

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.

**DRAFT**

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Kelton Apartments

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: 644-648 Kelton Avenue

City or town: Los Angeles State: California 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Not For Publication:  Vicinity: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>_____  <b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>	

<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____  <b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>Title :</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></span></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:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 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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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: reinforced concrete, wood; Walls: stucco; Roof: tar, gravel; Windows: steel, glass; Doors: wood; Fascia: steel

### 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.)

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### Summary Paragraph

Located west of the sprawling University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) campus in the Westwood neighborhood, the three-unit west-facing Kelton Apartments is a two-and-one-half-story stucco-and-wood rectangular frame building surrounded by mature landscaping and trees. Key materials are painted stucco, redwood cladding, steel-framed windows, and glass. In massing the building is an "L" with the longer arm, running up the hill behind the shorter arm parallel to Kelton Avenue. The 3,253-square-foot building occupies a long, thin lot on one of the gentle hills characterizing the dense neighborhood of narrow, curving streets and low- and mid-rise apartment houses. The east (rear) end of the building digs into the hill that rises from the west to the east. The flat-roofed apartment building is a complex composition of three levels that track the slope of the lot. The largest apartment, the top level, is stacked above the middle level that comprises two units below, while the bottom level consists of a two-car garage faced with redwood sheathing. Continuous bands of steel windows alternate with white-painted stucco clad walls that enclose extended terraces for two of the three units. Two prominent stucco-clad multi-segmented concrete staircases serve to dynamically divide the north and the west façades and to shield the rear and parking area from street view. The property retains all aspects of integrity.

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## Narrative Description

### Setting

The three-unit Kelton Apartments is located in the locally designated Midvale-Kelton Apartment Historic District, a community in Westwood in the north central part of Los Angeles. Westwood, the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) and neighboring Holmby Hills (hometown of the Tongva-Gabrielino Native Americans), and Bel Air were all part of the 4,438-acre Mexican land grant known as Rancho San Jose de Buenos Ayres. Granted to Maximo Alanis in 1843, the diverse area of Westwood includes high-rise office towers aligned on major thoroughfares; densely packed apartment buildings; upscale single-family residences on leafy, quiet streets; and the pedestrian-oriented retail district Westwood Village, which has retained its low-rise village atmosphere since it opened in 1929.

The UCLA campus is the area's most important anchor, bounded by Sunset Boulevard on the north, Whittier Drive on the east, Santa Monica Boulevard on the south, and the 405 Freeway on the west. The Midvale-Kelton Apartment Historic District, just east of the Los Angeles National Cemetery, contains thirty-eight properties largely constructed in the 1940s and '50s designed primarily in the American Colonial, Minimal Traditional, and Mid-Century Modern styles. As noted in the City of Los Angeles 2015 Westwood Report, the district is "exclusively multi-residential, containing both apartment houses and courtyard apartment complexes ranging from two to four stories in height."<sup>1</sup>

East of Veteran Avenue, a major street, and west of Gayley Avenue, (UCLA's western edge), the relatively flat topography becomes a series of rolling hills whose close-knit apartment houses often house university students and employees. The area is unusual in the Neutra canon in that it has small four apartment projects he designed all constructed in an eleven-year period, all between three and eight units, and all quite close to one another, even adjacent. Strathmore Drive, Kelton Avenue, and Landfair Avenue are neighboring streets in this busy area filled with constant pedestrian and automobile traffic. These three streets include four Neutra-designed apartment buildings: the eight-unit Landfair Apartments, completed early 1937; the eight-unit Strathmore Apartments, completed late summer 1937; the three-unit Kelton Apartments, completed in 1941; and the five-unit (Louis) Kievman, or ElKay, Apartments, completed in 1948.<sup>2</sup> Like the Strathmore Apartments a block away, the Kelton Apartments are part of Tract 9617, a 277-parcel subdivision of Rancho San Jose de Buenos Ayres purchased in January 1927 by the Janss Investment Company, the area's most important early developer.<sup>3</sup>

The well-known family firm operated from 1895 to 1995; it is credited with selling 375 acres in 1925 for the land since occupied by UCLA and for developing surrounding neighborhoods including the bustling, town-like, low-scale Westwood Village. As the Westwood Report also notes, "... development did not occur within the district until the late 1930s. Even then,

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<sup>1</sup> City of Los Angeles, SurveyLA, Westwood Report, April 2, 2015, 250.

<sup>2</sup> "Elkay" derives from the first initials of the client and family friend, musician, and educator Louis Kievman.

<sup>3</sup> Los Angeles County Assessor's Tract 9617, Map Book 134-78-82, Sheet 3.

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construction activity was sluggish, with only one or two buildings constructed per year until 1941. Four apartment houses were constructed that year (including the Kelton Apartments) before the outbreak of World War II halted all residential building activity.”<sup>4</sup> Architect Dion Neutra, the Neutras’ middle son of three, confirms that the area was quite undeveloped. “I remember when one could walk from Strathmore across bean fields directly to the site of the new project [the Kelton Apartments].”<sup>5</sup>

The Kelton Apartments occupies one of the neighborhood’s gentler small hills. The deep parcel is a long rectangle, with roughly parallel long sides running east-west except for the east boundary, angled pointing east, and shaped like a ship’s prow. The land is lower on the west and higher on the east; the parcel is approximately 167 feet long on the north, 73 feet long on the east, 149 feet long on the south, and 55 feet long on the west, for a total of approximately 9,896 square feet or .23 acres.

The three units track the slope of the hill and differ somewhat in size and orientation. Unit 646, the two-bedroom unit on the top level, faces north with additional western view. The higher elevation seems to place the inhabitants within the upper canopy of the property’s many mature deciduous and coniferous trees. Unit 644, a two-bedroom unit altered to one-bedroom unit on the lower floor, essentially has the same orientation. Its terraces face different directions, and at the lower level, it feels more intimately engaged with both the surrounding landscape and the street activity to the west. Unit 648, a studio altered to one-bedroom unit, is located the rear and faces north into the parking area and landscaping beyond. At the west, street elevation, one of two prominent staircases separates the garage from a small rectangular hillside area dense with ivy and a copse of six or seven mature deciduous and conifer trees. The front doors to the units cannot be discerned from the street.

Located at the very rear of the building, an unusual tiny wood-framed space, whose exterior walls measure 10’3” by 13’ 4”, occupies most of the original carport’s footprint, bordered by an approximately five-foot-tall concrete retaining wall on the south. By contrast to the original construction, this volume is clad in plywood that is painted the same dark brown as can be seen elsewhere on exterior window trim. The windows appear to be wood-framed.

**Typical Exterior Character-Defining Features Associated with Neutra’s Residential Architecture, 1930s–1940s, present in the Kelton Apartments:**

- horizontal profile reinforced with a flat roof
- overall design is asymmetrical; no bilateral symmetry
- deep integration with site, setting, and landscape through terraces and extended overhangs that include some kind of lighting embedded in the soffit’s edge
- rhythmic distribution of windows
- avoidance of conventional or elaborate ornament

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<sup>4</sup> Op. cit., Westwood Report.

<sup>5</sup> Dion Neutra, email communication with author, May 21, 2019.

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- hybrid of conventional wood framing (for solid walls) combined with the regular disposition of wood posts in post-and-beam construction (for banks of grouped windows)
- steel-framed commercial windows, typically casement or fixed single-light windows
- doors single-panel painted wood, typically silver-colored (1930s) paint, varnished natural wood (typically birch), with no ornamentation or elaborate detail; sometimes single upper light
- use of simple materials associated with twentieth century construction: concrete, stucco, float glass, steel, and aluminum contrasted with natural materials such as wood, brick, and stone
- alternating layers of white-painted stucco with walls of windows, each approximately equal in height, creating a strong rhythm of solid and void
- exterior soffit lighting, here in single square steel-framed lights flush with the bottom of the overhang

Notably, roof and floor framing are spaced not at a typical 16” or even 24”, but here at 12”. This suggests that the intent was to construct a strong building. Such spacing may be considered over-engineered, but so far the building has also weathered seismic activity very effectively.

### **Elevations**

The floating quality of the layered construction is anchored through the large triangular planes of stucco comprising the concrete stairwells leading to the primary entrances on the west and the north elevations of the two larger apartments, Unit 644 and Unit 646. While the sand-finished stucco is painted white like the nearby International Style buildings Neutra designed, the brown colors of the trim and garage doors distinguish the building from its older siblings with their silver-colored aluminum trim. Dug into the hill rising behind it, the two-car garage is sheathed in naturally stained redwood. Likewise, the trim on woodwork, windows, and stairs is stained or painted a dark brown, further connecting the building to the trunks, limbs, and branches of the surrounding mature landscape.<sup>6</sup> The window configurations are operable casements alternating with larger fixed single-light windows; the band of windows on the principal façades of each unit is 4’2” tall. The relatively narrow metal pipe railings for each of the three major sets of concrete stairs (west, north, and a side stair on the south) feature curved terminations recalling typical Neutra railings such as at the Lovell Health House, Los Angeles, 1929, and the Beard House, Altadena, 1934. The roof’s two-part metal fascia is a classic Neutra detail, a short rectangular gutter that projects beyond a tall metal cap.

### **West Elevation**

Representing the top stroke of the L-shaped building, the primary façade faces Kelton Avenue. At the top, Unit 646 features a flat roof atop a continuous band of steel windows. Set well back from the rest of the building, this north-facing apartment can barely be seen from the street, in part because its own west elevation opens out to one of two generous terraces, one on the west

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<sup>6</sup> According to Dr. Raymond Neutra, Richard and Dione Neutra’s youngest son, his father decided to paint the bright silver trim color to the dark brown shade, a departure from his typical International Style detailing of silver-colored paint. Early photos by Julius Shulman show the original trim color was silver.

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and the other on the east, a design move that further ensures privacy for the flat's occupants. By contrast, the west-facing façade of Unit 644 is plainly visible from the street. It is bisected by a flight of multi-segmented metal-capped stucco-clad stair with concrete steps whose lower section is perpendicular to the façade and whose upper section turns right to continue upward and south to the small entrance terrace. Adjacent to the south-facing front door, the west-facing wall is clad in tongue-and groove redwood, a move that harmonizes with the redwood cladding of the garage doors. In contrast to the solid stucco wall of the north side of the staircase, the right (south) side of its lower section only has a metal pipe rail, thus opening to the landscaping and densely packed grove of several trees standing in the property's southwest corner. Neutra did not include a spider leg in this project, as he designed and used these in the very late 1940s. He did include a narrow wood trellis located above the garage doors and extended north. The gesture frames and defines space just as a spider leg would do later.

### **North Elevation**

The north-facing façade is the most dynamic elevation. It contains the primary entrance for both Unit 648 and Unit 646. The top extended band of glass windows surmounts the long expanse of the stucco wall that wraps the building. The multi-segmented concrete staircase, enhanced by a tall curved wall, ascends to the north-facing front door of this upper flat. Below, the north-facing front door of Unit 648 is located near the east end of the building, where the plywood-clad one-room volume and a shallow area bordered by a retaining wall terminate the ground floor. The later one-story volume (1948) differentially steps back about one foot from the façade. Notably, the west end of this elevation (the north side of the garage) reveals the stepped construction of the concrete at the base of the building, providing clues to building techniques used during the period of significance.

### **South Elevation**

The south elevation, just a couple of feet short of the south property line, is devoted to service: trash bins, access to mechanical systems, a storage closet, and a concrete staircase to Unit 646. The façade of the one-story volume embedded in the ground is a short vented opaque wall on the west side flanked by two windows, one a casement window, the other fixed. A single fixed clerestory is mounted above the two windows.

### **East Elevation**

The east elevation is characterized by an area that is dug into the hill and bounded by a concrete retaining wall. The east-facing façade of the one-story volume is characterized by a series of three large fixed windows, each glazed with translucent glass.

### **Interiors**

Units 644, 646, and 648 are almost identical in their finishes and details. All have plaster walls painted white, while the interior window trim is painted silver. Floors in public areas are carpeted or have thin-slat oak flooring, while halls and kitchens have 9x9 tiles of possibly linoleum or asphalt tile. Kitchen cabinets are white-painted wood with simple chrome door and drawer handles. Unit 646, the top apartment, includes a white-painted brick fireplace using three different kinds of brick: Roman brick for the lining of the firebox, painted common brick of the



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fireplace, and larger brick for the hearth. The south wall of the Unit 646's dining bay features a tall wainscot wall of Philippine mahogany, while the full-height wall panel and inset door to the immediate west of the fireplace is of rotary sawn Douglas Fir plywood, stained to match the rich red brown of the mahogany. The smallest unit, Unit 644, also includes a fireplace of unpainted red brick on its east wall. All three units include a telephone niche in a hall wall. All bathroom floors are laid with one-inch hexagonal porcelain white tiles with some dark navy inlays.

### **Typical Interior Character-Defining Features Associated with Neutra's Residential Architecture, 1930s–1940s, present in the Kelton Apartments:**

- plain, smooth-finished plaster walls
- use of silver-colored paint for interior wood trim
- mixed brick in fireplaces
- Crane or American Standard bathroom fixtures (sinks and bathtub) and chrome hardware by Hallmack
- kitchen sinks are rimmed in stainless steel rings, flush with surrounding tile or Formica
- kitchen and bath white-painted cabinetry with simple chrome hardware and special diagonal undercuts at the base of drawer faces, permitting a monolithic, easily cleaned surface for each drawer
- recessed, square lighting fixtures rimmed with stainless steel
- small hexagonal white tiles for bathroom flooring
- 9" x 9" linoleum tiles for kitchen flooring
- oak flooring in living and dining areas

### **Construction History**

The title was received from The Janss Investment Corporation and the Holmby Corporation and vested in Richard J. and Dione Neutra on January 17, 1941 and recorded on February 8, 1941. Land Record Comments state that the Janss Investment Corporation took title to the land in 1927.

The timing of the purchase and the permit for the building is notable. The land was purchased on January 27 and the deed recorded on February 8. Plans for the construction building permit were received by the Building Department on January 23—four days before the land was purchased and two weeks before the deed was recorded. Neutra was a man in a hurry.

The Janss Company placed an extraordinary range of restrictions on the property. No single-residence building could cost less than \$7,500 in construction costs, one of many requirements to ensure that properties would be well built and well finished. The additional rule that flat roofs would not be allowed was clearly ignored.

Because of the 1937 constructions of the Landfair and Strathmore Apartments, it is logical that Neutra may have been quite familiar with the City's building department officials, and that relationship may have permitted a more flexible arrangement than usual.

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### Permit History

The permit history is sparse.

**Record ID:** 53984390

**Document Number:** 1941 03360

Dated Feb. 3, 1941, the owner is listed as Richard J. Neutra. The permit was for “Plans Received Jan. 23, 1941,” dwelling and garage. This first building permit, submitted by General Contractor Eric F. Nelson, is for a stucco-clad, wood-framed building 34’ x 73’. The cost of construction is listed at \$9,400, crossed out, and replaced with \$10,000.

**Record ID:** 54335732

**Document Number:** 1948WL02986

Dated Oct. 22, 1948, the owner is listed as Mr. Alfred Niedermann (Neutra’s father-in-Law; the Niedermanns never owned the property.) The work is for “installing of an enclosed toilet room for gardener within the rear porch on the first floor.” The toilet room, carved out of the original carport, was actually for friends and family.

**Record ID:** 5557327

**Document Number:** 1941 03360s

Dated Aug. 11, 1995.

Reroofing.

### Integrity

A 1987 evaluation, prepared using California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) survey forms and used as the basis for the local Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) designation, notes that “no alterations are visible,” a condition that remains unchanged.<sup>7</sup> The small addition of the rear room does not compromise the building’s integrity.

The Kelton Apartments retain an outstanding level of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling. The seventh and last aspect of integrity, association, is especially strong here, given the long and enduring relationship with the Neutra family, friends, and employees. The property has never left the hands of the Neutra family.

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<sup>7</sup> Heumann Johnson Research Associates, May 5, 1987, cited as a primary source in the February 4, 1988 HCM application.

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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.)

ARCHITECTURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1941

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Neutra, Richard: Architect

Nelson, Eric F.: Builder

\_\_\_\_\_

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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 Kelton Apartments is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Completed in 1941, the property embodies a shift in Richard Neutra's architectural approach from earlier, purer iterations of the boxy volumes of the International Style as seen in his nearby Strathmore and Landfair Apartments, built in 1937. While retaining some key character-defining features of the earlier style, Kelton Apartments embodies a more relaxed, regionally responsive composition with a woodsier palette and a "breaking of the box" approach seen in extended terraces and roof overhangs that enable a fuller relationship with nature. Neutra's mastery is exhibited here in a building type rarely seen in his work, that of a small multi-residential apartment building. Limited to a modest square footage and exploiting a challenging sloping site, the three-unit design appears to be a single-family residence. It is carefully scaled in such a way that the property overall retains a domestic feeling, yet each unit feels expansive and functionally efficient. The period of significance is 1941, the date of its construction.

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

While it appears to be a free-standing residence, the Kelton Apartments is actually a small multi-residential building consisting of three units of varying sizes and orientations. While modest and relatively small, this building is highly complex. By exploiting the slope and depth of a long, narrow site and stacking the upper unit perpendicularly to the two ground floor units, the design demonstrates Neutra's appreciation for the individual privacy for the inhabitants of each unit.

In its description of the Kelton Apartment's physical appearance, the May 5, 1987 DPR form evaluating the property notes the change in Neutra's design approach, noting the shifts present in the "crisply detailed" building.<sup>8</sup> In comparison, the Landfair comprises a two-story series of connected stepped volumes with a stacked pair of larger units present on the south. While its configuration differs sharply from that of the Strathmore Apartments, whose eight units are broken up into smaller groups that march up its steep hillside site, the two early projects share key character-defining features associated with canonical International Style attributes.<sup>9</sup> The later Kelton Apartments features broad bands of windows alternating with deep bands of white painted stucco, a primary feature of the International Style that enhances the quality of alternating solid and void. The multi-residential building presents itself as a large, low-slung house that blend in with the lush landscape and copses of surrounding trees, rather than standing out as white rectangular volumes. While some modest recessed areas create balconies in the earlier apartment buildings, at the Kelton Apartments the roof extends much farther beyond the

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Owned by UCLA and used as student housing since 1941, the Landfair Apartments were designated as a City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) in 1987. Along with the privately owned Strathmore Apartments, the Kelton and Elkey Apartments were designated as HCMs in 1988.

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building envelope, thus acting as a bold cantilever sheltering portions of larger, more generous patios. The effect at the Kelton Apartments is not of a “bite” taken out of a rectilinear volume—to create small, shallow outdoor areas as seen at the earlier 1937 projects. It introduces what later became a consistent strategy of creating a complex composition of asymmetrical lines and planes that reaches out into nature and connects the multi-terraced building more emphatically to the landscape and setting.

While only four years separates the Kelton Apartments from the older Landfair and Strathmore apartment complexes, the change in design strategies and motifs is obvious. As physician Dr. Raymond Neutra, a sharp observer of his father’s work, points out, “Beginning with the Jardinette Apartments, my father was thinking of how to introduce indoor/outdoor experiences for apartment dwellers.<sup>10</sup> This is in contrast to his vividly described experience in *Life and Shape* where he described the dark apartment on Taborstrasse in Vienna and how important the nature of the huge public park, the Augarten, was to him a few blocks away.”<sup>11</sup>

At the Kelton Apartments, the outdoors becomes a more prominent living area. In addition to the tectonic changes facilitating a different spatial experience, Neutra began using redwood as an accent cladding or sheathing an entire building as early as 1935 with the trio of small redwood clad houses, the Johnson/Stafford houses, Palo-Alto, 1935-1939.<sup>12</sup>

Neutra’s own project description demonstrates his ideas of how the apartment functioned and its attributes; he emphasizes the privacy afforded by his control of views, the beauty of the vistas themselves, the variety of storage, and the opportunities afforded by the “outdoor living spaces:”

A multiple dwelling with careful use of controlled views and of outdoor living spaces, containing two types of apartments: two-bedroom units and a one-room bachelor unit. This latter one has a cozy social bay with a seating arrangement at a fireplace, a bay for rest, an alcove separable by a curtain, another housekeeping alcove separated from the main room by an 8’-6” high shelf unit, and a movable

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<sup>10</sup> Completed in 1929 and designed with Rudolf Schindler, the Jardinette Apartments in central Hollywood featured balconies and long metal supports at the edge for mounting balcony-width boxes for growing flowers, plants, etc.

<sup>11</sup> The popular Baroque Augarten, opened in 1775, is one of Vienna’s largest city parks. Taborstrasse is an important main artery running roughly north-south and beginning north of the Wien River, the river that flows through central Vienna. The busy street is not architecturally distinguished. Known as the Second District, historically it was an area heavily populated by Jews since the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. One of Kristallnacht’s main targets, the population was largely wiped out but has regained a small but thriving Jewish community. The first Neutra family apartment, a row house on a busy major thoroughfare in Vienna, was relatively dark with little natural lighting. The family’s second flat, near Drasche Park, was larger and brighter.

<sup>12</sup> Redwood became a staple in Neutra’s designs of the 1940s and early 1950s. Raymond Neutra suggests that Neutra might have been influenced by the work of his protégé, architect Harwell Hamilton Harris (1903 – 1990), who was using redwood as early as 1935 in the Lowe House, Altadena; Harris in turn was deeply influenced by the redwood-sided C.C. Curtis Ranch, Altadena, 1909. Designed by Craftsman builder/designer Louis B. Easton, the ranch was on the route Harris took to go home from the Lowe job site. Neutra went on to design many projects that included redwood, such as the Gill and Sweet houses, Glendale, 1939; the McIntosh House, Los Angeles, 1939 and many others including his iconic Nesbitt House, Los Angeles and the celebrated, long demolished Channel Heights Housing, 1942.

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fixable screen. Also, there is a small bathroom and ample covered space and an outdoor covered porch.

The lower two-bedroom apartment, reached by a well-separated entrance, has a large living room with a dining bay. Its amply dimensioned, roofed front terrace connects with a private patio. Its large windows look over pine tree tops and far-away hills. A carefully laid out kitchen and utility bay with ample cupboard space, two bedrooms and a bath complete this lower apartment.

The upper one, reached by a thoroughly segregated exterior stair, has a similar arrangement with the addition of a fireplace in living room and a large terrace off the second bedroom. The magnificent view from this upper apartment is utilized to full advantage ...<sup>13</sup>

Neutra's completely developed plans show a second building containing two additional units, for a total of five, to be sited at the back of the lot. This building, while often seen in magazine articles about the Kelton Apartments, was never built.

### **Richard Neutra, Architect**

Richard Joseph Neutra (1892-1970) is regarded as one of the most influential architects of the twentieth century. Born in Vienna, Austria, the Modernist architect graduated summa cum laude from the Vienna Technical Institute (later Technical University, Vienna), and was affiliated with the radical architectural theorist Adolf Loos before serving with the Austro-Hungarian Empire forces in World War I. Like his early friend and later sometime colleague Rudolf M. Schindler, Neutra was deeply influenced by the European publication of Frank Lloyd Wright's *Wasmuth Portfolios* (1910-1911), a watershed manifesto. The publication, which both Neutra and Schindler encountered in about 1912, illuminated Wright's radical conception of the "breaking of the [conventional] box" through the use of diagonal vistas through ganged corner windows, a more open plan, and an emphasis on the extended and low horizontal line. For Wright, these strategies culminated in a complete break with European-derived historicism in favor of a liberated, democratic architecture, an American architecture that embodied the individual free from constraints.

While Neutra deeply appreciated the break with historicism, he was less interested in heroic self-expression as an end than in recognizing the potential of Wright's work in terms of designing surroundings and environments better suited to human well-being and on a scale that embraced all classes of people. While still in Europe, right after World War I when there was little work in an exhausted Europe, Neutra worked for the famous Swiss gardener and landscape theorist Gustav Ammann. In 1921, he found a post as City Architect for the feudal city of Luckenwalde, where he designed housing and a forest cemetery before later that same year landing a job with Expressionist Erich Mendelsohn, one of Germany's most successful architects between the two world wars.

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<sup>13</sup> Richard Neutra, "Kelton Apartments in Westwood," undated essay, Richard and Dion Neutra Papers, Collection 1179, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA, Box 64, Folder 16.

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Neutra emigrated to America in 1923, fulfilling a dream which took root years before. After a short stint in New York, he was hired as a draftsman for the Chicago firm Holabird and Roche, where he mastered the new steel skyscraper framing techniques and later met another hero, architect Louis Sullivan. Neutra and his young bride Dione continued west, working for Wright in his atelier Taliesin in Spring Green, Wisconsin, beginning in the fall of 1924 before moving in early 1925 to Los Angeles, which became Neutra's permanent home. His international fame was established by the Lovell Health House, one of the few West Coast designs included in the iconic "International Exhibition of Modern Architecture" held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1932. The Austrian American went on to build hundreds of homes, including tract developments and military housing as well as private residences, primarily in Southern California, and as far away as Switzerland, Italy, Germany, and Puerto Rico.

Neutra distinguished himself from his Modernist peers in his credo that human beings needed to be connected to nature or the attributes of nature. He also argued that in order to design effectively, architecture as a profession needed to embrace a range of sciences including evolutionary biology, environmental psychology, Gestalt aesthetics, and anthropology in order to better understand the basis of human needs and how best to address them. Neutra called the synthesis of architecture and these sciences *biorealism*, which he addressed in many books beginning with *Survival Through Design* (1954), and ending with *Nature Near: The Late Essays of Richard Neutra*, published posthumously in 1989.

Biorealism sought to re-integrate human and nature through strategies and details that responded to essential human biology, perception, and the senses. Each project blended a consideration of the human being as generic, that is, with the same basic universal psychological and physiological needs as other humans, and also as individual, with a unique and personal history of experiences, wants, and needs. While addressing these concerns, stylistically Neutra buildings are Modern, seen in his well-controlled, horizontal arrangements of asymmetrical massings; use of standard and/or prefabricated systems and products; and unornamented planes of glass, white stucco, and wood.

On behalf of biorealism he deployed specific elements such as the continuity of materials inside and out; graduated transitions between public and private space; calibrated views to outdoor views and landscape; full-height window walls and steel casement windows; and spider legs.<sup>14</sup> Neutra also wrote on the need to include nature and landscape as a critical part of any design in the layperson's book, *Mystery and Realities of the Site* (1951). Winner of numerous honorary doctorates, prizes, and awards, he earned the American Institute of Architects' Gold Medal posthumously in 1977.

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<sup>14</sup> This is a special construction in which a beam supporting the roof runs beyond the building envelope and terminates in a post. The effect of the L-shaped unit is to connect building and earth and create interstitial space between indoors and out.



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### Family and Friends

The Kelton Apartments is noteworthy for its role in the history of Neutra's family, friends, employees, UCLA students, and colleagues. That role strengthens the integrity of *association*.

While the VDL Research House I, Silverlake, 1932 served as both Neutra's architectural practice and the immediate family's home for Richard's wife Dione Neutra (1901-1990), and sons Frank, Dion, and Raymond, the Kelton Apartments were where special occasions including birthdays, Easters, Christmases, and graduations were celebrated with, as Raymond Neutra put it, the "heart of the family," Dione's parents. The Swiss-born Alfred, an electrical engineer and serious amateur violinist, and the German-born Lilly Niedermann moved from the Strathmore Apartments to Unit 648 at the Kelton Apartments in 1942. Dione, an accomplished cellist, and her father played string quartets with close friends—such as Arnold Schoenberg, the celebrated Modern composer and pianist and the author, educator, and violinist Louis Kievmán, who commissioned Neutra to design the apartment building next door—and sometimes with sons Raymond and Dion.<sup>15</sup> Neutra's older brother Wilhelm had also played in string quartets in Vienna with Schoenberg, so the Neutras were maintaining the family tradition in the New World. Lilly Niedermann was, especially, a "crucial" support to Neutra, according to son Raymond, and family letters reflect her architectural sophistication and appreciation for his professional objectives. The Niedermanns had encouraged their son-in-law to enter the 1921 League of Nations competition.

Beginning with his mid-1920s series of utopian city planning schemes known as *Rush City, Reformed*, Neutra demonstrated his concern for changing family patterns by designing flexible spaces that could be readily reconfigured. The Kelton Apartments were no exception. The complex was the ceremonial center of the extended family's activities, and as family circumstances changed, so did living arrangements. All these varied individuals occupied all the different spaces that Neutra designed, ranging from the light-filled two-bedroom Unit 646, to the "Kelton Gardeners Room," the tiny 123-square-foot space, with hotplate and tiny sink, carved into the hillside from half the original carport on the east.<sup>16</sup> Son Raymond Neutra noted that his father took special delight in designing that tiny space. His care to disguise toilet equipment with a more useful and more dignified seating and storage unit when not in use is emblematic of Neutra's problem-solving approach to small spaces and his lifelong intention to provide the ordinary person with quality design.

The room was first occupied by sister-in-law Regula Niedermann Thorsten, who moved there in 1955 to take care of her parents after retiring from her role as executive office manager of the Neutra practice. It is a *pièce de résistance* of space-saving design: the toilet is hidden beneath a flip-up plywood shelf, part of a clever assemblage of storage that included a narrow bed, shelving, and even a closet. Stained a dark rich reddish brown, the grouping is reminiscent of

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<sup>15</sup> Louis Kievmán (1910-1990) was a close friend of the Neutras and commissioned the El-Kay (for LK) Apartments next door. The two-story, five-unit building was constructed in 1948 and designated City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument 368 on June 21, 1988.

<sup>16</sup> "Kelton Gardners [sic] Room" was the title of the undated perspective drawing of the room. Yellow trace, Collection 1179, Richard and Dion Neutra Papers, Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

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strategies that Neutra admired in vernacular Japanese dwellings as he was long interested in built-in storage and ergonomic relationships.<sup>17</sup> He published “A Study of Storage Elements” analyzing how cabinetry can save gratuitous steps and labor in the *Architectural Forum* in October 1937. The generous amount of glazing on the east and south illuminate the interior and prevent it from being too dark and claustrophobic. The Kelton Gardener’s Room is an important character-defining feature of the Kelton Apartments.

While the Niedermanns had initially desired the compactness of Unit 648, not long after they moved in Raymond Neutra recalls that one Christmas Eve in the 1940s, Richard and Dione and the boys arrived from Silverlake “to find no Christmas tree! When asked about this, my grandmother raised her eyebrows and said that a surprise was in store. After a glass of wine, she opened the closet door and led us through the closet to a whole other room which she had appropriated from Unit 644 [presumably with her son-in-law’s permission.] There was a Christmas tree with candles burning!”<sup>18</sup> From then on, both Unit 644 and Unit 648 became one-bedroom apartments. Photograph 20 shows the two doors that originally separated the units; the door on the left leads to the bedroom appropriated by the Niedermanns.<sup>19</sup>

The Niedermanns continued to live in Unit 648 from 1942 to 1964, when Regula married Hans Fybel. The Fybels moved into Unit 644, remaining there until 1993, while the Neutra’s Silverlake housekeeper, Evelyn Francis, moved into the Gardener’s Room to assist Regula in caring for the elder Niedermanns. Richard and Dione’s oldest son, Frank, who was born with brain damage, received tutoring from a student who later became a professor of psychiatry at UCLA. Raymond and his wife Penny der Yuen lived in Unit 646 while he was an associate professor at UCLA from 1977 to 1980. Architect son Dion Neutra convalesced there from illness in the late 1950s. Neutra’s family life at the Kelton Apartments afforded the architect’s spatial explorations, observations, and conclusions about indoor-outdoor living at a very personal level.

Other notables who lived at the Apartments included actress Lilly Latte, wife of German director Fritz Lang, who lived in Unit 644 from 1954 to 1958 after moving there from the Strathmore Apartments. Noted architectural historian Thomas S. Hines, professor emeritus of history and architecture at UCLA, also lived in the Strathmore Apartments (1968-1973) before moving to the Kelton Apartments in 1989. In his biographical history on Neutra, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, Hines wrote,

...Around the corner from Strathmore... Neutra designed a modest but fetching apartment triplex... Two small juxtaposed ground-floor flats formed the base of the larger and more lyrical second-story “tree-house” apartment, with inviting balcony roof

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<sup>17</sup> Neutra visited Japan in 1930 and wrote about Japanese houses and other aspects of Japanese life, urban planning, and design.

<sup>18</sup> Raymond Neutra, “Kelton Memories,” written recollections for author, April 22, 2019.

<sup>19</sup> The desire to design flexible spaces readily able to be reconfigured to suit changing family and user needs dates back to Neutra’s first independent project under German architect Erich Mendelsohn in 1922-23; this practice became a major feature of his work beginning with his apartment dwellings for his early 1920s hypothetical work called Rush City, Reformed.

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decks stretching into the trees at front and back. Less tautly dramatic than Strathmore and Landfair, Kelton looked ahead to Neutra's more relaxed and lyrical work of the 1940s.<sup>20</sup>

Four of the Strathmore's eight units and the Kelton Apartments that Neutra owned were valuable contributors to the family income. It showed the architect to be a conscientious business person aware of the value of owning property, as well as an innovative designer. As early as 1941, the same year the Kelton Apartments were permitted and completed, Neutra's 1941 tax return records revenue of \$680. By 1944, the annual revenue was \$2,350; depreciation for the apartments alleviated the family's tax burden even more.

### **Publicity and Recognition**

Publicity for the Kelton Apartments underscores its significance because as a building type a small freestanding three-unit apartment house was unusual in America. Proffering a viable alternative to the expense of single-family housing, the media interest was specifically oriented to innovative ways of saving space in a servantless world and to extolling the benefits of what was later termed as "tiny living."

The triplex was featured in several publications ranging from popular shelter magazines to progressive forums for Modern architecture including the *Sunday Home Magazine*, *Los Angeles Times*, October 6, 1946; *American Home*, September 1943; and *Arts + Architecture*, November 1942.<sup>21</sup> The project won a Certificate of Honor for design excellence from the American Institute of Architects, Southern California Chapter (AIA/SCC) December 10, 1946. Published March 30, 1947, another *Los Angeles Times* article, featuring the "Distinguished Honor" award for the Nesbitt House (Los Angeles, 1942), also noted the Kelton Apartments for the AIA/SCC award.<sup>22</sup> Among a number of Neutra-designed projects of different building types, the Kelton Apartments were singled out to be the cover photograph of a special edition monograph by Alexandre and Helen Persitz, *Richard J. Neutra*, published by the distinguished French journal of architecture, *L'architecture D'aujourd'hui* in 1946. The property was also included in a joint treatment of the Kelton, Strathmore, and Landfair Apartments in "Three Privately Developed Apartment Houses," in *Pencil Points* in 1944.

The *L'Architecture D'aujourd'hui* issue is especially compelling. Clearly Neutra won the approval of the French architectural community. In "Systematics: An Ingredient of Design," Neutra explains his approval of an architecture that exploits the "methodology of a war-trained industry," technology, prefabrication, and the use of systems in design on behalf of housing for everyone; additionally, he argues, the use of technology allows a closer—not more distant—relationship with nature.<sup>23</sup> An essay by Marcel Lods, president of the French Association of Architects Prefabricators, eloquently supports Neutra's position on better and more housing

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<sup>20</sup> Thomas S. Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982, 172.

<sup>21</sup> Collection 1179, Richard and Dion Neutra Papers, Charles Young Research Library, UCLA, Box 1319, Folder 10.

<sup>22</sup> Lee Howard, "Enchantment Takes the Prize," *Los Angeles Times*, 30 March 1947, E4; "Three Privately Developed Apartment Houses," *Pencil Points*, January 1944, 51 – 58.

<sup>23</sup> Richard Neutra, "Systematics: An Ingredient of Design," *L'Architecture D'aujourd'hui*, May-June 1946, 7.

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through “rational systems,” finding his work “an invigorating new expression of architecture.” Likewise, author Persitz notes that Neutra’s “most characteristic principle [is that] every design... is planned to determine a typical solution which can, if required, serve as a basis for industrial production.”<sup>24</sup> He also emphasized Neutra’s egalitarian approach, “the same towards a millionaire’s house as towards low-cost worker,” as well as his rejection of the architect as perceived as an individual seeking self-expression, instead embracing team work as the going paradigm in a modern society.<sup>25</sup>

Although not prefabricated, the Kelton Apartments embodies Neutra’s “egalitarian approach” in terms of the high level of care taken, whether the client is rich or poor, the project large or small, the client custom or speculative. In terms of systems, Neutra’s hybrid of standard American stud construction with post-and-beam construction, along with the consistent refinement of proven details, represents his lifelong search for systems that are consistent and predictable, yet are malleable.

While the French *L’Architecture D’aujourd’hui* extolled Neutra’s inventive “rational systems,” a 1944 issue of *Pencil Points*, then an important trade journal for the architectural profession, included Neutra’s trio as part of an edition dedicated to the challenges of apartment design, such as making mass housing feel individual or how to improve the acoustical quality of acoustics in multi-residential projects. *Pencil Points* praised Neutra’s ability to secure a steady source of income by designing flats that felt like private homes, calling out such features as the wide (36”) closet doors, providing for ease of use; vented base cabinetry and trash receptacles to keep produce and air fresh; linoleum or hardwood floors; and even “numerous convenience outlets,” another deluxe feature more likely specified for a private custom house, not a typical apartment.<sup>26</sup>

Other popular American publications were focused on changing domestic realities during World War II, as seen in a 1943 issue of *The American Home*. Neutra’s design perfectly summed up the *Home*’s opening line, “In a world at war, the order of the day is simple living!”<sup>27</sup> It highlighted the smallest unit, 648 (then still a studio or publicized as one) for its easy livability with “straw rugs that can be washed with a hose... built-in furniture... a spot for quickie meals in the kitchen... everything in this one-room home is for comfort and economy!” The article discussed the cost of the Celotex board used for walls and ceiling (\$60.50 for a room 12’ x 16’.)<sup>28</sup> The article also praised the open plan, noting that that kitchen was “partitioned only by bookcases so

<sup>24</sup> Alexandre Persitz, “A Twentieth Century Architect,” *L’Architecture D’aujourd’hui*, May-June 1946, 12.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> “Unusual and Highly Successful Apartments in Los Angeles, Calif.,” *Pencil Points*, January 1944, 51 – 54.

<sup>27</sup> “2 Solutions for Minimum Housekeeping, Gracious Surroundings, for Busy People!”, *The American Home*, September 1943, 34-36. Collection 1179, Richard and Dion Neutra Papers, Charles Young Research Library, UCLA, Box 1319, Folder 10.

<sup>28</sup> Celotex wood fiber board and gypsum board products saw increasing use in construction due to the scarcity of building materials during WWII.

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you can continue a conversation with friends while whipping up the lunch, or listen to a Chopin sonata while peeling the potatoes for dinner.”<sup>29</sup>

*Arts + Architecture*'s lavish three-page spread of Shulman images used Neutra's project description verbatim. Although the article was published almost a year after America entered World War II, it made no mention of war.<sup>30</sup> By contrast, the *Los Angeles Times Sunday Magazine* issue of October 6, 1946 introduced its article "Apartments That Take To The Hills" with a reminder of wartime restrictions. It noted that for all their compactness, Neutra's apartments expressed "true homelike character" and a "fine relationship to the outdoors" as well as providing the "elasticity of usage of every nook and corner so needed today, and the double and triple functioning of every square foot of floor area," a compliment that Neutra, who regularly ensured that his hard-working details perform more than one function, must have appreciated.”<sup>31</sup>

Both popular magazines highlighted views and landscape. The most luxurious element seemed to be the privacy afforded by the perpendicular orientation of the units, their situations on the sloping site, and the staircases that "thoroughly segregated" one unit from another.<sup>32</sup> Later tenants note the same attributes: views and privacy. Professor Hines goes much farther, noting that while the Strathmore Apartments were "more dramatic, living here changed my life. It's expansive, a liberated feeling. Neutra was a master of proportion: the parts just seem to fit. I feel it every time I walk in.”<sup>33</sup>

## Conclusion

In Neutra's canon, like other properties of the late 1930s and early 1940s, the Kelton Apartments definitively steps away from a Eurocentric International Style palette of silver-colored paint and white stucco toward a more relaxed, woodsy sensibility that became prevalent in later work. It is the only design in this period that is an apartment building, not a single-family residence. The Kelton Apartments also demonstrates Neutra's ability to exploit a sloping site and to establish and then manipulate a single vocabulary of finishes and fixtures to achieve individuality among the three units, and his dexterity and innovation in creating the maximum flexibility of use in the tiny, leftover space called the Kelton Gardener's Room. Retaining a very high degree of integrity in location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and especially association with the Neutra family, the property is an excellent example of Richard Neutra's early and transitional work. Designated as City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument 365 in 1988, the Kelton Apartments is eligible for listing at the local level of significance on the National Register of Historic Places.

<sup>29</sup> "Ibid. The open kitchen idea was one also employed by architect and early Neutra protégé Gregory Ain, whose original plan for the Avenel Apartments, partially funded by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA)

<sup>30</sup> "Kelton Apartments," *Arts + Architecture*, November 1942, Collection 1179, Richard and Dion Neutra Papers, Charles Young Research Library, UCLA, Box 1319, Folder 10.

<sup>31</sup> Painting an area brown may protect underlying woodwork, and the dark color also assisted an area or plane to recede, which Neutra desired to achieve based on Gestalt theories of aesthetics of projection/recession and figure/ground.

<sup>32</sup> "Apartments That Take To The Hills," *Los Angeles Times Sunday Magazine*, October 6, 1946, 9.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas S. Hines, interview with author, June 8, 2019.

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Office of the Assessor, Los Angeles County. 500 W. Temple St., Los Angeles.

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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
- 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: City of Los Angeles, Office of Historic Resources SurveyLA

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** less than one acre

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

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1. Latitude: 34.065456      Longitude: -118.452812

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

The legal description of the property is TRACT # 9617 LOT 6 BLK 4, AIN 4363-014-006.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes all resources associated with the Kelton Apartments and represents the legal original and unchanged property lines.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Dr. Barbara Lamprecht, M.Arch., Ph.D.  
organization: Modern Resources Research Rehabilitation Restoration  
street & number: 550 E. Jackson Street  
city or town: Pasadena state: CA zip code: 91104-3621  
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telephone: (626) 264-7600  
date: July 2019; Revised August 2019

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**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: Kelton Apartments  
City or Vicinity: Los Angeles  
County: Los Angeles  
State: California  
Photographer: 1-3; 5-8; 10-23: Laura Orozco  
4, 9: Barbara Lamprecht  
Date Photographed: June 8, 2019

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

- 1 of 23 West (primary) elevation, camera facing east
- 2 of 23 Northwest corner of the garage, camera facing southeast
- 3 of 23 North elevation as view moves around corner and up driveway, camera facing southeast
- 4 of 23 North and west elevations, camera facing southwest
- 5 of 23 North elevation, camera facing south
- 6 of 23 East elevation, distant view, camera facing west
- 7 of 23 East elevation, near view, camera facing west
- 8 of 23 South elevation, eastern end, camera facing west
- 9 of 23 South elevation, western end, camera facing northeast
- 10 of 23 South-facing entry, Unit 644 (middle unit), camera facing north
- 11 of 23 North terrace, Unit 644, camera facing west
- 12 of 23 Detail, exterior lighting, Unit 644
- 13 of 23 West terrace, Unit 646 (upper unit), camera facing east
- 14 of 23 West terrace, Unit 646, camera facing north
- 15 of 23 Fireplace opposite entry, Unit 646, camera facing south

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- 16 of 23 Rotary cut Douglas Fir plywood wall, Unit 646, camera facing southeast
- 17 of 23 Dining bay and view to west terrace, Unit 646, camera facing west
- 18 of 23 Dining bay showing Philippine mahogany wall, Unit 646, camera facing south
- 19 of 23 Living room and west terrace beyond, Unit 646, camera facing west
- 20 of 23 Living area, west end, Unit 648 (smallest unit, ground floor), camera facing west
- 21 of 23 Living area, east end, with fireplace, Unit 648, camera facing east
- 22 of 23 Kelton Gardener's Room, built-in toilet/sink/bed compartment, toilet cover closed, camera facing west
- 23 of 23 Kelton Gardener's Room, built-in toilet/sink/bed compartment, toilet cover open, camera facing southwest

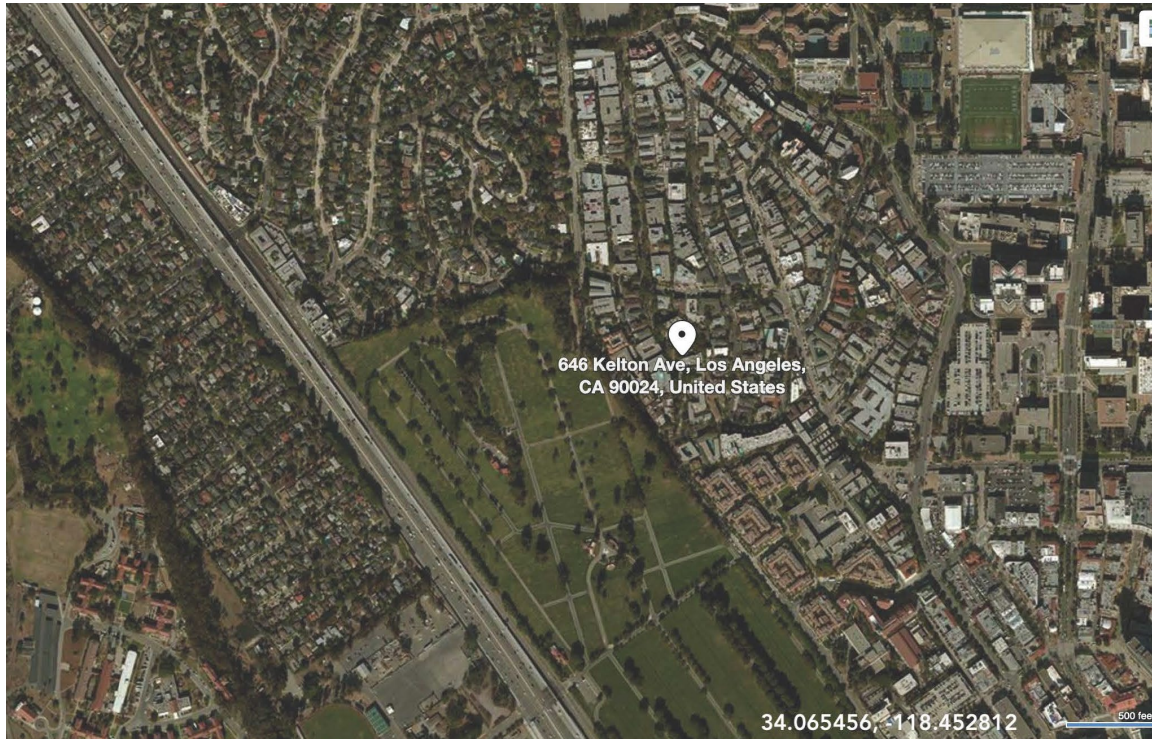
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

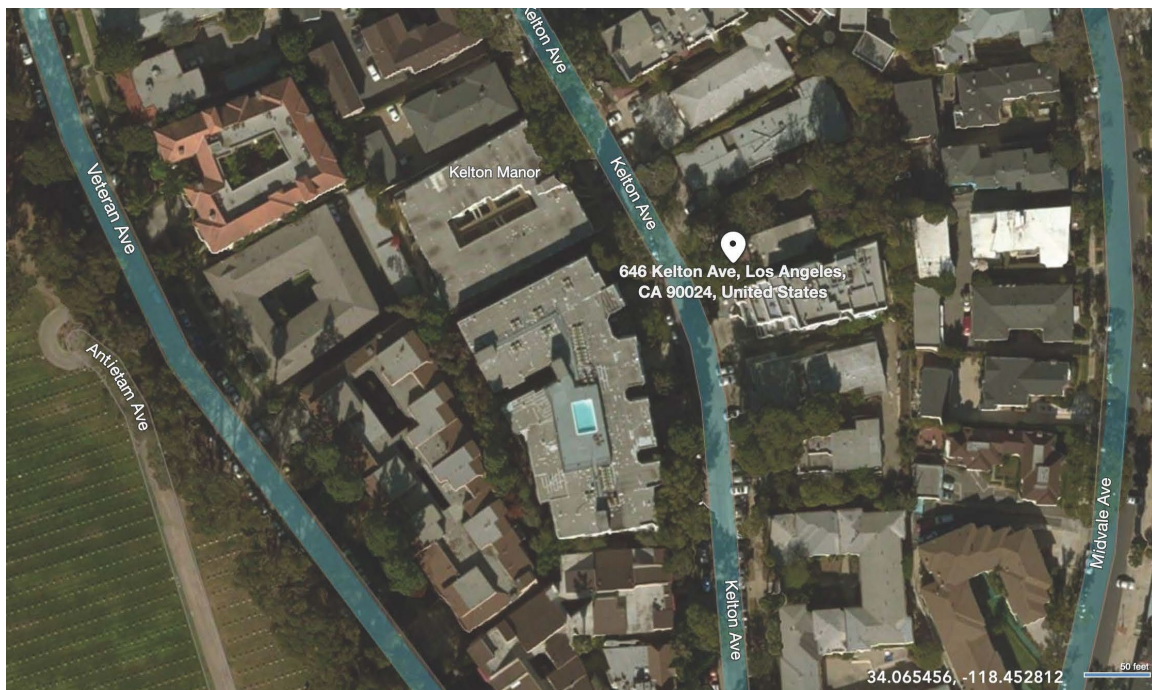
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**Location Map (distant view)**



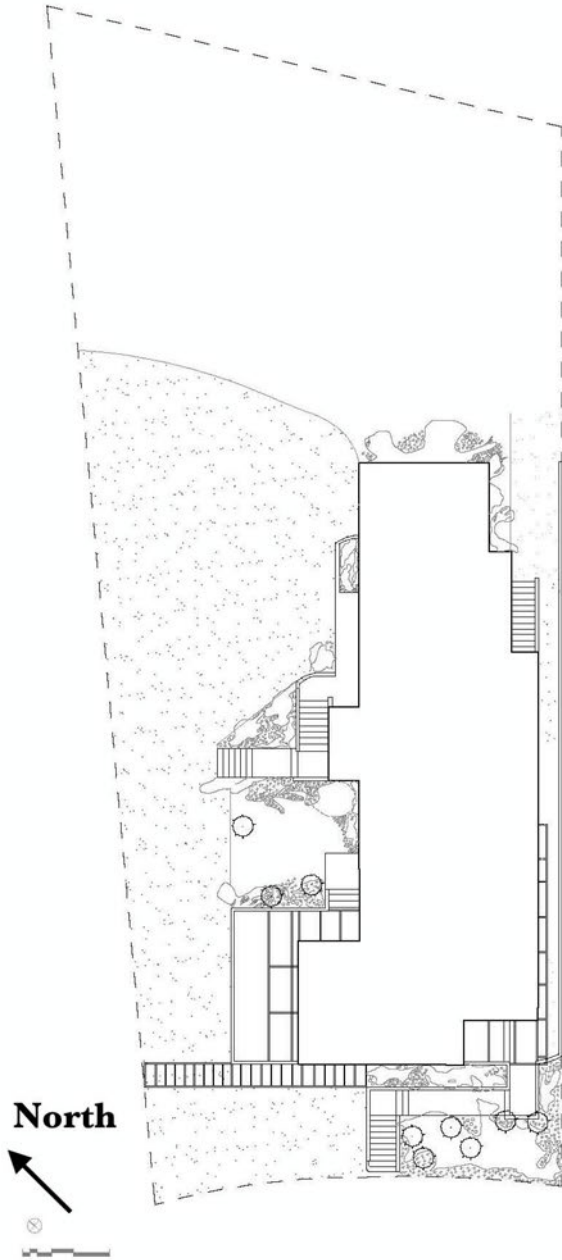
**Location Map (near view)**



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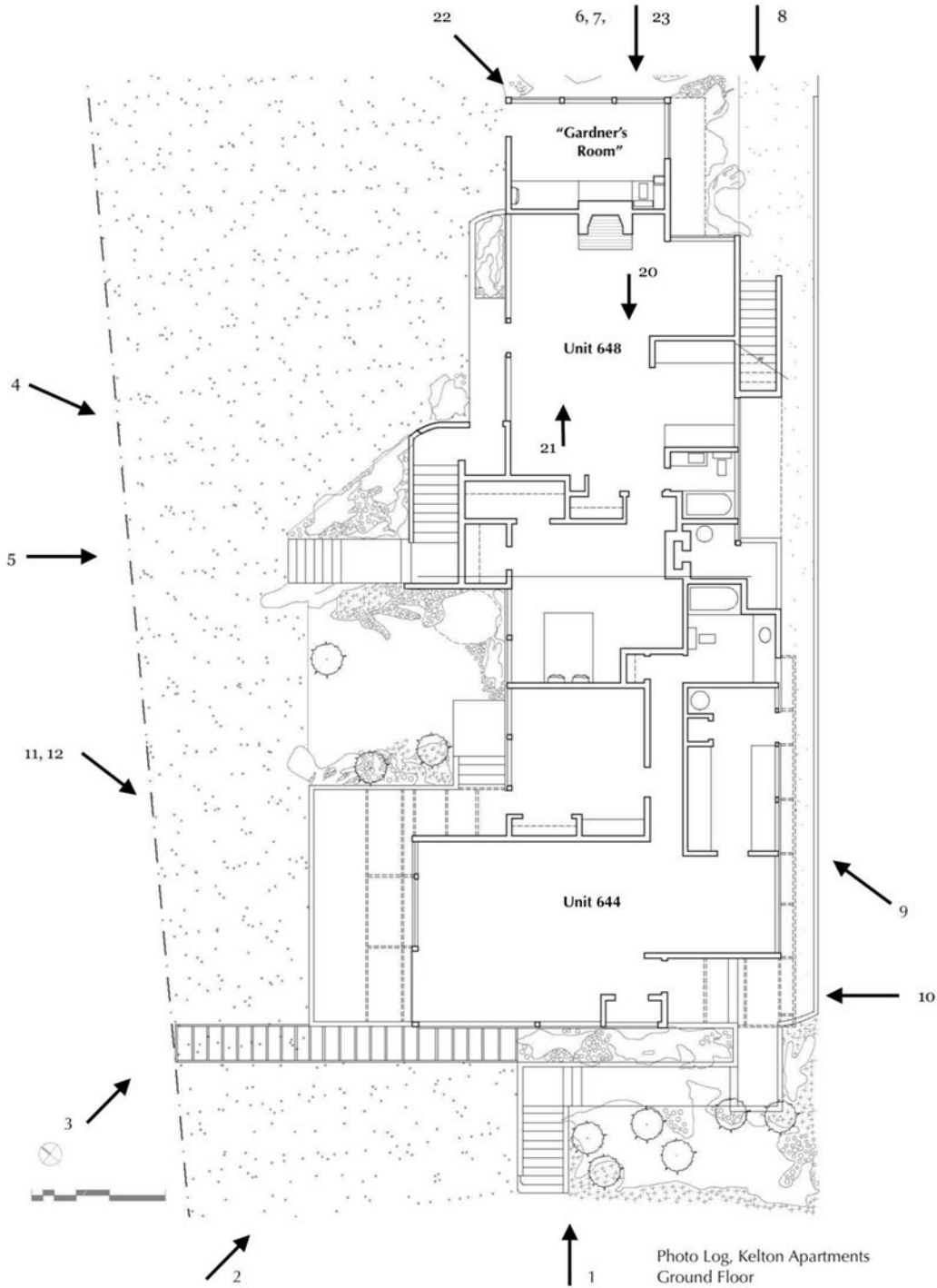
**Site Map**



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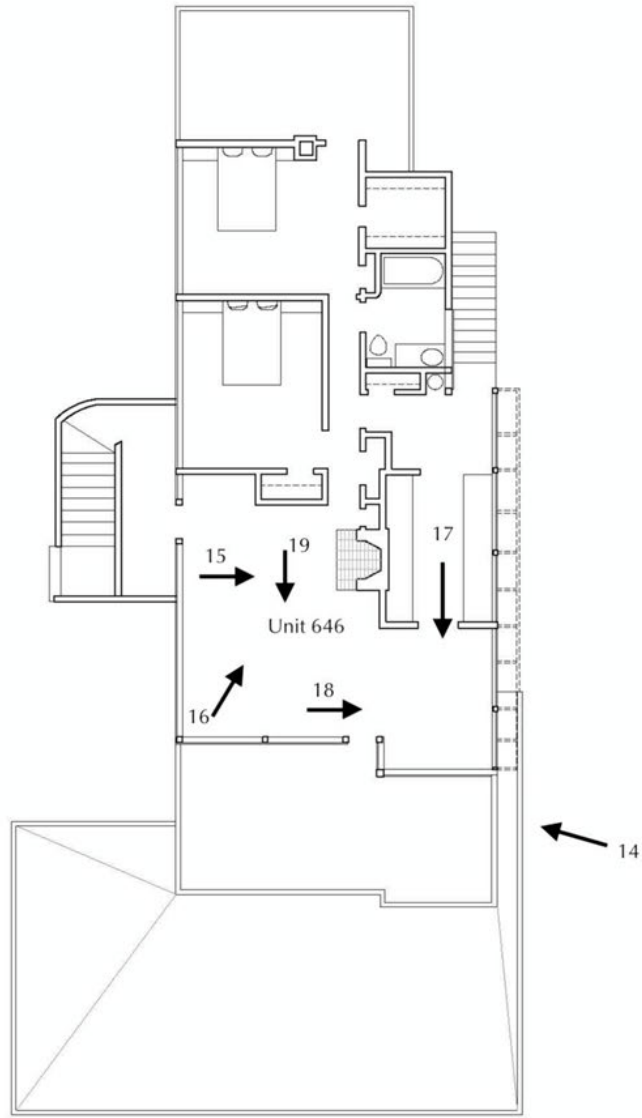
**Sketch Map/Photo Key 1 of 2**



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**Sketch Map/Photo Key 2 of 2**



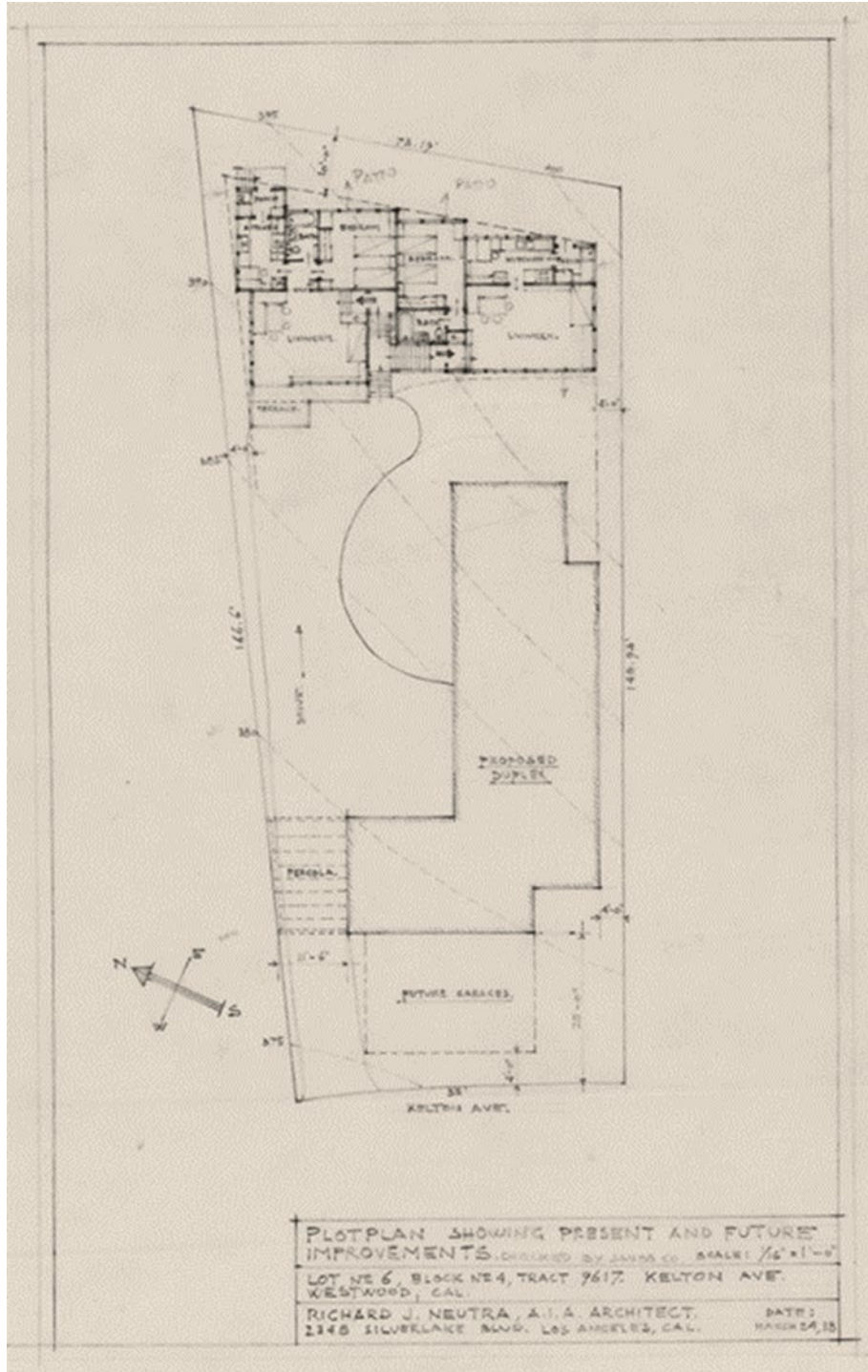
13 ↑  
Photo Log, Kelton Apartments,  
Upper Floor



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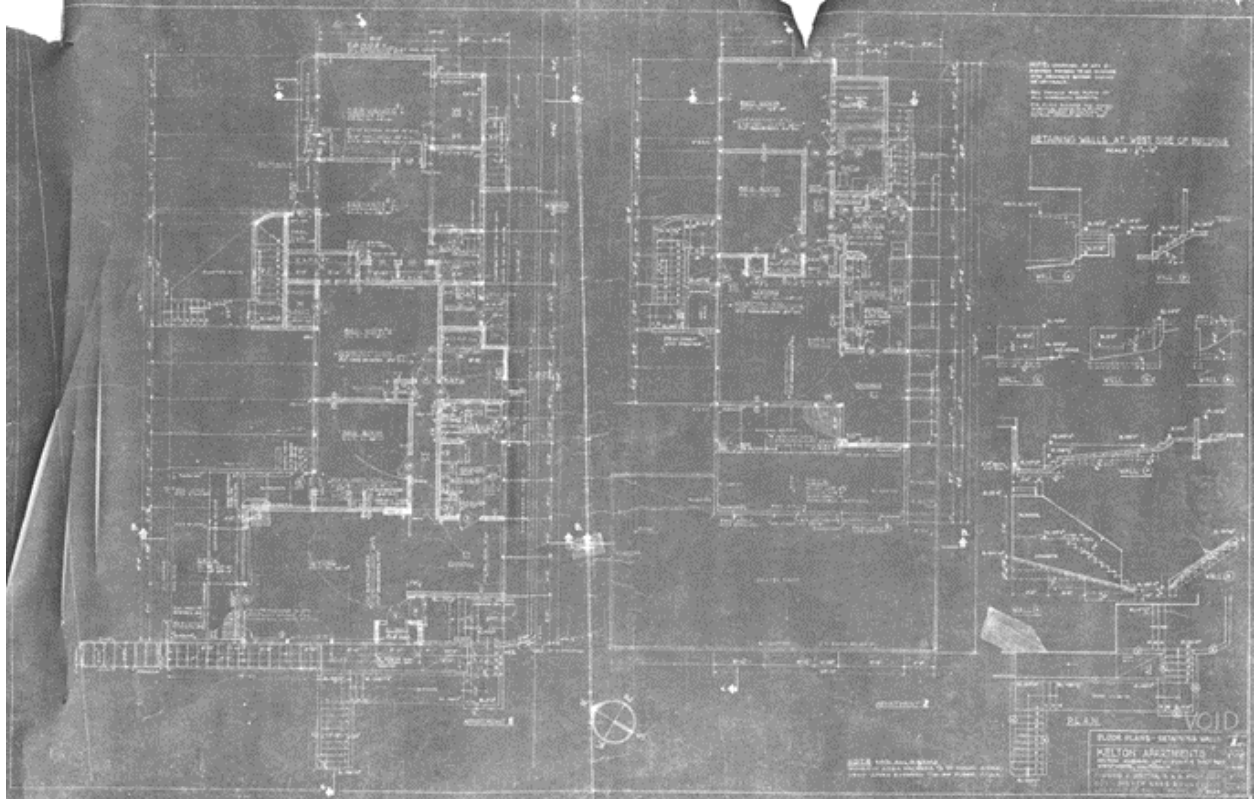
**Figure 1.** Preliminary Site Plan March 24, 1938. Note rear two units apparently planned first (never built); front building loosely sketched and constructed.



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**Figure 2.** Floor plans, Blueprint, Nov. 19, 1940. Richard and Dion Neutra Papers, Collection 1179, Special Collections, UCLA.

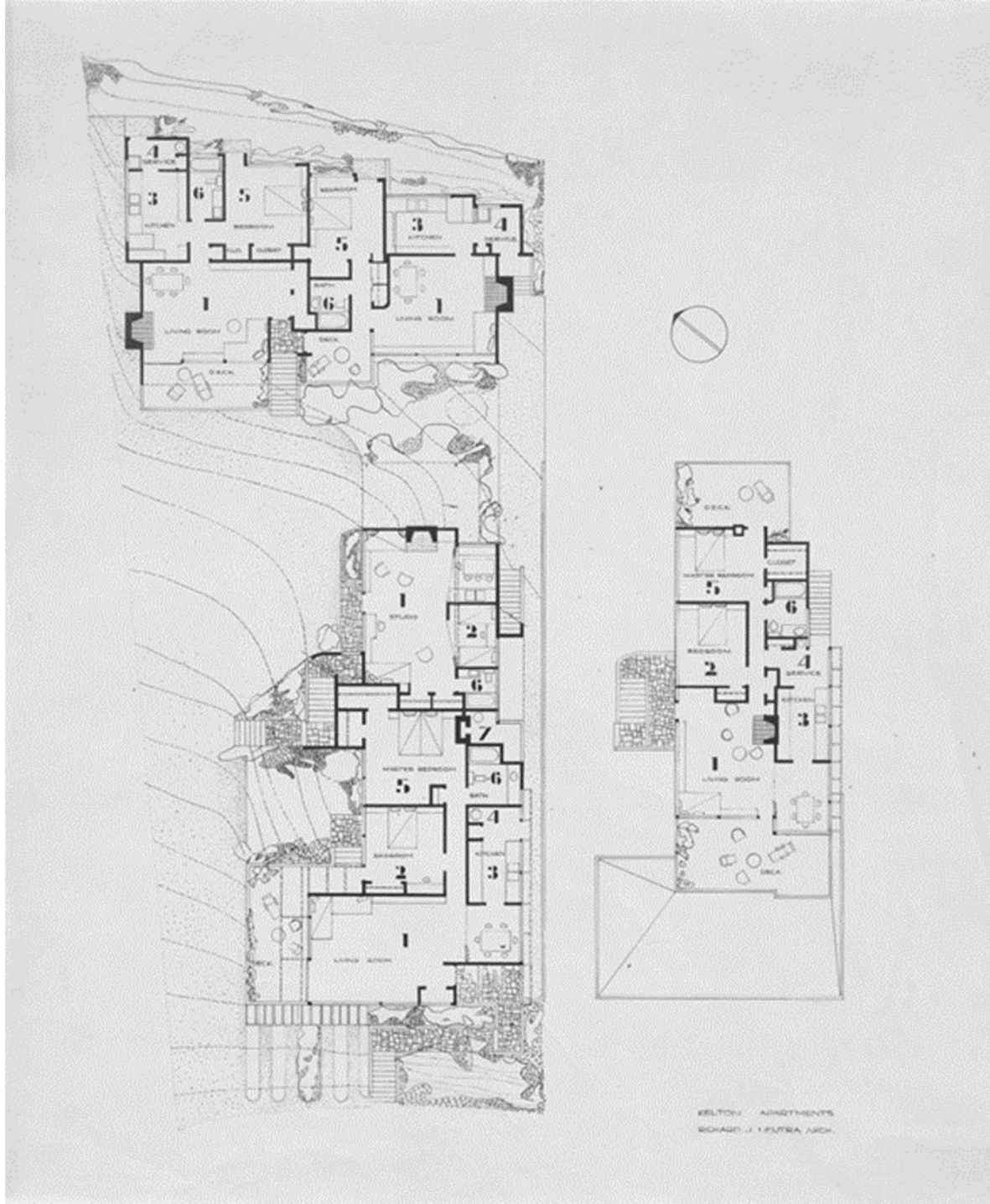




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**Figure 3.** Floor plans, Presentation, undated. Richard and Dion Neutra Papers, Collection 1179, Special Collections, UCLA.



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**Figure 4.** North elevation, camera facing southwest. Photo by Julius Shulman, © J. Paul Getty Trust. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2004.R.10). Job 070, 1949.



**Figure 5.** North terrace, Unit 646 (upper unit), and steps leading down to the unit's private garden, camera facing west. Photo by Julius Shulman, © J. Paul Getty Trust. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles 2004.R.10). Job 070, 1949.



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**Figure 6.** West elevation, Unit 644 (middle unit), steps leading up and garage at left, camera facing southeast. Photo by Julius Shulman, © J. Paul Getty Trust. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2004.R.10). Job 070, 1949.



**Figure 7.** Living room and dining bay, Unit 646 (upper unit), camera facing southwest. Photo by Julius Shulman, © J. Paul Getty Trust. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles 2004.R.10). Job 070, 1949.



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**Figure 8.** Unit 648 (smallest unit, ground floor), camera facing south. Home of Mr. and Mrs. Niedermann. Note dark paint in sofa cubicle to create a defined, more sheltering space. Photo by Julius Shulman, © J. Paul Getty Trust. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2004.R.10). Job 070, 1949.



**Figure 9.** Midvale-Kelton Apartment Historic District, City of Los Angeles Planning Department Westwood Report, Historic Districts, Planning Districts and Multi-Property Resources (April 2, 2015), 251.



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**Figure 10.** Los Angeles County Assessor's Tract 9617, Map Book 134-78-82, Sheet 3.



**Figure 11.** North façade, Kelton Apartments. Model and photograph courtesy of “Atlas of Interiors,” DASTU-Politecnico di Milano, Athens Course.



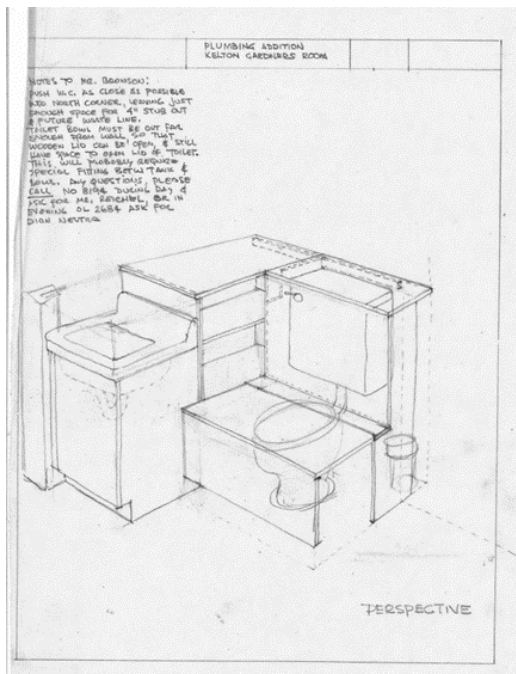
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**Figure 12.** Neutra family: Richard Neutra, Vicki Neutra, Dion Neutra, Lilly Niedermann, Alfred Niedermann, Regula Thorsten, Dione Neutra, Raymond Neutra. Early 1950s, photographer unknown. Photo courtesy of Raymond Neutra.



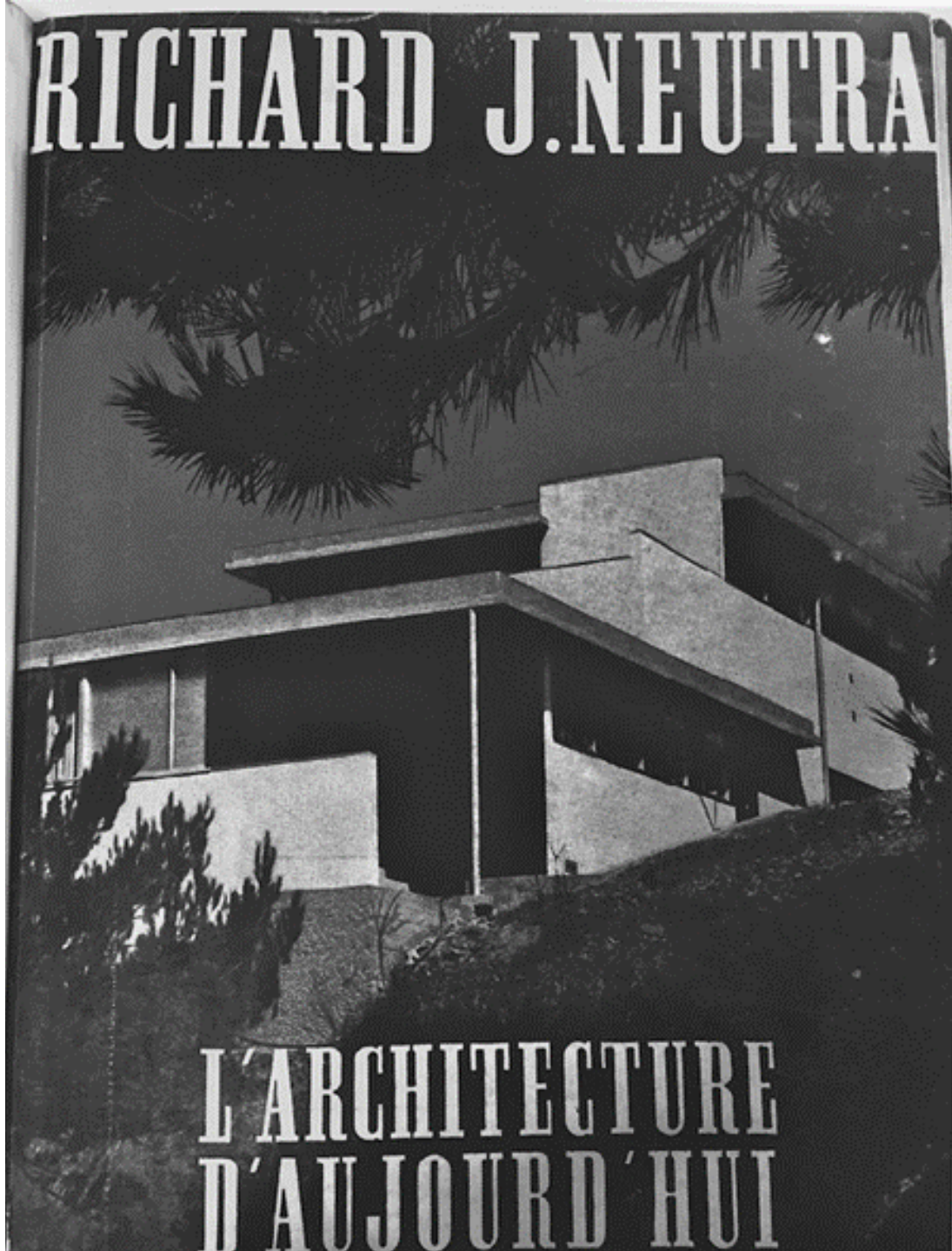
**Figure 13.** Kelton Gardeners Room toilet/storage/sink unit. Richard and Dion Neutra Papers, Collection 1179, Special Collections, UCLA.



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**Figure 14.** *L'Architecture D'aujourd'hui*, May-June 1946 cover. UCLA, Southern California Regional Library Facility.



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**Figure 15a.** “2 Solutions for Minimum Housekeeping, Gracious Surroundings, for Busy People!” *The American Home*, September 1943, 34-36. Collection 1179, Richard and Dion Neutra Papers, Charles Young Research Library, UCLA. [See transcription Figure 15b.]

**2 Solutions**  
for  
**MINIMUM HOUSEKEEPING,**  
**GRACIOUS SURROUNDINGS**  
for  
**BUSY PEOPLE!**

**I**N A world at war, the order of the day is for simple living! That one can have gracious surroundings, and at the same time little maintenance expense and minimum housekeeping we hereby set out to prove.

The lovely room on your left is one done by the Critec Corporation who wanted to do a cheerful, livable room for a warworker with a suggestive idea in mind that home owners in war production areas can re-do a spare or attic room in this manner. Ceiling and walls, based on a room 12' x 14' amounts to \$60.50—(all Critec products, of course!) The furniture purchased at Marshall Field & Co. unpainted, including the chest, 2 side chairs, coffee table, upholstered chair and end table, amounts to \$94. The cost of finishing this in blonde color shown was \$25. The twin lamps on the table are

*Photograph, John Steinhilber*

The one-room home of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Neiderman  
RICHARD NEUTRA, Architect

*Photograph on living page  
by Bruce of King Studios*

Built in couches, a single chair, a small coffee table, completely furnish fireplace end.  
Ivory white plaster walls are given contrast by natural brick of fireplace

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**Figure 15b.** “2 Solutions for Minimum Housekeeping, Gracious Surroundings, for Busy People!” Transcription

Page 35 In a world at war, the order of the day is for simple living! That one can have gracious surroundings, and at the same time little maintenance expense, we hereby set out to prove.

The lovely room on your left... [refers to a non-Neutra apartment on facing page]

Upper  
Caption The one-room home of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Niederman  
Richard Neutra, Architect

Lower  
Caption Built-in couches, a single chair, a small coffee table, completely furnish [*sic*] fireplace end. Ivory white plaster walls are given contrast by natural brick of fireplace.