

Appendix D
**Supplemental Historic
Resources Memorandum**

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MEMO

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Introduction

This memorandum summarizes the methodology used in the evaluation of potential impacts to the former Studio City Golf and Tennis Club (now Weddington Golf & Tennis) as a result of the project currently proposed for the property (the Project). As stated in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) and the Historic Resources Technical Report (Appendix E-1 to the DEIR), the former Studio City Golf and Tennis Club was officially designated a City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) in 2021. The HCM designation states that it is significant under Criterion 1 because it “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” as an excellent example of a 1950s private recreational facility open for public use in Studio City; and under Criterion 3 because it “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method or construction,” including the clubhouse, golf ball light standards, putting green, and brick wall with weeping mortar surrounding the front lawn at the northeast edge of the property, as an excellent example of a 1950s community recreational facility.

Therefore, the following are the character-defining features in the HCM designation:

- Private recreational facility open for public use
- Clubhouse
- Golf ball [-shaped] light standards
- Putting green
- Brick wall with weeping mortar surrounding the front lawn at the northeast edge of the property¹

¹ Studio City Golf and Tennis Club Historic-Cultural Monument Application, Council File: 21-0470, adopted by City Council, September 29, 2021.

The HCM nomination does not specify a period of significance. Per the National Park Service (NPS), the period of significance is the length of time when a property was associated with important events, activities, or persons, or attained the characteristics which qualify it for listing.² The former Studio City Golf and Tennis Club was established in 1955, with a clubhouse added in 1956. Therefore, it would be appropriate to consider the period of significance 1955-1956, the property's original development period. This period of significance is also consistent with the significance statement and character-defining features as specified in the HCM designation.³

HCM designation is a formal determination by the City of the eligibility and associated character-defining features of the Studio City Golf and Tennis Club. The HCM designation process includes consideration of all available evidence and a determination by the City of a property's significance and those features that convey that significance. The HCM designation therefore represents the facts about the significance of the property as identified by the City and is appropriately referenced as the basis for the analysis in the DEIR.

In order to provide more detailed information about the history of the former Studio City Golf Club, understand how it has changed over time, and document the existing conditions of the site in order to complete the evaluation of potential Project impacts in the DEIR, the project team conducted additional research and analysis. This involved primary and secondary source research including building permits, historic and aerial photographs, and contemporary news articles; review of NPS guidance for evaluating the significance of golf course design; and analysis of the property within the context of the post-World War II development of the San Fernando Valley. This research supports the City's conclusions regarding the significance and character-defining features of the former Studio City Golf and Tennis Club.

Analysis

The former Studio City Golf and Tennis Club was established in 1955 as the Joe Kirkwood Jr. Golf and Sporting Center on land owned by the locally prominent Weddington family. Kirkwood's initial plans for the property, slated to cost \$1.25 million, included an 18-hole golf course and driving range, "a gigantic bowling center, championship swimming pool and a big ice rink...and a drive-in restaurant."⁴ A later version of the project planned for "a swimming pool, bowling alley, tennis courts, badminton courts and an ice-skating rink," in addition to a nine-hole golf course and driving range.⁵ Kirkwood's ambitious original vision was never fully implemented on the property; however, he did establish a 9-hole golf course on the property in 1955, with a clubhouse added in 1956. The property changed hands in 1957 and was renamed the Studio City Golf Club. Immediately thereafter, as discussed further below, the golf course was significantly redesigned.

The original development of the property as a golf club in Studio City in the mid-1950s coincided with the rapid transformation of the San Fernando Valley from a sparsely populated agricultural

² United States Department of the Interior, National Register Bulletin #15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, 1997.

³ It should be noted that the construction date of the brick wall with weeping mortar is unknown; however, based on the construction method, it appears to be an early feature and is typical of Ranch-style properties dating from around the former Studio City Golf and Tennis Club's period of

significance. Therefore, it is appropriately identified as a character-defining feature.

⁴ Pete Kokon, "What's Cookin' with Kokon," Valley Times, July 6, 1955.

⁵ Charles Curtis, "Golfagraphs: Littler Defends Montebello Title," *Los Angeles Times*, December 11, 1955.

area into a sprawling collection of suburban residential neighborhoods in the post-World War II era, and the resulting increased demand for local recreational facilities. The former Studio City Golf and Tennis Club is one of several recreational amenities established in the San Fernando Valley in the postwar era and represents the expansion of services for a rapidly growing population that had the time and financial resources for recreation. Kirkwood's original vision for the property was to create a facility that catered to a variety of recreational pursuits, as evidenced by the inclusion of a bowling center, pool, ice rink, and badminton courts in that vision. In addition to serving local residents, the proximity of Kirkwood's facility to several motion picture studios resulted in patronage from members of the entertainment industry.

The significance of the Studio City Golf and Tennis Club under HCM Criterion 1 is therefore derived from its development as a recreational site in the San Fernando Valley in the immediate postwar era, and not as an example of a golf course or for its design characteristics. As such, its character-defining features are those that retain integrity (defined by the NPS as location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association) from the period of significance, reflect the overall significance of the property within the context of postwar recreation, and convey its accessibility to the growing population at that time. The significant features are therefore its facilities and use as a recreational amenity; the golf ball-shaped light standards; Ranch-style clubhouse; putting green that serves as the "front yard" of the clubhouse; and brick wall with weeping mortar that defines the property at the corner of Whitsett Avenue and Valley Spring Lane. The clubhouse and its associated features reflect the character of the surrounding residential neighborhoods and the specific association of the property with Studio City's postwar development.

While the recreational facilities and use of the former Studio City Golf and Tennis Club are character-defining, the specific features of the tennis courts are not. Tennis courts were not added to the property until the 1970s, long after its period of significance in the immediate postwar period; moreover, the original number and configuration of the tennis courts has been altered over time. Furthermore, the driving range and 9-hole course, as explained below, do not represent significant examples of golf course design, and they have both been extensively altered, compromising the integrity of design.

According to guidance from the NPS, the following factors are considered when evaluating the potential significance of a golf course for its design characteristics:⁶

- The 1910s-1920s are widely considered the "Golden Age of Golf" during which time most of the greatest courses in the United States were constructed.
- Often golf course designs will show the clear influence of an earlier, renowned course, or will have features found on other courses, and consideration of these factors helps to place a particular course within a stylistic context.

⁶ A property would be evaluated for potential significance for its design characteristics under National Register Criterion C, which is equivalent to HCM Criterion 3.

- The very impressive, architect-designed buildings on some historic courses may enhance the overall design sophistication of the course and add to the significance of the resource.
- The layout of the holes, the overall configuration and circulation of the [typically] 18 play areas, and the design of each hole should be noted as part of any evaluation of potential significance.
- As landscapes, golf courses evolve over time through natural changes, use, and redesign. Eligible courses may include a slight redesign indicating the natural evolution of the course.⁷

In California, there are numerous golf courses that reflect the characteristics outlined by the NPS and have been designated as significant examples of the type. Select examples include:

- Pasadena Arroyo Parks and Recreation District, Pasadena (National Register of Historic Places, 2008): Brookside Golf Course is included as an important contributing feature to the district as one of the oldest golf courses in Los Angeles County. First opened in 1928, it was designed by famed golf course architect William P. Bell for the City of Pasadena. It was constructed during the “Golden Age” of golf course design; was designed by one of the foremost golf course designers in the United States; and retains a high degree of historic integrity.
- Sharp Park Golf Course, Pacifica (locally designated, 2011): Established in 1932, the property was designed by preeminent master golf architect Dr. Alister MacKenzie. It is a rare public golf course and the only public seaside course. It was modeled after the Seaside links originally established in Scotland.
- Chester Washington Golf Course, Los Angeles (County of Los Angeles Historic Landmark, 2020): The golf course was the first in the county to be integrated. In 1955, events on the property led to the integration of all county-owned golf courses and the addition of a nondiscrimination clause in contracts between the County and concessionaires.
- Desert Golf Course, Palm Springs (National Register of Historic Places, 2020): Established in 1925, the golf course is associated with the growth of Palm Springs into an internationally known desert recreational hub in Southern California. Situated at the edge of downtown at the base of the San Jacinto Mountains, the course’s design incorporates the terrain and exploits impressive mountain backdrop views.

Therefore, in terms of its design and potential eligibility under HCM Criterion 3, the golf course at the former Studio City Golf and Tennis Club does not rise to the level of significance conveyed by the above examples. The property was initially developed in the 1950s by Joe Kirkwood, Jr., as a 9-hole, par-3 and 4 course. An actor and professional golfer, Kirkwood was not a trained or recognized golf course architect and is not considered a master in the field. The golf course, as originally constructed, did not embody a singular, cohesive design or represent a specific stylistic

⁷ Susan E. Smead and Marc C. Wagner, “Assessing Golf Courses as Cultural Resources,” *Cultural Resource Management* 23 no. 10 (2000).

context. Moreover, immediately following the property's sale in 1957 to golfer and investor George McCallister, Sr. and his business partner Art Andersen, the course was substantially altered to make play easier and improve accessibility to players from the surrounding neighborhood. The NPS guidelines referenced above outline that the appropriate level of change would be a "slight redesign" in order for a golf course to remain eligible for designation under National Register Criterion C/HCM Criterion 3. Alterations to the golf course at the former Studio City Golf and Tennis Club exceed this threshold, representing far more than a "slight" or small-scale redesign or typical evolution over time. Historical analysis confirms continuous changes after the period of significance of 1955-1956 to improve Kirkwood's original golf course and accommodate new recreational uses (e.g., tennis courts).

Changes to the former Studio City Golf and Tennis Club are summarized below:⁸

- 1955: Original permits pulled for construction of the golf course and clubhouse
- 1956: Joe Kirkwood Jr. Golf & Sporting Center opens; 9-hole par-3 and par-4 course with driving range
- 1957: Joe Kirkwood Jr. Golf & Sporting Center changes ownership and is renamed Studio City Golf Club, and removing the two par-4 holes included in the original layout
- 1957: Golf course substantially redesigned, including filling in water and sand traps and rebuilding the greens to make play easier
- 1962: Addition to the clubhouse
- 1966: Enclosure constructed at the driving range, creating ten sheltered tees
- 1973: Golf course altered with shortening and repositioning of holes 5 and 6 to accommodate the addition of five tennis courts
- 1973: Tennis shack constructed
- 1974: Four tennis courts added
- 1976: Driving range reduced in width to accommodate an additional six tennis courts
- 1980: Driving range reduced in width again to accommodate five additional tennis courts
- 2004: Driving range shelter extended
- 2006: Four tennis courts removed to accommodate the construction of Los Angeles Fire Station

⁸ This summary was prepared based on available building permits, historic aerials, newspaper articles, other published sources, and previous evaluations of the site.

- 2018: Golf course realigned and holes 4 and 7 shortened

Figure 1 compares historic (1956) and current (2019) aerials of the golf course to illustrate the cumulative effect of alterations after the period of significance. In summary, the course’s configuration has dramatically changed; four of nine original holes are presently in entirely different locations; the driving range does not retain its original appearance, having been repeatedly reduced in width; and the yardage of each hole deviates considerably from the original design. Figure 2 compares original and current yardages of each hole to further illustrate the extent of the alterations, including, notably, an average reduction in hole yardages by 40 percent (and in some cases by as much as 60 percent).



Figure 1: Aerial photographs documenting significant changes in the configuration of the golf course at the former Studio City Golf and Tennis Club. Left: 1956 aerial photograph. Right: 2019 aerial photograph.

HOLE NUMBER	ORIGINAL YARDAGE	CURRENT YARDAGE
1	150	105
2	229	130
3	91	75
4	219	95
5	310	115
6	291	105
7	125	91
8	149	135
9	140	90

Figure 2: Yardage of each hole at the former Studio City Golf and Tennis Club in 1956 and in the current configuration.

Conclusion

The formal determination by the City regarding the significance and character-defining features of the former Studio City Golf and Tennis Club is supported by a review of the relevant contexts, research into the development of the property over time, and guidance from the National Park Service for evaluating potentially significant golf course design. The former Studio City Golf and Tennis Club is significant as an example of post-World War II recreational development. The character-defining features are those that are important within that context and convey the property's significance as a recreational amenity established in the San Fernando Valley immediately after World War II. The property was originally envisioned as a multi-purpose recreational facility that catered to different pursuits and is considered significant under HCM Criterion 1 as an excellent example of a 1950s private recreational facility open for public use in Studio City. It retains the essential physical features that made up its character and appearance during its period significance and retains integrity of location, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, association, and features expressive of its design and function. It also "embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method or construction," under Criterion 3 including the clubhouse, golf ball light standards, putting green, and brick wall with weeping mortar surrounding the front lawn at the northeast edge of the property, as an excellent example of a 1950s community recreational facility. However, as discussed above, the golf course does not represent an important example of golf course design under Criterion 3; it does not rise to the level of significance of other important examples of the type in California; and it has been extensively altered which has compromised its integrity of design. Therefore, the character-defining features have been appropriately identified to recognize the use of the property as a publicly-accessible recreational facility, with the associated features of the clubhouse, golf ball-shaped light standards, putting green, and brick wall with weeping mortar.