

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

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Hotel Mayfair DRAFT

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 1256 West 7th Street

City or town: Los Angeles State: CA County: Los Angeles

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B ___C ___D

<p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	
<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____ Signature of commenting official:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ Title :</p>	<p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Renaissance Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, architectural terra cotta

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Hotel Mayfair is prominently located on the south side of West 7th Street between Witmer Street (formerly Stewart Street) and Hartford Avenue in the Westlake neighborhood near downtown Los Angeles, California. The building sits flush to the sidewalk on the north, east, and west, and is flanked to the south by a three-level parking structure with a swimming pool and amenities deck. The hotel was designed by the distinguished local architectural firm of Curlett & Beelman and completed in 1926. The 13-story-plus-mezzanine building is in the Renaissance Revival style and consists of a three-story-plus-mezzanine base with a square plan, supporting a nine-story tower with an L-shaped plan and a flat roof. It is of steel frame construction with concrete and hollow clay tile infill walls. The exterior walls are clad primarily in rose-colored ruffled face brick laid in Flemish bond, with decorative details of architectural terra cotta. All of the exterior terra cotta was produced by the well-known manufacturer Gladding, McBean & Company. Fenestration consists primarily of rectangular, sliding metal sash windows with fixed spandrel lights and projecting terra cotta subsills. Although there have been some alterations over time, the Hotel Mayfair retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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Narrative Description

The primary (north) and secondary (east) façades are each twelve bays wide and are symmetrically arranged, with the end bays wider than the rest and framed with pilasters that extend the full height of the building. The façades are divided horizontally into a Classical base, “shaft,” and “capital.” The base consists of the first through third floors. The first floor forms the “plinth” of the composition and is clad in banded cast concrete panels below a continuous terra cotta torus. The primary entrance is recessed in the center of the north façade and consists of a pair of fully glazed wood doors with sidelights. The entrance is sheltered by a classically detailed metal canopy with illuminated marquee suspended on decorative struts. Secondary entrances consist of pairs of fully-glazed metal doors. There are large rectangular steel-sash fixed windows at the ground floor on the east façade.

The mezzanine,¹ second, and third stories are completely clad in architectural terra cotta made to resemble rusticated stone. The end bays are framed with fluted Ionic pilasters with stylized capitals, also of terra cotta, supporting a continuous terra cotta entablature. The two central windows of the mezzanine have molded architraves, open bed pediments, ornamented keystones supporting urns, and decorative metal balconettes. A continuous molded sill course runs under the second-floor windows, which have scrolled keystones above and decorative spandrel panels below; those in the end bays have terra cotta architraves, flat hoods with ancons, and semicircular corbeled balconettes with decorative parapets with patterns of urns, angels, and garlands.

The “shaft” of the composition consists of the fourth through twelfth stories. The fourth story is clad in ruffled face brick laid in Flemish bond and framed with a continuous terra cotta sill course, lintel course and molded stringcourse. The fourth-floor windows in each end bay have terra cotta architraves, ornamented keystones, and segmental pediments. The fifth through twelfth floors are clad in ruffled face brick laid in Flemish bond. The fifth story windows have a continuous terra cotta sill course. There is a terra cotta balcony under the six central seventh-floor windows on the north and east façades. The balcony has a rusticated parapet with a molded rail and recessed circular bas-relief medallions, fluted pedestals, and scrolled brackets. Fenestration consists of rectangular, horizontal-sliding metal sash windows with fixed spandrel lights and projecting terra cotta subsills.

The thirteenth floor forms the “capital” of the composition and is completely clad in architectural terra cotta; it is separated from the twelfth floor by a molded string course. The windows are separated by decorative panels and have a continuous sill course, spandrel panels with recessed bas-relief medallions, molded imposts and architraves, scrolled keystones, and decorative bas-reliefs in the semicircular tympana. There is a balcony with terra cotta balustrade and scrolled brackets under the six central windows. The end bays are flanked by rusticated pilasters. The windows in the end bays are framed by Tuscan pilasters supporting open bed pediments with decorative bas-reliefs in the tympana. They have balconettes with paneled parapets, molded rails, and scrolled brackets. The thirteenth floor is topped with continuous dentil and egg-and-dart moldings, and a wide, bracketed copper cornice. There is a metal flagpole mounted on the roof above the cornice.

The building’s west façade is asymmetrically composed but has features and finishes similar to those on the north and east façades. The rear (south and west) façades of the tower are clad in ruffled face brick laid in Flemish bond and are unadorned save for simple band courses above and below the thirteenth-floor windows.

¹ The mezzanine is considered an extension of the first floor.

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The interior of the Mayfair Hotel is organized around the ground-floor lobby which retains its location, configuration, and double-height volume. The lobby has a floor of tessellated pink and gray marble. It is flanked by double-height arcades that open to the reception desk, first-floor public rooms, circulation, and office spaces, as well as to the mezzanine above. The piers of the arcades are faced with paired pilasters with stylized capitals featuring a design of scrolls, honeysuckle, urns, and fretwork supporting an entablature with a decorative frieze. The sides of the piers have smaller, fluted pilasters supporting a stylized Doric frieze with modified triglyphs and metopes, and a plain parapet at the mezzanine level. A row of full-height, square fluted columns with stylized capitals extends along the center of the lobby. The south wall of the lobby, which originally featured a decorative mantel, now opens to a bar and lounge which occupy the former kitchen space. Opening off of the lobby through the west arcade is a restaurant, kitchen, and public restrooms, occupying the former lounges, reception desk, beauty parlor, and barber shop. Through the east arcade is the reception desk and elevator lobby which is finished in wood paneling. Beyond the elevators are a retail space, occupying the former coffee shop, and a writing room and sun room, occupying the former dining room.

At the mezzanine level, circulation spaces surround the upper portion of the lobby. The elevators on the mezzanine retain their original decorative wood surrounds. The west portion of the mezzanine is occupied by a bar, private dining room, and kitchen; the south portion by an atrium lounge; and the west portion by meeting rooms and public restrooms. A ballroom space is located at the southwest corner of the second story. It is a large rectangular volume that extends through three floors. The ballroom was gutted by fire in 1969 and was not refinished until the recent rehabilitation project. It has wood flooring, painted brick masonry walls, and exposed wood roof framing. A prep kitchen is located to the south of the ballroom space.

The second through thirteenth stories contain the hotel's guestrooms. These floors retain the historic circulation pattern and overall configuration of spaces. They are composed of double-loaded corridors flanked by guestrooms. The hotel contains approximately the same number of guestrooms as it did originally. The rooms retain their original square footage and overall configuration, and each room includes a private bathroom. The features and finishes in the rooms have been altered over time.

Alterations

The Hotel Mayfair has undergone a number of exterior alterations. The marble panels that originally clad the first-story walls were removed in 1952 and subsequently replaced with cast concrete panels. The first-floor window openings on the north and west façades were filled and those on the east façade altered. All windows and exterior doors were replaced. All lighting fixtures, and the translucent panels in the illuminated marquee, were replaced. The rooftop neon sign, terra cotta finials on the seventh-floor balconies, and fire escapes on the north façade were removed. A parking structure was added to the south of the hotel in 1966.

Interior alterations include replacement of main lobby flooring, skylights, and mezzanine parapet; over-painting of main lobby decorative ceiling; removal of the lobby's south wall; removal of front desk with decorative metal grilles; expansion of the mezzanine into the former dining room and lounge, which were originally double-height spaces; reconfiguration of other public and secondary spaces; and replacement of original fixtures and finishes in the guestrooms and hallways.

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From 2014 to 2019 the Hotel Mayfair was rehabilitated in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The work included the replacement of incompatible storefront openings on the ground floor with new steel-sash windows that recall the design and configuration of the originals; replacement of the entrance doors with new compatible doors; rehabilitation of the historic awning and marquee; reconstruction of the original neon rooftop signage; removal of the added carpet and marble tile flooring in the lobby and restoration of the underlying historic tessellated floor; restoration of the lobby columns, arcades, pilasters, and entablatures; installation of new finishes, fixtures, fittings, and furnishings in all guest rooms; structural upgrades; and installation of new mechanical, plumbing, and electrical systems to meet current code and use requirements. The National Park Service reviewed the Historic Preservation Certification Application Part 3 – Request for Certification of Completed Work and on June 8, 2020 determined that the completed rehabilitation meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Character-defining Features

The Hotel Mayfair retains significant character-defining features of its original Renaissance Revival design, including:

- square base supporting L-shaped tower;
- 13-story-plus-mezzanine height;
- symmetrical composition of north and east façades and horizontal division into “base,” “shaft,” and “capital”;
- exterior cladding of rose-colored ruffled face brick laid in Flemish bond;
- architectural terra cotta details by Gladding-McBean including rusticated cladding, pilasters, entablatures, pediments, string and sill courses, molded architraves, keystones, brackets, balconies, balustrades, and decorative panels;
- bracketed copper cornice;
- fenestration pattern;
- decorative metal entrance canopy with illuminated marquee;
- main lobby location, configuration, and double-height volume;
- main lobby arcades, pilasters, and entablatures;
- main lobby square fluted columns;
- main lobby tessellated marble floor;
- decorative wood surrounds at the elevator doors on the mezzanine level;
- ballroom location and configuration; and
- double-loaded corridors flanked by guestrooms with private baths on the upper floors.

Integrity

Although there have been alterations to the property over time, the Hotel Mayfair retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance:

Location: The building remains on its original site and therefore retains integrity of location.

Design: The Hotel Mayfair retains significant character-defining features of its original Renaissance Revival design, including its rectilinear massing, Classical articulation, symmetrical façades, ruffled face brick exterior cladding, architectural terra cotta details, metal entrance canopy and marquee,

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fenestration pattern, copper cornice, and double-height lobby with marble floor, arcades, columns, pilasters, and entablatures. It therefore retains integrity of design.

Setting: At the time of its construction in 1926 the 13-story Hotel Mayfair visually dominated the low-scale Westlake neighborhood of one- and two-story residential and commercial buildings. In later years, particularly in the decades after the Second World War, the area was altered with the construction of a number of taller, denser projects. Although the property's setting has been altered, several low-rise structures remain in the immediate vicinity, and the Hotel Mayfair retains its original visual prominence in the neighborhood. It therefore retains integrity of setting.

The Hotel Mayfair is located in a densely developed urban environment in the Westlake neighborhood adjacent to downtown Los Angeles. The relationship of the building to its surrounding remains intact, and it therefore retains integrity of setting.

Materials: Although there have been some alterations over time, the Hotel Mayfair retains the majority of its historic materials including rose-colored ruffled brick, architectural terra cotta, copper cornice, metal entrance canopy, tessellated marble flooring, and cast plaster interior columns, arcades, pilasters, and entablatures. It retains integrity of materials.

Workmanship: The Hotel Mayfair retains the physical evidence of early 20th century construction techniques, including Flemish bond brick cladding, architectural terra cotta by Gladding-McBean, cast copper cornice, decorative metal entrance canopy, tessellated marble flooring, and interior cast plaster Classical details. It therefore retains integrity of workmanship.

Feeling: The Hotel Mayfair retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship. It therefore retains the significant physical features that convey the building's character and express the aesthetic and historic sense of a 1920s Renaissance Revival hotel building in the Westlake neighborhood of Los Angeles. It retains integrity of feeling.

Association: The Hotel Mayfair retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling. It thus retains the essential physical features that made up its character and appearance as a prominent commercial hotel constructed during the significant period of commercial development in Westlake in the 1920s and 1930s. The property therefore retains integrity of association.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce

Architecture

Period of Significance

1926-1945

Significant Dates

1926

1945

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Curlett, Alexander

Beelman, Claud

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Hotel Mayfair is significant in the areas of Commerce and Architecture, and it is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criteria A and C. It is eligible under Criterion A as an excellent and prominent example of commercial hotel development in the Westlake district of Los Angeles in the 1920s and 1930s. During this period, Westlake became one of the important centers for the construction of commercial hotels in the city, which was a marked departure from earlier periods that focused commercial development in downtown Los Angeles. It is an early example of a hotel that provided ample accommodations for the automobile, reflecting the rapidly developing car culture in Los Angeles at that time. The period of significance under Criterion A is 1926-1945, reflecting the original construction of the hotel through the end of World War II, when Westlake began to decline as an important commercial center.

The Hotel Mayfair is eligible under Criterion C as an excellent local example of Renaissance Revival commercial architecture by the distinguished local architectural firm of Curlett & Beelman. The period of significance is 1926, reflecting the date that construction was completed.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A

Development History of Westlake

The Hotel Mayfair is significant under Criterion A as an excellent and prominent example of an early twentieth century commercial hotel located in the Westlake area of Los Angeles. The Hotel Mayfair represents an important trend in commercial development starting in the 1920s, when Westlake became a center for the construction of commercial hotels. Developers were looking beyond downtown Los Angeles for the construction of commercial properties, and Westlake was ideal in terms of proximity to downtown while providing views of the city beyond, which featured heavily in marketing materials for area hotels.

The Westlake area of Los Angeles is located immediately west of downtown. It contains some of the oldest residential and commercial development in the city. In the late nineteenth century, the area was largely residential in character, and it had a reputation as an affluent and desirable neighborhood. The area's ample parkland and improvements in transportation and infrastructure helped draw people westward. The introduction of electric streetcar lines in the 1880s and 1890s provided easy access to the downtown commercial core and made the development of residential neighborhoods in outlying areas to the west possible. During this period, Westlake was traversed by numerous streetcar lines on most of its major roadways.

The early development of Westlake was influenced by the discovery of oil in 1892. Edward Laurence Doheny identified the first oil deposits in the city near the base of Crown Hill and later drilled the first successful oil well in Los Angeles. Along with his business partner, Charles A. Canfield, Doheny established the Los Angeles City Oil Field, which stretched across Westlake and grew to include 80 wells in the first two years of operation. By 1898, The Los Angeles City Oil Field accounted for 65 percent of

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the oil production in California. By the end of the nineteenth century, the field was the largest producer in the world and would become the most influential in the history of California.² Doheny and Canfield's success sparked the petroleum boom which helped fuel much of the early development of Los Angeles, and derricks sprang up throughout the surrounding residential neighborhoods. In the twentieth century, the film industry played an important role in the development of Westlake. In the 1910s, actor Hobart Bosworth established Occidental Studios at 201 North Occidental Boulevard. The studio hosted such pioneering early filmmakers as Cecil B. DeMille and D. W. Griffith. The facility remains one of the oldest continuously operating studios in Los Angeles today.

By the turn of the twentieth century, prosperity from these early industries attracted newly wealthy residents from the emerging service and creative industries.³ As residents flocked to Westlake, the demand for housing necessitated greater density in residential development, and Westlake contains one of the largest concentrations of early twentieth century multi-family residential development in the city. To accommodate the more transient culture of the less established industries as well as to house tourists, a proliferation of one-story bungalow courts, brick apartment houses, and luxury apartment hotels were developed.

In the book, *Historic Hotels of Los Angeles and Hollywood*, Westlake is identified as one of five important Los Angeles neighborhoods for hotel development in the early twentieth century.⁴ Due to increasing property values downtown, exclusive hotel and apartment complexes were built in Westlake Park beginning in 1902. The development of the automobile made the location even more viable and a second, more elaborate period of hotel development in the Westlake area occurred between 1925 and 1929. Significant examples of Westlake Park hotels from this period include the Hotel Saint Paul (1927, demolished), the William Penn Hotel (1927), the Victoria Arms Hotel Apartments (1924), the Asbury Hotel (1925), the Hotel Mayfair, and the Arcady Apartment Hotel (1927). The Asbury, Mayfair, and Arcady were characterized by their 13-stories and dominant presence in the landscape. Hotel development subsequently followed the development of Wilshire Boulevard westward through Beverly Hills.

Westlake remained a prominent residential and commercial enclave through the 1930s. There was little development during World War II, but the years following the war brought significant changes to the area. The widening of Wilshire and Olympic Boulevards, completed in the 1930s and 1940s, shifted development on the two major thoroughfares from largely residential uses to more commercial construction. Adjacent segments of the Hollywood (101) and the Harbor (110) Freeways were completed in the 1950s, allowing Angelenos to bypass Westlake in favor of communities further west. The residential neighborhoods were no longer prestigious addresses desired by upscale residents, and several prominent early residences were demolished during this period. Postwar commercial development consisted of the construction of several new corporate and industrial headquarters designed by prominent Southern California architectural firms, such as Welton Becket & Associates, Pereira & Luckman, and A. C. Martin & Associates. These new corporate buildings did little to halt the area's overall decline, and by the late 1960s, Westlake suffered from an aging infrastructure, widespread neglect, and private disinvestment.

² Stephen M. Testa, "The Los Angeles City Oil Field: California's First Oil Boom During the Revitalization Period (1875-1900)," <http://www.aegsc.org/chapters/inlandempire/pdf/LOS%20ANGELES%20CITY%20OIL%20FIELD.pdf> (accessed November 2013).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ruth Wallach, Linda McCann, Dace Taube, Claude Zachary, Curtis C. Rosenman, *Historic Hotels of Los Angeles and Hollywood*, Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2008.

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Development History of the Hotel Mayfair

The Hotel Mayfair was developed by the Sun Realty Corporation. Organized in 1921, the president of the company was Isador Eisner and the board “included many of the most prominent bankers and financiers in Los Angeles including Marco Hellman, Leo Jacoby, Victor Rosetti, and Ben Meyer.”⁵ In 1926, Sun Realty reported net annual earnings of over \$300,000 and concurrent investments of over \$5 million in the development of the Hotel Mayfair (1926), Roosevelt Building (Curllett & Beelman, 1926), and Chester Williams Building (Curllett & Beelman, 1926).⁶

The \$2.5 million Hotel Mayfair opened its doors on February 1, 1927 to much fanfare.⁷ Designed as a “tourist and residential hotel,”⁸ it featured 350 rooms and thirty-six “super suites,”⁹ each with private bath and views from every room. As a stand-alone location just outside the congested center of downtown, the hotel “...commanded unusually beautiful views of the city, the mountains and Hollywood.”¹⁰ An unusual feature for a “downtown” hotel, the Hotel Mayfair offered a garage that could accommodate over 200 cars as an amenity for its guests. The garage was located at 715 Stewart Street,¹¹ and was a clear acknowledgement of the fashion and dominance of the car culture in Los Angeles in the 1920s.

The interior included luxurious, “club-like” Georgian style features, in the spirit of designer Robert Adam.¹² The main lounge, dining room (a.k.a., The Wedgewood Room), Elizabethan ladies lounge, mezzanine lounge, and coffee shop all drew direct inspiration from historic British interior designs of the 1770s.¹³ The original “Rainbow Isle” supper room on the hotel’s third floor was designed by noted industrial and interior designer Kem Weber (1889-1963). Weber held the title of Art Director with Barker Brothers furniture at the time.¹⁴ Art Deco in design, Weber described the Rainbow Isle room as “American jazz music translated into form, color and design.”¹⁵ Its most distinctive feature was the unique “futuristic” mirrored dance floor that “...flashes a thousand and one gleaming lights in its gold and silver blocks—a veritable rainbow isle with its brilliant refracted colors.”¹⁶ The Mayfair also featured the first use of neon lights as interior illumination in America.¹⁷

From the day it opened, the Hotel Mayfair was operated as both a residential and tourist hotel. A review of City Directories from 1929 shows the building was home to ten full-time residents, the

⁵ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Roosevelt Building, 2007, section 8 page 1.

⁶ “Earnings of Sun Realty Announced,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 10, 1926, A9.

⁷ “Structure Enhances City’s Charm,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 31, 1927, 9.

⁸ “New Hostelry Going Up,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 26, 1926, E3.

⁹ “New Hostelry Commands View of the City,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 31, 1927, 9.

¹⁰ “New Hostelry Commands View of the City,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 31, 1927, 9.

¹¹ Los Angeles City Directory, 1929. Stewart Street was renamed Witmer Street in the mid-1930s. The parking garage is extant but is located on a separate parcel under separate ownership.

¹² According to the Victoria and Albert Museum, Robert Adam (1728-92) was one of the most important British architects working in the Neoclassical style. He incorporated design elements from ancient Greece and Rome into his forms and decorations. The Adam style or Adamesque was influenced by classical design but did not follow Roman architectural rules as strictly as Palladianism.

¹³ “New Hostelry Commands View of the City,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 31, 1927, 9.

¹⁴ Barker Brothers provided all of the custom-built furniture for the Hotel Mayfair.

¹⁵ Noted architectural historian and author David Gebhard refers to Weber’s designs as “zig-zag moderne” directly inspired by the Zigzag Parisian Moderne. Weber’s design for the Rainbow Isle was among the first he attempted after a trip to Paris in 1926. *Kem Weber: The Moderne in Southern California*, 39.

¹⁶ “New Hostelry Commands View of the City,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 31, 1927, 9.

¹⁷ Ibid.

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majority of whom held upscale professions: real estate, physicians, and management and sales of manufactured goods. By 1938, fourteen full-time residents were listed, the majority of whom held positions in retail, as school teachers, or at public utilities. By 1942, of the twenty-four full-time residents listed, the majority were women – a reflection of draft and deployment of the nation’s men to World War II. Throughout its history, the hotel was home to a variety of civic, professional, and community group events, along with limited convention business.

Not long after its opening, the Hotel Mayfair underwent the first of several transfers of management and ownership. In June 1927, management of the hotel passed from noted hotelier J.J. Hernan to Roy Cummings who managed other hotels in the area.¹⁸ The lease was passed from Cummings to Thomas E. Hull in October of 1932, likely as the result of the Great Depression.¹⁹ Hull, a hotelier from San Francisco, managed to restore the financial health of the hotel within sixteen months.²⁰ By 1938, the Mayfair Investment Company was formed and purchased the Hotel Mayfair from the Sun Realty Company. The new owners spent \$400,000 modernizing the hotel and installing new fixtures.²¹ With each sale, the hotel underwent changes and improvements. In 1949, it was sold to the California Western Hotel Co, Inc., whose investors included owners of the Sir Francis Drake and St. Francis hotels in San Francisco. In 1965, the Hotel Mayfair leased to new operators, Pacific Hosts.²² In 1969, there was a fire in the hotel, and by 1970, the owner was in default. There were several other owners in the late twentieth century; it was purchased by the current owner in 2012.

The Hotel Mayfair represents an important pattern of commercial development in early twentieth century Los Angeles, when the Westlake neighborhood became a significant center for the construction of hotels. Commercial development, particularly of hotels, was expanding beyond downtown Los Angeles during this period. Offering lush interiors and views of the Southern California landscape, these hotels epitomize California boosterism and represent the massive growth in the city in the 1920s. The Hotel Mayfair was a prominent example of this development pattern, and retains a majority of character-defining features from the period.

Criterion C

Renaissance Revival Architecture

The Hotel Mayfair is significant under Criterion C as an excellent local example of Renaissance Revival commercial architecture by the noted firm of Curlett & Beelman. The Renaissance Revival style was based upon the classically inspired architecture developed in Italy during the artistic, architectural, and literary movement of the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries that was spurred by the rebirth of interest in the ideals and achievements of imperial Rome. Italian Renaissance architecture was familiar to late nineteenth century American architects who were trained at the *École des Beaux Arts*, and the style was first interpreted for monumental, elaborately decorated public buildings such as the Boston Public Library (McKim, Mead, and White, 1887) and lavish mansions such as the Breakers (Richard Morris Hunt, 1893), the Vanderbilt “summer cottage” in Newport, Rhode Island. By the early twentieth century, a more restrained, literal interpretation of the style developed as a larger number of American architects, as well as their clients, visited Italy and thus

¹⁸ “New Head for Hotel Mayfair,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 1, 1927, A1.

¹⁹ “Lease Revival Hits Climax as Height Limit Unit Turned,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 2, 1932, 17.

²⁰ “Roosevelt Hotel Deal Announced,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 25, 1934, A10.

²¹ “Mayfair Hotel Changes Hands for \$2,000,000,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 22, 1949.

²² “Mayfair Hotel Leased,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 6, 1965, A7.

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gained first-hand knowledge of original examples of Italian Renaissance architecture. This knowledge was further disseminated through extensive photographic documentation.

In Los Angeles, the Renaissance Revival style was typically applied to commercial blocks. Commonly used during the first quarter of the twentieth century and peaking in popularity in Los Angeles during the 1920s, this style created simple rectangular volumes that allowed for ease of construction and maximum floor area ratio. The nod to classicism also evoked a sense of permanence in a rapidly growing and developing city. Renaissance Revival buildings are loosely based on the Italian Renaissance palazzo. The palazzo was typically arranged in three horizontal divisions of a “basement” (ground floor) with rusticated or smooth stone, “*piano nobile*” (main floor) and “attic” with ornate features crowned by a cornice. Other features include formal, usually symmetrical façades with recessed entrances, open loggias, and restrained use of classical details including quoins, roofline balustrades, pedimented windows, molded cornices and stringcourses, and rusticated stone work.

The Hotel Mayfair is an excellent and prominent local example of the style. It exhibits significant character-defining features of Renaissance Revival architecture, including:

- Symmetrical primary façade
- Tripartite horizontal arrangement
- Rectangular plan and formal composition
- Decorative cornice
- Exterior masonry walls
- Arched window and door openings, especially at the first floor
- Pedimented windows
- Decorative cast stone classical details including quoins, entablatures, stringcourses, pediments, architraves, and cornices

Curlett & Beelman, Architects

The Hotel Mayfair is a prominent example of the work of the distinguished local architectural firm of Curlett & Beelman. Alexander Curlett and Claud Beelman worked together from 1921-1928. During that relatively short period, they were responsible for the design of several prominent commercial buildings in Los Angeles. Their partnership benefited from a city that was growing exponentially in population²³ and was “...awash in new oil wealth and new arrivals.”²⁴ Curlett and Beelman’s work during this period was primarily characterized by commercial commissions in the Beaux Arts style. They designed and built in Los Angeles, Pasadena, Long Beach, Culver City, and Phoenix, Arizona. Their work was widely published in trade magazines such as *Architect*, *Architectural Record*, and *Western Architect*. The Hotel Mayfair was published in *Architectural Digest* in 1928, an issue devoted exclusively to the best architecture in Los Angeles.²⁵

Claud Beelman (1884-1963) was born in Bellefontaine, Ohio. He received the Harvard Scholarship from the Architectural League of America in 1905 and practiced architecture in various offices

²³ Between 1920 and 1930, the population of Los Angeles rose 136% from 577,000 to 1,238,000 people. Kevin Starr, *Material Dreams*, (New York: Oxford University Press), 87.

²⁴ George V. Credle, III, “Claud Beelman’s Corporate Modern Style 1951-1963,” (MHP thesis., School of Architecture, University of Southern California, 2012), 13.

²⁵ “Hotel Mayfair,” *Architectural Digest*, 1928, volume 6, number 4, pages 68-69.

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throughout the Midwest until 1919. He arrived in Los Angeles in 1921, obtained his license, and joined the firm of Alexander (Aleck) Curlett – whose father William Curlett had already established a significant architectural practice in the city.²⁶

Alexander Curlett (1881-1942) was born in San Francisco. Formally trained at Columbia University, he joined his father's architectural practice forming William Curlett & Son. In 1913, Alexander Curlett moved to Los Angeles to run that office. William Curlett died in 1913, but Alexander Curlett continued running the practice, designing the Hotel Congress (1919) and Rialto Theatre (1920) in Tucson, Arizona. Curlett had several contracts in place when Beelman joined him in 1921. In addition to the Hotel Mayfair, Curlett and Beelman designed several buildings for the Sun Realty Company including the Sun Drug Company Building (1923), the Roosevelt Building (1926), and the Chester Williams Building (1926).

The firm was dissolved in 1928 for unknown reasons. Beelman went on to establish a distinguished practice of his own with prominent Los Angeles commissions including the Garfield Building (1928), the Eastern Columbia Building (1931), and the Superior Oil Building (1954-55). He is increasingly recognized for his contributions to the Corporate Modern style of architecture in the post-World War II period – a skill set rooted in the successful designs of buildings for corporate and commercial clients during the 1920s.²⁷ Curlett spent the remainder of his career in public service, becoming the head of the local division of the U.S. Housing and Administration and Federal Housing Projects.

Collectively, and individually, Curlett and Beelman have a distinguished body of work. They influenced the architectural development of downtown Los Angeles during the 1920s, a pivotal period in the city's growth. They are often equated with the best architects and architectural firms in the history of Los Angeles, including Parkinson and Parkinson, Walker & Eisen, Morgan, Walls & Clements, and Albert C. Martin. The Hotel Mayfair is a prominent example of their work in Los Angeles and represents an important period of development for the city.

Gladding, McBean Tile Company

The exterior terra cotta detailing for the Hotel Mayfair was produced by the Gladding, McBean Tile Company. Gladding, McBean was established in 1874 when Charles Gladding and his two business partners, Peter McBean and George Chambers, invested \$12,000 to create a business aimed at providing vitrified sewer pipe for the booming cities in northern and southern California. The first carload of sewer pipe left the factory in August 1875, and by 1880, business was booming.²⁸ Based in the town of Lincoln, California the company soon expanded its production to include architectural terra cotta ornamentation and decorative wall tiles.

By 1900, Gladding, McBean could list over one hundred buildings using its architectural terra cotta. Nearly half were in San Francisco, but some were in cities across the west coast. After the 1906 earthquake and ensuing fire in San Francisco, the demand for fireproof building materials such as terra cotta further increased.²⁹ Word of the company's fine craftsmanship spread across the United States, increasing demand for the tiles for use in major building projects throughout the country. Gladding, McBean terra cotta ornamentation was installed in the Wrigley Building in Chicago, the

²⁶ Adapted from the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the Roosevelt Building prepared in 2007.

²⁷ George V. Credle, III, "Claud Beelman's Corporate Modern Style 1951-1963," IX.

²⁸ Finding aid, Gladding McBean and Company Archives: Job Order Documents, 1888-1966, California State Library.

²⁹ Finding aid, Gladding McBean and Company Archives: Job Order Documents, 1888-1966, California State Library.

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Warner Theater in Washington, D.C., and Carnegie Hall in New York City. In Los Angeles, the terra cotta ornamentation was installed in the Million Dollar Theater, the Bullock's-Wilshire department store, the Alexandria Hotel, and the Los Angeles City Hall. In addition, Gladding, McBean decorative wall tiles were used in Balboa Park's Persian Rug Water Fountain in San Diego, Union Station in Los Angeles, and the Santa Monica City Hall.

Until the early 1920s, Gladding, McBean manufactured all of its products from its first plant at Lincoln, California.³⁰ The company "incorporated in 1924 and [...] initiated a policy of territorial expansion."³¹ By 1925 Gladding, McBean operated ten clay products plants in California, Oregon, Washington, Montana, and British Columbia. The company utilized two hundred kilns and employed over two thousand people.³² It was the primary supplier of sewer pipes, terra cotta roof tiles, and ornamental terra cotta on the West Coast and developed a nationwide reputation for quality and innovative design.

Until the Great Depression, Gladding, McBean "enjoyed a preeminent position in the field of terra cotta ornamentation and participated in many of the premier architectural projects in the country."³³ In the 1930s, suffering from its dependence on the construction industry, the company embarked on a diversification program, introducing products such as dinnerware to their product line. "With multiple factories and product lines, Gladding, McBean was helping to industrialize the whole of the State of California."³⁴ By the late 1940s, Gladding, McBean had "run practically the entire ceramic gamut from extensions of sewer pipe to the manufacture of fine hand-painted china."³⁵ However, after World War II, fine porcelain imports from Japan became widely available, and Gladding, McBean returned its focus to industrial production of clay building materials.³⁶ By 1952, Gladding, McBean's "Hermosa real lay tile for kitchens and bathrooms [was] reportedly used in one out of every three homes on the Pacific Coast, and in some 75% of the West's commercial and industrial buildings."³⁷

In 1962, Gladding, McBean and Lock Joint Pipe Company merged to become Interpace (International Pipe and Ceramics Corporation).³⁸ The original Gladding, McBean plant in Lincoln, California was sold to Pacific Coast Building in 1976.³⁹ The plant continued to produce vitrified pipes and architectural terra cotta, making it one of the oldest continually operating ceramics factories in the United States.⁴⁰ After undergoing a series of name and ownership changes, Pacific Coast Building reinstated the original Gladding, McBean name.

³⁰ "To Meet the East," *Fortnight: The Newsmagazine of California*, vol. 6 (1), January 7, 1949, 20.

³¹ "Gladding McBean Noted for Ceramics Pioneering," *Los Angeles Times*, April 26, 1952.

³² James Elliot, "Green Valley Clay Becomes Architectural Terra Cotta." *White River Journal: A Newsletter of the White River Valley*, July 1996, 2.

³³ Finding aid, Gladding McBean and Company Archives: Job Order Documents, 1888-1966, California State Library.

³⁴ Tracy Conrad, "How the famous Gladding, McBean Tile Company made its way to Palm Springs," *Desert Sun*, November 30, 2018.

³⁵ "To Meet the East," *Fortnight: The Newsmagazine of California*, vol. 6 (1), January 7, 1949, 20.

³⁶ Tracy Conrad, "How the famous Gladding, McBean Tile Company made its way to Palm Springs," *Desert Sun*, November 30, 2018.

³⁷ "Gladding McBean Noted for Ceramics Pioneering," *Los Angeles Times*, April 26, 1952.

³⁸ Finding aid, Gladding McBean and Company Archives: Job Order Documents, 1888-1966, California State Library.

³⁹ Finding aid, Gladding McBean and Company Archives: Job Order Documents, 1888-1966, California State Library.

⁴⁰ "Gladding, McBean: Lincoln, California." *Franciscan Pottery Collector's Society of America Newsletter*, Spring 1996, 1.

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Conclusion

The Hotel Mayfair represents an important pattern of commercial development in early twentieth century Los Angeles, when the Westlake neighborhood became a significant center for the construction of hotels. Commercial development, particularly of hotels, was expanding beyond downtown Los Angeles during this period. Offering lush interiors and views of the Southern California landscape, these hotels epitomize California boosterism and represent the massive growth in the city in the 1920s. The Hotel Mayfair was a prominent example of this development pattern, and it dominated the surrounding landscape at the time of its construction. The Hotel Mayfair is significant as an excellent example of Renaissance Revival commercial architecture in Los Angeles, and as a prominent example of the work of the architectural firm Curlett & Beelman. The firm had a significant influence on the architectural landscape of Los Angeles in the 1920s, and during their brief partnership they produced notable works of commercial architecture in and around downtown. Alexander Curlett and Claud Beelman, collectively and independently, are recognized among the most prominent local architects of the early twentieth century. The Hotel Mayfair exhibits quality of design, distinctive design details, high-quality workmanship, and it retains significant character-defining features of Renaissance Revival architecture. It was recently rehabilitated as part of a Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit project; the Part 3 was approved on June 8, 2020.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register (Part 1 approved May 2014)
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property .85 Acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 34.052337 Longitude: -118.267817
2. Latitude: 34.052168 Longitude: -118.267439
3. Latitude: 34.051409 Longitude: -118.267922
4. Latitude: 34.051568 Longitude: -118.268263

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Hotel Mayfair is located at 1256 W. 7th Street in the Westlake neighborhood of the City of Los Angeles, CA. The property is bounded by 7th Street to the north, Witmer Street to the west, Hartford Avenue to the east, and an associated parking structure to the south.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries represent the historic and current boundaries of the Hotel Mayfair property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Christine Lazzaretto, Managing Principal; and John LoCascio, AIA, Principal

organization: Historic Resources Group

street & number: 12 S. Fair Oaks Avenue

city or town: Pasadena state: CA zip code: 91105

e-mail christine@historicresourcesgroup.com

telephone: 626-793-2400

date: August 18, 2020

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

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Photo Log

Name of Property: Hotel Mayfair

City or Vicinity: Los Angeles

County: Los Angeles

State: California

Photographer: Molly Iker-Johnson (Historic Resources Group)

Date Photographed: December 2019; March 2020

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

PHOTO #	DESCRIPTION/VIEW
0001	Context view of property and roof sign from 7 th Street, facing southwest.
0002	Overview of east façade, facing southwest.
0003	Overview of north (primary) façade, facing south.
0004	Overview of north and west façades, facing southeast.
0005	Overview of south façade, facing northeast.
0006	Detail of main entrance, marquee and ground floor, facing south.
0007	Detail of marquee sign on north façade, facing southwest.
0008	Detail of balconettes on west façade, facing east.
0009	Detail of fluted pilasters, entablature, capital, brackets and bas relief, facing southwest.
0010	Detail on east façade, facing west.
0011	Detail on north façade, facing southeast.
0012	Detail on north façade, facing south.
0013	Detail of main floor on east façade, facing southwest.
0014	Context view at dusk from 7 th Street, facing southeast.
015	Overview of main lobby on ground floor, facing southwest.
016	Overview of main lobby on ground floor, facing southeast.
017	Detail of lobby pilasters in main lobby, facing east.
018	Detail of guest elevators in main lobby, facing southeast.
019	Overview of event space on mezzanine, facing northwest.
020	Overview of ballroom space on 2 nd floor, facing northwest.

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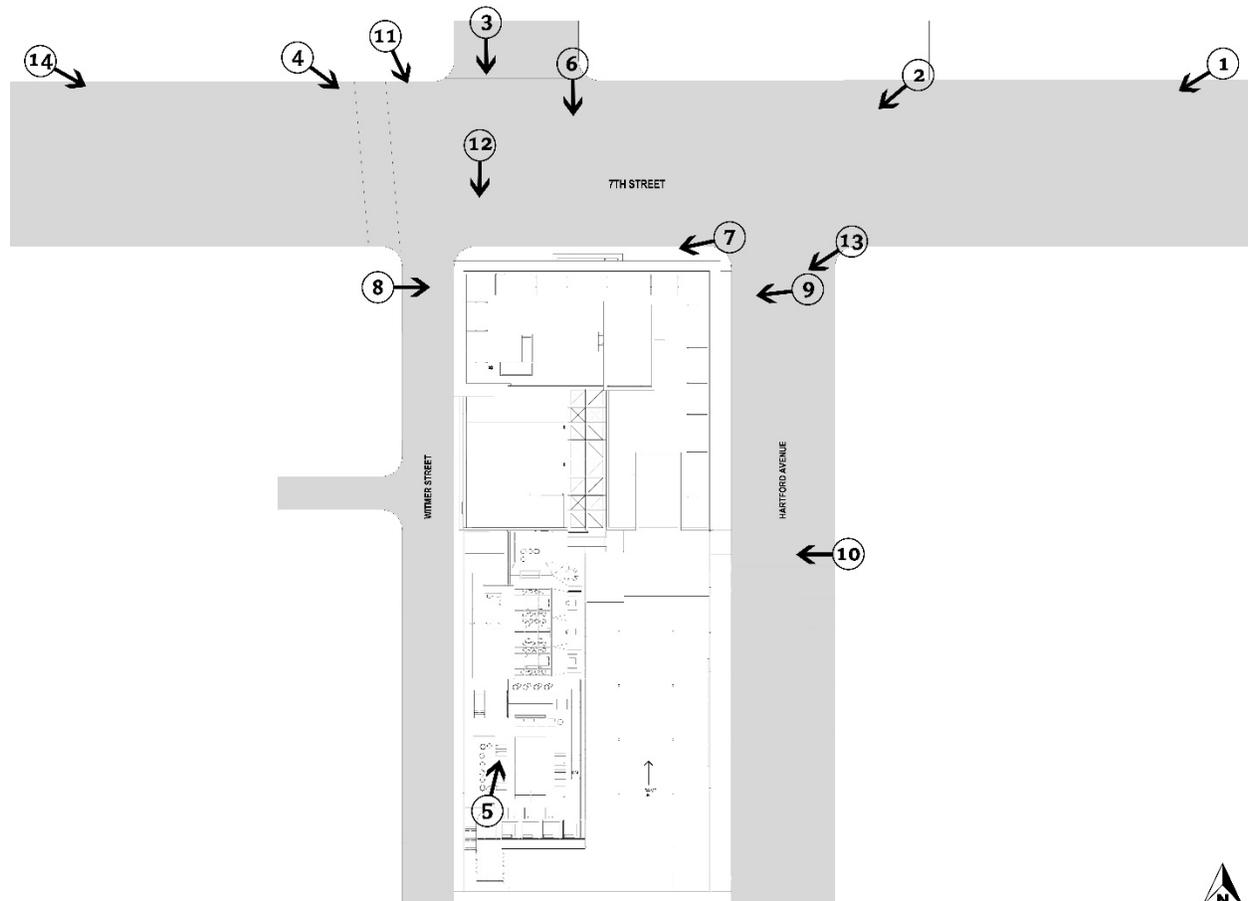
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PHOTO #	DESCRIPTION/VIEW
021	Overview of typical corridor to guestrooms, facing southeast.
022	Overview of typical guestroom, facing west.

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Figure 1. Photo Key

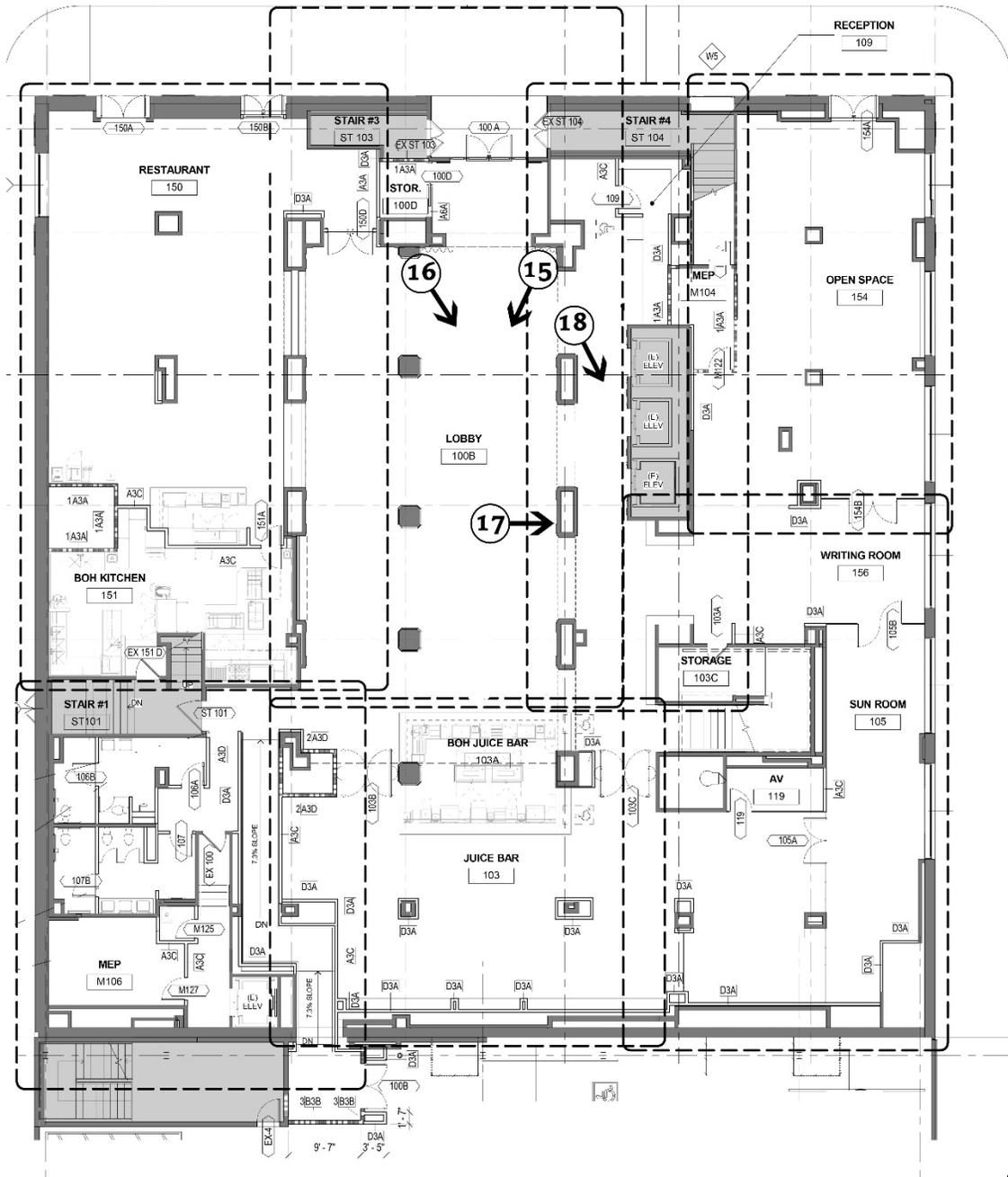


Mayfair Hotel - National Register Nomination Photo Key - Site Plan

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Figure 2. Photo Key

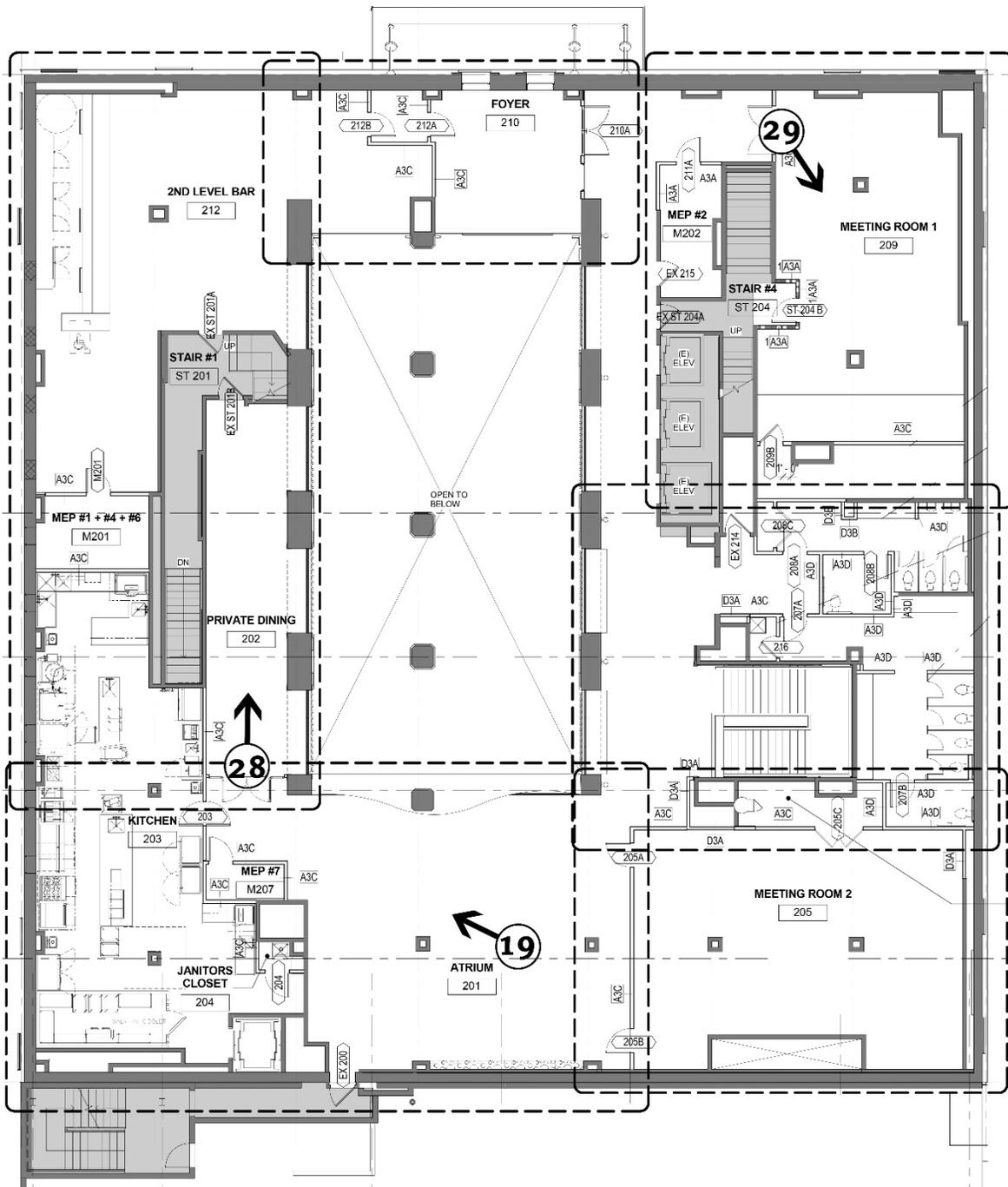


Mayfair Hotel - National Register Nomination Photo Key - 1st Floor

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Figure 3. Photo Key



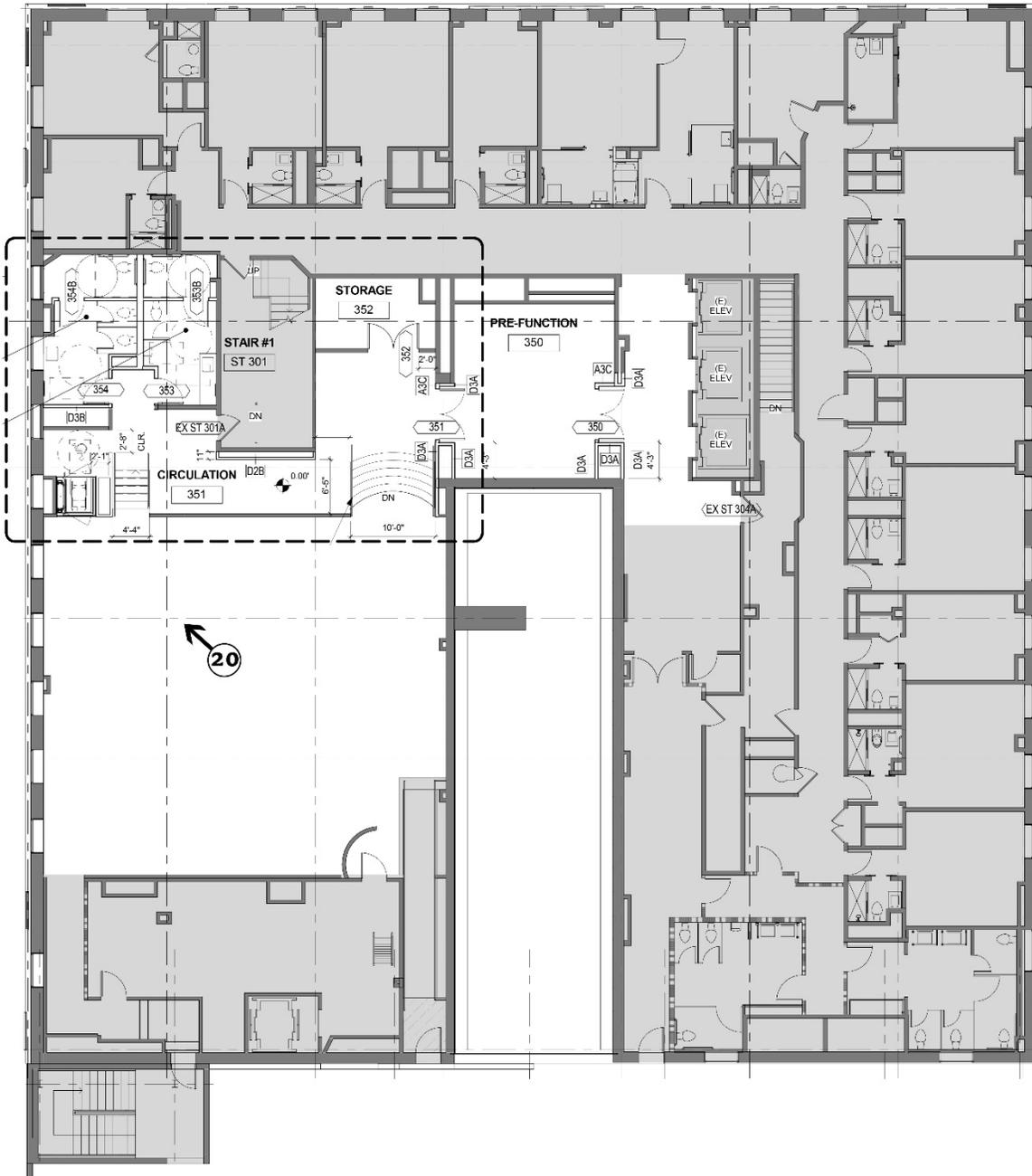
Mayfair Hotel - National Register Nomination Photo Key - Mezzanine



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Figure 4. Photo Key



Mayfair Hotel - National Register Nomination Photo Key - 2nd floor



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Figure 5. Photo Key



Mayfair Hotel - National Register Nomination Photo Key - 10th floor 

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Figure 6. Location Map



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Additional Documentation



Figure 4. Looking east down W. Seventh Street in 1927, the thirteen-story Hotel Mayfair dominates the surrounding neighborhood. Source: Photo by Dick Whittington, USC Digital Archive.

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Figure 5. Lobby and mezzanine of the Hotel Mayfair, 1927. Source: Los Angeles Public Library.

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Figure 6. Hotel Mayfair, 1928, as shown in *Architectural Digest*. Source: University of California, Santa Barbara.

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Figure 7. Hotel Mayfair, c. 1932, Keystone Studio. Source: USC Digital Archive.