



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: April 8, 2026 REPORT NO. HRB-26-014

HEARING DATE: April 23, 2026

SUBJECT: **ITEM #1 – SAN DIEGO BUNGALOW COURTS MULTIPLE PROPERTY DOCUMENTATION FORM**

RESOURCE INFO: California State Office of Historic Preservation Pending Nominations:  
[San Diego Bungalow Courts Multiple Property Documentation Form \(ca.gov\)](https://www.californiahistoricpreservation.org/san-diego-bungalow-courts-multiple-property-documentation-form)

APPLICANT: South Environmental

LOCATION: Citywide

DESCRIPTION: Review and make a recommendation to the California State Office of Historic Preservation on the approval of the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form for the San Diego Bungalow Courts Multiple Property Listing

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Recommend that the California State Office of Historic Preservation approve the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form for the San Diego Bungalow Courts Multiple Property Listing.

### BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board pursuant to the California State Office of Historic Preservation's requirement that the local jurisdiction be provided 60 days to review and comment on a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. A National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) was prepared and submitted to the Office of Historic Preservation by South Environmental as part of a proposed Multiple Property Listing to the National Register of Historic Places.

A recommendation by the Historical Resources Board to the Office of Historic Preservation to approve this MPDF is not a designation action, and the proposed Multiple Property Listing will not be listed in the City's local register as a result of the HRB's recommendation. Should the Office of Historic Preservation approve this MPDF, the document would be used in future National Register nominations under the San Diego Bungalow Courts Multiple Property Listing. Any properties listed

under that Multiple Property Listing would meet the definition of a historical resource under the City's Municipal Code and would be subject to compliance with the City's Historical Resources Regulations.

According to [National Register Bulletin 16B: How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form](#), an MPDF is a document for recording written statements of historic context and associated property types, thereby providing a framework for evaluating a thematic group of historic properties. An MPDF may be created when related properties exist or are likely to exist in sufficient numbers to warrant registration in the multiple property format.

When the MPDF is submitted in conjunction with a National Register Registration Form for an associated individual property nomination, the combined documentation constitutes a multiple property submission. For the HRB's reference, two submissions associated with the MPDF are currently pending State Historical Resources Commission review — the [El Cantorral Court](#) and the [Elm Courts](#). These two nominations work in conjunction with the San Diego Bungalow Courts MPDF.

## ANALYSIS

The San Diego Bungalow Courts MPDF records the history of bungalow courts in San Diego, identifies their characteristics, and provides evaluation criteria and registration requirements for their listing on the National Register.

### Statement of Historic Contexts

A historic context is a body of information about related properties organized by theme, place and time. The MPDF documented the City's history of bungalow courts, using a variety of sources, including the [2021 Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement](#) and other City historic context statements.

The MPDF notes that the bungalow court property type was developed in Pasadena during the 1910s and spread throughout Southern California. A bungalow court generally consists of multiple detached one-story residences, oriented around a shared central court, with a clear connection to the street. Bungalow courts were often built near existing streetcar lines, offering working-class renters a quick way to commute to work. Early examples of this building type were designed in Craftsman, Spanish Colonial Revival, Mission Revival, Pueblo Revival, and Egyptian Revival styles.

When San Diego's population doubled following the 1915-1917 Panama-California Exposition and World War I, the City faced a housing shortage. Bungalow courts began to emerge to meet the increased housing demand. The courts were attractive to build because they offered a good return on investment, given the increased number of units on the lot. Renters enjoyed better light and air compared to apartment living. Bungalow court construction began to decline after the passage of a 1929 citywide zoning system that generally limited their construction to older, denser neighborhoods, such as Golden Hill, University Heights, and Middletown. With the passage of the 1934 National Housing Act, Minimal Traditional-style bungalow courts, characterized by their modest traditional architectural detailing, became popular. In 1941, the City's first highway was built, and as dependence on automobile transit increased, streetcar ridership declined; in 1949, streetcars ceased operation completely. Although bungalow courts were still being built in the 1940s and

1950s, they largely served as infill construction in established neighborhoods. Bungalow courts were not being built in newer neighborhoods because those areas were often zoned for single-family residences only. Bungalow courts became obsolete after ca. 1960. Heritage Preservation staff concurs with the MPDF's historic context.

### Associated Property Types

The MPDF states that bungalow courts are most likely to be found eligible for designation under the National Register of Historic Places Criterion C. To be eligible under Criterion C, a property must embody the distinctive characteristics of the bungalow court property type in terms of overall form, arrangement, and orientation, and it must reflect a popular architectural style of the time of construction. Both full bungalow courts and half bungalow courts may be eligible. Both narrow and wide courts may be eligible. An "expanded court," presenting as one-and-a-half or two full courts with architectural cohesion, may also be eligible. An eligible court must retain sufficient integrity of design, location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The MPDF proposes a period of significance of 1920 to 1949.

The MPDF's proposed period of significance is narrower than the ca. 1917 to ca. 1960 period of significance established by the City's [2021 Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement](#). The MPDF justifies the beginning of its period of significance by stating that the first bungalow court in San Diego was built in 1920 near Broadway and 24<sup>th</sup> Street. San Diego's context statement recognizes that the aforementioned court is an early bungalow court, but stops short of declaring it as the first. Similarly, the MPDF proposes an end date of 1949 for the period of significance, citing the end of streetcar operation. In contrast, the City's context statement identifies a ca. 1960 date as the end date for bungalow courts' period of significance, citing the introduction of parking requirements under R-4 Zoning that rendered bungalow courts functionally and economically obsolete, as street frontage and open court space were sacrificed for parking spots.

Nevertheless, there is no requirement that a National Register MPDF's period of significance must match that of a local jurisdiction's historical context statement. Evidently, the MPDF's 1920-1949 date range is a stricter interpretation of bungalow court's significance compared to the City's interpretation. Although the proposed period of significance is narrower, the 1920-1949 date range captures a significant number of bungalow courts that were built during population booms after the 1915-1917 Panama-California Exposition, after World War I, and during and after World War II. While bungalow courts predating 1920 and postdating 1949 may exist, they would not be eligible for listing on the National Register San Diego Bungalow Courts Multiple Property Listing. However, these properties may still be eligible for listing on the City's local register. Ultimately, Heritage Preservation staff concurs with the MPDF's designation framework and registration requirements for listing of National Register properties under the San Diego Bungalow Courts Multiple Property Listing.

### Geographical Data

The MPDF proposes a boundary confined to San Diego city limits and along original streetcar lines. Heritage Preservation staff concurs that this boundary is appropriate.

CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted, Heritage Preservation staff recommends that the Historical Resources Board recommend that the California State Office of Historic Preservation approve the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form for the San Diego Bungalow Courts Multiple Property Listing.



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City Planning Department



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AL/ss

Attachment(s):

1. Applicant's National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form for the San Diego Bungalow Courts Multiple Property Listing under separate cover

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### National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information.

  X   New Submission                      \_\_\_\_\_ Amended Submission

#### A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

San Diego Bungalow Courts DRAFT

#### B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

San Diego, City of. "Bungalow Court and Apartment Court Historic Context Statement."  
September 2021. Prepared by Page & Turnbull for the City of San Diego Planning  
Department, San Diego, CA.

#### C. Form Prepared by:

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(760) 334-3355

Date: July 2025

#### D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

United States Department of the Interior  
**National Park Service**

Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Create a Table of Contents and list the page numbers for each of these sections in the space below.

Provide narrative explanations for each of these sections on continuation sheets. In the header of each section, cite the letter, page number, and name of the multiple property listing. Refer to *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* for additional guidance.

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**Section E. Statement of Historic Contexts**

**Introduction**

This Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) documents the history of bungalow courts in the City of San Diego, California (hereinafter referred as City or San Diego) and provides the framework for the nomination of associated properties to the National Register of Historic Places. The majority of the intact and significant bungalow courts in the City were constructed between 1920 and 1949. Bungalow courts are characterized by their organization of one-story residences oriented around a centralized and shared space with a clear connection to the street. Some examples also feature original garages at the rear of the property for resident parking. Bungalow courts are typically arranged in an L- or U-shape plan, and contain detached, semi-detached, or attached units. Common space is accessed directly from the street and contains a mix of paved and landscaped surfaces. Bungalow courts quickly became a desirable property type for both developers and residents as they offered a higher return on investment by allowing several units to be constructed on a single lot, used similar construction techniques and materials as single-family houses, were conveniently located near public transportation, were affordable, required limited maintenance, and offered a communal lifestyle with the privacy and outdoor space of a single-family home.

The bungalow court property type was first developed in Pasadena, California during the 1910s. By the end of the 1910s the property type spread throughout Los Angeles and eventually Southern California. San Diego’s first bungalow courts were constructed in the decade after the 1915-1917 Panama-California Exposition and World War I, to meet increasing population demands that resulted from an influx of civilians and military personnel and their families to the area. The first bungalow court was commissioned by mayor Louis J. Wilde in 1920 and proposed to be built near Broadway and 24<sup>th</sup> Street in the neighborhood of Golden Hill. The 1920-1921 Sanborn Maps show that by 1921, several bungalow courts were constructed or were in progress. The popularity of bungalow courts is also attributed to the fact that they allowed for increased density during the housing shortages, because they provided a quick way to increase density on a property by having multiple residential units on a single lot.

The City’s earliest bungalow courts were typically constructed in neighborhoods served by the City’s streetcar system. As the main form of public transportation at the time, constructing bungalow courts within close proximity to streetcar lines offered residents a convenient means of getting to work and accessing other parts of the City without an automobile. While the construction of bungalow courts slowed after the 1920s, the housing shortage during World War II in the early 1940s resulted in a renewed focus on bungalow courts as the property type remained a convenient way to add housing quickly to established areas. As such, there are examples of bungalow courts in the City as late as the mid-century. However, the notable and significant bungalow courts are those that were placed near the streetcar lines from 1920 to 1949. The popularity of the bungalow court ultimately tapered with the end of streetcar line operations in 1949.

The prevalence of bungalow courts in the City across the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century led to the emergence

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of variations of the property type, and multiple architectural styles were utilized over the years, including: Craftsman, Spanish Colonial Revival, and Minimal Traditional. Regardless of their design, configuration, and history, intact bungalow courts continue to be an important property type in the City.

**Early Streetcar Residential Development in San Diego (1885-1916)**

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the City experienced increased population growth in response to transportation improvements. In 1885, the Atlantic & Pacific and Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railroads were completed, linking the City to other parts of the United States. In 1886, the San Diego Street Car Company began operating a two-mile long, horse drawn track along Broadway in downtown San Diego. By 1887, the City’s population increased from hundreds to nearly 40,000, and land speculation was rapid. Streetcar lines quickly began to expand in new neighborhoods located immediately adjacent to the north, east, and south of downtown, such as Bankers Hill, Sherman Heights, and Golden Hill. Expansion also continued outside of the downtown core in new housing tracts including University Heights, Hillcrest, and Logan Heights.<sup>1</sup> Further real estate speculation spread to coastal areas in the City, resulting in new subdivisions in La Jolla and Ocean Beach in the 1880s. Noted for their appeal as vacation and recreation destinations, residential development in these areas typically consisted of small beach cottages. Although these cottages were on individual lots, their general style and modest size served as precursors to the bungalow courts that would be developed later in these areas.<sup>2</sup>

Following a real estate bust in 1888, rapid population growth and development nearly came to a halt, resulting in many of the subdivisions that had been laid out remaining undeveloped in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1890s, the City’s various independent streetcar lines were consolidated by John D. Spreckels and given the name San Diego Electric Railway. Horse drawn lines were replaced with electric lines, and the system was further expanded. Neighborhoods within a few blocks of rail and streetcar lines developed the fastest, showing how important it was for residents to have reliable transportation.<sup>3</sup>

By 1907, both the Adams Avenue and University Avenue streetcar lines opened, sparking suburban development in University Heights, Normal Heights, and East San Diego (known presently as City Heights).<sup>4</sup> By 1909, D. C. Collier constructed the Point Loma Railroad (PLRR) to serve as a loop from downtown San Diego to Ocean Beach, further connecting coastal communities via public transit. Spreckels took over the PLRR by 1922.<sup>5</sup>

After the success of the 1915-1917 Panama-California Exposition in the City’s Balboa Park, further residential development occurred in existing neighborhoods and within newly established suburban

<sup>1</sup> Historic Resources Group, *North Park Community Plan Area Historic Resources Survey*, April 2011 A-6, 18.  
<sup>2</sup> City of San Diego, *San Diego Modernism Historic Context Statement*, 2007, 15-16.; Ocean Beach Community Plan and Local Coastal Program, Appendix C.  
<sup>3</sup> *San Diego Modernism Historic Context Statement*, 18.; Historic Resources Group, *North Park Community Plan Area*, 13.; Page & Turnbull, *Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement*, 21. Page & Turnbull, *Southeastern San Diego Community Plan Update Historic Context Statement*, August 2014, 31.  
<sup>4</sup> Historic Resources Group, *North Park Community Plan Area*, A-10.  
<sup>5</sup> Page & Turnbull, *Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement*, 22.

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neighborhoods. The Exposition attracted 3.7 million visitors, many of whom chose to relocate to the City permanently following the event. The influx of relocations to San Diego after the Exposition is noted as one of the primary reasons for the population boom that led to the construction of bungalow courts in the City.<sup>6</sup>

**Development of Bungalow Courts in San Diego (1920- 1929)**

The City’s population rose from 74,000 in 1910 to more than 147,000 in 1920.<sup>7</sup> As a result of the increased population, the City experienced a housing shortage. Bungalow courts began to appear in San Diego in 1920 as one way address the demand for housing. By the time they emerged in San Diego, bungalow courts were already established as a popular multi-family property type in Pasadena and the greater Los Angeles area.<sup>8</sup> Articles in notable publications, such as *The Craftsman*, *The California Bungalow*, *Western Architect*, *Building Age*, *House Beautiful*, and *Architect and Engineer* from the early 1910s through 1920 praised bungalow courts for filling the gap between single-family houses and traditional apartments. The new property type offered occupants the benefits of a single-family home, including light and airflow, without burdening them with the task of maintaining an entire lot. The scale of bungalow courts often required two or three lots, so they were well suited for newer residential subdivisions with large swaths of available land, as opposed to more developed parts of the City where only smaller parcels were available. Many of these early units were Craftsman style homes, often referred to as “Craftsman Bungalows” resulting in the naming convention of the property type as “bungalow courts”. Although Craftsman style bungalow courts were very popular, Spanish Colonial Revival and Mission Revival style bungalow courts were also constructed in the City.<sup>9</sup> Examples of these popular styles include 4081-4087 Mississippi Street (Spanish Colonial Revival), 7769 Ivanhoe Avenue (Craftsman), and 3933-3945 Hamilton Street (Mission Revival).

In 1920, a convention of the California Association of Commercial Secretaries was held in Pasadena and attended by representatives from San Diego. At the convention, bungalow courts were recommended as an effective solution to address housing shortages. They were touted as being a good return on investment, because they allowed for multiple units on a single lot and offered a steady stream of rental income, both of which were difficult to accomplish with traditional single-family homes. Following the convention, City Mayor Louis J. Wilde decided to construct a bungalow court to keep the City competitive with the rest of Southern California. It was a 14-unit court constructed near Broadway and 24<sup>th</sup> Street in Golden Hill along a streetcar line.<sup>10</sup>

By 1920, several bungalow courts were constructed or underway in established streetcar neighborhoods. By this time, the property typology was well established and easily recognizable. From 1923 to 1926, a

<sup>6</sup> Page & Turnbull, *Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement*, 23-24.

<sup>7</sup> Page & Turnbull, *Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement*, 24.

<sup>8</sup> Page & Turnbull, *Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement*, 24.; Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 566-578

<sup>9</sup> Page & Turnbull, *Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement*, 25-26.

<sup>10</sup> “Bungalow Court Plan Favored as Solution of Housing Problem,” *San Diego Evening Tribune*, 3 January 1920.; “Mayor to Spur Building in City with Big Court,” *San Diego Union*, 5 June 1919.

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construction boom and decreased material and labor costs resulted in the rapid development of many additional bungalow courts in the City. These courts were constructed in the neighborhoods surrounding Balboa Park, Ocean Beach, and La Jolla, typically within walking distance to a streetcar line and small commercial corridors. The proximity of the new bungalow courts to the streetcar lines, was extremely beneficial and convenient for working and middle-class residents that needed to commute to other parts of the City for work. This convenience further increased the popularity of bungalow courts in the City’s suburban areas and hundreds more were constructed throughout the 1920s. Bungalow courts were also ideal for construction in residential neighborhoods for their ability to blend in with both existing and planned single-family residences; as opposed to larger multi-family apartment buildings that were typically more difficult to build without disrupting existing streetscapes and neighborhood plans.<sup>11</sup> Examples of bungalow courts constructed during this period near streetcar lines include 2454-2474 Adams Avenue in University Heights, 2122-2130 Cable Street in Ocean Beach, and 3981-3995 Idaho Street in North Park.

By the start of the Great Depression in 1929, development throughout the City slowed. However, the presence of the tourism industry and the continual growth of the population due to the increase of the military presence in the City spared it from many of the catastrophic effects seen in other United States cities. A bright spot for the City during the Great Depression was the California Pacific International Exposition in 1935. The Exposition was held in Balboa Park and brought an influx of tourists to the City. Though not as successful as the earlier 1915 Exposition, the 1935 Exposition helped the City rebound economically. The 1935 Exposition also introduced new architectural styles, including Pueblo Revival, Mayan Revival, and Streamline Moderne styles, which influenced the designs of new residential housing forms throughout the City.<sup>12</sup>

Bungalow court construction began to decline by the 1930s as a result of citywide zoning changes and the decline of public transit systems. In 1923, the City passed its first zoning ordinance. This ordinance divided the City into five zones (identified as A to E) that restricted what type of buildings could be constructed in each area. Areas for commercial, industrial, and multi-family development were separated from areas focused on single-family development. However, the ordinance was not consistently implemented, resulting in areas along streetcar lines with a mixture of stores, apartments, and single-family developments.<sup>13</sup> However, by 1929, the A-E zones in the City were replaced with a new comprehensive citywide zoning system. Residential zones were divided into the following categories: single-residential development only (R-1), slightly more dense “limited income residential” developments, which included infill development, duplexes, churches, and schools (R-2), and dense residential development, which included hotels, apartment buildings, apartment courts, and bungalow courts (R-4). Existing neighborhoods were predominately zoned for what had already been constructed in

<sup>11</sup> Page & Turnbull, *Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement*, 28-30.

<sup>12</sup> Historic Resources Group, *North Park Community Plan Area*, 15, A-32.; Page & Turnbull, *Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement*, 41.

<sup>13</sup> Page & Turnbull, *Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement*, 41. “City-Wide Zoning Plan Proposed,” *San Diego Union and Daily Bee*, 13 March 1927.; “San Diego’s New Zoning Law is Believed to be Invalid,” *San Diego Union and Daily Bee*, 23 December 1923.

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the neighborhoods, but undeveloped areas were primarily zoned R-1 and only allowed single-family development. Neighborhoods where bungalow courts were already constructed, such as Golden Hill, University Heights, and Middletown, were typically zoned R-4. However, areas which were largely developed in the 1920s, such as Ocean Beach, North Park, and South Park, saw a mix of R-4 zoning near streetcar lines.<sup>14</sup>

As a result of the new citywide zoning, bungalow courts could only be constructed in areas zoned as R-4. Therefore, they were not constructed as a part of most new residential developments in the 1930s, as these areas were typically zoned R-1. Thereby, the construction of bungalow courts began to decrease and the ones that were able to be constructed were within the City’s older neighborhoods with R-4 zoning. The decline of bungalow courts was also a result of the rise in the popularity of the automobile and the decline of reliance on public transportation.<sup>15</sup>

**Bungalow Courts in the 1930s through the Mid-Century**

The later bungalow courts that were constructed in the 1930s followed similar plan patterns as their predecessors but utilized the popular styles of the time such as Streamline Moderne and Minimal Traditional. Examples of these later bungalow courts can be found at 4370-4378 Louisiana Street, 4072 30<sup>th</sup> Street, and 4970 Cape May Avenue. The rise in popularity of Minimal Traditional style courts was largely a result of Federal Housing Authority (FHA), which created standardized construction styles and methods for affordable single-family homes throughout the United States.<sup>16</sup>

The FHA was an essential feature of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal legislation enacted to facilitate the construction of new homes despite the economic downfall brought about by the Great Depression. The FHA was established in 1934 under the National Housing Act to expand the possibility of homeownership for working class families in America, as well as broaden the availability of mortgages and stimulate home construction. As a result of the FHA, home building began to increase across the country. In addition to new neighborhood layouts, new housing styles also emerged and rose in popularity. One of these styles served as simplified form that was known as Minimal Traditional. The influence of this style in single-family homes also began to manifest itself in the form of Minimal Traditional style bungalow courts. Minimal Traditional style homes and bungalow courts were more modern and streamlined than their earlier counterparts. They were typically one-story in height and featured minimal decorative elements such as simple wooden trim work and metal or wooden porch posts. Though they had minimal details and decoration, they still possessed a comfortable and traditional feel, with all the necessary amenities to satisfy the average middle-class resident.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Page & Turnbull, *Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement*. 44-45.; "City Zoning Task is Completed by Action on 13 Lots," *San Diego Union*, 13 November 1935.

<sup>15</sup> Historic Resources Group, *North Park Community Plan Area*, A-31.; Page & Turnbull, *Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement*, 45.

<sup>16</sup> Historic Resources Group, *North Park Community Plan Area*, A-31.; Page & Turnbull, *Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement*, 44-45.

<sup>17</sup> Melissa Stegman, "Federal Housing Administration," National Low Income Housing Coalition, April 25, 2025, [https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/AG-2021/05-01\\_FHA.pdf](https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/AG-2021/05-01_FHA.pdf).

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During World War II, the City's intensification of military activity and wartime production propelled it out of the Great Depression and into a new period of growth and development. However, this surge in production and population created a new citywide housing shortage. As a result, some bungalow courts were constructed in remaining vacant lots or utilized as infill construction on lots with existing housing. New bungalow courts sometimes replaced existing building stock in established neighborhoods that had lots with older, smaller houses that did not maximize lot coverage.<sup>18</sup>

In 1941, the City's first highway was constructed, and the popularity of the automobile initiated the decline of the streetcar system, which ultimately ceased in 1949.<sup>19</sup> All new housing developments after this time were located on former agricultural land farther from downtown, and consisted of single-family homes. Few bungalow courts were constructed in the 1940s and 1950s. The few that were constructed largely served as infill construction within established neighborhoods and were designed in popular architectural styles like Minimal Traditional and Ranch.<sup>20</sup> Examples of these later bungalow courts include 1281 Robinson Avenue in Hillcrest, 4030-4040 Iowa Street in North Park, and 2002-2008 30<sup>th</sup> Street in Golden Hill. By 1960, the City enacted its first off-street parking requirement for housing in R-4 zones. This mandated that newly constructed apartments provide one off-street parking space for each unit. This was the final marker of the end of the construction of bungalow courts, as they became functionally and economically obsolete to construct.<sup>21</sup>

### Characteristics of Bungalow Courts in San Diego

Early bungalow courts in the City were predominately architect-designed, but in the mid-1920s and later, builder-designed examples also emerged. Architect-designed examples often included more elaborate features, increased ornamentation, and had more complex designs. Whereas builder-designed examples contained more uniformity and standardization, lacked ornamentation, and were more simplistically designed. Regardless of being builder or architect designed, the architectural styles of bungalow courts typically reflected popular styles of the time period. As such there is a range of styles throughout the City such as Craftsman, Spanish Colonial Revival, Mission Revival, Pueblo Revival, Minimal Traditional, and Ranch with some present but less common styles also including Streamline Moderne and Tudor Revival.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to architectural styles, bungalow courts are also identifiable by their plans and configurations. The most popular and common bungalow court plan is the U-shaped plan. Courts with wide U-plans contain large open and centralized courtyards, while courts with narrow U-shaped plans contain only a walkway with minimal landscape features. Open plans were also common, with parallel rows of units and

<sup>18</sup> Historic Resources Group, *Uptown Community Plan Area*, A-17 to A-18.; Page & Turnbull, *Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement*, 46-47.

<sup>19</sup> Historic Resources Group, *North Park Community Plan Area*, 16.; Page & Turnbull, *Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement*, 47.

<sup>20</sup> Page & Turnbull, *Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement*, 48-50.

<sup>21</sup> Page & Turnbull, *Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement*, 50.; "R-4 Off-Street Parking Rules to Start July 1," *San Diego Union*, 18 June 1961.

<sup>22</sup> Page & Turnbull, *Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement*, 33.

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no building at the rear, both in narrow and wide layouts.<sup>23</sup>

The most notable bungalow courts have a clearly defined plan and architectural cohesion amongst all buildings. The units making up the court could be detached single-standalone units, like miniature houses, semi-detached double units (duplexes), or attached units with more than two units attached in a linear configuration. The most unifying factors of the bungalow court property type is that they are typically one-story in height and oriented to face a communal space at the center.<sup>24</sup>

Another popular form of bungalow courts that were typically constructed on smaller lots are half courts. These are characterized by a single-linear row or sometimes L-shaped arrangement of detached, semi-detached, or attached units appearing as a half bungalow court constructed on a single parcel. These half courts maintain orientation toward a single walkway or communal space, as if there was another row of units on the opposing side, completing the court. Occasionally, “expanded bungalow courts” were constructed which included two full courts, or one well-defined full court and a half court. These expanded bungalow courts were constructed on large, combined lots, and were unified by their consistent architectural style and repetitive features. An example of an expanded court is located at 1726-1748 290<sup>th</sup> Street in South Park.<sup>25</sup>

Most early examples of bungalow courts did not include parking, as they were specifically constructed in areas with access to streetcar lines. Parking was sometimes included as a small parking area or row of garages along a rear of side alleyway. Some bungalow courts built into slopes within the City featured integrated garages at the street level, with the units above accessed via ascending staircases.<sup>26</sup>

**Conclusion**

In summation, the majority of bungalow courts were constructed in San Diego between 1920 and 1949 as a desirable, multi-family property type identified by its concentration around a shared open space and connection to the street and public transportation. Bungalow courts are present in a variety of arrangements in the City, including full bungalow courts, half bungalow courts, and bungalow court complexes. This property type was constructed throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to address housing shortages during periods of population growth throughout the City. They were most commonly concentrated in neighborhoods near the downtown core and streetcar suburbs, as well as early coastal communities. Bungalow courts were designed in a variety of architectural styles popular during their period of construction, such as Craftsman, Spanish Colonial Revival, and Minimal Traditional. By 1960, the construction of bungalow courts became obsolete due to changes in zoning laws, the closure of the streetcars, and increased automobile reliance.

<sup>23</sup> Page & Turnbull, *Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement*, 33-34.

<sup>24</sup> Page & Turnbull, *Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement*, 33-34.

<sup>25</sup> Page & Turnbull, *Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement*, 34.

<sup>26</sup> SurveyLA, “Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement,” 50.; Page & Turnbull, *Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement*, 34-35.

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**Section F. Associated Property Types**

The purpose of this section is to assist with the identification and evaluation of bungalow court properties within San Diego. The Associated Property Types identified in this section are those that are eligible under NRHP Criterion C. Eligible properties under Criterion C are properties “that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that 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”.<sup>27</sup> The parameters for the associated property types were established by the City of San Diego Bungalow Court and Apartment Court Historic Context Statement with supplemental information taken from the Historic Resources of Pasadena (Partial Inventory: Bungalow Courts) Multiple Property Documentation Form. Registration requirements for San Diego bungalow courts are discussed below.<sup>28</sup>

Bungalow Courts

The period of significance for eligible bungalow courts constructed in San Diego under this MPDF is 1920 to 1949. Bungalow courts consist of multiple buildings arranged around a central common open space known as a court. This central common area features landscaping and walkways. Plan organization of the courts typically features a U-shaped plan (full court), L-shaped court, or a single row of bungalows (half court). U-shaped courts can have two different variations, enclosed or open. Enclosed courts have a building at the rear, creating a sense of enclosure on three sides to form a full courtyard space, but still provide access to the street. Open courts do not have a building at their terminus and instead have two rows of bungalows facing each other across the walkway, without a building at the end to create a sense of enclosure. In addition, some bungalow courts were designed as bungalow court complexes, meaning they feature two of these plans in their design. For example, they may have two U-shaped courts situated directly next to each other on one large lot, forming two individual courts functioning as one bungalow court complex. In addition, some examples maybe have a full U-shaped court with an adjacent half court which created a full complex.

Bungalow courts can be wide or narrow in plan. Wide variations are situated on double or triple lots with a central walkway and substantial green space on either side of the walkway, forming small yards in front of each bungalow. Narrow variations are typically situated on a single lot and contain a walkway and a small amount of landscaping or green space between the bungalows.

The bungalows that make up a bungalow court can either be detached (standalone unit), semi-detached (duplex style units), or attached. The bungalows are typically one story in height, with enclosed courts

<sup>27</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, “National Register Bulletin #15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” 17-20.

<sup>28</sup> San Diego, City of. “Bungalow Court and Apartment Court Historic Context Statement.” September 2021. Prepared by Page & Turnbull for the City of San Diego Planning Department, San Diego, CA.; Pasadena Heritage. “Historic Resources Oof Pasadena (Partial Inventory: Bungalow Courts)”, Multiple Property Documentation Form, July 1981.

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including a two-story building at the rear of the court.

While garages were a common feature of some bungalow courts, they are typically inconsistent and not considered a character-defining feature of the property type. If there are garages present, they were typically located at the rear of the property and accessed by a service alley. Some examples of bungalow courts built into a hilly landscape contain a set of garages at the street level, with the bungalow court above. Though less common, there are some examples of bungalow courts with driveways as a central feature of the court. There is significant variation in how garages were incorporated into bungalow courts. Some courts had one garage for each residence, while others had only a few garages for all the residents, or no garages.

Bungalow courts were designed in a variety of architectural styles typically reflected popular styles of the time. These included Craftsman, Spanish Colonial Revival, Mission Revival, Pueblo Revival, Egyptian Revival, Minimal Traditional, and Ranch. Regardless of architectural style, bungalow courts emphasized maintaining elements of single-family homes, such as small porches and patios, and heavily landscaped areas around the base of the bungalows and throughout the shared spaces and courtyards. Bungalow courts typically exhibit repetition and symmetry in their design and features. Features consistent throughout a court include roof forms, exterior materials, fenestration organization, window types and materials, entry doors, and applied ornamentation.

**Significance**

San Diego bungalow courts are most likely to be found eligible under the following criterion:

*NRHP Criterion C*

Bungalow courts in San Diego may be significant under Criterion C because they are properties “that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that 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”.<sup>29</sup> Eligible bungalow courts must embody the distinctive characteristics of the bungalow court property type such as overall form, arrangement, and orientation. In general, primary character defining features of a bungalow court include the following: one-story residential units, central communal space that is open to the street, and individual entryways fronting communal spaces. Eligible bungalow courts may be enclosed or open but must present as one of the two distinct plans seen in San Diego: U-shaped plans (full courts) and L-shaped court or a single row of bungalows (half courts). Eligible bungalow courts may also be expanded courts which include two full courts, or one well-defined full court and a half court with architectural cohesion. In addition to the overall arrangement of the plan, bungalow courts could be wide or narrow. Wide courts featured a center walkway with substantial green space and landscaping on either side, while narrow courts feature just a walkway and minimal landscaping. The units in a bungalow court can also vary in design and can be detached,

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, “National Register Bulletin #15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” 17.

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semi-detached, attached, or a combination of these types within one court.

To be eligible under Criterion C, bungalow courts must also reflect a popular architectural style of the time in which they were built and possess those repetitive style characteristics throughout the court. The most common architectural styles for bungalow courts in San Diego are Craftsman, Spanish Colonial Revival, Mission Revival, Pueblo Revival, Egyptian Revival, Minimal Traditional, and Ranch. Eligible bungalow courts exhibiting one of these styles will exhibit the style throughout all the units and have consistency in character-defining features. While not essential to significance, eligible bungalow courts may also represent the work of a master builder, designer, architect, landscape architect, and/or craftsman.

**Registration Requirements**

To meet eligibility requirements for inclusion in the NRHP, a bungalow court must meet the requirements of Criterion C for its cohesive architectural style and expression of the bungalow court property type.

Eligibility requirements for Criterion C, entail embodying “the distinct characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that 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.”<sup>30</sup> Bungalow courts must embody a clear and cohesive architectural style that reflects the time period in which the court was constructed. They must also retain character defining features of the bungalow court property type, such as organizational and plan. Architectural styles for bungalow courts must also be a good representation of an architectural style to be eligible under this criterion.

To be considered eligible, bungalow courts must maintain sufficient integrity to represent the property type, architectural style, and period of significance (1920-1949). Details of each of the seven aspects of integrity are provided below:

- Location: The property must be situated in its historic location.
- Design: Each property should retain the distinct and original elements of the bungalow court property type, including plan, number of units, inclusion of detached, semi-detached, attached units, organization around communal space, and access to the street. The bungalow court must also retain character defining features of an architectural style.
- Setting: The property must be situated in a historically residential neighborhood that is still primarily residential, though some aspects may have changed over time due to the removal of streetcar lines to include more commercial development.
- Materials: Each property should maintain the majority of its original building materials. Common materials found in a variety of bungalow courts will include wood windows, stucco or wood siding exteriors, and wood entry doors.

<sup>30</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, “National Register Bulletin #15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” 17.

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- **Workmanship:** Each property should retain original workmanship and detailing to the period of significance. Alterations that remove or detract from original workmanship may compromise a bungalow court's integrity to the point that it is no longer considered eligible for designation.
- **Feeling:** Each property should clearly convey its sense of time and place from the period of significance. It should maintain important spatial elements and organizational aspects that characterize it as a bungalow court property type. It should also maintain cohesive architecture features that unify it as one distinct property.
- **Association:** The property must retain its association with historical residential development patterns in the City of San Diego.

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**Section G. Geographical Data**

The geographical area covered by this MPDF is limited to the city limits of San Diego and along original streetcar lines. Concentrations of intact bungalow courts are located in the following Community Planning Areas: North Park, Uptown, City Heights, Golden Hill, Normal Heights, Ocean Beach, and Kensington-Talmadge

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**Section H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods**

The MPDF was prepared by South Environmental Architectural Historians Marlena Krcelich, BA, and Principal Architectural Historian Sarah Corder, MFA. The Bungalow Courts and Apartment Courts Historic Context Statement prepared for the City of San Diego in 2021 served as a foundational document for this MPDF. While the 2021 study served as a baseline, additional archival research was conducted that included Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, United States Census records, City Directories, and newspapers. Many of these sources are available online for cities and counties throughout the state. Research materials were also provided by the University Heights Historical Society that aided in the identification of potential properties for inclusion in the MPDF.

The associated property types identified as part of the MPDF are a result of limited field survey and research by the University Heights Historical Society. While the previous studies and the research conducted as part of this MPDF identified over 400 bungalow courts, many do not rise to the level of integrity required for inclusion in the NRHP.

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**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1: 60-100 hours (generally existing multiple property submissions by paid consultants and by Maine State Historic Preservation staff for in-house, individual nomination preparation)
- Tier 2: 120 hours (generally individual nominations by paid consultants)
- Tier 3: 230 hours (generally new district nominations by paid consultants)
- Tier 4: 280 hours (generally newly proposed MPS cover documents by paid consultants).

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