Own-your-owns, Co-ops, Town Houses
Hybrid Housing Types and the New Urban Form in Postwar Southern California

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To meet the needs of these households, in the late 1940s and 1950s small-scale speculative homebuilders and architects began to experiment with new kinds of garden apartments. By the early 1960s they began to create modern row-house communities. In planning these projects, architects and developers built upon local housing traditions and borrowed and adapted models from larger eastern cities such as New York, where owner-occupied, suburban multifamily housing had first appeared in the 1920s. Within a decade of the completion in 1954 of Lakewood—the iconic FHA project near Long Beach with more than 17,000 detached houses—a majority of new homes that were underway in Southern California's fourteen counties were multifamily. In Los Angeles County the proportion was two-thirds, and in the city of Los Angeles, three-quarters. By the mid-1970s as many as one in seven owner-occupied homes in Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, and San Diego counties—more than a quarter of a million units—were apartments or row houses.

The emergence of this genre of housing is exemplified by three types of pioneering projects. The first group centers on the half-dozen well-equipped own-your-own apartment courts created in Pasadena between the late 1940s and early 1960s by Lionel V. Mayell, a long-time local homebuilder. The “own-your-own” was a type of collective homeownership native to Southern California, which homebuilders employed beginning in the 1920s as an alternative to the cooperative, or co-op, system that prevailed in East Coast cities. (See sidebar on p. 382 for a discussion of home ownership models.) The second group is the score of garden-apartment co-ops insured by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) constructed in the late 1950s and early 1960s by the Ardmore Development Corporation, most of which were designed by the architect Robert

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Figure 1  Mayell Enterprises, Villa San Pasqual, Pasadena, ca. 1954
Charles Lesser. The third group consists of a handful of projects built simultaneously by various developers (including Ardmore) in the early 1960s that employed row-house typologies, a physical form that would come to dominate multifamily construction in Southern California and many other parts of the U.S. beginning in the late 1960s and 1970s.

Speculative housing in postwar America is not often associated with social or physical innovation. This was the era of regional and national “merchant builders,” such as Levitt & Sons, and mass-built, large-scale, visually homogenous suburban subdivisions, such as Lakewood. Advancements were often limited to the efficiencies of speed and cost. Nevertheless, local developers such as Mayell and Ardmore were able to experiment with other varieties of housing. This was facilitated by the modern financing mechanisms for homebuilding (both FHA and conventional) that ensured real-estate development remained an open field, with low barriers to entry. Larger companies could build and sell homes for somewhat less than local builders because of greater economies of scale, but these savings were not so great that new, smaller firms could not compete. Small firms in particular were open to testing new kinds of housing, including owner-occupied multifamily housing. There is an important story to be told about the creativity and variety of speculative homebuilding during the 1950s and 1960s.11

Most historians and critics have all but overlooked the substantial amounts of owner-occupied multifamily housing because it undermines widely held myths about the American city.12 It does not fit well into conventional narratives of postwar urban change—reinforced by images from popular culture—which suggest that government and big business offered middle-class families few alternatives to owning a suburban detached house.13 The growth of alternative models, such as the garden-apartment co-op and the modern row-house complex, even in a decentralized region such as Southern California, belies this idea. Multifamily homeownership is also a difficult-to-detect phenomenon.14 Before the war, it was concentrated in East Coast city centers, but after 1945 the majority of this housing was built out of view in rapidly growing suburban sections—much of it in Sunbelt cities such as metropolitan Los Angeles.15 Furthermore, unlike other new kinds of postwar housing, such as the large-scale FHA-insured detached subdivision or the high-rise public housing project, there was no single physical typology associated with this owner-occupied multifamily housing. This flexibility has concealed it from historians, who tend to read social and cultural change through innovations in physical form.16

Lionel V. Mayell and the Own-your-own Apartment Court
Among the first owner-occupied multifamily complexes built in Southern California after the Second World War was Orange Grove Manor, a small apartment court erected by Lionel V. Mayell at 168–80 South Orange Grove Boulevard in Pasadena. Constructed between 1949 and 1950, the simple but well-appointed project comprised five two-story wood-frame and stucco residential buildings, each with four apartments, and a one-story service building with private garages for each suite and a common laundry room, all grouped around a landscaped garden (Figure 2). The modern, vaguely Monterey Revival design featured low cross-hipped roofs, second-story balconies, painted wrought-iron columns and railings, and a mixture of bay windows and large, nearly floor-to-ceiling, casement and plate-glass windows. Exterior walls were painted stucco and devoid of ornament (Figure 3).17

Orange Grove Manor represented a great advance in the evolution of middle-class housing in Southern California. It was the first example of a speculative homebuilder undertaking an owner-occupied apartment complex in a local multifamily vernacular. Nevertheless, it was unexceptional in many respects. Physically, neither its apartment-court plan nor its hybrid design vocabulary was new. Southern California had long been home to a variety of different kinds of multifamily housing; apartment courts were among the most common. The stylistic treatment, which architectural historian Reyner Banham characterized as what “economic necessity” tended to “extract from the Spanish Colonial Revival,” had come into vogue in Southern California in the 1930s.18

Owner-occupied multifamily housing also was not new to Southern California. Developers had built several mid- and high-rise co-ops and own-your-owns in the 1920s. And in 1948, a group of prospective homeowners had developed a ten-unit co-op designed by Gregory Ain on Avenel Street in the City of Los Angeles’s Silver Lake district. (This sort of collective self-construction had long, if infrequently, been used in eastern cities as an alternative to developer-built housing.)19

Multifamily Vernaculars, Rented and Owned
Before the Second World War, most multifamily housing in Southern California was built according to three low-rise typologies: the apartment or bungalow court, the studio apartment, and the catwalk, or open-air corridor, apartment. These small rental buildings had two important
attractions. They were relatively inexpensive to construct, and they offered tenants a way of life compatible with Southern California’s good climate and automobility. Unlike other kinds of multifamily housing, such as mid- and high-rise apartment buildings, these typologies offered outdoor space, including private and shared patios, common gardens, and courtyards, which in larger, better-equipped complexes might include a swimming pool or tennis court. They typically offered each unit a private entrance leading directly to the outside (rather than to an interior hallway) and quick access to the car; parking garages were common.

Many of these low-rise complexes, such as the Marie Antoinette (1937, demolished 1961), Chateau Colline (1935), and Richard Neutra’s modernist Strathmore Apartments (1937), all in Westwood, were well-equipped and catered to a relatively well-to-do clientele. Most, however, were simple and inexpensive. Socially, they served chiefly as working-class housing or as temporary accommodations for middle-class families and individuals who did not wish to own their own homes. Many tenants were tourists, seasonal residents, or retirees.20

Although the overwhelming majority of Southern California’s relatively limited stock of multifamily housing in the prewar period was rental, developers did experiment with owner-occupied apartments during the real-estate boom of the 1920s. In the mid-Wilshire district west of
Many of the most elaborate winter estates were left unoccupied. However, the California Institute of Technology’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory, along with the completion in 1940 of the Arroyo Seco Parkway—Southern California’s first freeway, which connected Pasadena to Downtown—lent the place new life as a year-round center.  

Although equipped with many amenities, most Los Angeles co-ops had trouble making sales and ended up operating as rental buildings or hotels. Their developers, many of whom were new to the West Coast, eyed the popularity of high-rise co-ops in cities such as New York and Chicago and mistakenly assumed well-to-do Angelenos (all these co-ops were quite expensive) might, too, like to live this way. Prospective homebuyers, however, seemed to bristle against the apartment-building typology, which failed to accommodate the regional preference for quick access to the out-of-doors and the car.

More successful than these projects was a series of high-rise buildings developed as seasonal resort housing along the oceanfront at Long Beach, which attracted many well-to-do summer residents in the 1920s. To cater to this clientele, homebuilders, led by a young Lionel V. Mayell, employed open tower and Y-plan typologies, foreshadowing postwar American public housing and the vernacular, Morris Lapidus-style modern urbanism of postwar Miami Beach. These buildings, unlike conventional apartment houses, offered each unit substantial light and air as well as multiple unobstructed views.

Most of these resort-style high-rises of the 1920s operated as own-your-owns. The own-your-own plan, like the condominium, which became popular in the 1960s, offered each homeowner a title and deed and afforded more individual rights in property than the co-op. This innovative system, which at first glance more closely approximated the “fee-simple,” or outright, ownership of a single-family house, was devised by Mayell (who had some legal training) for his first Long Beach project in 1921. Other Southern California homebuilders imitated it, and it remained in common use there until the mid-1960s.

**Postwar Pasadena**

Through the Depression, the 1940s, and the early 1950s, Southern California’s population and urbanized area grew tremendously. This physical expansion was primarily horizontal, with vast new tracts of single-family houses erected near the large, new industrial plants. During this period Pasadena, an independent municipality ten miles northeast of downtown L.A., was in transition. Like Long Beach, it had been a winter resort destination for well-to-do families in the prewar era, with many expensive seasonal hotels and large mansions clustered on and near South Orange Grove Boulevard. But like many older resorts nationally, Pasadena entered a period of slow but deep decline after 1929.

Downtown L.A., homebuilders erected several lavishly equipped mid- and high-rise apartment buildings of the sort native to East Coast and Midwestern cities. Nearly all were intended for sale—mainly on the cooperative, or co-op, plan of ownership devised in Manhattan in the late 1870s. (See sidebar, above.) In eastern cities co-ops had appealed to middle-class and well-to-do families and individuals who wanted permanent homes in apartments, because it offered to them the many financial and social benefits over tenancy.

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**Plans of Ownership**

In the 1950s and 1960s apartments in Southern California were sold on three competing plans of ownership. Each offered homeowners a different combination of private and common rights in property.

**Own-your-own**: The entire complex is owned jointly by all the homeowners through tenancy-in-common and governed by an elected board of directors. Buyers purchase an undivided (non-specific) percentage of the whole, typically determined by square footage and other features, and receive a unique deed conveying this percentage of the whole and exclusive right to the unit in perpetuity. The board of directors must match a resale offer if it finds a potential buyer unsuitable.

**Co-op**: A corporation is established to own the entire complex. Each unit is allotted a certain number of shares of stock in the corporation, typically determined by the unit’s square footage and other features. Buyers purchase stock and receive long-term propriety leases that renew automatically, granting exclusive right to a particular unit, at nominal rents ($1 a year). The elected board of directors may force an owner to forgo a resale offer if it finds a potential buyer unsuitable.

**Condominium**: A complex is divided into multiple cubes of air, each with its own deed. Unlike own-your-owns and co-ops, the condominium is therefore considered by many to confer outright, or fee-simple, ownership. Deeds also, however, convey ownership of an undivided (non-specific) share of land, common areas, and structural elements, which remain jointly owned by all the homeowners through tenancy-in-common. The elected board of directors must match a resale offer if it finds a potential buyer unsuitable.
few families cared to maintain the old mansions, South Orange Grove Boulevard, long known as Millionaire’s Row, retained substantial social cachet. What it seemed to require was a new kind of housing—in particular, well-equipped, owner-occupied multifamily housing. Mayell was among the first to grasp the contours of this changing market.

Large-scale social and economic developments stimulated this trend. Many additional small and nontraditional households, especially with retirees, became able to afford homeownership in the late 1940s and 1950s as a result of national prosperity, private pensions, and Social Security (introduced in 1935). At the same time, living in a smaller home such as an apartment became ever-more appealing even to many well-to-do people as the relative cost of maintaining a large, elaborate house grew thanks to the era’s high income-tax rates and the long-term decline in the availability of inexpensive domestic labor (stemming both from the buoyant industrial economy and from restrictions on foreign immigrations first put in place in the 1920s).25

Orange Grove Manor

In the spring of 1948, Lionel V. Mayell took out a building permit to replace a mansion with Orange Grove Manor, whose twenty modestly proportioned but “ultra luxury” owner-own apartments ranged in size from approximately 900 to 1,700 square feet. Mayell (1897–1978), born in Canada, moved to Los Angeles as a child and entered development after studying law at the University of Southern California and Stanford. According to one biography, while in Palo Alto he “became enthralled with the great co-op apartments being built in New York City” and dropped out to undertake his first project at Long Beach. Despite his great success with own-your-owns in the 1920s, the Depression bankrupted him, and he left the field until the 1940s. He retired from real estate entirely in the mid-1960s.26

The new project faced stiff resistance from many old-guard homeowners, who since the end of the war had been fighting efforts by developers and absentee property owners to rezone South Orange Grove Boulevard for multifamily housing. Ultimately, city officials approved the new construction.27 As Orange Grove Manor rose in the spring of 1949, the Los Angeles Times wrote with nostalgia: “in the midst of disdainful mansions and the frowning ghosts of a thousand blue-blooded memories, the first units of an apartment colony are being erected. A big sign beckons to those who would invade ‘Millionaire’s Row,’ which is reserved for millionaires no more.”28 In 1954 a society columnist expressed more explicit appreciation for Mayell’s new kind of housing. In “Pasadena Folk Switch Abodes: Residents of Crown City Forsake Own Homes for Apartment Life” she reported: “Many people who have lived in their own homes [detached houses] for years are moving into ‘own your own’ apartments.” The writer noted in particular that one local matron was “getting settled in her spacious apartment on S Orange Grove,” having sold her house to a younger family.29

The confluence of postwar social change and Mayell’s innovative pairing of the long-popular apartment court typology with the social and financial benefits of homeownership transformed the owner-occupied apartment from a marginal experiment into a desirable kind of year-round home. Between 1950 and 1961 Mayell completed at least five more own-your-own complexes in Pasadena.30 Each was equipped with better materials and newer technologies than the last. At the 1954 Villa San Pasqual, for example, which comprised fifteen modern buildings (with ranch-style hipped roofs) grouped around two courts, each of the sixty suites had a kitchen finished in natural birch with copper hardware, sixteen-foot-wide sliding plate-glass balcony or patio doors, and optional central air conditioning (see Figures 1, 4). Green slate roofing from Idaho complemented the buildings’ stucco façades, which Mayell painted bright flamingo pink.31

Mayell developed similar projects in La Jolla and Santa Barbara, as well as in Phoenix, Houston, and several cities in Florida.32 More crucially, Mayell’s acquaintance, Charles E. Carpenter, began building similar complexes in nearby (if less exclusive) Glendale, seven miles east of Pasadena, responding to a broadening market for own-your-own apartments in Southern California. By 1963 Carpenter had completed ten projects in Los Angeles (including one in the neighborhood of Los Feliz), as well as one in the La Jolla section of San Diego.33

The Architects and Homeowners

Little is known about the largely anonymous designers of Mayell’s and Carpenter’s own-your-owns. Mayell marketed many of his projects as “Designed and Built by Mayell Enterprises,” and it appears that he conceived of several of his plans, hiring engineers, rather than architects, to realize them.34 Both he and Carpenter did sometimes employ architects, however. A number of Mayell’s projects and at least one of Carpenter’s were designed by Jasper S. Hawkins Jr. and Thomas W. Lindsey, recent graduates of the University of Southern California’s School of Architecture.

Hawkins & Lindsey’s design for Mayell’s Villa Del Lido in La Jolla (1959) contained fifty-four apartments in ten rather explicitly modernist two- and three-story buildings, which they arranged around a lavishly landscaped garden

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Figure 4 Villa San Pasqual, cover of original sales prospectus
The project appears to have been one of their first commissions. They also designed Whispering Waters, a modern mid-rise building, surrounded by a moat, that Mayell developed in Pasadena in 1961; Mayell’s Villa Miradero apartment court in Santa Barbara; and Carpenter’s Park Central mid-rise in Glendale. The firm designed several other own-your-own complexes for competing area homebuilders.35

Information about the home buyers is scarce, although it is known that at Whispering Waters a third of the initial owners were single women.36 In general, prices and the size of units suggest that most buyers were small, well-to-do households, perhaps retirees. At Carpenter’s Oak Mount Manor, a Colonial Revival apartment court built in 1954, one-bedroom apartments sold from $10,500 (with $26 for maintenance, today equal to $110,000 and $275), while three-bedroom units cost $30,000 (with $75, today $315,000 and $790). The maintenance charges covered each owner’s share of property taxes, homeowners’ insurance, exterior maintenance and repair, and landscaping. Often this assessment also covered the cost of gas, electricity, and water. At many early complexes the weakest demand appears to have been for the largest apartments, suggesting that buyers were smaller, older households. In later projects the largest suites were eliminated.37

The FHA had had programs in place to support the construction and sale of individual apartments since its inception in 1934, although no developer took advantage of these programs before the Second World War. Many co-ops in eastern cities became insolvent during the Depression when homeowners fell behind on maintenance payments, and multifamily homeownership acquired a poor reputation. Moreover, before the war few families had the money to buy apartments. Nevertheless, Mayell’s and Carpenter’s apartments were far from inexpensive, and financing them was often difficult. Lenders do not appear to have considered own-your-own deeds sufficiently liquid to serve as collateral for mortgages. Occasionally homebuilders made available short-term financing, but these arrangements, which amounted to personal loans, typically provided only half the cost of an apartment. Most buyers paid entirely in cash. Only well-to-do households, or middle-class families selling a house already owned outright, were likely to have sufficient resources.

Ardmore and the FHA Garden-Apartment Co-op

A second phase in the evolution of Southern California’s new multifamily landscape is exemplified by the score of complexes built in the late 1950s and early 1960s by the Ardmore Development Corporation. As well-equipped own-your-own apartment courts were built in Pasadena and Glendale, an increasing number of small-scale homebuilders began to experiment with owner-occupied multifamily housing that catered to middle-class families who required financing to buy their homes. Chief among these developers was Ardmore.

Ardmore’s projects differed from Mayell’s first and foremost because they were sold on the nationally known co-op plan of ownership, rather than the local own-your-own formula. As a result, loans could be insured by the Federal Housing Administration. Although lenders did not consider co-op shares eligible for individual mortgages until the 1970s, the FHA would insure blanket mortgages covering up to 97 percent of the cost of an entire complex, which owners paid off collectively. Under this system individual owners had to pay down only the remaining three percent balance in cash.

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1950s, they also began to appear nationally, including in Southern California.39

For many younger families, particularly in more highly centralized cities, ownership of an FHA-insured apartment was attractive because it permitted them to live in a convenient area while they built equity for the purchase of a better-located and better-equipped detached house. Everywhere, however, there was steady growth in the number of smaller, and perhaps busier, middle-class households. By 1960, for example, the number of families with working women reached 50 percent, and by 1970 nearly 60 percent. The share of single-person households grew to 18 percent in 1970 (from under 8 percent in 1940). The number of single-parent families grew similarly. In 1960, 8 percent of U.S. children lived with a single mother, while in 1970 nearly 12 percent did.40

Braemar Towers

Among the first proposals for an FHA-insured co-op in Southern California was the unbuilt Braemar Towers, a thirteen-story building planned by Paul J. Broman’s Braemar Homes for 8440 West Sunset Boulevard in West Hollywood. The architect was John C. Lindsay, who had designed several rental apartments immediately after the war, and who in the early 1950s worked for Palmer & Krisel designing subdivisions of detached houses.41

Broman unveiled the project with a model apartment at Los Angeles’s annual Home Show at the Pan-Pacific Auditorium in June 1955. Advertisements pitched one-bedroom apartments to “career women” (two- and three-bedroom models were also available), and the building sold quickly from plans. The FHA, however, required the co-ops it insured to sell 90 percent of units before construction, and by the time enough apartments were sold the project had become financially unviable, presumably due to rising construction costs, and Broman abandoned it. He refunded the buyers’ deposits and in 1962 erected a rental building on the site called Braemar-Lesser Towers,42

Ardmore Development emerged from this failure. The firm’s principal, Leonard B. Schneider, had worked in Broman’s sales department. When forty of the 200 buyers of Broman’s Braemar Towers initially refused to accept refunds and insisted on waiting as long as required to get an apartment, he became convinced that he could make a project work. With the help of a local attorney he established a development company and built one of Southern California’s first successful middle-class co-ops: 6400 Primrose Avenue in Hollywood’s Beachwood Canyon.43

Typical FHA Co-ops

Nationally, most owner-occupied multifamily housing insured by the FHA between the late 1940s and early 1960s was of two basic varieties, neither of which was common in Southern California. One was the freestanding suburban high-rise, which began to appear only in the second half of the 1950s, mainly in metropolitan New York and in resort and retirement centers such as Miami Beach. The other and far more common type was the suburban garden apartment. FHA garden apartments comprised groups of long, identical two-story buildings arranged in a parklike landscape with ample but unreserved surface parking (Figure 6). The buildings, which were almost always rendered in a modern Colonial Revival style, typically contained four to sixteen one-story apartments arranged one deep. The plan eliminated the need for interior corridors and allowed each unit outside exposures at the front and rear. Occasionally builders added a third story or configured the suites as two-story duplexes. Ground-floor apartments and duplexes had private front doors opening directly to common gardens, parking areas, or the street. Upper-story apartments had individual front doors at the ground level, leading to private stairways, or they shared stairways in pairs.

The term garden apartment first came into common use
in the U.S. in the late 1910s at Jackson Heights, Queens, where homebuilder Edward MacDougall’s Queensboro Corporation had begun erecting well-equipped five- and six-story co-op apartment buildings catering to professional families. These New York complexes, designed primarily by Andrew Jackson Thomas, arranged buildings along the perimeter of blocks, leaving large, commonly owned gardens at the center. MacDougall used the term garden apartment, along with historical styles; ethnic restrictions; and shared recreational amenities such as tennis, golf, and horseback riding to create a suburban atmosphere.44

Developers in other cities, such as Chicago and, to a much larger extent, Washington D.C., copied this model, although buildings were rarely taller than two or three stories. When the FHA was established in the 1930s, the homebuilding industry believed these less expensive, low-rise projects were the best model for a large-scale multifamily housing program, both rented and owned. (It defined large-scale as having more than four units.)

The first such FHA project, a rental complex called Colonial Village in Alexandria, Virginia (begun in 1935), took this form. In 1938 both the FHA and the National Association of Real Estate Boards issued design guidelines for large-scale multifamily housing. Exemplary plans were borrowed from Colonial Village and other early complexes, prescribing groups of low-rise buildings with 200 to 1,000 suites on sites of fifteen to seventy-five acres.45 The homebuilding industry quickly expanded the term garden apartment to include this kind of arrangement.

6400 Primrose

Unlike Braemar Towers or most FHA-insured co-ops, Ardmore’s 6400 Primrose was neither a high-rise nor a conventional garden apartment. Building a large project with a long time-line, such as Braemar Towers, could be financially risky. Furthermore, despite the sales success of Braemar Towers and a handful of tall own-your-owns in the 1920s, the high-rise had never proved especially popular in Southern California. However, the standard garden apartment model was not quite right either.

One constraint was that, while growing, the market for owner-occupied multifamily housing in 1955 was still small. Own-your-own complexes in Pasadena and Glendale contained a few dozens suites at most, and a standard FHA-style project with hundreds of apartments, as built elsewhere in the country, would have exceeded the demand. Another factor was that typical middle-class households in Southern California in the 1950s had different expectations for quality in housing than in East Coast cities: they required more privacy, better-equipped outdoor space, and more convenient parking. Moreover, the land was more expensive in Beachwood Canyon than in areas where homebuilders typically erected FHA-insured co-ops. It was too costly to assemble a parcel large enough for a standard garden apartment development with multiple structures.

Shaped by these conditions, 6400 Primrose, whose designer remains unknown, broke from East Coast models. Its twenty-four one-story suites were arranged in a single two-story G-plan building with a swimming pool and landscaped patio at the center (Figure 7). Apartments were entered from the courtyard, either through ground-floor front doors (sometimes paired in alcoves) or via exterior staircases leading to one or two upstairs units.

The project eschewed the Colonial Revival style of East Coast examples in favor of a contemporary California vernacular that borrowed from generic ranch and split-level designs, as well as recent houses by well-known architects, such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Marcel Breuer, and Harwell Hamilton Harris. Like these now increasingly celebrated modern houses, 6400 Primrose employed an asymmetrical plan, horizontal massing and fenestration, low-pitched roofs with deep eaves, and contrasting exterior materials, in this case panels of light stucco and dark clapboard accented with vertical panels of aluminum and beige glass (Figure 8).

In its use of inexpensive decoration and stucco, the project recalled the small “dingbat” and “stucco box” rental apartments being built all over the region around the same time. These ruthlessly expedient buildings, first written about by Reyner Banham in the 1970s and studied by the architectural historians John Beach and John Chase in the 1980s, articulated their simple volumes (punctuated by flush, aluminum windows) with inexpensive but often outré ornament.46

In addition to its novel design, Ardmore included amenities rarely found in FHA-insured co-ops outside California. Some apartments had private patios or enclosed balconies facing the courtyard. More importantly, the complex included a swimming pool. While neither small middle-class houses nor Mayell’s own-your-owns included pools, Ardmore’s Leonard Schneider seems to have believed that this sort of luxury, whose expense could be shared among the homeowners, was necessary to make the complex competitive.

Because of these atypical features and the high cost of land in Hollywood, the project was more expensive than typical FHA co-ops. (FHA blanket mortgages covered projects only up to a certain cost per suite, and buyers had to make up the balance in their cash down payments.) Apartments sold for $4,980 to $5,300 down ($45,000 to $48,000 today) with $141 to $148 per month in maintenance ($1,300}
Figure 7  Ardmore Development, 6400 Primrose Ave., Hollywood, ca. 1957–58, courtyard

Figure 8  6400 Primrose Ave., street façade
to $1,350), including finance charges on the blanket mortgage. Ardmore sold the project out with only a small handful of advertisements in the *Los Angeles Times*, and the building opened by 1958.47

**Suburban Complexes**

The sales success of 6400 Primrose led Ardmore to develop projects that were more thoroughly suburban. Among the seventeen it began between 1958 and 1961, only two—high-rise towers in Hollywood and Westwood—were in established centers of multifamily living. Of the remainder, three were in West Los Angeles, one in South Pasadena, and eleven in the San Fernando Valley, including one in remote Reseda.48 Most (including all those discussed here) were designed by Robert Charles Lesser (b. 1931), a recent graduate of Berkeley’s architecture program. Schneider met the architect in 1955, just after beginning 6400 Primrose. Lesser, who was more interested in housing, planning, and real estate than in practicing as a designer, became a partner in Ardmore and in the late 1960s formed Robert Charles Lesser & Company, which became one of the largest real-estate consultancies in the U.S.

Lesser’s co-ops were larger and more strictly modernist than 6400 Primrose. Most comprised compact, symmetrical groups of two to ten long, low, horizontal buildings, with aluminum-frame ribbon-windows and flat roofs. The spare aesthetic recalled the area’s progressive low-income rental projects of the 1940s, including Baldwin Hills Village in Baldwin Hills (Reginald Johnson, 1941–42), Channel Heights in San Pedro (Richard Neutra, 1943), and Pueblo del Río in Vernon (Paul R. Williams and Neutra, 1940–41).49 Lesser distinguished his co-ops from worker housing by providing lush landscaping and by enlivening flat stucco façades with colorful contrasting trim, iron

Figure 9 Robert Charles Lesser, Ardmore Development, Queensland Manor North, Los Angeles, ca. 1960, main pedestrian entrance from side street
screens, and decorative panels of painted brick, tile, dark wood, and natural stone (Figures 9, 10). These decorations appeared only at the street and on the courtyard facades; side and rear elevations remained unornamented stucco (Figure 11). Lesser also offered custom-design services to buyers, who could alter the layout of apartments to fit their needs and choose from several optional features.50

Projects varied in size, from fourteen to ninety-six suites, and in configuration. Colfax Ardmore Co-operative Estates at 4353 Colfax Avenue in Studio City had five residential buildings (Figure 12), and Queensland Manor North at 3200 South Sepulveda Boulevard in West Los Angeles had ten (Figure 13). They resembled standard FHA-insured garden apartments of the 1950s to the extent that they comprised large groups of two-story buildings. As at 6400 Primrose, however, homeowners reached their apartments from small courtyards dominated by paved walkways and swimming pools (Figures 14 and 15).

Lesser improved on Ardmore’s first project in several respects. Although small households tend to prefer those with a convivial social atmosphere and many community amenities, complexes offering the most physical privacy seem to sell best. To that end, Lesser’s designs gave every apartment a fenced patio or balcony. He also included individual carports or garages, which were located at the back or side of the complexes, as at Mayell’s Orange Grove Manor (see Figure 11). 6400 Primrose, by contrast, had had a surface parking lot.

Greater privacy was also achieved by all but sealing complexes off from surrounding neighborhoods. This design strategy was all the more crucial because most of the projects faced broad boulevards carrying through traffic.51 One way Lesser achieved this goal was by orienting buildings perpendicular to the street or turning them to face away from it. Apartments that backed up to the front had only small windows facing the roadway. Another way was to deemphasize entrances. 6400 Primrose had a clearly articulated main façade that included a formal front entrance, despite the fact that most homeowners entered...
Figure 12. Lesser, Ardmore Development, Colfax Ardmore Co-operative Estates, Studio City, ca. 1960, site plan

Figure 13. Queensland Manor North, site plan

Figure 14. Colfax Ardmore, courtyard

Figure 15. Clover Arms, courtyard
from a side gate closer to the parking lot (see Figure 8). Lesser, by contrast, recognized that homeowners usually entered their homes from rear parking areas and that there was little need to maintain the pretense of a conspicuous front door for visitors and passersby. As such, he often pushed entryways—which also housed mailboxes, directories, and way-finding maps—to corners or side streets, or set them under deep trellises or canopies, or behind gates, walls, or thick plantings (see Figure 9).

Ardmore’s Market

Information about buyers of these complexes is difficult to find. Unlike the Pasadena own-your-owns, these apartments were of a size and a price geared toward larger middle-class families with children. According to Leonard Schneider, apartments with three and four bedrooms sold more quickly than those with one or two. As noted by the homebuilding trade journal House & Home in a 1961 article on Ardmore, the success of the firm’s suburban projects “suggests there is not only a social need but also an effective market demand for family-size apartments even in the middle of a traditionally one-family-house area.”

The relatively modest price of land in the Valley and similar places kept construction costs lower than at 6400 Primrose, and well within FHA limits for blanket mortgages. At Clover Arms and Queensland Manors North and South, at Coldwater Ardmore, and at Colfax Ardmore, all of which began sales around 1960, prices ranged from $950 down with $99 in maintenance ($7,500 and $800 today) for a one-bedroom unit to approximately $2,500 with $250 ($20,000 and $2,000 today) for a three-bedroom. These prices were competitive with small detached houses.

Although Ardmore Development seems to have catered primarily to younger families, like Mayell Enterprises it also found a market among older households. To satisfy these varied clients, Ardmore began segregating residents by age. At Coldwater Ardmore, for example, it divided the two-and-a-half-acre site in half and built one section for families with children and one in which children were prohibited by the co-op’s by-laws. Each section had its own pool and recreation area.

Communities segregated by age were not new. Suburbs composed of single-family homes had long appealed primarily to families with children. Conversely, purpose-built apartment buildings (as opposed to working-class tenements) appealed to families and individuals without children since the first appearance of that building type in the U.S. in late nineteenth century. While these patterns were largely voluntary, formal segregation by age also had prece-
several new master-planned communities, such as Irvine and Westlake. Although many middle-class families continued to pursue the American “drive-until-you-qualify” dream of a detached house, others opted for multifamily housing in better locations.  

The Appeal of the Row House

As the popularity of own-your-owns and co-ops continued to grow in Southern California, more and more homebuilders entered the field. If Carpenter and Ardmore joined Mayell in building to suit new tastes in the mid-1950s, the late 1950s and early 1960s saw the launching of at least a dozen additional entrepreneurial developers, including large firms such as Kaufman & Broad. By the mid-1960s nearly every homebuilder, large and small, was producing some form of owner-occupied multifamily housing. Despite the successes of Mayell’s own-your-own apartment courts and Ardmore’s co-op garden apartments, homebuilders continued to experiment with new physical typologies and arrangements for ownership. The most popular of these new communities were condominium and common-interest suburban-style row-house complexes.

Enthusiasm for the condominium in Southern California in the 1960s had its origin in the surge of condominio construction that swept San Juan, Puerto Rico, in the 1950s. Adopting the ownership model preferred elsewhere in Latin America, local lenders in San Juan provided financing for condominium mortgages, and their activity was quickly emulated by Florida mortgage lenders who were anxious to pursue the American “drive-until-you-qualify” dream of apartment living.  

Suburban Row Houses

Unlike older row houses common in East Coast and Midwestern cities, in the postwar era most were developed on suburban tracts. U.S. housing reformers first began to experiment with suburbanized arrangements of row houses at Forest Hills Gardens in Queens in the 1910s. In the 1920s and 1930s, members of the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA) promoted it, and Sunnyside Gardens and Radburn in suburban New York, Greenbelt in suburban Washington, D.C., Chatham Village in Pittsburgh, and Baldwin Hills Village in Los Angeles all included suburban-style row houses.

A few speculative developers also played with this format in eastern cities, and in Southern California several apartment buildings were arranged with two-story “maisonettes.” After the Second World War, a handful of larger-scale homebuilders began to employ suburban-style row-house plans. In 1952, for example, American Community Builders announced plans for hundreds of (mostly unbuilt) row houses at Park Forest outside of Chicago. That year, the FHA’s Cooperative Housing Division introduced new design guidelines that recommended two-story “row type” units that included private parking and patios (Figure 16).  

Row houses came to be called “town houses” (sometimes made one word) by the homebuilding industry as early as 1952 to recast the type as modern—and, perhaps more importantly, middle-class—in an effort to counter their reputation as old-fashioned and working-class. After 1965 the term became ubiquitous. By the late 1950s modern multiple-owner town-house complexes began to be built more widely, with at least a dozen completed nationally by 1962. These kinds of projects served as models for the cluster and planned-unit-development designs promoted by planners beginning in the mid-1960s.

Several federally aided urban renewal projects planned in the 1950s also included town houses. Among them were Washington’s Southwest, which included the Capitol Park complex designed by Chloethiel Woodard Smith and, somewhat later, the River Park complex designed by Charles Goodman; Eastwick and Mill Creek in Philadelphia, designed by Constantine Doxiades and Louis Kahn, respectively; and Lafayette Park in Detroit, designed by Mies van der Rohe.
No town houses appear to have been built in Southern California until 1960. That fall, K. L. van Degrift Corporation, a small-scale homebuilder advertised Bundy Place located at Idaho Avenue and Bundy Drive, south of Santa Monica Boulevard on Los Angeles’s West Side (Figure 17). The ad copy suggested that the design idea derived from “more than a years’ study of row-housing in Washington, D.C., Baltimore and San Francisco.” Despite this claimed pedigree, the project, whose designer is unknown, was innovative, comprising two parallel rows of eight two-story units oriented inward toward a narrow walkway. Each unit had a patio facing the walkway and a garage at the rear, fronting the street or the alleyway. The garage was accessible via interior staircases.68

Toluca Townhouse
Bundy Place remained an isolated experiment in Southern California for only two years. In 1962 several new projects appeared, including Toluca Townhouse, an elegant condo...
minimum complex at 4246–80 West Kling Street in the Toluca Lake section of Burbank at the southeastern edge of the San Fernando Valley. The project started with thirty-six units, and later phases would raise this number to more than 200 by 1967. The developer was Barclay Hollander Curci, a new local homebuilder who was buying up old movie-studio ranches from Warner Brothers and Columbia Pictures in the San Fernando Valley for conversion to residential use. Since the 1920s and 1930s, major studios had owned large back-lot sites in remote sections of town. As the city grew, they sold them for development.

Toluca Townhouse was designed by architect Richard D. Stoddard with an innovative site plan by civil engineer Jack Spahn, who would go on to become one of Southern California’s more prolific planners of multifamily housing in the 1960s and 1970s. The complex was modern, with strong geometries and a palate of white and plate glass (Figure 18). This style underscored the novelty of the row-house arrangement, while recalling early local experiments in modernism, such as the Bubeshko Apartments designed by R. M. Schindler in 1938.

The plan of the complex was symmetrical, with five virtually identical buildings of five or six units facing a compact courtyard with a swimming pool (Figure 19). At the front were four buildings running perpendicular to the street; the fifth sat behind them, parallel to the street. The front buildings were paired around landscaped walkways. At the rear of each unit, private two-car garages were reached from alleyways. To mask the alleys and to save space, living areas and the walkways were elevated half a story above the street and the alleys were sunk half a story, providing each home with a half basement (Figure 20).
The well-equipped units contained two bedrooms and two baths (1,000 square feet) or two bedrooms, den, and three baths (1,500 square feet). Stoddard arranged them on split-level plans over two-and-a-half stories, with tall (one-and-a-half-story) entrances from the walkways. Each had a private patio facing a walkway as well as an upstairs balcony that projected out over the patio. Both faced with floor-to-ceiling plate-glass windows and sliding-glass doors framed in a grid of unadorned, thin square columns, painted white (see Figure 18). Balcony railings and patio fences were also painted white. Alley façades were shorn of all decoration and pierced only by small sliding windows.

Socially, Toluca Townhouse catered to relatively affluent older families. The site was near the production facilities of Universal, Disney, Warner Brothers, Columbia Pictures, and NBC, and the developers hoped to provide convenient, carefree housing for single people, older families, and childless couples. Children under the age of thirteen were prohibited (a rule that the condominium association strictly enforced). The Times reported that a majority of buyers were “former home-owners”—real-estate shorthand for families who were selling their detached houses. Prices at Toluca Townhouse, which went on sale in August 1962, ranged from $20,500 to $26,500 ($160,000 to $205,000 today). The least expensive units required $4,000 down ($30,000) with a twenty-four-year mortgage.69

Gramercy Park

Unlike Toluca, many new multifamily developments welcomed families with children, signaling a growing emphasis on larger units for larger households in Southern California, especially in town-house complexes. Their designs typically included larger units (four bedrooms were typical) and shared facilities such as athletic fields and playgrounds. Many such projects also offered extensive community programming. None made more effort in this direction than Gramercy Park, whose approximately 200 units were developed by Ardmore beginning late in 1962.

Gramercy Park, whose designer remains anonymous, was built just north of the Santa Ana Freeway and west of North Euclid Street in the northern Orange County city of Anaheim.70 Like Ardmore’s earlier complexes, it was organized as an FHA-insured co-op. The first phase of the project contained a mixture of one- and two-story row houses. The larger two-story units sold best, and later phases were all of this type. The name referred to West Gramercy Avenue, which ran through the neighborhood. The two-story units, which came in a range of sizes, cost $500 to $3,000 down ($3,700 to $22,000 today) with $100 to $270 a month in maintenance ($730 to $2,000).71

Gramercy Park was conceived to appeal to younger families in several ways. Promotional materials stressed the ease of maintenance and excellent community facilities. At the sales

![Figure 20: Toluca Townhouse One, street and side façades with sunken driveway](http://www.example.com/image.png)
office Ardmore screened a twenty-minute color film, Better Living for Less Money, about its earlier projects. According to an advertisement for the movie “The ‘dramatic conflict’ . . . is provided by the home-owner’s losing war against . . . the tyrannical lawnmower.” “The film shows,” it continues, “how rescue from his plight is provided by a cooperative apartment project, in which the resident is completely freed from the cares and responsibilities of yard upkeep, pool cleaning, repairs and maintenance.”72 Other advertisements asked, “Why maintain a house?” and promised “More leisure time for yourself and your family.”73

More important than these promotions were the services promised to young families of moderate means and, in particular, families with two working adults. These included a van service to take commuters to major local employers—including Hughes Aircraft, Northrop Corporation’s Nortronics, and North American Rockwell’s Autonetics—for a monthly fare of $4 ($30 today), an all-day nursery school for $35 a month ($260), an after-school program operated in conjunction with Anaheim’s Park and Recreation Department for $10 a month ($75), a free evening study hall supervised by certified teachers, and babysitting at competitive rates.74 Advertisements proclaimed the residence “Perfect for Working Mothers!” and appealed to employees of the larger companies—“A Fabulous Deal for People Who Work at Hughes.”75 Although the builders of American housing have long been criticized for being oblivious to the needs of families with working women, Gramercy Park belies this idea.76

A New Aesthetic

For Gramercy Park, Ardmore rejected the symmetry and modernist style of adult-oriented row-house complexes like Toluca Townhouse in favor of a diluted French historical vocabulary. The design also emphasized the individuality
and privacy of the row-house typology by articulating units with diverse widths, setbacks, and decoration (Figures 21, 22). All roofs were flat, but many of the houses featured exaggerated Mansard-style false fronts at the second story. The exterior cladding was a mixture of stucco, brick veneer, and, for the Mansards, clapboard and what appears to be aluminum; and fenestration was irregular, with casement windows of varying widths and heights. Wholeheartedly embracing this formula’s playfulness, Ardmore chose a palette of Disneyesque colors, including baby blue and pink, which it splashed with abandon on trim and Mansards.

This decorative scheme was a variety of L.A.’s Hollywood Regency, whose loose combination of early nineteenth-century English, American, and French revivals had emerged in the 1930s as an alternative to the ubiquitous Spanish Colonial. Exaggerated Mansard-style rooflines began to appear around 1940 and became popular in house renovations in the mid–1950s. Speculative developers began to use them in the 1960s as people tired of ranch and split-level styles.77 Because the Mansard evoked the urban sophistication of the Continental city it was especially appropriate for what seemed a historic—and historically urban—typology such as the row house.

Varied façades—introduced in a less polychromatic way in the 1920s and 1930s at projects such as the Granada Buildings apartment complex in L.A. (Franklin Harper, 1925) and Chatham Village (Ingham & Boyd, 1929–35)—masked the homogeneity of units’ interiors.78 When combined with historical styles, the effect could be corny. The popularity of this combination had been previously tested at Dudley Square in Shreveport, Louisiana, completed in 1959, and Colonial Park in Louisville, Kentucky, begun around 1960. Both were Colonial Revival in style. In March 1961, a color photograph of Colonial Park appeared on the cover of House & Home, showing five row houses distinguished from each other by color, window patterns, and mixture of wood and brick facing.79 By the mid-1960s, this became the standard treatment for American row-house complexes, and, when U.S. homebuilders Levitt & Sons and Kaufman & Broad began working in France and Germany, the phenomenon became international.80 Gramercy Park was among the first such projects in Southern California to distinguish individual house façades in this way.

To appeal further to families with children, Ardmore grouped the rows of houses at Gramercy Park around a
wide common green (Figure 23). In the first phase, the mixture of smaller and larger units had faced the neighborhood’s narrow streets. After the switch to only two-story units, however, a superblock was created in which the perimeter houses turned inward to face a common garden, as at the eponymous Manhattan development of 1831. In both sections of Ardmore’s complex, parking was in long sheds behind units, accessed by alleys. Each house had a small rear patio surrounded by high walls for privacy.

These design strategies coupled with the project’s promise of many social amenities proved a sales success, and Ardmore opened two similar projects in late 1963 and early 1964. Fountain Park at Topanga Canyon Boulevard and Oxnard Street in Woodland Hills was advertised to employees of neighboring Rocketdyne and Litton Industries. Concord Park, at 12005 Avalon Boulevard in South Central, was the first such development to be developed explicitly for African American families. Its construction was reported extensively in the Los Angeles Sentinel, the city’s leading Black newspaper, and President Johnson visited the site in March 1964.82

**Conclusion**

In July 1962 the Los Angeles Times reported that for the first time a majority of new homes under construction in Southern California were multifamily. “What does this mean in terms of Southland [Southern California] living preferences?” asked real-estate editor Tom Cameron. According to an unidentified source, the appeal was escape from maintenance responsibilities. “What’s the fun,” the informant mused, “of fighting crabgrass in your front lawn when your friends, who live in apartments, are playing golf or catching albacore on weekends?” Cameron worried how the trend would affect traffic, parking, shopping habits, and the homebuilding industry: “Whatever the answers,” he concluded, “the headlong rush to the suburbs . . . is waning and . . . the return to apartment living is waxing.”83

Cameron was not entirely correct. The rush to suburbia had by no means ended. Southern California was changing, but even a high-rise district like Wilshire Boulevard on the West Side was hardly about to become Manhattan. He was also wrong to describe the surge in popularity of apartment living as a return. While multifamily housing had been common in Southern California since the early twentieth century, it catered primarily to working-class, temporary, and seasonal tenants. Most of the new multifamily homes in 1962, by contrast, were year-round residences, and perhaps a majority were owner-occupied.

Additionally, much of the new housing stock was not conventional apartments but town houses, garden apartments, and other new types. Cameron wrongly imagined that the new multifamily homes conformed to a particular physical typology, a high-density urban “other” that could be juxtaposed with the ubiquitous detached house. Perhaps he was thinking of the kinds of generic tall buildings and low but densely built dinghats and stucco boxes that had become common in certain sections of Los Angeles in the 1950s, and which were celebrated in the 1960s by the artist Ed Ruscha in his photographic essay-book Some Los Angeles Apartments.84

The overwhelming thrust of the new trend, however, was toward hybrid kinds of physical arrangements, such as those at Toluca Townhouse and Gramercy Park. Countless other types were pioneered and named by homebuilders as the multifamily trend accelerated in the 1960s, including “walled garden homes,” “apartment cottages,” “village green cluster-courts,” “courtyard homes,” “zero lot-line houses,” and four-plex “quadrominiums.” Contrary to what Cameron implied, most of them were suburban—low in height, medium in density, and built in predominantly single-family neighborhoods.

The multifamily trend was the avant-garde of a transformation in American domestic architecture, even if the structures themselves were conservative. Just as mid-century Southern California is understood by many scholars and critics as a new (if unwelcome) kind of American city—disorienting to outsiders who lacked Banham’s “four-ecologies” framework for touring the town, this next wave of California innovation, comprising a new form of multifamily housing, challenged conventional urban categories, blurring the boundaries between urban and suburban, house and apartment.

By 1962, in contrast to the popular image of Southern California as an endless single-family subdivision, much had been built to satisfy the appreciable number of households that preferred multifamily housing. However, the new housing types continued to reflect the priorities that had long shaped middle-class housing in the region, including preferences for indoor-outdoor living and quick access to the car. By meeting these demands, they ensured that Southern California would not become a city of cliff-dwellers and helped it grow into a new, hybrid metropolis. Although more densely settled than any other region in the U.S., it was spacious, open, and modern in ways that earlier critics of speculative housing production, such as the RPAA, had only imagined.
Notes
This article draws on material for a book on the history of multifamily homeownership in the U.S. I am grateful to Meredith Martin, Lauren Ristvet, David Brownlee, and the anonymous reviewer for detailed comments on various versions of the manuscript; to Robert Charles Lesser, Micah Mayell, Amanda Elloff, and Candice Hemming for sharing their recollections; to Margaret Crawford, Daniel Abramson, Robert Bruegmann, and Jennifer Hock for their support while first working through this material; and to Cecilia Cabello and Kelly Kagan for touring these housing complexes with me.
2. On efforts to limit density see, for example, Jeremiah B. C. Axelrod, “Keep the ‘L’ Out of Los Angeles: Race, Discourse, and Urban Modernity in 1920s Southern California,” Journal of Urban History 34, no. 1 (Nov. 2007), 3–37.
14. “Multifamily homeownership” is one of several terms that appears in the real-estate trade literature to refer to ownership of an entire multiple-family building in which one lives in one unit and rents out the others—it is useful as a blanket term to describe the dwelling practices addressed in this article and I use it throughout.
ing: Skyscrapers, Skid Rows, and Suburbs (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), chap. 5.


17. For description of Orange Grove Manor, see Environmental Planning Associates (prepared for City of Pasadena, Department of Planning and Development), *Ambassador West Project: Final Environmental Impact Report* (Pasadena: City of Pasadena, 2006).


30. Mayell’s other Pasadena projects included Villa San Pasqual at 1000 San Pasqual St., 707 S. Orange Grove Blvd., Capri Aire at 660 S. Orange Grove Blvd., and Plaza del Arroyo at 101 N. Grand Ave.


32. Mayell’s projects outside Pasadena included Villa Constance at 2625 State St. and Villa Miradero at 2814 Miradero Dr. in Santa Barbara; La Jolla Capri on La Jolla Boulevard and Villa Del Lido at 2350–60 Torrey Pines Rd. in La Jolla; Bonnymede Shores on Bonnymede Dr. in Montecito; Villa del Coronado at 100–190 E. Coronado Rd. in Phoenix; the Ambassador at Post Oak at 5030 Ambassador Way in Houston; and Whistling Waters (modeled on the original in Pasadena) at 1048 N. Shore Dr. in St. Petersburg, 311 E. Morse Blvd. in Winter Park, and 308 Inlet Way in Palm Beach Shores, all in Florida.

33. Carpenter’s projects included Oak Mount Manor at 1125 N. Central Ave., Verdugo Manor at 1120 N. Louise St., Glennmont on N. Brand Blvd. at E. Mountain St., Verdugo Villa at 301 N. Louise St., the Louise at 312 N. Louise St., the Virginian at 315 N. Louise St., the Royal Palms, and the Park Central at 215 N. Kenwood Ave. in Glendale; the Glen Feliz at 3707 Los Feliz Blvd. in Los Angeles; and the Wind’n Sea East at 245 Coast Blvd. in La Jolla.


48. High-rise projects were the Hollywood Ardmore at 1830 N. Whitley Ave. in Hollywood and the Wilshire Ardmore at 10501 Wilshire Blvd. in Westwood. Low-rise projects included 11511–15 Moorpark, 4252 Fair Ave., Coldwater Ardmore Co-operative Estates at 6259 Coldwater Canyon Ave., and the Oxnard Ardmore at 6000 Coldwater Canyon Ave. in North Hollywood; Colfax Ardmore Co-operative Estates at 6353 Colfax Ave. in Studio City; Queensland Manor South at 11120 Queensland St., Queensland Manor North at 1280 S. Sepulveda Blvd./11121 Queensland St., and the Clover Arms at 1166 S. Sepulveda Blvd., all on Sepulveda just south of National Blvd. in Los Angeles; 514 S. Glenoaks Blvd. in Burbank; 6509 Reseda Blvd. in Reseda; and 1903 Freemont Ave. in South Pasadena.


50. Senning, “Close-up.”

51. Most of Ardmore’s suburban sites had long been zoned for multifamily housing because they fronted major roads yet they remained surrounded almost entirely by single-family subdivisions. On zoning, see Gish, Building Los Angeles, esp. chap. 6.
61. This system is also commonly referred to as planned unit development, or PUD. On this kind of housing generally, see McKenzie, Prarcitopia; Donald R. Stabile, Community Associations: The Emergence and Acceptance of a Quiet Innovation in Housing (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2000).

62. Wright, Building the Dream 270.


64. See, for example, Susan L. Klaus, A Modern Arcadia: Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and the Plan for Forest Hills Gardens (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press; Library of American Landscape History, 2002), 4–5; Cathy D. Kneppe, Greenbelt, Maryland: A Living Legacy of the New Deal (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), chap. 1; Clarence S. Stein, Toward New Towns for America (Liverpool: University Press of Liverpool, 1951); Edward K. Spahn, Designing Modern America: The Regional Planning Association of America and its Members (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1996); Roy Lubove, Community Planning in the 1920s: The Contribution of the Regional Planning Association of America (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963). This era also saw several comparable projects designed by avant-garde modern architects in Europe, as well as Frank Lloyd Wright’s fourplex Suntop Houses, one of which was built in Ardmore, Pennsylvania in 1939. See, for example, Roger Sherwood, Modern Housing Prototypes (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 29–30.


The mid-1950s also saw row-house typologies used at public-housing complexes such as Easter Hill in Richmond, California, designed by Vernon DeMars, Donald Hardison, and Lawrence Halprin, and at the Cherokee complexes such as Easter Hill in Richmond, California, designed by avant-garde modern architects in Europe, as well as Frank Lloyd Wright’s fourplex Suntop Houses, one of which was built in Ardmore, Pennsylvania in 1939. See, for example, Roger Sherwood, Modern Housing Prototypes (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 29–30.


70. The designer may have been L.A. architect Robert Donald. Robert Charles Lesser, personal interview, 6 Oct. 2008.


75. Display advertisement, Los Angeles Times, 16 Aug. 1964, OC16.


83. Cameron, “Multiple-unit Building Leads in Dwelling Race.”


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