. I truly hope that this unique property will be granted a historic designation. Thank You for your time and consideration.

Communication from Public

Name: Andrew Salimian, LA Conservancy

Date Submitted: 04/02/2025 12:21 PM

Council File No: 25-0179

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Members of the PLUM Committee, The Los Angeles Conservancy fully supports the nomination of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments in the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments, and ask the Committee to recommend to the City Council that it be declared as an HCM. We are pleased that the nomination will go before you for consideration, as it conveys an important element of the San Fernando Valley's history. In this six-unit courtyard apartment designed by renowned builder and developer William Mellenthin, the typical "American Dream" is a little denser, but no less picturesque. In the postwar period, Mellenthin designed over 3,000 homes across Los Angeles, contributing to its rapid growth. His influence is seen all across the San Fernando Valley where his iconic cupola birdhouse design graced single-family homes across the growing suburbs. In recent years, appreciation for the style has grown. Architecturally intact Mellenthin homes often garner premium values in the housing market. In the 1950s, Mellenthin began to apply the Traditional Ranch style to multi-family residences. Few remain, however, making the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments an extremely rare building type. The courtyard and landscaping creates a community atmosphere for tenants, some who have lived there for over two decades. They serve as an example of how builders can create affordable multi-family units while providing dignified living spaces. Through thoughtful design, Mellenthin was able to offer the same American Dream to tenants that he was able to mass-produce for homebuyers. Perhaps most importantly, these six units are currently rent-stabilized, providing some security for existing tenants. The Birdhouse Apartments and its inhabitants are facing imminent demolition and displacement due to a redevelopment project proposed at the site. The 5-story, 104 unit building that is slated to replace it has been approved under Executive Directive 1, even though the Historic-Cultural Monument application had already been deemed complete. The Department of City Planning and City Attorney's office contends that HCM status cannot be applied to the ED-1 project. This is a dangerous loophole that exists, and could lead to the demolition of many eligible resources and RSO units. We hope that the Committee can seek clarification on this issue and make steps to close the loophole. Due to deteriorating market conditions and

increasing construction costs, we expect that if these apartments are demolished, the site will sit vacant until it is sold or a new, more marketable project is approved on the site. Despite the proposed demolition of the complex, we ask that the Committee approve the nomination as a way to honor and enshrine an often overlooked aspect of the San Fernando Valley's history. It is important to note that HCM status could be used beneficially by current or future owners by opening up incentives such as the Mills Act and the State Historical Building Code. The Mills Act is currently going through the policy update and ordinance amendment process that will improve equity and prioritize naturally occurring affordable housing complexes such as the one before you for consideration. Due to the imposed constraints of ED-1 and the Housing Crisis Act on the designation process, we do not see HCM status as an impediment for development, though some comment letters have mischaracterized this. Designating the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments as an HCM gives the property two options: either to build the ED-1 project or to continue to maintain the current fully-occupied structures as long-term assets. We ask Council District 2 and the whole City Council to help avoid the increasingly more likely outcome – that six RSO units are demolished with no replacement project on the horizon. The Birdhouse Apartments are certainly worthy of recognition and designation. There are few sites that receive the natural outpouring of support from previous owners, current and previous tenants, community members, and architectural historians. The Cultural Heritage Commission noted and commended these many messages of support in their deliberations, which led to their unanimous vote of approval. We ask that you declare the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments as an HCM and encourage its preservation as an important Traditional Ranch multi-family complex by a master builder. About the Los Angeles Conservancy: The Los Angeles Conservancy is the largest local historic preservation organization in the United States, with nearly 5,000 member households throughout the Los Angeles area. Established in 1978, the Conservancy works to preserve and revitalize the significant architectural and cultural heritage of Los Angeles County through advocacy and education. Sincerely, Andrew Salimian Director of Advocacy



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laconservancy.org

April 2, 2025

Submitted electronically via
<https://cityclerk.lacity.org/publiccomment/>

Planning and Land Use Management Committee
200 North Spring Street, Room 340
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Re: 5922-5930 North Buffalo Avenue / William Mellenthin
Birdhouse Apartments - CF-25-0179**

Dear Members of the PLUM Committee,

The Los Angeles Conservancy fully supports the nomination of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments in the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments, and ask the Committee to recommend to the City Council that it be declared as an HCM. We are pleased that the nomination will go before you for consideration, as it conveys an important element of the San Fernando Valley's history.

In this six-unit courtyard apartment designed by renowned builder and developer William Mellenthin, the typical "American Dream" is a little denser, but no less picturesque. In the postwar period, Mellenthin designed over 3,000 homes across Los Angeles, contributing to its rapid growth. His influence is seen all across the San Fernando Valley where his iconic cupola birdhouse design graced single-family homes across the growing suburbs. In recent years, appreciation for the style has grown. Architecturally intact Mellenthin homes often garner premium values in the housing market.

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of how builders can create affordable multi-family units while providing dignified living spaces. Through thoughtful design, Mellenthin was able to offer the same American Dream to tenants that he was able to mass-produce for homebuyers. Perhaps most importantly, these six are units are currently rent-stabilized, providing some security for existing tenants.

The Birdhouse Apartments and its inhabitants are facing imminent demolition and displacement due to a redevelopment project proposed at the site. The 5-story, 104 unit building that is slated to replace it has been approved under Executive Directive 1, even though the Historic-Cultural Monument application had already been deemed complete. The Department of City Planning and City Attorney's office contends that HCM status cannot be applied to the ED-1 project.

This is a dangerous loophole that exists, and could lead to the demolition of many eligible resources and RSO units. We hope that the Committee can seek clarification on this issue and make steps to close the loophole. Due to deteriorating market conditions and increasing construction costs, we expect that if these apartments are demolished, the site will sit vacant until it is sold or a new, more marketable project is approved on the site.

Despite the proposed demolition of the complex, we ask that the Committee approve the nomination as a way to honor and enshrine an often overlooked aspect of the San Fernando Valley's history. It is important to note that HCM status could be used beneficially by current or future owners by opening up incentives such as the Mills Act and the State Historical Building Code. The Mills Act is currently going through the policy update and ordinance amendment process that will improve equity and prioritize naturally occurring affordable housing complexes such as the one before you for consideration.

Due to the imposed constraints of ED-1 and the Housing Crisis Act on the designation process, we do not see HCM status as an impediment for development, though some comment letters have mischaracterized this. Designating the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments as an HCM gives the property two options: either to build the ED-1 project or to continue to maintain the current fully-occupied structures as long-term assets. We ask Council District 2 and the whole City Council to help avoid the increasingly more likely outcome – that six RSO units are demolished with no replacement project on the horizon.

The Birdhouse Apartments are certainly worthy of recognition and designation. There are few sites that receive the natural outpouring of support from previous owners, current and previous tenants, community members, and architectural historians. The Cultural Heritage Commission noted and commended these many messages of support in their deliberations, which led to their unanimous vote of approval. We ask that you declare the William Mellenthin Birdhouse

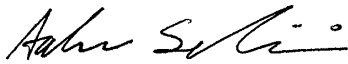


Apartments as an HCM and encourage its preservation as an important Traditional Ranch multi-family complex by a master builder.

About the Los Angeles Conservancy:

The Los Angeles Conservancy is the largest local historic preservation organization in the United States, with nearly 5,000 member households throughout the Los Angeles area. Established in 1978, the Conservancy works to preserve and revitalize the significant architectural and cultural heritage of Los Angeles County through advocacy and education.

Sincerely,



Andrew Salimian
Director of Advocacy



Communication from Public

Name: Giovanni Garcia

Date Submitted: 04/02/2025 02:02 PM

Council File No: 25-0179

Comments for Public Posting: Dear PLUM Committee Members, I strongly support of the Historic Designation of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments CHC-2024-6156-HCM. For over two and a half decades, I have resided adjacent to the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments. The proposed development of an apartment complex would have a significant impact on our community. Given that our neighborhood is already at capacity, the construction of a new complex with an additional number of tenants would exacerbate the existing parking challenges. Our community is characterized by its tranquility and simplicity. The introduction of such a large-scale development would bring about a profound transformation. It is imperative that we preserve the legacy of William Mellenthin and the affordable housing provided by the Birdhouse Apartments. We should resist the efforts of the new owners to undermine affordable housing, which is already a pressing issue in our city.

Communication from Public

Name: Jeff Musial

Date Submitted: 04/02/2025 05:53 PM

Council File No: 25-0179

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Members of the Los Angeles City Planning and Land Use Management Committee, My name is Jeff Musial, and I have been a tenant at 5930 Buffalo Avenue for nearly 22 years. This property, designed by renowned Los Angeles architect William Mellenthin, is not just my home—it is a vital part of the city's architectural and cultural heritage. When I first moved here in 2003, I was a young artist with big dreams, trying to make a life in Los Angeles. The moment I saw this property, I fell in love. Its timeless charm—hardwood floors, spacious rooms, and unique birdhouse details—was unlike anything else I'd seen. What struck me even more was the sense of community. This wasn't just a building; it was a neighborhood in miniature, where neighbors cared for one another and shared their lives. Over the years, this home has been a sanctuary amid the bustle of Los Angeles. The tall trees, lush greenery, and thoughtful architecture create a peaceful retreat that feels miles away from the congestion of city life. The historic birdhouse design, a hallmark of Mellenthin's work, embodies a mid-century vision of harmony between urban living and nature—a vision that is increasingly rare in today's high-density developments. This property is more than bricks and mortar; it has history. It is where I wrote and self-published books, collaborated with artists whose work reached global audiences, and even hosted creative projects that became part of Hollywood's legacy. It is a place that has fostered creativity, community, and resilience. Beyond my personal story, this building serves as a rare example of Mellenthin's architectural contributions to Los Angeles. Its preservation is essential not only for its beauty but for its embodiment of a time when thoughtful design prioritized livability and connection over density and profit. Losing this property to demolition would erase an irreplaceable piece of our shared history and displace a community that exemplifies the kind of connection we need more of today. Our annual pumpkin carvings, shared meals, and mutual support reflect a way of living that has become all too uncommon. Preserving this property is about more than saving a building—it's about saving a way of life. I urge you to support the CHC's recommendation to designate this property as a Historic-Cultural Monument. Doing so will honor its architectural significance, protect its rich history, and preserve the sense of

community that makes it so special. Thank you for considering this heartfelt plea. Sincerely, Jeff Musial

Communication from Public

Name: Stephanie Ferguson

Date Submitted: 04/02/2025 06:26 PM

Council File No: 25-0179

Comments for Public Posting: Dear PLUM, I have spent many wonderful and meaningful times at this, what should absolutely be an historic property, with it's community who lovingly have maintained and cared for this building for many years. It's not only home to humans but to lots of hummingbirds and other creatures that find safe heaven in the trees. After the devastating LA Fires that decimated entire cities, this is one of the last structures that deserves to be left alone standing. I stand with every living being that dwell there. ??

Communication from Public

Name: S. Camille Murray

Date Submitted: 04/02/2025 07:25 PM

Council File No: 25-0179

Comments for Public Posting: Please see the attached correspondence.

April 2, 2025

VIA ONLINE PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

Re: Council File Number is 25-0179

Dear PLUM Committee Members,

I am writing regarding the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments located at 5920-30 Buffalo Avenue. I have been informed that there are plans to tear down this property and build a 5-story apartment complex. I have friends who have lived in this complex for over twenty years, people who have become my family away from home. I love the architecture and the wonderful design features that were built to last. The beautiful attention to detail and craftsmanship are still recognized today and appreciated by all who live here.

I am in full support of preserving the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments nomination as a historic designation. With the recent fires in Los Angeles, a lot of people have been displaced and lost their homes because of a natural disaster. In the case of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments, allowing Angelenos to keep their homes and preserving the property can prevent displacement.

I truly hope that this unique property will be granted a historic designation.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Camille Murray". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

S. Camille Murray

Communication from Public

Name: Vilma Hernandez

Date Submitted: 04/02/2025 02:09 PM

Council File No: 25-0179

Comments for Public Posting: Dear PLUM Committee Members, I strongly support of the Historic Designation of the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments CHC-2024-6156-HCM. For more than thirty years, I have lived next to the William Mellenthin Birdhouse Apartments. The proposed development of a new apartment complex would have a substantial impact on our community. As our neighborhood is already at full capacity, the addition of more tenants would worsen the existing parking issues. Our community is known for its tranquility and simplicity, and such a large-scale development would lead to a significant transformation. It is crucial that we uphold the legacy of William Mellenthin in the San Fernando Valley and the affordable housing offered by the Birdhouse Apartments. We must oppose the new owners' attempts to undermine affordable housing, which is already a critical concern in our city.