

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: Mitchell Camera Corporation

Other names/site number: Studio One (preferred), The Factory

Name of related multiple property listing:

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

2. Location

Street & number: 661-665 N Robertson Boulevard & 652 N. La Peer Drive

City or town: West Hollywood 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Not For Publication: Vicinity: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 : 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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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility
- COMMERCE/professional
- COMMERCE/business
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/music facility
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater
- COMMERCE/restaurant
- INDUSTRY/industrial storage

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- RECREATION AND CULTURE/music facility
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility
- COMMERCE/business
- COMMERCE/restaurant

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

CONTRIBUTING:

No Style

NONCONTRIBUTING:

Modern Movement

Other: Zig-Zag Moderne

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

CONTRIBUTING:

foundation: Reinforced Concrete Block

walls: Copper Steel Panels

roof: Asphalt, Copper Steel

other: Metal Framed Industrial Windows

NONCONTRIBUTING:

foundation: Reinforced Concrete Block

walls: Stucco

roof: Asphalt

Other: Metal Framed Industrial Windows

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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 Mitchell Camera Corporation Factory/Studio One Disco-Backlot Theatre building, known as The Factory, is one of the earliest reinforced concrete and steel buildings in West Hollywood. When completed in 1929, The Factory was celebrated as the “largest factory in the world manufacturing exclusively standard professional motion picture cameras” with approximately 26,000 square feet of factory floor space. The Factory building is the only known surviving example of a Truscon Steel Company building in West Hollywood and Southern California. The two-story (with basement) industrial building is a daylight factory designed and built by notable daylight factory, design-build company Truscon Steel Company using all Truscon materials and products.¹

The Factory building is located on Assessor’s Parcel Number 4336-009-007 in the City of West Hollywood. The lot is L-shaped. The former factory building and a noncontributing small, stucco building are sited on the north side of a single parcel fronting Robertson Avenue south of Santa Monica Boulevard. La Peer Drive runs along the west (rear) of the parcel. The former factory building has two street addresses, 661-665 North Robertson and 648 North La Peer Drive.² The two buildings occupy approximately 75% of the entire of the parcel; the rest of the parcel is parking lot. The Factory building’s form is irregular with steel-copper panels and factory windows on all four elevations, a flat roof, and a factory-windowed monitor. The single-story (and basement) stucco building is a rectangular-shaped with a square, stucco rear addition built in 1940.

Narrative Description

The Factory building has a minimally pitched roof with a one-story, very low gabled monitor running the full length of the building, east to west. The eaves are slightly projecting. There are numerous air conditioner units on the roof. A metal band is riveted along the cornice line and

¹ American Cinematographer, “The Mitchell’s New Home,” 34.

² County of Los Angeles Assessor Records.

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runs around the entire building. The building, including monitor, is covered by decoratively pressed sidewall panels made of copper and steel, and industrial steel sash windows.³

Exterior: The Factory – East Façade

The east façade (Robertson Boulevard) is somewhat hidden by trees. The east façade contains two banks of industrial sash windows with sidewall panels above and below each bank. It has 10 bays. (See Figure 1 and Figure 2) The industrial sash windows alternate in a pattern of five lights high and three lights wide all fixed, and, five lights high and three lights wide with six panes pivoting. The sidewall panels are each 4' high and 2'8" wide.⁴ Each bay is two panels side by side, one window, panels two over two, one window, and, panels two over two. The industrial sash windows and copper steel panels are painted black.

The ground level basement is of reinforced concrete. There is one double metal fire door and a bank of four industrial sash windows of two lights high and three lights across with six panes pivoting. A 1939 Sanborn map shows the location of the fire door as original.

An attached industrial, metal staircase leads from the ground floor to the second floor. According to city permits, the staircase was added in 1971. A double glass door was added circa 2010 on the second floor. There was a single metal door prior. Above the double glass door, there is a steel panel measuring approximately 8' wide and 2'8" high. The original industrial sash windows on the second floor were replaced with industrial fixed windows in 2014-2015, and most recently in 2016. The monitor is covered by sidewall panels approximately 4' in length and 13'4" in height.⁵ An unattached concrete block half-wall runs along the sidewalk in front of the building and continues west, back toward the building. A multi-paned wooden door is in the opening of the half-wall at the sidewalk.

Exterior: The Factory – South Façade

The lot's grade rises going east to west. The ground level basement is approximately 9' to 10' high at the east end and approximately 2' high at the west end. Three openings in the first floor and one in the second floor are entrances into the building.

The south façade contains two banks of industrial sash windows with sidewall panels above and below each bank. It is 60 bays long. The industrial sash windows alternate in a pattern of five lights high and three lights wide all fixed, and, five lights high and three lights wide with six panes pivoting. The sidewall panels are each 4' high and 2'8" wide. Each bay is two panels side by side, one window, panels two over two, one window, and, panels two over two.

³ "Truscon Permanent Buildings," accessed January 26, 2015, <https://archive.org/details/TrusconPermanentBuildingsStandardizedForGeneralIndustries>, 29-33.

⁴ Ibid, 29.

⁵ Ibid.

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The first floor has a bank of industrial sash windows alternating between five lights high and three across with six panes pivoting, and, five lights high and three across fixed. The sidewall panels are approximately 4' wide and 2'8" high. There are three steel panels approximately 4' wide and 7' high at the west end in the first floor. There is a single wood door, a single metal door, a large, sectional steel door with a metal awning, and a single commercial glass door that is the entrance to the commercial business that occupies most of the first floor interior. Some of the original industrial sash windows on the second floor were replaced with industrial, single pane, fixed windows in 2014-2015.

The sectional steel door does not appear on the last Sanborn map of the area (1961), however, the machinery operating it from the interior indicates it may be original Truscon engine/machinery.⁶

The second floor has a bank of industrial sash windows that alternate between a pattern of 2 three lights high and three across fixed, and, 3 three lights high and three across with six panes pivoting. The sidewall panels are approximately 4' wide and 5'4" high.

There is an attached industrial metal staircase that leads from the ground to the second floor. A wood, privacy fence encloses underneath the stairs. There is an attached industrial sprinkler system that appears to be original. Four air conditioning units sit on the building roof.

The monitor runs the full length of the building, east to west. The monitor has a bank of industrial steel sash windows that alternate between a pattern of three lights high and five lights wide with six panes pivoting, and three lights high and six lights wide with eight panes pivoting. Approximately ten original, industrial steel sash windows were replaced with industrial, double, fixed pane windows in 2015 and 2016. The industrial sash windows and copper steel panels are painted black.

A single floor, brick structure abuts the south façade at the eastern end. There are two small, wood structures that abut the south façade at the western end and middle.

Exterior: The Factory – West Façade

The west façade (La Peer Drive) contains one bank of industrial sash windows with sidewall panels above and below the bank. It has 10 bays. The industrial sash windows alternate in a pattern of five lights high and three lights wide all fixed, and, five lights high and three lights wide with six panes pivoting. The sidewall panels are approximately 4' high and 2'8" wide. Each bay is panels two over two repeated three times, one window, and, panels two over two. The industrial sash windows and copper steel panels are painted black.

⁶ See CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0037.

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The ground level basement is approximately one foot high and made of reinforced concrete block. Two openings in the first floor are entrances into the building.

A double glass door and one single glass door appear to have been added between 1969 and 1978 according to historical photographs. It is likely the glass doors were added during the Studio One Disco-Backlot Theatre period of significance (1974-1984). A 1969 photograph shows a large, double door opening, which looks very similar to a 1929 interior photograph. (See Figure 4 and Figure 9) The large, single door opening appears to have been fitted with double glass doors and a single glass door was added between 1969 and 1978. A 1978 Studio One disco photograph shows the glass doors. (See Figure 5)

A Truscon Standard Steel Sliding Door appears to be from the Mitchell Camera Corporation period of significance (1929-1946) according to the 1939 Sanborn maps. The door is a single leaf, manually operated, horizontal, sliding door approximately 7' high and 6' with six lights, three over two above sidewall panels.⁷

The first floor contains three industrial sash windows that are three lights high and three lights wide all fixed. One pane has been replaced with a metal vent cover grill. A sidewall panel approximately 2' wide and 8' high is between the windows and the glass doors. A sidewall panel approximately 2' wide and 8' high and a sidewall panel approximately 4' wide and 8' high are between the glass doors and the sliding door.

A metal ladder is attached to the second floor with curved, metal handrails attached to the roof. The monitor is covered by sidewall panels approximately 4' in length and 13'4" in height.

A canopy approximately 10' wide projects over the building's glass doors to the sidewalk. The canopy is made of a metal frame with 4 metal support posts. A freestanding handrail goes from between the double and single glass doors and the sidewalk. The handrail is made of galvanized, metal pipe.

Privacy walls approximately 8' high run from each side of the glass doors diagonally to the sidewalk. A quarter-wall runs along the sidewalk from the privacy wall to the canopy posts. The walls are made of concrete block covered in decorative tile.

Exterior: The Factory – North Façade

The north façade is similar to the south façade with the lot's grade rising from east to west, 60 bays long, two banks of industrial sash windows with the same fenestration pattern, sidewall panels, low front gable roof and monitor. Three openings in the north elevation are entrances with single metal doors. Some second floor and monitor original industrial sash windows were replaced with industrial fixed windows in 2014-2016. At the approximate middle of the north

⁷ "Truscon Permanent Buildings," accessed January 26, 2015, <https://archive.org/details/TrusconPermanentBuildingsStandardizedForGeneralIndustries>, 34.

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elevation is a side wing that protrudes from the building. The industrial sash windows and copper steel panels are painted green.

The side wing is similar to the larger rectangular building with two banks of industrial sash windows with a similar fenestration pattern, sidewall panels, low front gable roof and a monitor that runs from east to west. The east façade of the side wing is mostly hidden behind a 1929 stucco structure and a later second floor addition, electrical boxes and utility lines, wooden fencing, and industrial steel stairs. The west façade is partially hidden by partially attached, stucco structures with composite roofs added between 1942 to 1944 according to Sanborn maps and a wood-sided structure with a wood door that seems to have been added after 1961 according to Sanborn maps. The north façade contains an opening to the building on the second floor. It is a recessed double doorway. An attached metal staircase runs ground level to the second floor entrance. The staircase does not appear on the 1961 Sanborn map. A building permit refers to metal stairs being installed in May 1988 and a 1989 Studio One Disco event blueprint shows the stairs so it is likely the stair's addition is with in the Studio One Disco-Backlot Theatre period of occupation.

Mitchell Camera Corporation added numerous outbuildings between 1942-1944 (See Map 3) according to Sanborn maps for woodworking, heat treating, painting, storage and a gatehouse that, except for the ones still standing, have been demolished in the ensuing years. Mitchell Camera Corporation left West Hollywood for a larger factory in Glendale, California in 1946.

Interior: The Factory

The Factory's 1929 interior retains integrity. The first and second floors still expose the hallmarks and physical features of a Truscon-built building: Truscon Center Span Trusses, Open Truss Steel Joists, Truscon Steel Columns, sawed end grain wood block flooring (set in concrete slabs), and Truscon Stock Sash Daylight Partitions.⁸

When Mitchell Camera Corp occupied the building, there were partitions made up of Truscon Stock Sash Daylight Partitions; most of the factory floor was open. (See Figure 6 and Figure 9) Since Mitchell Camera Corp left in 1946, some of the Truscon partitions remained and are still in place on the first floor. The second floor is sectioned off with temporary partitions, much like it was during the Studio One and Backlot Theatre period of significance.

The foremost character defining features is the massing of space. One immediately knows they are in a factory building, mostly due to the size, scale, and interior open plan. Exposed trusses, joists, beams, and columns complete the integrity of the main space.

⁸ "O-T Open Truss Steel Joists: A Product of Truscon," accessed February 12, 2015. <http://archive.org/details/o-tOpenTrussSteelJoistsAProductOfTruscon>.

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Alterations: The Factory

The building retains almost all of its original Truscon copper steel sidewall panels. And it retains most of its original Truscon industrial steel sash windows. All of the sidewall wall panels have been painted. Most of the windows have been painted. Some of the original glass panes have been removed and replaced. Some of the first floor's sidewall panels are dented due to cars bumping into them.

The Factory, like all Truscon buildings, is earthquake proof.⁹ The building is mostly fire proof, except for the wooden floor that Mitchell Camera Corporation installed for its comfort and its vibration resistance.

There are air conditioning units on The Factory building's roof. Various utility lines are attached to The Factory building.

Features of the building have been altered throughout its lifetime. Most alterations reflect the industrial and manufacture upgrades and everyday maintenance. With the change of use to entertainment, a series of operators made cosmetic changes primarily to the interior. The list below documents the major alterations:

No date:	Steel panels painted, window panes painted
Between 1929-1939:	Possible addition of fire door at east façade
1948/1949, 1949/1950:	Storage buildings, varying from 360 square feet to 650 square feet
1950:	18 x 24 storage building
Between 1961-1978	1 single-glass door added to west façade entrance
1971:	Exterior staircase, east façade
1987/1988:	Studio One metal stairs
1994:	2 twenty-minute fire doors, Ladies and Men's Room
1999:	Tenant improvements to interior
1999:	New company in front entrance
1999:	New detached office, storage room addition
1999:	Tenant improvements to interior
2000:	Interior renovation of restaurant with new exterior canopy
2000/2001:	Welding – “structural steel TS frame canopy” – possibly west façade
2001:	Installation of fire alarm
2003:	Change of occupancy load
2005:	1 80 x 80 structure, possibly 1 30 x 70 structure
2007:	Remove existing roof, install 1 ply 28 lbs torch down class A roof
2008/2009:	Addition of awning to commercial building
Circa 2010:	Double-glass door on second floor, east façade
2014/2015, 2016:	Window replacement in existing frames

⁹ “Truscon Permanent Buildings,” accessed January 26, 2015, <https://archive.org/details/TrusconPermanentBuildingsStandardizedForGeneralIndustries>.

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Alterations have been for life-safety upgrades, window replacement within existing opening and reversible painted-out panes, upgraded entry doors for entertainment use, and setting change with privacy walls. Interior changes are limited to partition walls, which have been created according to need without damaging the primary open space. Mechanical and lighting rigs and reversible decoration elements contribute to the visual change, but do not impact the historic character of the main volume.

The Factory: Integrity

The Factory retains a high degree of integrity. The building has been in continual use since its completion in 1929. After Mitchell Camera Corporation vacated in 1946, the building was used as a drug and cosmetics warehouse, members-only nightclub, interior design offices and showroom, club and theater, various small shops, experimental theater, western-themed restaurant, hardware store, cabaret nightclub, and gay discotheque. The building continues to be used as a nightclub and restaurant, a gym, and offices. The Factory stands out as being one of the last remaining large, industrial buildings left from the manufacturing days of the 1920s-40s in that area, and even at that time The Factory stood out as being one of the only factories of its kind in West Hollywood.¹⁰

Location: Building has not changed location since construction.

Design: Building maintains industrial character with some alterations (noted above).

Setting: The setting has become increasingly urban. However, the change in surrounding uses has not altered the building's ability to convey its significance. The property shares a border with the Design District and Historic Boystown. Boystown is generally the area around Santa Monica Boulevard between La Cienega Boulevard (and as east as Crescent Heights Boulevard) and La Peer Drive. West Hollywood was a natural draw for gay and lesbian bars because the city was unincorporated until 1984, so the Sheriff's raids and crackdowns on the bars were not as frequent as in the incorporated cities like Los Angeles and Hollywood. The bars were small, windowless places, mostly without signage. In the 1960s and 1970s, the old nightclubs on the Sunset Strip became famous for their live music, especially folk and rock-and-roll. Free spirits, musicians, bohemians and LGBT moved into the surrounding neighborhoods. The area was given the nickname "Boy's Town." The west side of Santa Monica Boulevard is still considered the most LGBT part of West Hollywood and is now being referred to as "Historic Boystown." The Factory still hosts gay dance events, and across the street from the property on the east side is the most popular LGBT bar in Los Angeles called The Abbey, which is next to another LGBT bar and a LGBT restaurant.

Materials: Some materials have been altered, but materials from its construction remain. Others have been added (windows).

¹⁰ American Cinematographer, "The Mitchell's New Home," 34.

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Workmanship: The building reflects its Truscon features. The building retains a high degree of integrity in terms of design and workmanship. Some things have changed on the building's facades but the defining features of the daylight factory - monitor and large windows for natural light and ventilation, open interior - have all been retained. The building has lost some integrity of materials as some of the original industrial sash windows have been replaced and some of the copper and steel sidewall panels have been altered or bent. Since the building is very large and is clad only in sidewall panels and windows, and the interior Truscon trusses, joists, steel columns, and wood floor have been retained, the building retains a high degree of integrity of materials.

Feeling/Association: The property retains integrity of location, feeling and association as an industrial property located in an area that is a mixture of commercial and industrial uses. The southwest side of West Hollywood has held the concentration of the city's industry and manufacturing since the late 1890's when a massive rail yard was constructed on south side of Santa Monica Blvd at San Vicente Blvd (where the Pacific Design Center is).¹¹ In the late 1940's, furniture makers and interior designers moved their showrooms and light manufacturing into the area. The area is now known as the Design District.¹²

Exterior: Mitchell Camera Corporation office building

Adjacent to The Factory's north elevation there is a single-story (and basement) stucco building fronting Robertson Boulevard. Designed and built by Truscon Steel Company in 1929, the building is made of reinforced concrete and steel according to Sanborn maps. The building has a flat roof, plain parapet and no coping.

Currently visually non-contributing, the east façade has one opening that is an entrance to the building. The entrance is on the second story with a recessed porch and concrete stairs with a metal handrail and decorative metal poles attached to the floor and a recessed ceiling. The east façade is covered with a metal, textured skin. The 1929 façade had Zig-Zag Moderne decorative elements including pilasters with stepped capitals and a decorative relief course running below the parapet that may still exist under the skin.¹³ (See Figure 2) The skin was likely added after the period of significance.

In 1940, Mitchell Camera Corporation built a second addition behind the 1929 stucco building. It is a single-story stucco building, adjacent to The Factory building's north façade. The 1940 addition connects to the 1929 noncontributing Mitchell Camera Corp office building. According to Sanborn maps, the 1940 addition abuts The Factory building's irregular projection. The 1940 addition has a flat roof, plain parapet, and no coping.

There are awnings, canopies, wooden fences, and concrete block walls fronting the north façade of the 1929 noncontributing building and 1940 addition. A vernacular wooden structure, with

¹¹ Gierach, *Images of America: West Hollywood*, 20, 25.

¹²

¹³ City of West Hollywood, DPR, 1987.

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sliding windows was built on the roof of the 1940 addition sometime between 1946 and 1953 according to Sanborn maps. This was likely done outside the Mitchell Camera Corp period of significance (1929-1946). The quality of construction does not match the integrity of the other buildings.

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.)

- INVENTION
- INDUSTRY
- ENGINEERING
- COMMERCE
- SOCIAL HISTORY
- ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
- PERFORMING ARTS

Period of Significance

1929-1984

Significant Dates

- 1929 (Mitchell Construction)
- 1974 (Studio One begins)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Truscon Steel Company

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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 Mitchell Camera factory/Studio One Disco and Backlot building (The Factory) is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A at the local level due to its pivotal association with the motion picture industry and LGBTQ civil rights and events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the City of West Hollywood's political and social history. Commonly known as The Factory, the Mitchell Camera Corporation factory/Studio One Disco and Backlot building was the site where the Mitchell Camera Corporation designed and manufactured technologically advanced motion picture cameras and related equipment that revolutionized the motion picture industry by introducing features to cameras that changed the way films were made. The camera movement designed and manufactured at The Factory became the sole basis for motion picture camera design until digital motion picture cameras were introduced. Mitchell Camera Corp. moved from The Factory in 1946.

After a series of uses, it was the site of Studio One disco and the Backlot Theatre where gay men socialized in an open and celebratory environment that had cutting-edge sound and light systems, and a dance floor that held well over a 1,000 dancers. Studio One and the Backlot Theatre, a cabaret, had music and comedy performances by unknowns and established stars like Patti LaBelle, Joan Rivers and Chita Rivera. Founded by Beverly Hills optometrist Scott Forbes, Studio One and the Backlot helped bridge the cultural gap between gay and straight communities by its prominence and popularity. In the early days of the AIDS crisis, Forbes donated the use of Studio One and the Backlot to host many fundraisers including one of the nation's first AIDS fundraisers put on by newly formed AIDS Project Los Angeles and hosted by Joan Rivers in 1984, no other celebrities would participate. The period of significance is 1929-1984, which encompasses the Mitchell Camera Corp. era and the Studio One reuse for LGBTQ culture. The property is eligible under Criteria A and significant under Criteria Consideration G for its exceptional significance in LGBTQ history. The Factory has a non-contiguous period of significance in two contexts (entertainment industry technology and LGBTQ recreation).

Criteria Consideration G: Studio One LGBTQ History

Studio One meets the National Register of Historic Places Criteria Consideration G because it has achieved significance and exceptional importance within the past 50 years. Studio One is exceptionally significant for its association in LGBTQ history. Studio One has been the subject of significant scholarly evaluation by academic and contemporary researchers in the field of LGBTQ Studies, and its significance has been demonstrated by this nomination's statement of significance. Scott Forbes opened Studio One in 1974. Studio One is the first gay discotheque of its kind. The popularity, prominence and influence of Studio One were pivotal in normalizing LGBTQ existence in the dominant mainstream/heterosexual society and played a role in the

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development of modern West Hollywood. Properties associated with LGBT history are rare and the population is vanishing.

The disco's visibility in the venue, with the majority gay male patronage, and its influence on and attraction of heterosexuals and popular culture, as well as the mingle of homosexual and celebrity patrons in the theatre, influenced gradual social acceptance and self-affirmation of homosexuals in the Los Angeles area and the normalization of homosexuals more broadly in the early, post-Stonewall period of LGBTQ civil rights history. The post-Stonewall period of LGBTQ civil right history includes the rise of the gay entrepreneur of which Scott Forbes was one of the first. The nomination of Studio One-Backlot Theatre is especially significant because it offers the opportunity to document a part of LGBTQ civil rights history that is post-Stonewall but pre-AIDS.

Many preservationist groups have recognized the exceptional significance of Studio One. The Los Angeles Conservancy considers the potential demolition of The Factory an "Urgent Important Issue."¹⁴ The Los Angeles Conservancy says Studio One is "a transformative discotheque" that qualifies as an historical resource for its associations with "West Hollywood's pioneering gay community..."¹⁵ The National Trust for Historic Preservation named The Factory one of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places 2015.¹⁶ The National Trust for Historic Preservation says Studio One is a "pioneering gay disco... associated with the gay rights movement throughout its history."¹⁷

¹⁴ Los Angeles Conservancy, "The Factory." Accessed February 2016. <https://www.laconservancy.org/locations/factory>.

¹⁵ Fine, Adrian, "Letter: Notice of Preparation for the Robertson Lane Hotel Project." Accessed May 2015. <https://www.laconservancy.org/sites/default/files/files/issues/LA%20Conservancy%20Comments%20on%20NOP%2C%20Robertson%20Lane%20Hotel%20Project%2C%201.23.15.pdf>.

¹⁶ National Trust for Historic Preservation, "11 Most Endangered Historic Places: The Factory." Accessed June 2015. www.savingplaces.org/places/the-factory#.V0No0SMrJuU.

¹⁷ Heffern, "11 Most Endangered Round-Up." Accessed June 27, 2015. <https://savingplaces.org/stories/weekend-reads-11-most-endangered-round-up-featuring-gizmodo-the-advocate-and-more#.V0OXDfkrKM8>.

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

Context: Studio One – 1974-1984

*Bathhouses and discos, rather than meeting halls or community centers, became the ‘sensational glue’ holding these communities together.*¹⁸

Andrew Kopkind, journalist

After the Stonewall Riots in 1969, the 1970s can be considered the birth of the gay rights movement. Gays and lesbians now expected and demanded acceptance for who they were.¹⁹ The GLF (Gay Liberation Front) was formed right after Stonewall; this “new breed of radicals... fashioned a new language and style of homosexuality. The accent was on pride and affirmation; they were blatant, outrageous, and flamboyant. Discarding notions of sickness and sin, they represented homosexuality as a revolutionary path toward freedom...”²⁰ At liberal universities, the GLF sponsored dances for gays and lesbians. The dances were meant to engender love and acceptance and to create community through hippie-style dance circles but they soon would evolve to feature mirrored balls and gogo-boys.²¹

In the very early 1970s, the gay discotheque began taking form in Manhattan. In 1971, the GAA (Gay Activist Alliance), a more moderate gay rights group, began sponsoring dances. The GAA leased a firehouse in SoHo, Manhattan as a gay and lesbian community center, and once used the space as a huge disco, bringing in 1,500 people. (See Figure 10)

The uninterrupted dancing with other men evoked the feeling “that there is only now, in this place and time.”²² Within the pulsing lights, engulfing sound, there was the “commingling of music, men, and the feeling of brotherhood.”²³ The disco dance floor became the site of release. For gay men accustomed to being surveilled, harassed and arrested while dancing in gay bars, and the coming disco years would constitute a “sloughing off of centuries of shame and a venting of pent-up desire.”²⁴

The GLF and GAA would eventually fade away but its members would infiltrate city governments, other advocacy organizations, and many would revel at the new freedoms and adventures of “remaking our worlds.”²⁵

¹⁸ Echols, *Hot Disco*, Loc 1067.

¹⁹ D’Emilio, 247.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 243.

²¹ Echols, Loc 1059.

²² *Ibid*, Loc 1118.

²³ *Ibid*, Loc 1216.

²⁴ *Ibid*, Loc 1497.

²⁵ D’Emilio, 258.

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Scott Forbes opened Studio One in 1974. Studio One is the first gay discotheque of its kind. The popularity, prominence and influence of Studio One were pivotal in normalizing LGBTQ existence in the dominant mainstream/heterosexual society and played a role in the development of modern West Hollywood. Properties associated with LGBT history are rare and the population is vanishing.

The disco's visibility in the venue, with the majority gay male patronage, and its influence on and attraction of heterosexuals and popular culture, as well as the mingle of homosexual and celebrity patrons in the theatre, influenced gradual social acceptance and self-affirmation of homosexuals in the Los Angeles area and the normalization of homosexuals more broadly in the early, post-Stonewall period of LGBTQ civil rights history. The post-Stonewall period of LGBTQ civil right history includes the rise of the gay entrepreneur of which Scott Forbes was one of the first. The nomination of Studio One-Backlot Theatre is especially significant because it offers the opportunity to document a part of LGBTQ civil rights history that is post-Stonewall but pre-AIDS.

*"Studio One" was the money, power and prestige behind gay rights in the late 70's in Los Angeles, when the struggle was real.*²⁶

Grant Smith
Studio One patron

Studio One was the first discotheque of its size in California that catered exclusively to gay men. Studio One ushered in a new era in gay visibility in media, popular culture and within the gay community of California and helped to mainstream the gay liberation movement. It was widely regarded as the number one dance spot, straight or gay. In 1978, owner Scott Forbes estimated that more than 10,000 people a week came to Studio One. On the weekdays the clientele was 90-95% male and on the weekend it was about 85% male.²⁷ Studio One took up approximately 5,000 square feet of The Factory's second floor. (Studio One and its Backlot Theatre took up the entire 12,000 square feet second floor of The Factory.)

Studio One's dance floor utilized the sawed end grain wood block flooring installed by Mitchell Camera Corp. The dance floor's official capacity was 1,000; however, Studio One employees estimated it to be closer to 1,700 people dancing almost every night. (See Figure 11 and Figure 12) The line to get into Studio One was several blocks long every night. Studio One had 84 employees, which made it the largest, single operation employment in West Hollywood at the time.²⁸ Studio One was owned and operated by a gay man. Most of the bartenders were Playgirl centerfolds, and outfitted in short basketball shorts.²⁹ Studio One had three famous staff DJs plus

²⁶ Smith. Facebook. February 3, 2015. Studio One Disco Nightclub - West Hollywood. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/68745887988/permalink/10153493408872989/>.

²⁷ Rocco, "Spotlight On Studio One," 6.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Roberts, "Scott Forbes," 35.

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guest DJs. Lighting technicians operated the state-of-art light system by hand all night ultimately creating a dramatic and elaborate light show.³⁰ In 1979, it was said the lighting and sound systems were worth a half million dollars, which is over 1.5 million in today's dollars.³¹

Many newspapers and nationally circulated magazines dubbed Studio One the most exciting disco in the country. Vogue magazine said Studio One was one of the ten "in" spots of the jet set in 1977.³² Billboard magazine named Studio One the best disco in Southern California.³³

Billboard would also feature updates on Studio One's DJs, set lists, renovations, and the annual Disco Music Awards held at Studio One. These are the first times a gay establishment made headlines for something other than being gay. It was unprecedented to have mainstream magazines provide a gay business with such exposure. Some of Studio One's DJs were listed as top DJs in Billboard magazine. Studio One became a valuable resource for record companies and record producers.³⁴ They needed Studio One to promote their new artist or latest single; they needed a place to try out their music and the gay clientele at Studio One was the perfect clientele to do it with.³⁵ Publicists often sent their clients to Studio One to be seen and photographed.³⁶ Television and film studios rented Studio One for movies, shows and specials.³⁷ Studio One was rented for film releases and studio parties. In 1975, Columbia Pictures rented Studio One for Elton John's *Tommy* premiere. Elton John, Paul McCartney and Lucille Ball attended. Universal Studios took over Studio One for the 1976 premiere of *A Chorus Line*. Robert Wagner, Natalie Wood, and Liza Minnelli attended.³⁸

It was exciting to be there and work that first night, and just see how happy everyone was...to have this "new" disco just for us gay men.... I'm sure all the guys coming in were amazed to see such a large dance floor, that one LONG bar, the DJ playing all that great disco music, and they must have felt like they were in heaven!³⁹

Gary Mortimer
Studio One employee

Studio One hit on the young gay community's vital need for a place like it. It was said that 90% of its clientele were gay between the ages of 21 and 35. Studio One had approximately 1,000 "members" by 1979; membership offered free entrance or discounts on special nights.⁴⁰ "It was the first time I ever went anywhere where I felt like a normal person. Like I wasn't an evil person

³⁰ Solomon, "Disco L.A.: Behind the Scene," G14.

³¹ Baird, "It's Exciting...Sexy in Disco Whirled," CS4.

³² Kimmel, "Leonard Grant: Bringing Hollywood Back to Hollywood," 21.

³³ Faderman and Timmons, 235.

³⁴ Hunt, "Disco DJ: Producer of the Beat," F14; Hunt, "Discotheques Loving the Spin They're In," T58.

³⁵ Lloyd Coleman interview, October 20, 2015.

³⁶ Ibid; Billboard articles, various.

³⁷ Rocco, "Spotlight On Studio One," 6; Various; Billboard, "N.A.," 30.

³⁸ Kilday, "Bash Follows 'Tommy' Premiere," 114; Jacobs, Jody, "Stars Step Out for 'Chorus Line,'" F2-3.

³⁹ Gary Mortimer interview, September 2, 2015.

⁴⁰ Grein, "Studio One Constantly Upgrading, L.A. Spot Remodels - Every Year," 46.

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for being the way I was.... It was a whole different era. Studio One was the first place that made it normal and exciting and also inviting,” said Lloyd Coleman, patron.⁴¹ “I had never felt so free; so normal! I wanted this party to go on forever...” said Randall Neece about Studio One in his memoir.⁴² Studio One put on elaborate theme parties like Red Night, Heavy Metal and Heat Party. During the day there was Sunday Champagne Brunch, the Gay Dating Game and aerobics classes with live DJs.⁴³ Studio One hosted dozens of events that required the extra space of the surrounding parking lot because of the huge in line to get into Studio One or the event would inadvertently spill out to the streets.⁴⁴ “A weekend in West Hollywood was something to look forward to every single week based on what was going on at Studio One,” said Coleman.⁴⁵

Studio One also threw huge and outrageous Halloween parties. These parties are considered to be the pre-cursor to the annual Halloween Carnival, which still takes place in West Hollywood every year. At Studio One’s Halloween parties, more than 2,000 guests would converge under crystal chandeliers in huge red-and-white-striped tents set up in the parking lot. (West Hollywood park across the street served as a crowd spillage area.) Costumes were judged by clothing designers and celebrities, like Bob Mackay, interior designer Phyllis Morris, Sheldon Andelson and Alan Carr. At these parties it was said that “all the Hollywood glamour in the 70s is happening here at Studio One.”⁴⁶ By the mid-1980s, Forbes was renting out the Beverly Wilshire Hotel and busing patrons between the two venues. Photos of the events appeared in local newspapers. Studio One had two staff photographers. It was unheard of to have photos of men dancing together, posing, and celebrating displayed so openly since just a few years before gays feared being outed in the newspaper.

The evening was an astonishing celebration of a simple new fact that shows no sign of going away despite conservative backlash: the majority of gays in the late 70s are out of the closet and have no intention of going back (or being shoved back) in.”⁴⁷

-Herald-Examiner newspaper

In 1977, at a Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center (GCSC) meeting and at Studio One, Scott Forbes and business partner Carol Taylor-DiPietro orchestrated a private LGBT party at Disneyland. (See Figure 13) Forbes was president of the Los Angeles Tavern Guild, an organization of several Los Angeles area LGBT bars.⁴⁸ He told the Disneyland executives that their group was the Los Angeles Tavern Guild, to make it appear that the event was for employees of non-gay Los Angeles restaurants and bars.⁴⁹ Tickets were sold at Studio One, as

⁴¹ Lloyd Coleman interview, October 20, 2015.

⁴² Neece, *Gone Today, Here Tomorrow*,” 34.

⁴³ Studio One, Various titles, 2 pages; Studio One ephemera, Studio One, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives.

⁴⁴ Richard Sweigart interview, September 5, 2015.

⁴⁵ Lloyd Coleman interview, October 20, 2015.

⁴⁶ Faber, “Free Press Entertainment,” 9.

⁴⁷ Cuskelly, “First Time For Gays at Disneyland, Landmark Event For Homosexuals,” 1 page.

⁴⁸ Roberts, “Scott Forbes,” 35.

⁴⁹ Carol Taylor-DiPietro interview, October 3, 2015.

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well as many other California gay bars. Most bars closed for the night and hired buses to transport their employees and regulars to the event.⁵⁰ Disney designed the event flyers, as they did with all private party events. The headlines read “The Tavern Guild of Los Angeles and Studio One...Family Fun Party at Disneyland/Private Party at Disneyland.”⁵¹ Studio One had its name with Disney’s, the icon of American purity. Disney did figure out that the party was for gays and lesbians. Forbes hosted the executives to Studio One to quell their fears.

The night went smoothly, aside from an argument between a Disney maintenance man and a gay man.⁵² There were no arrests. “They really expected our party to have a lot of problems. They were expecting to have at least as many arrests as their most problematic annual private party-attended by employees of the US Postal Service,” said Taylor-DiPietro.⁵³ Over 15,000 gays and lesbians attended the event.⁵⁴ It was the first time so many gays and lesbians shared one space for a gay private party. The Herald-Examiner called it “an extraordinary evening on anybody’s scale, perhaps a landmark event.”⁵⁵ (See Figure 14)

“The fact that we did a ‘gay night’ at all and that it came off without problems speaks for itself,” said Forbes, “It’s great P.R. – showing them that we’re not all a bunch of screamers.”⁵⁶ It was “a night that will be fondly remembered in gay history...same-sex couples walked hand in hand and arm in arm, feeling the freedom to be themselves as gay men and lesbians...”⁵⁷ said Pat Rocco, Studio One staff photographer. Other theme parks heard about the event and its financial success at Disneyland and did not need any convincing of doing an openly gay event.⁵⁸ Forbes and Taylor-DiPietro put on several more LGBT private parties at theme parks without having to hide whom the event was for.

*The purpose really was to create an entity – a thing – a happening. A place where the gay community could go and have a nice dinner, see a nice show.... After the Backlot Theatre opened, celebrities started coming here and the press started coming here and the press started picking up on it and we were soon getting national publicity.*⁵⁹

-Leonard Grant

The Backlot Theatre, or better known as “the Backlot,” was a semi-formal, cabaret-style theatre that had a dinner and a show. (See Figure 15) Initially Scott Forbes kept the acts gay, like female impersonators Charles Pierce and Craig Russell. Forbes didn’t want to attract a straight clientele.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Studio One and Gay Night articles, ephemera, and photos, Carol Taylor-DiPietro Collection.

⁵² Conlon, 36.

⁵³ Carol Taylor-DiPietro interview, October 3, 2015.

⁵⁴ Rocco, “Gay Night at Disneyland,” 62.

⁵⁵ Cuskelly, “First Time For Gays at Disneyland, Landmark Event For Homosexuals,” 1 page.

⁵⁶ Franklin, “Great American Fun on the Gay Midway,” 3 pages.

⁵⁷ Rocco, “Gay Night at Disneyland,” 62.

⁵⁸ Franklin, 3 pages; Carol Taylor-DiPietro interview, October 3, 2015.

⁵⁹ Galligan, “The Sweet Smell of Success at Studio One.”

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His experience with straight clientele at Studio One meant six hours of dancing and the purchase of only one drink. Heterosexual choreographer Ron Field understood – “whether you like his policy or not, it is the only gay discotheque that has survived more than just the fad rush in the world.... The next one that’s bigger, has more lights or a better sound system, all the guys then go there. But because of Scott’s policy, because of protecting his clientele, I think that’s why Studio One has remained successful. I think the gay guys should have a place where they can go, where they’re not ogled and stared at, that they can feel is *their* place.”⁶⁰ But Forbes gave in and booked Chita Rivera.⁶¹ Liza Minnelli promptly bought out the room. “You’ve never seen so many movie stars in one place except if you were at an awards show....” said Mortimer.⁶²

The Backlot had an intimacy that encouraged a sense of adventure in both performer and audience and because of the subcultural status in society, gays tended, and still do, to look for, and create, entertainment that appeals to specialized tastes, i.e., camp, or that is generally obscure or undiscovered.⁶³ “The biggest names in the business rub elbows with the shirtless, sweating gay crowd any night of the week. Celebrities compete for the best tables in the Backlot cabaret.... It has transcended the label of a ‘gay’ nitespot and has become one of the spots to be in Los Angeles.”⁶⁴

At the Backlot, and Studio One, older Hollywood stars like Rock Hudson, Orson Welles, and Bette Davis would rub elbows with the new generation of stars, David Bowie, Grace Jones, Sylvester, and Donna Summer. Frequent performers at the Backlot were Bette Midler, Natalie Cole, Wayland Flowers, Rosalyn Kind, Rip Taylor, Phyllis Diller and many more. Each performer’s run at the Backlot was extensively written up in the LA Times and continued to be into the 1990s.⁶⁵

*I think that the biggest thrill that I get out of Studio One is knowing that the Gay Community has something to be very proud of.... I think it’s quite an accomplishment to have a place that’s so well known and so respected by non-gay people. To have all these celebrities coming constantly to what is known as a Gay club shows we’ve come to a point where we’re not looked down upon by the non-gay community.*⁶⁶

-Scott Forbes

Scott Forbes was a pioneering, gay entrepreneur. He used the brand of Studio One and the Backlot to infiltrate himself, his brands, and gay culture into the mainstream, popular culture. Forbes was a charismatic gay man from Framingham, Massachusetts. He began studying at the

⁶⁰ Galligan, “Cabaret! Stars Words,” 20.

⁶¹ Galligan, “The Sweet Smell of Success at Studio One.”

⁶² Gary Mortimer interview, September 2, 2015.

⁶³ Shewey, “The Ticket to Entertainment,” 17.

⁶⁴ Roberts, “Scott Forbes,” 34-35.

⁶⁵ Various ephemera and articles from Los Angeles Times and ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives.

⁶⁶ Rocco, “Spotlight On Studio One,” 6.

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University of Southern California at 17 years old and eventually earned a Doctor of Optometry degree, becoming Dr. Scott Forbes O.D. Forbes created a very successful Beverly Hills practice, which included many famous clients such as musician Elton John. Forbes left his practice in 1973 to pursue his dream of offering gay men an alternative to the small, dark, nondescript bars that were scattered throughout the Los Angeles area.⁶⁷ Forbes named his discotheque Studio One in honor of the building's proximity to the Hollywood studios. (See Figure 16) Forbes invested in the latest sound systems, light, laser and strobe light systems, mirror balls and mirrors, and a neon Pegasus, Studio One's logo that hung from the factory truss beams.⁶⁸ Forbes and his investor's initial investment in the space was \$100,000, which is \$423,000 in today's dollars.⁶⁹ Forbes redid Studio One's interiors and updated the sound and light systems every year.⁷⁰

Forbes magazine reported that Studio One "turns over 7,000 homosexual customers a week and grosses over a million annually" in 1976 which is 4.2 million in today's dollars. Forbes was routinely hired to consult on how to start-up and run discotheques by straight and gay disco owners. Most of the proceeds from Studio One's special events went to charity, including the proceeds from the theme park parties. One charity was the Neimeier Memorial Reward Fund, a fund established "to post rewards for information leading to the arrest and conviction of persons who murder members of the gay community."⁷¹ Forbes was on the Advisory Board of the Los Angeles Gay Community Services Center (Los Angeles LGBT Center) and was a major donor.

"Suddenly everyone remembered that it was faggot music, that it 'sucked.' ... For the rock-headed straight masses [disco] still had too many gay associations..."⁷²

-Bill Brewster

Last Night a DJ Saved My Life: The History of the Disc Jockey

Brewster wrote about the coming hatred of disco and the direct association it had to gays. Soon the phrase "disco is dead" was born, which echoed a lot of hate behind the music itself and the very people who started it.

In Chicago, radio DJ Steve Dahl hated disco so much he raised a 'disco destruction army' and mobilized it to attack disco wherever possible. His followers rallied around the overtly homophobic 'Disco Sucks' slogan and fought the evil faggot music by harassing DJs wherever it was played. 'Disco music is a disease. I call it disco dystrophy. The people victimized by this killer disease walk around like zombies. We must do everything possible to stop the spread of this plague.'⁷³

⁶⁷ Faderman and Timmons, *Gay L.A.*, 234.

⁶⁸ Solomon, "Disco L.A.: Behind the Seen," G15.

⁶⁹ Galligan, "The Sweet Smell of Success at Studio One."

⁷⁰ Grein, "Studio One Constantly Upgrading, L.A. Spot Remodels - Every Year," 46.

⁷¹ Studio One ephemera, Studio One, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives.

⁷² Brewster, *Last Night a DJ Saved My Life*, 177.

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The general masses had loved disco, largely because of its association with decadence, cocaine, and sex. The film *Saturday Night Fever* epitomized the very height of disco in 1977, but by 1979 record producers and their labels had completely over-saturated the market with disco.⁷⁴ Scott Forbes told the Los Angeles Times that he thought the media was crucial for the disco explosion, and was now instrumental in its downfall. The media was relentlessly broadcasting that discos were dying, and so people started believing it. Gay disco owners were asked about the new music trends of New Wave and Rock. Forbes and Circus disco owner Gene LaPietra had differing opinions. LaPietra welcomed the new trend, but Forbes still saw disco as lucrative for

the gays, especially now that the straights thought it was not fashionable anymore. Forbes admitted that the disco owners who jumped on the disco craze were likely to close down. Forbes though was a smart businessman and his Studio One would be one of the few to survive.⁷⁵

“Straights want to come here, but they can’t, because if they do, the gays won’t feel at home.... Let someone who’s straight and into that straight element open a straight Studio One. The only straight element we entice are the ones we think are compatible with the gays and that’s theatre people.”⁷⁶

-Scott Forbes

Studio One doormen routinely asked for three pieces of identification from African-Americans and Latinos and even then they were denied entrance. Studio One adhered to a strict no-open-toed shoes policy for women. The Gay Community Mobilization Committee (GCMC), a coalition of gay groups and individuals made three demands of Forbes: one admission policy for *all* people, allow GCMC to monitor the door, and to post a sign that if someone was discriminated to call the printed phone number.⁷⁷

Issues dealing with race and sex in the LGBT community were not limited to Studio One. The political and cultural changes that came from the Stonewall Inn Riots was most beneficial to middle class white gay men, some benefit trickled down to lesbians, but trans-people and people of color experienced little of the benefit. Separate organizing by people of color began within a year or so after Stonewall. In some Gay Liberation Front organizations, “Third World” caucuses formed addressing the issues of people of color; in a few cities, distinct groups were started.⁷⁸

White activists were challenged to expand their vision to include whole human beings instead of just slices of the self. By the early 1980s the clamor for recognition and

⁷³ Ibid, 290.

⁷⁴ Brewster, 176-77.

⁷⁵ Hunt, “Disco Clubs: Down But Not Out,” G1, G4.

⁷⁶ Galligan, “The Sweet Smell of Success at Studio One.”

⁷⁷ The Gay Community Mobilization Committee. Flyers of Studio One boycott. Studio One, ONE Subject File collection, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives.

⁷⁸ D’Emilio, *Making Trouble*, 260-61.

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inclusiveness had become ever present. There were few significant movement gatherings where the demands of people of color were not raised. Although the response of white organizations was limited, the level of discomfort was rising dramatically. – John D’Emilio in his essay “After Stonewall”⁷⁹

There was a lack of support of the Studio One boycott from established gay groups, like the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC). In fact, Reverend James Sandmire denounced the boycott during one of his sermons.⁸⁰ As early as 1977, Forbes had given his name, money, and space to several gay groups; something which would soon become synonymous with the name Studio One.⁸¹ Forbes at the time was on the Board of the Directors at the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center.⁸² The picket lines soon ended.

There was a follow-up article in the Los Angeles Times. It started with: “To enter a discotheque is to step into a metaphor for urban America. The moment we pass beyond the gatekeeper’s careful inspection and through the well-guarded doors.”⁸³ This practice has become known as the velvet rope policy and it is still in effect today in many straight nightclubs in metropolitan cities. The velvet rope “could either caress you as you walked by, or give you rope burn.”⁸⁴

In a 1976 interview with *The Advocate*, Forbes openly said that the biggest problem with running Studio One was keeping it gay. “Scott didn’t want it to be overtaken,” said Carol Taylor-DiPietro, Forbes’ long-time friend and business partner, “One of the ways we kept it gay was by enforcing the ‘no open-toe’ shoe policy. He told people the policy was for safety reasons, because of possible broken glass, but it was really intended to keep straight women out.”⁸⁵

Forbes insisted that Studio One had a “uniform,” strict ID policy, which also denied entrance to intoxicated people, and people who smelled bad. He continued to say that when they initially opened, straight black men were coming to pick up the women in the club, which he stated “was the problem with any straight club...the bad element came.” When questioned on the “bad element” he snapped and shouted “straight people” and went on to explain that straight people did not go to discos too much, and for that reason would get rowdy and aggressive, whereas gays were at discos like Studio One every night.⁸⁶ Straight disco owner Henry Berger admitted to the Los Angeles Times that gay discos were attractive to straight women because of the “meat market” mentality at straight discos.⁸⁷ Straights did stage a one-week takeover of Studio One in the 1980s. And three straight couples drove a Rolls Royce into Studio One’s front entrance in protest of being denied entrance.⁸⁸

⁷⁹ Ibid, 261.

⁸⁰ Johnson, “Studio One Hit With Charges of Racism, Sexist Discrimination,” 2 pages.

⁸¹ Los Angeles Times, “McKuen to Play Benefit Sunday,” C11.

⁸² N.A., “Gay Community Services Center,” 1 page. Studio One and Gay Night articles, ephemera, and photos, Carol Taylor-DiPietro Collection.

⁸³ Slater, “Discotheques Dance to Another Tune,” G1.

⁸⁴ Litton. Facebook. July 31, 2016. Studio One Disco – West Hollywood. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/68745887988/>.

⁸⁵ Carol Taylor-DiPietro interview, October 3, 2015.

⁸⁶ Slater, “Discotheques Dance to Another Tune,” G1, G4.

⁸⁷ Gindick, “Club Troubleshooter: Doctoring the Discos,” F6.

⁸⁸ Echols, *Hot Stuff*, Kindle edition, Loc 1254 of 5604.

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If police harassment and archaic laws had been the main obstacle to gay nightlife before disco took off, it was now the chic appeal of gay disco among fashionable and fashion-hungry heterosexuals that was thwarting the brotherly reverie of dance-floor oneness that gay men were chasing – Alice Echols, *Hot Stuff: Disco and the Remaking of American Culture*⁸⁹

*“[AIDS] is here and it’s occurring in the community. We just can’t close our eyes to it. We have to do what we can to help”*⁹⁰

-Scott Forbes

AIDS was devastating to West Hollywood. By 1981, West Hollywood’s population was approximately 40% LGBT, primarily gay men. In 1983, it was reported by the Los Angeles Times that half of the AIDS victims came from the Hollywood/West Hollywood area. Health officials warned gay men “to be careful about traditional ‘pickup’ places like bathhouses and singles bars.” After intense social liberation and sexual liberation, gay men were now uttering the words “My mother was right” or “My minister was right.” By 1982, Studio One’s attendance went down because the patrons were either dying of AIDS or were too scared to go out. The Los Angeles Times in 1983 reported that attendance in gay clubs was down 20%.⁹¹ Many gay clubs closed and others tried to reinvent themselves like Studio One. Some of the small clubs were able to survive because the overhead was lower. Like other clubs in the area, Studio One started 18 and over nights, which brought a new generation into Studio One.⁹²

Forbes offered Studio One and the Backlot numerous times for fundraising efforts. Studio One had fundraisers for AIDS hospice care and medications, and AIDS research as early as 1982. A fundraiser in 1983 brought in \$8,000 for AIDS research.⁹³ One of the most famous fundraisers and one of the first major fundraisers was on March 11th, 1984.⁹⁴ It was hosted by Joan Rivers, who at the time was the only celebrity willing to lend her name to help any cause having to do with AIDS.⁹⁵ (See Figure 17) Rivers was an early pioneer when it came to helping AIDS victims, before Elizabeth Taylor, and before Princess Diana. Rivers could not get other celebrities to perform with her (even though the club had been routinely filled with them.) Rivers had already hosted a number of AIDS fundraisers.

“There were people there literally with guns. There were death threats. It was very, very weird. But we did it, and that was the first AIDS benefit – the first major AIDS benefit probably – in the United States,” Rivers said. Both Forbes and Rivers hired security in response to death threat

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Citron, “AIDS Haunts Gay Sex Life,” WS6.

⁹¹ Ibid, WS1, WS6.

⁹² Richard Sweigart, September 5, 2015.

⁹³ Citron, WS6.

⁹⁴ Los Angeles Times, “Joan Rivers Sets AIDS Benefits,” I6.

⁹⁵ Fox, “Hollywood Powers Help AIDS Victims,” W3.

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calls before the event.⁹⁶ The event was to raise money for APLA, Aid for AIDS, and Shanti Foundation Los Angeles. The audience was almost all composed of gay men since most straight people (including celebrities) did not want to be around gay people, fearing they would get sick from AIDS. Some celebrities donated money but often wanted to remain anonymous. The fundraiser raised \$45,000 (equivalent to \$104,309 in 2015).⁹⁷ After that event, Studio One and the Backlot would hold AIDS fundraisers practically every weekend.⁹⁸

Forbes closed Studio One in 1993. Forbes died at the young age of 57 in 2002 from complications due to elective surgery. In lieu of flowers at his funeral, the family asked people to give donations to the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station Fund.⁹⁹ The February 4th 2002 West Hollywood City Council meeting was adjourned in Forbes' name.¹⁰⁰

Bill Miles, Forbes' life partner, told the Los Angeles Times for an obituary article that Forbes designed the club to fill a void in the community: "Scott thought it right that gays have a place to go that was a dynamic spot, a place of prominence in the community." The Times called Forbes "a leading figure in the social history of West Hollywood."¹⁰¹

Context: Mitchell Camera Corporation – 1929-1946

Mitchell Camera Corp broke ground on their new factory on January 21, 1929. They hired the Youngstown, Ohio-based, design-build firm Truscon Steel Company to design and build a factory and office building at 661-665 North Robertson Boulevard in West Hollywood, CA.¹⁰² This area of West Hollywood at the time was made up of mostly single-story, industrial buildings with a few small, residential structures; one city-block east of the Pacific Electric Railway Company's Sherman/West Hollywood massive rail yards, shops and car barns.¹⁰³ In attendance at the groundbreaking ceremony were the West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce President and Secretary, two engineers from the Truscon Steel Company along with Mitchell and Boeger.¹⁰⁴ (See Figure 8)

The Factory building was designed with function dictating its form, a Kahn Daylight Factory hallmark. Julius Kahn, a structural engineer, founded Truscon Steel Company in 1903 using the materials and products (most importantly the Kahn Bar)¹⁰⁵ he had perfected while working with Albert Kahn, the foremost American industrial architect of his day. The Kahns perfected the Daylight Factory construction and design, which became known as the Kahn Daylight

⁹⁶ Holston, "Expect No Pitch from Joan Rivers at AIDS Concert," 1E.

⁹⁷ AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA), "History." Accessed December 2015. <http://www.apla.org/about-apla/history.html>.

⁹⁸ Lloyd Coleman interview, October 20, 2015.

⁹⁹ Thurber, "Obituaries; Scott Forbes, 57; Ran Dance Palace," B15.

¹⁰⁰ City of West Hollywood, "City Council Minutes." February 4, 2002. <http://www.weho.org/Home/ShowDocument?id=8678>.

¹⁰¹ Thurber, B15.

¹⁰² American Cinematographer, "The Mitchell's New Home," 34.

¹⁰³ Sanborn Fire Insurance Atlas, Los Angeles 1906-Jan 1950, Vol 20, 1926, Sheet 2048.

¹⁰⁴ American Cinematographer, "The Mitchell's New Home," 34.

¹⁰⁵ Sedlar, Frank, "Engineering Industrial Architecture: The Trussed Concrete Steel Company and Albert Kahn." Accessed July 2015. https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/98436/Sedlar_Engineering_Industrial_Architecture.pdf?sequence=1. Pages 3, 5, 10, 12.

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Factory.¹⁰⁶ The Kahns collaborated on many automobile factory plants such as Ford and Packard.¹⁰⁷ The design of The Factory building gave key consideration to the comfort and full efficiency of the workmen- large factory windows for maximum natural light and ventilation and large, uninterrupted factory floor. Mitchell also had installed the sawed end grain wood block floor to reduce floor vibration, and a motor at every workstation, eliminating hanging cables and belts. And with having the building designed with a metal and glass skin on a steel frame made the building earthquake and fireproof. The Factory building alone cost \$60,000 (\$823,902 in 2015).¹⁰⁸

International Photographer proclaimed, “Hollywood can well be proud of this plant as it will be the largest factory in the world manufacturing exclusively standard professional motion picture cameras.”¹⁰⁹ American Cinematography and International Photographer magazines ran photos on their back covers of the progression of the factory’s construction until it was complete. (See Figure 1, Figure 6, Figure 7) A 1934 Mitchell Camera Corp catalog (See Figure 9) shows that the first floor of the factory was for camera manufacturing, while the second floor was devoted to the accessory department.

By the time the Mitchell Camera Corp factory and offices were complete, the Academy of Motion Picture Sciences had gotten involved in the film industry’s problems with development and standardization. After prolonged consideration of the transitional period between silent films and talkies, it was agreed, in 1930, that it all came down to three major problems– silencing the arc lamp, silencing the camera movement, and constructing soundproof set material.¹¹⁰ In response, Mitchell Camera Corp made changes to their existing Mitchell Standard to make it quieter by changing metal gears to Bakelite gears, and taking out ball bearings wherever possible. American Cinematographer reported that RKO Studios was using the improved Mitchell Standard camera out in the open, not in a camera booth as was previously required.¹¹¹

During the first year at their new factory in West Hollywood, most focus of the Mitchell Camera Corp was manufacturing and aggressively marketing their new 70mm Mitchell-Grandeur (aka Fox-Grandeur) camera. The cameras were originally built for Fox Film, in Fox Film’s attempt to corner the market on wide-screen films. Fox Film ordered fifty cameras. By January 1931, Mitchell Camera Corp had substantially completed sixteen cameras and had thirty-four more in various stages of completion when the Hearst Company bought Fox Film, which forced Mitchell Camera Corp to sell the finished cameras to other studios.

According to a consequent lawsuit between Mitchell Camera Corp and Fox-Hearst Company, two 70mm Mitchell-Grandeurs were sold to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, one went to Feature

¹⁰⁶ ArchiTakes, “Detroit: City of the Future.” Accessed March 2015. <http://www.architakes.com/?p=11139>.

¹⁰⁷ Sedlar, 25.

¹⁰⁸ American Cinematographer, “The Mitchell’s New Home,” 34.

¹⁰⁹ The International Photographer, “New Mitchell Factory.”

¹¹⁰ Bordwell and Staiger, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, 299.

¹¹¹ American Cinematographer, “Taking the Click Out of Cameras,” 22.

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Productions, and four were sold to Fox Film but it is rumored that Fox Film had close to eight Mitchell-Grandeurs.¹¹² The films shot on the Mitchell-Grandeur were Fox's *The Fox Follies*, *Happy Days*, *Song O' My Heart*, John Wayne's first film *The Big Trail*, and MGM's *Billy the Kid*.¹¹³

By 1931, Mitchell Camera Corp created a new, experimental camera called the Mitchell NC (News Camera), also known as the Mitchell Sound Camera. The Mitchell NC was officially released in 1932, U.S. Patent 1,930,723. The new intermittent mechanism of the NC eliminated gear meshing and employed eccentrics and sliding surfaces, an ingenious way to avoid some of the noise from the mechanism. The construction of this movement demanded extreme tolerances of the parts, which were machined and lapped to .0001 inch and polished to a .0005 inch tolerance in the register pins. Mitchell cameras were machined with finer tolerances than the most expensive Swiss watch but were built like a tank.¹¹⁴ The inventor of the NC film movement mechanism is stated as "George A. Mitchell, Los Angeles, Calif., assigner to Mitchell Camera Corporation, West Hollywood, Calif."¹¹⁵

Ira B. Hoke, camera operator and technician, wrote this about the Mitchell NC – "considering the multitude of noise-contributing factors necessary to the construction of this type of machine, the builders have been extraordinarily successful in their undertaking. From the cameraman's standpoint the new Mitchell is ideal. To the sound man it will offer no obstacle to perfect recording, and the producer will find that time saved by the use of this modern photographic equipment will quickly repay the initial outlay."¹¹⁶

The Mitchell NC included a noiseless movement, a hand dissolve (instead of the automatic shutter), a miniature reference shutter, a buckle trip and the improved monitoring viewfinder conceived at the end of the twenties with upright image and built-in mattes but eliminated the floating iris system, very little used after the end of the silent films. But its most valued feature was its near silent operation at 35dB.¹¹⁷ (10dB is the threshold for hearing, 20dB is a whisper, and 30-35dB is twice as loud as a whisper.)

William Stull of American Cinematographer said of the new Mitchell NC – "it was clear that other camera companies were only making alterations to an inherently noisy mechanism but it was Mitchell Camera who built a completely new device, one that marked a great step forward in cinematographic engineering and practice."¹¹⁸ In *American Cinematographer*, Mitchell Camera Corp advertised the NC as a "camera designed for studio use...an entirely new camera built to the high standard of Mitchell products...it has new features not previously offered in a professional motion picture camera, and has been quieted so that the use of a heavy blimp is not

¹¹² "Mitchell Camera Corp. v. Fox Film Corp.," accessed March 9, 2015.

<http://social.stanford.edu/opinion/mitchellcameracorpvfoxfilmcorp24998>.

¹¹³ Mitchell Camera Corp Ad, "Mitchell Wide Film Cameras," *American Cinematographer* back cover.

¹¹⁴ Roberts, "The Mitchell Camera: The Machine and Its Makers," 141.

¹¹⁵ Mitchell, U.S. Patent 1,930,723: Film Movement Mechanism. Filed January 11, 1932, published October 17, 1933.

¹¹⁶ Hoke, "Mitchell Silences Sound Camera," 12.

¹¹⁷ *American Cinematographer*, "Cameraman Want Silence," 22.

¹¹⁸ Stull, "The Silent Mitchell Camera," 22.

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necessary.”¹¹⁹ The Mitchell Camera factory in West Hollywood made approximately 150 Mitchell NCs from 1932 to 1938.¹²⁰

International Photographer proclaimed that, “times have changed. Now the cinematographer can go back to the methods that he used before sound. Hard lights are again being used and his camera is being released from its cell. Scenes which were called impossible then are now being shot without trouble.”¹²¹

The Mitchell NC was soon the preferred camera of most Hollywood studios, newsreel and short film companies and film producers. Orders for the Mitchell NC also poured in from London, Berlin, Calcutta, Bombay, Tokyo, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Manila, and Moscow. Mitchell cameras were more expensive than many other brands on the world market, but its particular design features and outstanding workmanship made it worth the higher price.¹²²

However, the NC model still required the use of a blimp for extreme close-ups. Harold Rosson (*Wizard of Oz*), one of the first cinematographers to use the experimental Mitchell NC, said “this camera is satisfactorily silent for most work except extreme close-ups, or scenes recorded at a very low volume-level.” Most studio camera departments made their own blimps. The use of a blimp was a limitation and a time-consuming operation for the camera crew; framing and focus checking, changing lenses, footage control, and adjusting the shutter could only be done through the blimp’s opening.¹²³

Master cinematographer Gregg Toland’s (*Wuthering Heights*, *Grapes of Wrath*, *Citizen Kane*) use of the Mitchell NC received accolades for his treatment of close-ups in the film *Les Miserable*. American Cinematographer called it “a revelation in artistic conception and courage” for a previously impossible endeavor because of noisy cameras.¹²⁴ Toland was known for his surprisingly original and ingenious take on the mechanical side of his profession so George A. Mitchell enlisted Toland’s help in conceiving a truly silent studio camera. Toland worked with the engineers at the Mitchell Camera Corp factory to develop a camera prototype with Mitchell NC’s features but completely silent.¹²⁵ In 1934, after several trials, the new Mitchell BNC (Blimped/Blimpless New Camera), also known as the Studio Model, was introduced, U.S. Patent 2,088,714. The inventor of the BNC or “Sound Insulated Motion Picture Camera” is stated as “George A. Mitchell, Los Angeles, Calif., assigner to Mitchell Camera Corporation, West Hollywood, Calif.”¹²⁶

¹¹⁹ Mitchell Camera Corp Ad, “Announcing the New Mitchell Silenced Cameras,” American Cinematographer back cover.

¹²⁰ Hoke, “Mitchell Camera Nears Majority,” 496.

¹²¹ Clark, “Before and After Sound,” 34.

¹²² Raimondo-Souto, *Motion Picture Photography*, 143-44.

¹²³ Ibid, 144.

¹²⁴ Toland, “Intensive Preparation Underlies Toland’s Achievements,” 247.

¹²⁵ Raimondo-Souto, 144.

¹²⁶ Mitchell, U.S. Patent 2,088,714: Sound Insulated Motion Picture Camera. Filed May 7, 1934. Published August 3, 1937.

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The Mitchell BNC was lighter than an NC with a blimp, 120lbs versus 173lbs (permitting a greater freedom and flexibility of camera choreography), and the movement's operating noise level dropped to just 21 dB, a whisper.¹²⁷ International Photographer said of the Mitchell BNC, "convenient foolproof operation...no blimp is necessary, hence, there's no shooting through glass and all controls of the camera are on the outside."¹²⁸ Prolific cinematographer, L. William O'Connell, said in *American Cinematographer*, "they're simply such a perfect instrument for the work at hand that I never have to give the camera thought. It's there – it does its work perfectly – so perfectly I'm never conscious of its presence."¹²⁹

After his inventions of the Mitchell NC and Mitchell BNC, George A. Mitchell resigned from Mitchell Camera Corporation in 1934. In 1953, Mitchell would receive an honorary Oscar "for the design and development of the camera which bears his name and for his continued and dominant presence in the field of cinematography."¹³⁰

The major Hollywood studios purchased or rented the Mitchell BNC – Samuel Goldwyn Studios bought the first two cameras made; United Artists rented a Mitchell BNC for Gregg Toland to shoot *Wuthering Heights* for which he won an Academy Award for Cinematography; RKO rented the Mitchell BNC for Toland to shoot *Citizen Kane*; Warner Brothers purchased ten Mitchell BNCs.¹³¹ (See Figure 18)

Mitchell Camera Corp's new vice-president, movie producer and motion picture pioneer, Charles H. Christie, cultivated a world-market for Mitchell cameras. By 1935, Mitchell Camera Corp opened agencies in Sydney, London, Bombay, Rome, and Osaka.¹³²

In a series of advertisements, cinematographers praised the Mitchell BNC – Ernest Haller (*Jezebel*, *Gone With the Wind*, *Mildred Pierce*, *Rebel Without a Cause*): "Everything a cinematographer could want for the finest photography is embodied in the Mitchell Studio Camera"; Sol Polito, (*The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex*, *Sergeant York*, *Now Voyager*) "I have been using Mitchell Cameras since 1920 and in my opinion the new Mitchell Studio Camera is perfect"; Arthur Edeson (*All Quiet on the Western Front*, *The Maltese Falcon*, *Casablanca*), "Silent—convenient—dependable, the Mitchell Studio Camera answers today's exacting demands"; Charles B. Lang (*A Farewell to Arms*, *Sabrina*, *Some Like it Hot*), "In the studio and on location the speed and the convenience of the Mitchell studio camera made photographing 'Sundown' doubly a pleasure."¹³³

¹²⁷ Raimondo-Souto, 144.

¹²⁸ The International Photographer, "Cinematographer," 9.

¹²⁹ Stull, "Mitchell Blimpless Cameras Really Silent," 167.

¹³⁰ Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, "The 25th Academy Awards Memorable Moments." Accessed August 15, 2016. <https://www.oscars.org/oscars/ceremonies/1953/memorable-moments>.

¹³¹ Raimondo-Souto, 144-45.

¹³² The International Photographer, "After a World's Market," 3.

¹³³ Mitchell Camera Corp Ads, "Satisfied Mitchell Camera Users," various back covers.

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“Describing the Mitchell Motion Picture Camera: The Camera That Advances with the Industry” is how Mitchell Camera Corp described their cameras in their 1934 catalog. At that time their “roll call” of Mitchell camera users included –

Charles Chaplin Studios	Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Corporation
Columbia Pictures Corp	Monogram Pictures
Educational Studios, Inc	Paramount Productions, Inc
Fox Film Corp	R K O – Pathe Studios
Bryan Foy Studios	R K O – Radio Studios
General Service Studios Inc	Hal E. Roach Studios
Samuel Goldwyn, Inc, Ltd	Mack Sennett, Inc
International Film Studios	Twentieth Century Pictures, Inc
Harold Lloyd Company	United Artists Studio Corporation
Majestic Productions	Universal Pictures Corporation
Mascot Pictures Corp	Warner Bros. Productions Corporation

Their “roll call” continued to list other studios, general service departments, including Eastman Kodak Company, R C A – Victor Co, and the United States Navy and the United States Army, and foreign service departments around the world.¹³⁴

Orson Welles’ *Citizen Kane* was released in 1941. American Cinematographer said, “it is the first production in which dialogue, sound, music and true motion picture technique are welded together to form a genuinely complete unity.”¹³⁵ Gregg Toland, as cinematographer, said the Mitchell BNC allowed him to experiment with extreme depths of field or “deep-focus cinematography,” camera angles, lighting that produced high-contrast tonality, and long takes. Along with new developments in film and lenses, it was with the Mitchell BNC that Toland “begins to evolve a radically new cinematographic style that develops to its full maturity in *Citizen Kane*.”¹³⁶ (See Figure 19)

LIFE magazine did a nine page spread on Orson Welles and *Citizen Kane*. *LIFE* magazine said this about the working relationship between Orson Welles and Gregg Toland –

Gregg Toland, ace Hollywood cameraman who accomplished the technical brilliance of *Citizen Kane*, tells how willingly Welles seized upon every new suggestion. During the 27 weeks of shooting, Welles spent countless hours with him, planning, plotting, experimenting with inexhaustible patience for new camera angles, new compositions, new light effects, new settings that would make for power and economy, for emotional intensity and utter realism.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Mitchell Camera Corp, *Mitchell Motion Picture Cameras*, 4-5.

¹³⁵ American Cinematographer, “Photography of the Month,” 222.

¹³⁶ Carringer, *The Making of Citizen Kane*, 73.

¹³⁷ LIFE Magazine, “Orson Welles,” 108.

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LIFE magazine in the last seven pages of the article, illustrated Toland's new techniques he perfected with the Mitchell BNC, including "pan focus," frame composition where Toland dressed the entire frame for a shot or lit only a portion of the frame in order to connote a certain mood, creating a low ceiling by Toland shooting from a hole in the floor to create the mood, the tight grouping of big figures in the foreground and sharp focusing on action in the background, remarkable depth of field where it was marveled that "scenes sometimes traversed two 100-ft. sound stages," and using special lens coating to cut light flares in the projection room scene. A seven page spread focusing on camera techniques of the cinematographer was unheard of before *Citizen Kane*. One page is even devoted to Toland's tricks with light like using natural candlelight in a scene from Bette Davis' film *Little Foxes* (also shot on a Mitchell BNC).¹³⁸

In 1945, *LIFE* magazine did a nine page spread of filmmaking. This time it centered on the process of "movie making" – the set, the take, camera, lights, lab, sound, and the film vault. A photo of the Mitchell BNC takes up most of the page with a camera operator behind its viewfinder under the "camera" section; the significance of this focus on the Mitchell BNC illustrates the importance of this machine and its impact on filmmaking.

The text calls the camera "the most important piece of apparatus in Hollywood. The whole great big motion-picture industry exists solely for the purpose of paying court to the black-hooded machine shown above."

The article continues –

This is the latest and best model camera. It costs about \$10,000 and is made in West Hollywood, Calif. By the Mitchell Camera Co. Warner Bros. has nine others just like it which are kept in an air-conditioned vault. Film runs through at 90 feet per minute, must nevertheless be stopped about once a second so that it may be exposed frame by frame. This calls for a great number of smoothly operating gears and sprockets finished to 1/10,000 of an inch. The most astonishing thing about the whole electrically run machine is that it operates in total silence, for if it whirred or clicked in any way the noise would be picked up and recorded along with the actors' voices.¹³⁹

According to Toland in *American Cinematographer*, *Citizen Kane* was "the starting-point of some new ideas in both the technique and the art of cinematography."¹⁴⁰ But even before *Citizen Kane*, Toland was experimenting with the Mitchell BNC on John Ford's film *The Long Voyage Home*.¹⁴¹

The capabilities of the Mitchell BNC enabled the development of a new artist – the cinematographer. The Mitchell BNC made the craft of the cinematographer easier so that he

¹³⁸ Ibid, 110-116.

¹³⁹ LIFE Magazine, "Movie Making," 68-77.

¹⁴⁰ Toland, "Realism For 'Citizen Kane,'" 54.

¹⁴¹ Carringer, 74-75.

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could focus on the artistry that the camera and his eye provided. The cinematographer painted a picture with lights and shadows; the Mitchell Camera recorded the picture exactly as the cinematographer painted it.¹⁴² By 1939, there were 19 Mitchell BNCs made and used by all the major studios; there was a total of at least 30 Mitchell BNCs made at the Mitchell factory in West Hollywood. (See Figure 18)

In the run up to World War II, part of design and production focus at the Mitchell Camera Corp factory began to shift toward the war effort. Even before the U.S. officially became involved in World War II, Mitchell Standard cameras and Mitchell NCs were being used to film Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force training films.¹⁴³ (The Mitchell Standard was also called the “High Speed” camera because it could operate up to 128 frames per second; its precision was consistent and predictable. During and post-World War II, the U.S. government called it the “GC.”)¹⁴⁴ Photographic Unit officers were called into active duty, including Gregg Toland and director John Ford.¹⁴⁵ Mitchell Camera Corp had developed and manufactured the chronograph “GC” camera which led to the development of specialized “government cameras” used in World War II, including an aerial tracking camera, a triangulation camera, and a split magazine camera.¹⁴⁶ Mitchell cameras were in the nose cones of the B-25 Bomber airplanes; a Mitchell camera filmed the first daylight bombing raid over Germany.¹⁴⁷ A Mitchell BNC that was sent to the Soviet Union during World War II also shot the notable Russian film *Ivan the Terrible* (1945). A Mitchell Standard camera was used to film the test “dummy bombs” and, more notably, the Trinity Site atomic bomb test in 1945, as part of the Manhattan Project.

On July 16, 1945, the photographer, Berlyn Brixner, sat behind a Mitchell Standard (made at the West Hollywood factory) to film the world’s first nuclear explosion. Before the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Brixner was dispatched to Washington, D.C. to deliver the 35mm motion-picture negative films to the Manhattan Project director, expressly for use in newsreels.¹⁴⁸

Mitchell Camera Corp was also heavily involved in the next groundbreaking filmmaking event after sound – color. A Mitchell camera movement was in the early Technicolor three strip cameras; in the beginning, Mitchell Camera Corp in West Hollywood, was also manufacturing the cameras for Technicolor. *Gone with the Wind* and *Wizard of Oz* were filmed with Technicolor cameras containing Mitchell camera movements and manufactured by Mitchell Camera Corp.¹⁴⁹

Mitchell Camera Corp also developed new camera devices and attachments at the West Hollywood factory. They manufactured universal magnifying view finders, including an inverted

¹⁴² Mitchell Camera Corp Ad, “The Expert Cameraman...,” *The International Photographer*, September 1937, 15.

¹⁴³ Stull, “Hollywood’s Own Film Unit Volunteers to Film the Navy,” 166-167.

¹⁴⁴ Roberts, 146-147.

¹⁴⁵ Stull, 166.

¹⁴⁶ George Worrall interview, Johnson Heumann Research Assoc, DPR notes, 1987.

¹⁴⁷ Joe Dunton interview, Kate Eggert, 2015.

¹⁴⁸ Berlyn Brixner’s interview, Manhattan Project Voices, February 1992.

¹⁴⁹ The Editor (*The International Photographer*), “A Cinema World Wonder,” 84.

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image view finder, erect image view finder, erect image view finder with built-in mattes, view finder support, and adapters and brackets for various sizes of photographic lenses. (The Mitchell view finder was first designed with cinematographer Tony Gaudio and Bausch and Lomb in 1922.)

Other items designed and manufactured at the West Hollywood factory included the standard tripod base, rolling tripod with the height of the camera controlled by single crank, baby tripod, still camera tripod, friction tilt and panorama, low mount or tilthead adapter, quick release friction head, an improved camera motor and motor adaptor, buckle proof magazine, dummy camera and projection lamp, gear hobber, gear box and extension shaft, electric trip switch, matte cutting device, variable diffuser, Mitchell camera carrying case, Mitchell magazine carrying case, Mitchell accessory carrying case, Mitchell Sound Recorder, Mitchell Background Projector.¹⁵⁰

Mitchell Camera Corp received an Academy Award for Technical Achievement in 1939, 1966 and 1968. George A. Mitchell received an Academy Honorary Award in 1952 by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.¹⁵¹

Mitchell Camera Corp left the West Hollywood factory building in 1946. They moved into a bigger factory building in Glendale, CA. At that time, they had over 200 employees. Mitchell Camera Corp built approximately 150 Mitchell NCs from 1932 to 1938. And by 1940, there were more than 20 Mitchell BNCs in use in Hollywood and internationally.

Since its introduction in 1932, the Mitchell NC movement became the standard design from which later Mitchell movements evolved. The Mitchell NC movement was used in Mitchell camera models NC, BNC, BNCR, and 205-R; a miniaturized NC-type movement was used in the compact types of Mitchell 35-mm cameras, models R35, Mark I, Mark II, S35R, S35RB, S35RC, Mark II, and in Mitchell 16-mm cameras.¹⁵²

According to Leo Enticknap in his book *Moving Image Technology: From Zoetrope to Digital*, “basically updated and heavily modified versions of the 1934 Mitchell BNC, and the 1937 Arriflex, represent the final stage in the development of (camera movement) fundamentals before the industry goes digital (in the 1990s).” In the mid-1960s, the first cameras produced by Panavision were retrofitted Mitchell BNC cameras. All standard 35mm cameras made by Panavision to this day are based on the Mitchell movement.¹⁵³

Mitchell Camera Corp moved from Glendale to a factory in Sun Valley, California sometime between 1970 and 1975. In 1979, Mitchell Camera Corp stopped all manufacturing and closed the Sun Valley factory.

¹⁵⁰ Mitchell Camera Corporation Ads, various in *American Cinematographer* and *The International Photographer*, 1929-1946.

¹⁵¹ Internet Movie Database. Various titles, production companies, directors, cinematographers, and actors. <http://www.imdb.com>.

¹⁵² Roberts, 144.

¹⁵³ Enticknap, *Moving Image Technology*, 44.

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Background Context: History of West Hollywood, California

The City of West Hollywood had its beginning as a small community associated with the railroad. Laid out first as a rail yard for the Los Angeles Railway, a town began to develop as land around the yard was subdivided. Largely agricultural at first, the town of Sherman began to take shape. Sherman's growth accelerated after the arrival of the motion picture industry in the late 1910s. Its location between Hollywood, home to the burgeoning industry, and Beverly Hills, a new residential haven for Hollywood's elite, made Sherman an attractive place for those in the motion picture industry, stars and workers alike, to unwind. It was this location between Hollywood and Beverly Hills that would drive much of the town's development in the first decades of the twentieth century."¹⁵⁴

Hollywood's stance as a "dry town," which was enforced even more strictly after the beginning of Prohibition, led motion picture industry workers and stars to seek entertainment elsewhere. Neighboring Sherman became attractive as a nighttime haunt, in part due to its location in unincorporated county and the relatively lax oversight by the Sheriff's Department.¹⁵⁵

From the time Sherman adopted the name West Hollywood in 1925 until the end of World War II, the up-and-coming town transformed into the home of some of Hollywood's most famous gathering spots. The growth that began in the first half of the 1920s continued during the second half. Dubbed the Sunset Strip, this stretch of unincorporated county road became synonymous with Hollywood glamour. Santa Monica Boulevard became part of Route 66 during the decade; the street retained its more working class character in comparison to the glamour that was taking root on Sunset Boulevard. During the same period, a modest commercial district developed along the streets south of Santa Monica Boulevard – Beverly Boulevard, Melrose Avenue, and Robertson Boulevard.¹⁵⁶

The motion picture industry had significant impacts on the commercial and industrial development of West Hollywood in the 1920s and 1930s. Neighboring Hollywood was the nucleus of the motion picture industry by the 1920s. West Hollywood's leading industries in the 1920s and 1930s were film and related industrial production, including the manufacture of motion picture cameras, radios, and building hardware. Among these businesses was the Mitchell Camera Company, which would become an innovative producer of cameras and sound equipment that enabled the development of sound pictures and cinematography. Mitchell moved to an industrial area of West Hollywood in 1929 and constructed a factory using designs from the Truscon Steel Company of Ohio. From the new factory in West Hollywood, Mitchell grew to dominate the camera industry in Hollywood.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ GPA Consulting, "City of West Hollywood: Commercial Historic Resources Survey," 16.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 25

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 34.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 34-5.

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As the center of the entertainment industry, Hollywood naturally attracted an artistic community, which was drawn by the freedom it encouraged. Members of what is today identified as the LGBTQ community were among those attracted to Hollywood. Los Angeles' reputation as a frontier town with more liberal social standards than the East Coast or Midwest also enticed many who were part of the LGBTQ community to move West. This reputation lasted into the 1920s, by which time the motion picture industry became its own draw.¹⁵⁸

The onset of the Great Depression in the 1930s brought about a more culturally conservative climate in America. Many Americans blamed their hard times on the excesses of the 1920s, particularly the hedonistic culture they associated with being gay, lesbian, or bisexual.¹⁵⁹ Demands for greater censorship in film ignited a justified fear of government intervention among studios and producers. To quell the reformist protests, William Hays, President of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) organization, joined forces with studio executives in 1930 to create the Production Code, a doctrine of self-censorship designed to preempt government interference, promote conservative politics, and keep Christian critics at bay. By the mid-1930s, Hollywood had transitioned from a place of relative freedom for the LGBTQ community to a place of certain fear and prejudice.¹⁶⁰

The censorship in Hollywood in the 1930s and crack down on portrayals of any type of homosexuality, including men as effeminate or women as masculine, drove many over the county line to seek refuge in West Hollywood. The town, situated in unincorporated county territory, enjoyed relatively less supervision from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department than Hollywood did from the Los Angeles Police Department, and bars and nightclubs catering to LGBTQ clientele began to crop up in the 1930s. For example, there was the Footlight Club at 7746 Santa Monica Boulevard Another nightclub, which featured cross-dressing entertainers, such as male impersonator Tommy Williams.¹⁶¹

In the post-World War II period, the area around The Factory became the center of region's creative communities. West Hollywood emerged as the center of the interior design industry for the West Coast. Several prominent decorators, art directors, and other figures in the design industry lived and worked in West Hollywood, giving the area a reputation as the center of the industry's most established tastemakers. Property owners and enterprising real estate agents made conscious decisions to attract design industry tenants to specific commercial corridors in West Hollywood. Land and small industrial buildings in this area were relatively inexpensive and undeveloped still in the late 1940s, creating opportunities for the large and flexible warehouse-like spaces needed by the industry to display furniture, carpets, tiles, and fabrics. Herman Miller, a furniture manufacturer, opened a showroom at Beverly and Robertson in 1949; the building was designed by Charles Eames.¹⁶² By the 1950s, design industries spread north to Melrose Avenue, south on Robertson Boulevard. Several design firms used the basement and

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 62.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 63.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 36-7.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 37.

¹⁶² Ibid, 54-5 .

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12,000 square feet first floor of The Factory for their offices, shops, and manufacturing from at least the 1960s¹⁶³ to the late 1970s. The most notable interior designer who had an office and workshop at The Factory was Phyllis Morris, who was known as “the designer to the stars” and one of the first women to find success in the Los Angeles design industry.¹⁶⁴ The area continues as a mecca for interior design.

West Hollywood’s location in Los Angeles County also invited illegal gambling, drugs, and after hours alcohol service, which centered mainly around Sunset Boulevard. Though the Sunset Strip had always been a center of vice, the flashy nightclub scene of the 1940s and 1950s became the center of escalating violence between organized crime rackets.¹⁶⁵ A new era of entertainment on the Sunset Strip began when the Whiskey a Go-Go opened on January 15, 1964 in a former bank building. Elmer Valentine, an ex-cop from Chicago with mob ties, created what became “one of the most celebrated clubs in the history of rock music.” The Sunset Strip quickly changed from sophisticated, expensive supper clubs to the place for youth culture. Music was a central focus and mode of expression for this culture. The Strip and nearby areas of West Hollywood became the center of West Coast rock music as it progressed from the 1960s through 1990s, spanning the eras of rock, folk, punk, glam, new wave, heavy metal, and grunge music.

Meanwhile on Santa Monica Boulevard, The Troubadour was opened by Doug Weston in 1957. Located three blocks away from The Factory, the club helped launch the careers of rock and folk singers such as Elton John, Linda Ronstadt, and Joan Baez. Another music venue/club would soon be at The Factory as it turned its use to entertainment. One of the first-known entertainment uses of The Factory was in 1967, when a group of celebrities, including Paul Newman Peter Lawford, and Samy Davis Jr. transformed the second floor to “The Factory,” a venue favored by the Rat Pack. This “cavernous private play-place” charged \$1200 for its annual membership and had bars, dance floors, dining, and an art gallery.¹⁶⁶ After “The Factory” folded, a series of clubs opened on the second floor of The Factory. In 1973, Scott Forbes leased the second floor on Sunday nights and before long he took over the lease and created Studio One.

Beginning in the late 1950s, the LGBTQ community established itself as an integral part of West Hollywood’s identity. One of the first-known businesses to cater to gay men was called Ah Men and was located at 8933 Santa Monica Boulevard. The history of Santa Monica Boulevard would soon become synonymous with gay culture and identity. By the 1960s, there were several gay and lesbian businesses; gay bars, although unadorned and shuttered clustered throughout the West Hollywood Area. An area which received the name “Boystown” was generally from La Peer Drive to La Cienega, but really stretched along to the middle of the city at Crescent Heights Boulevard and Santa Monica Boulevard. In West Hollywood, LGBTQ established a community of newcomers who gathered in local coffee shops, bookstores, restaurants, and nightclubs. In West Hollywood, they found a home, forming softball leagues, choral groups, and motorcycle

¹⁶³ Los Angeles Times, “Design Firm Leases Ground Floor of Club,” J11.

¹⁶⁴ GPA Consulting, 58.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 60.

¹⁶⁶ Alleman, *Hollywood: The Movie Lover’s Guide*, 259.

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clubs.¹⁶⁷ Led by Scott Forbes of Studio One, several LGBTQ bars around greater Los Angeles joined together as the Los Angeles Tavern Guild and sponsored activities for the community throughout the area.¹⁶⁸ Over the course of the 1970s, gays and lesbians throughout Southern California recognized West Hollywood as “the most visible concentration of gay culture and power in the region.” Many of the community organizations founded in Los Angeles began relocating or focusing their efforts on West Hollywood with its reputation as the center of the LGBTQ community.¹⁶⁹

The appearance of bars and nightlife establishments evolved as the community felt more comfortable and safe. Initially, LGBTQ bars were located in older retail or industrial buildings. Owners removed all fenestration and installed rear entrances. Gradually, as persecution and shame diminished, windows were added to the facades. Retail space was available and rent was cheap. It was in the 1974, that Scott Forbes would give gay men something they never knew could exist – a nearly 6000 square foot, world-class disco catering only to gay men and run by a gay man.

By the mid-1980s, it was not uncommon for storefronts and bars in Boystown to start opening entirely on to the sidewalk. According to historian Moira Kenny, “West Hollywood marks the evolution of Los Angeles’s gay movement from one focused on short-term responses to crisis within the community to one of creating and sustaining community institutions through alliances with other local constituent groups and residents.”¹⁷⁰ The personal and sexual freedom of the community in the 1970s gave way to the crisis of the early 1980s as the AIDS pandemic swept through the gay community, giving new urgency to activism and LGBTQ-focused social services for the community.¹⁷¹

When the City of West Hollywood incorporated in 1984, it was the first city in the United States to have an elected governing body whose majority comprised openly gay officials. This landmark moment for LGBTQ rights and plurality was possible because of developments in the preceding decades.¹⁷² A group called the Coalition for Economic Survival (CES) was a major force behind incorporation of West Hollywood, mobilizing and fighting for tenant’s rights. While renter’s rights were a major focus of the incorporation efforts, when West Hollywood officially incorporated as a city in 1984, “lesbian and gay issues defined early city politics.” The first official act of the City Council was to pass an ordinance banning discrimination against lesbians and gays.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁷ GPA Consulting, 77.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 79.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 77.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 78.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 76.

¹⁷² Ibid, 76.

¹⁷³ Ibid, 83.

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Background Context: LGBT History – 1940s - Stonewall Riots

Los Angeles played a critical role in the gay liberation movement in the United States. Before World War II, most LGBTs were isolated from one another but this soon changed during and after war when LGBTs from all over the country met each other through their service in the military and wartime industries.¹⁷⁴ Major port cities like San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York, which served as meeting points before soldiers were sent off also had enclaves of gay and lesbian bars. For the first time many LGBTs could live out a different identity than they could in their hometown.¹⁷⁵ Los Angeles' reputation as a frontier town with more liberal social standards than the East Coast or Midwest also enticed many who were part of the LGBTQ community to move West.¹⁷⁶ Since the 19th century, California has been a beacon for LGBTs and "outlaws."

After the war, many LGBTs chose to stay in Los Angeles. It was easier to be "different" in Los Angeles, and even though homophobia still existed it paled in comparison to other cities and small towns in the U.S.¹⁷⁷ This then created a community that needed spaces. These spaces were formed "through communal responses to sites of resistance to homophobic repression." According to *Queers in Space: Communities, Public Spaces, Sites of Resistance*, a queer site "is a singular point of expression, exchange, sexuality, or resistance in the landscape that counters loss of use and habitation because of social changes and events rooted in homophobia."¹⁷⁸

Before Studio One disco existed, the gay bars that existed in Los Angeles and across the nation were small, unadorned, had no windows, small windows, or windows covered with plywood, all with the intention to hide what was going on inside. Within the gay bar "it was possible for a homosexual to envision a future where in order to be free of sin, she or he did not need to become someone else...with very few exceptions, the bar was the only place where this process could happen."¹⁷⁹ Most of gay bars were also run by the mob, which kept the community repressed and under scrutiny. Although these spaces filled a vital need for many in the community, these spaces also perpetuated suppression and in-the-closet quietness and shame of the pre-1960s.

In the history of the Gay and Lesbian civil rights movement in the United States, the 1950's to the 1960's are considered the 'Homophile Years.' This is the time before the Stonewall Riots, with the growth in the urban subculture of gay men and lesbians, government and police harassment, persecution and investigation of gays. Through the 1950s to 1960s, the Homophile movement remained small and relatively marginalized. A very small percentage of LGBTs were deciding and forming what would become a gay revolution. Still thought of as "an abomination" and mentally ill in the eyes of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* of the American Psychiatric Association, most LGBTs viewed themselves as flawed and kept their feelings of attraction

¹⁷⁴ GPA Consulting, "Survey L.A.," 22.

¹⁷⁵ *L.A., A Queer History*. Directed by Gregorio Davila.

¹⁷⁶ GPA Consulting, West Hollywood Commercial Survey, 62.

¹⁷⁷ GPA Consulting, "Survey LA," 22.

¹⁷⁸ Ingram et al., *Queers in Space*, 43.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 180.

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inside. It is during this time that the small percentage who were willing to organize, protest, or to show themselves in some public way did so in the form of magazines like Edythe Eyde's *Vice Versa* and ONE Incorporated's *ONE magazine*.

Centered in Los Angeles, a preeminent event in the gay liberation movement was the founding of the Mattachine Society in 1950, which was one of the earliest homophile organizations in the country. Two years earlier, founding member Harry Hay, already a political activist, wrote a manifesto of an organization that would improve the social status of gay men. In their Statement of Missions and Purposes, the Mattachine Society adopted the following principles: homosexuals were a minority group with a unique heritage (equivalent to African-Americans, Latinos and Jews), and the group called for a grassroots movement of gay people to challenge anti-gay discrimination.¹⁸⁰

The gay liberation movement gained steam by the mid-1960s due to political and social unrest brought on by the Vietnam War, the continued American Civil Rights Movement, the Feminist Movement, and the straight sexual revolution. During this time, sexual and gender norms hinted at being more fluid and the challenged the conservative ways of American government and social thoughts. These "norms" were now being challenged.¹⁸¹

While the straight community could partake and revel in the movements of the 1960s there were still many challenges waiting for the LGBT community. The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) for example. The LAPD, which operated in the City of Los Angeles, was notorious for raids and gay bashing, and general humiliation of gay folk – ranging from "hog-tying" to outright beatings and murders. At the time when Studio One opened, Ed Davis was the Chief of the LAPD. Under Davis, the LAPD and its vice squad were known for active policing against gays. Zealous officers were purported to have dangled youth over a cliff to try to make them reveal names of a pedophile ring.¹⁸² Countless articles during Chief Davis' time with the LAPD were written with titles like – "The Power Politics of Ed Davis: A Cop Who Would Be King," "LAPD's 'Crazy Ed' Davis Shoots for California Governor," "In Cops' Eyes Gay Community Is a Threat," "The Meanest Police Chief."¹⁸³ Davis was the police chief from 1969 to 1978.

Almost ten years after the first-known instance of transgender persons resisting arbitrary police arrest at Cooper's Doughnut's in 1958, there were the 1967 Black Cat riots in Silver Lake.¹⁸⁴ LGBTs became more visible and identified themselves as a minority group which was now empowered by a more public and political stage.¹⁸⁵ In 1966 there was the first gay car parade of record on Hollywood Boulevard to protest the ban on homosexuals in the military. It was the first of five around the county.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁰ GPA Consulting, 23.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 22.

¹⁸² Thorstad, "Court Sends Boy Lover to Prison," 1.

¹⁸³ Various Los Angeles Times articles.

¹⁸⁴ GPA Consulting, 28-29.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 22.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 18.

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The shift to “direct action tactics” of public protest, the gay liberation movement soon received occasional media visibility. Starting from Southern California, an organizational impulse spread, and consequently on the eve of Stonewall, fifty gay and lesbian organizations existed. As a result of the work and activism done in the homophile years, “the idea that gays and lesbians were a mistreated, persecuted minority had begun to infiltrate American society and the gay subculture.”¹⁸⁷

Background Context: LGBT History – Stonewall Riots – Studio One

The Stonewall Riots, which started as a result of a police raid on June 28, 1969, is widely considered as being the single most important event leading to the gay liberation movement. The Stonewall Riots “has come to assume mythic proportions among gay men and lesbians.”¹⁸⁸ The news of the riots was heard across the United States. It became the marker between the conservative homophile movement and the radicalization of the gay liberation movement. One Mattachine member reviled the riots, calling the protesters “tacky and cheap” and “went against everything that I wanted people to think about homosexuals.”¹⁸⁹ The sense of empowerment though that came from gays’ “days of rage” at the Stonewall remade New York’s gay nightlife. Gay life in the city just “seemed to explode.”¹⁹⁰

As a result of Stonewall, the 1970s can be considered the birth of a gay rights movement, from liberation to activism. Rather than try to destroy the old in order to build something new, gays and lesbians sought recognition and inclusion in American society; gays and lesbians expected and demanded acceptance for who they were.¹⁹¹ Gays and lesbians took on a language of pride and self-affirmation and rejected the mainstream cultural views of homosexuality. Gay-focused, single-issue organizations publicly formed, and there were new economic opportunities for gay-orientated businesses, such as bars, bathhouses, discos and restaurants.¹⁹²

The GLF (Gay Liberation Front) was born out of Stonewall. This “new breed of radicals” continuously participated in an almost continuous round of flashy, dramatic public demonstrations. Their targets were directed at all implicated in “the maintenance of gay oppression” – the media, the police, and the medical profession. They protested in the streets, but also spoke to high school civics classes. They “fashioned a new language and style of homosexuality. The accent was on pride and affirmation; they were blatant, outrageous, and flamboyant. Discarding notions of sickness and sin, they represented homosexuality as a revolutionary path toward freedom, as a step out of the constricted, stultifying gender roles of middleclass America. They engaged in public displays of affection, violated gender conventions, and gloried in the discomfort they deliberately provoked in others.”¹⁹³

¹⁸⁷ D’Emilio, *Making Trouble*, 238.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 239.

¹⁸⁹ Echols, *Hot Stuff*, Loc 1038-39.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, Loc 1094.

¹⁹¹ D’Emilio, 247.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, 250.

¹⁹³ *Ibid*, 243.

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In 1970, the GLF took on the “no touching” rule at gay bars in West Hollywood. The GLF focused on The Farm, a very popular gay bar owned by Eddie Nash who reportedly had mob ties. After a meeting and eventual threat from Nash, a GLF member reportedly said “You don’t know who you’re dealing with. We will bomb your bars.” (At the time, the idea of bombing a place likely stemmed from the African-American church bombings of the 1950s and 1960s. Firebombing would soon hit the gay community with the firebombings of the MCC and the UpStairs Lounge.) After month-long protests, Nash met with Morris Kight, and The Farm was soon a “liberated bar.”¹⁹⁴

This new gay liberation quickly exploded with movement organizations. Post-Stonewall, there was an impulse to join and push together as one group. By 1973, there were close to a 1,000 gay and lesbian organizations; the results were the essential building blocks of both a movement and a community. In the early 1970s, Los Angeles would see the formation of the Gay Community Services Center (GCSC) formed to provide shelter for homeless gays and lesbians; the GCSC soon offered a gay men’s STD clinic, which also offered individual and group counseling. The GCSC grew to be the largest LGBT organization in the country. (Scott Forbes was a board member.) The GCSC changed its name to the Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center in 1980.¹⁹⁵ The Gay Women’s Services Center (GWSC) was formed and was the first organization in the U.S. incorporated as a social service agency exclusively for lesbians. The GWSC bailed lesbians out of jail, rescued lesbians from mental institutions, provided shelter for these women until they could “get back on their feet,” and held social gatherings every evening of the week.¹⁹⁶

Soon after Stonewall, the GLF sponsored weekend dances for gays and lesbians at liberal universities. The dances were meant to engender love and acceptance and to create community, which they tried to achieve through hippie-like circle dances but quickly GLF dances featured a disco ball and gogo-boys.¹⁹⁷ Much like they would soon do at Studio One, gay men would tear off their t-shirts, wave them above their heads, and dance bare-chested. Soon the Gay Activist Alliance (GAA), a more moderate group, began sponsoring Saturday night dances in 1971. By the very early 1970s, gay disco was already taking shape in Manhattan, New York. The GAA leased a SoHo firehouse as their gay and lesbian center, and used the space as a huge disco, bringing in 1,500 people. (See Figure 10) “Bathhouses and discos, rather than meeting halls or community centers, became what journalist Andrew Kopkind called the ‘sensational glue’ holding these communities together.”¹⁹⁸

For gay men accustomed to being surveilled and harassed on the dance floor and arrested during bar raids, the uninterrupted dancing with other men evoked the feeling “that there is only now, in this place and time.”¹⁹⁹ Within the pulsing lights, engulfing sound, there was the “commingling

¹⁹⁴ Faderman and Timmons, 175-6.

¹⁹⁵ GPA Consulting, 27.

¹⁹⁶ Faderman and Timmons, 170

¹⁹⁷ Echols, Loc 1059.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, Loc 1067.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, Loc 1118.

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of music, men, and the feeling of brotherhood.”²⁰⁰ The disco dance floor became the site of release and the coming disco years constituted a “sloughing off of centuries of shame and a venting of pent-up desire.”²⁰¹

The “pre-Stonewall pattern of control by the criminal underworld” was replaced in the early 1970s by gay men entrepreneurs opening businesses catering to gay men – bars, bathhouses, sex clubs, restaurants, and discos.²⁰² Most of these entrepreneurs were not considered activists nor did they belong to any gay liberation movement organizations, instead “they were the beneficiaries of what the movement had already wrought. The message of gay pride wafted through the air; it altered the way they lived and the way they understood their lives and identity.”²⁰³

Background Context: Mitchell Camera Corp. and the New Demands of the Movie Industry

The Mitchell Camera Corporation factory (The Factory) is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A at the local level, in the areas of Art, Invention and Industry. The Mitchell Camera Corporation is exceptionally significant in Industry for creating and manufacturing the motion picture cameras that improved and advanced the practice and art of movie making. The Factory is a significant remnant of an era when the motion picture industry was booming in West Hollywood and Hollywood, California in the 1920s-1940s, generating a need for a large factory to design and manufacture technologically-advanced motion picture cameras and related equipment for the studios.²⁰⁴ Mitchell Camera Corporation occupied The Factory building from 1929-1946.

Due to the development of motion pictures with sound/talkies in the late 1920s, the demand for quiet-running cameras was in high demand by the studios and theatergoers alike. The Mitchell Camera Corporation designed and manufactured the, almost, silent-running NC (News Camera) and the silent-running BNC (Blimped News Camera) at the Mitchell Camera Corporation factory building in West Hollywood, CA. By 1946, 85% of all motion pictures shown in theaters worldwide were filmed with Mitchell cameras that were made at the Mitchell Camera Corporation factory building.²⁰⁵

George A. Mitchell began his career in Los Angeles in 1911 as an optics expert and mechanic; he was trained in the U.S. Army Signal Corp and later in Universal Studios’ camera maintenance shop. At Universal Studios, he became acquainted with many cameramen in the industry whose technical problems he resolved and he also created custom camera accessories according to their

²⁰⁰ Ibid, Loc 1216.

²⁰¹ Ibid, Loc 1497.

²⁰² D’Emilio, 250.

²⁰³ Ibid, 251.

²⁰⁴ Roberts, “The Mitchell Camera: The Machine and Its Makers,” 141.

²⁰⁵ Mitchell Camera Corp, “Mitchell 16mm Professional,” 16.

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needs. This allowed Mitchell intimate exposure to the inner workings of the motion picture camera and the concerns of the cameraman.²⁰⁶

In 1919, Mitchell, the “master mechanic,” and Henry Boeger were both working in a camera repair and modification shop in Hollywood called the National Motion Picture Repair Company. Mitchell and Boeger’s first jobs at National were repairing and adapting the most utilized cameras in Hollywood at the time, the Bell & Howell, the Pathe, and the Debrie Parvo for studios and independent cameramen. Mitchell and Boeger took ownership of the company, which they renamed the Mitchell Camera Corporation.^{207 208}

Mitchell and Boeger as chief machinist and general superintendent headed the new Mitchell Camera Corporation. They set about building a new camera that would incorporate some of the basic concepts of the then popular Bell & Howell Standard, but improved with, inventor and cameraman, John E. Leonard’s new adjustable curtain or rack over device, film moving mechanism or motion, and adjustable iris or variable shutter. These features became the hallmark of early Mitchell cameras. In 1919, Mitchell Camera Corp purchased Leonard’s patents. In 1921 Mitchell Camera Corp created and marketed the Mitchell Standard camera.²⁰⁹

The first film shot with the Mitchell Standard was Mary Pickford’s *The Love Light* (1921). The result was better than anticipated and soon Hollywood master cinematographers such as Charles Rosher (Mary Pickford films, *Sunrise*), Arthur C. Miller (*The Perils of Pauline*, *How Green Is Your Valley*), and Tony Gaudio (*Hell’s Angels*, *Little Caesar*) purchased their own Mitchell Standards.²¹⁰

International Photographer magazine conducted a test on the Mitchell Standard - “As a test for endurance [Mitchell] put a camera on a milling machine, running it at 24 pictures a second continuously for five weeks, equivalent of two to three years use. During the run the camera was well taken of and oiled once or twice a day. At the end of five weeks we compared measurements (made after the test) with those made at the beginning and were unable to detect any wear.”²¹¹

By 1923, Mitchell Camera Corp had sales representatives in Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco. A backlog of orders for the Mitchell Standard forced Mitchell manufacturing into a 72-hour work week. At this time there were thirty Mitchell Standards in use in the Hollywood studios, making Mitchell Camera Corp and Bell & Howell the standard cameras used in studios through the late silent film period. Mitchell Camera Corp announced that their current

²⁰⁶ Raimondo-Souto, *Motion Picture Photography*, 55.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 55.

²⁰⁸ Hoke, “Mitchell Camera Nears Majority,” 495.

²⁰⁹ Leonard, Various Patents, 1921.

²¹⁰ Raimondo-Souto, 55.

²¹¹ Jonson, “Effect Maintenance in Quieting Cameras,” 166.

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manufacturing building had become too small and could not accommodate the company's growth so they would be constructing a larger facility in the near future.²¹²

Theatre attendance was in a steady growth pattern since 1921. In the mid-1900s, there were about 5,000 theatres in the US; at the beginning of 1930 there were 22,624, representing an average growth of about 740 theatres per year. By the mid-1920s, a decision by Warner Brothers and Fox to introduce synchronized sound and amplification systems in their theaters forced all the major studios to confront the need for new sound and motion picture technology.²¹³

The first sound equipment was installed in theaters in late 1926. The overwhelming success of *The Jazz Singer* ushered in a phenomenal rise in audience attendance. The wiring of theaters for sound motion pictures progressed rapidly and by 1929, there were approximately 9,000 theaters out of 26,000 wired for sound in the United States. There were approximately 2,000 theatres wired for sound in Europe.²¹⁴

By August 1930, the attendance to theatres was 115 million admissions every week; this number meant that the entire population of the United States attended the motion picture theater every seven days. It was no longer considered a luxury, but a necessary form of recreation for the masses.

According to *International Photographer*, by 1930 the total investment in the motion picture industry was \$2.5 billion in the US alone; in Europe it was estimated at \$1 billion. And it was estimated that 75% of theatres in the United States would soon be wired for sound motion pictures/talkies.²¹⁵

However, even with these rising numbers in revenue and attendance, there was still a cloud of doubt over the future of sound motion pictures/talkies. *International Photographer* opined that the current sound films were just "a combination of unsatisfactory photography with unsatisfactory sound effects, which even the best story cannot efface." And by December 1930 it was known that out of the approximately 26,000 theaters in the US, 10,000 were forced to close because they were not wired for sound and consequently could not compete with theaters that were wired for sound.²¹⁶

Movie producers turned to motion picture equipment manufacturers and their professional associations to an unprecedented degree. To solve the small-scale problems of sound, studios relied more heavily on their in-house engineers, draftsmen, and machinists. But the race for quality sound motion pictures put even greater demand on outside companies and caused a great expansion of the technical manufacturing and service sector.²¹⁷

²¹² American Cinematographer, "Mitchell Increases Production Program," 22.

²¹³ Raimondo-Souto, 298.

²¹⁴ Irby, "Recent and Future Economic Changes in the Motion Picture Field," 34-35.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Criticus, "Industry Must Look Truth in Face," 18.

²¹⁷ Bordwell and Staiger, 299.

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Santa Monica Boulevard as it runs through the westside of Hollywood and the City of West Hollywood was one of the main arteries of technical service and manufacturing companies – on the westside of Hollywood, Kodak established the Eastman Service Building in 1929 and added a processing plant in 1930 (currently slated for demolition); DuPont built a laboratory and manufacturing plant in West Hollywood in 1929; Mole-Richardson lighting manufacturing company moved to a new location one block south of West Hollywood in 1928 and built an addition a year later (demolished); Fearless Camera had a showroom and offices in West Hollywood in 1932 (demolished). And in 1929, Mitchell Camera Corp built a new factory in West Hollywood which was double the size of their previous location in Hollywood.²¹⁸ It is one of the last remaining factory buildings originally associated with the technological innovation and manufacturing side of the Hollywood movie making industry and with the light industrial origins of modern West Hollywood.

Before the days of talking pictures, no one gave a thought to the loud noise of the camera. According to International Photographer, “when the sound man first came into the picture business, he almost created a panic with his demands to do this and you can’t do that...No one expected to hear the producer say: ‘Never mind the picture; we want the sound.’” No one expected the time when the cinematographer would be in sound booths behind glass, be forced to limit or discard his lighting equipment (because they would buzz), or work with a camera blimp to dampen the noise which made focusing and general movement of the camera cumbersome.²¹⁹

At an American Society of Cinematographers meeting in 1929, the cinematographers and sound engineers in attendance were asked, what would you consider an ideal condition for achieving perfect photography/for making a perfect voice record? The cinematographers answered “an ideal photographic condition exists when we can place our lights and cameras at any desired point, or work without any restrictions whatever.” The sound engineers answered, “an ideal location for making a perfect vocal record would be in the middle of the Mojave desert, unhampered by cameras, walls or any other disturbing elements.”²²⁰

The major camera manufacturers, including Bell & Howell, Mitchell Camera Corp and Fearless Camera took on the task of creating a silent-running camera. Bell & Howell was quick to come up with “silent” cameras. Bell & Howell announced their Standard Sound Camera, which had to stay at least ten feet away from any microphone; Fearless came out with the New Fearless Silent Camera in 1930, which also had to remain at least ten feet away from any microphone. Both of these cameras still required a blimp (a large suitcase-like device that fit over the camera) in order for the camera to be close to the actors and action.

²¹⁸ Davis, “Film Equipment Production Centered Here,” D1, D3.

²¹⁹ Clark, “Before and After Sound,” 34, 36.

²²⁰ American Cinematographer, “Sound Men and Cinematographers Discuss Their Mutual Problems,” 8, 39.

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Conclusion

The Mitchell Camera factory/Studio One Disco and Backlot building (The Factory) is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A at the local level due to its pivotal association with the motion picture industry and LGBTQ civil rights and events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the City of West Hollywood's political and social history.

In 1978, The Factory building was recognized by the West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce for its historic significance as the former Mitchell Camera Company factory, and for the historically significant building's contribution to the WHCC's plan to attract business to West Hollywood. Until 1984, West Hollywood was an unincorporated city; the WHCC was acting as the city's only local government when they held a celebrity hosted ceremony and placed a plaque in the sidewalk cement in front of The Factory building on Robertson Blvd honoring the building.²²¹

The City of West Hollywood has done two residential Historic Resources Surveys, in 1986-87 and 2008. Although both surveys concentrated on residential properties, both sited a few commercial structures the surveyors thought were of architectural note. The Factory building was cited on both surveys.^{222 223}

In 1987, the City of West Hollywood completed a DPR 523 form on The Factory building. The historic research consultants Johnson Heumann Research Associates found the building to be eligible for local listing and for listing on the National Register.²²⁴

In 1994/95, the City of West Hollywood's Department of Community Development filed an application for the nomination of the building at local level. The City's Cultural Heritage Advisory Board recommended that The Factory building not be designated as a Cultural Resource, and the City Council agreed. Although the resolution noted the building's exterior is largely intact, the City Council sited some dented exterior sidewall panels and interior alterations as reasons for denying the designation. The resolution also noted that the "design of the building is undistinguished and makes no contribution to the historical events that occurred at the property." However, at the time the resolution was written, the architect, builder and that the building was specifically designed and built for the Mitchell Camera Corporation was "unknown." The owner of the building was against the designation.²²⁵

²²¹ Los Angeles Times, "Ceremony Set For Landmark Designation in W. Hollywood," H22.

²²² Johnson Heumann Research Associates (HRG), "City of West Hollywood: Historic Resources Survey 1986 – 1987," 54, 87.

²²³ ARG, "City of West Hollywood: R2, R3, R4 Multi-Family Survey Report," February 2008, 20.

²²⁴ City of West Hollywood and Johnson Heumann Research Associates, "DPR: Historic Resources Inventory: Studio One, Mitchell Camera Manufacturing Company," 1987.

²²⁵ City of West Hollywood, "Resolution No. 95-1393," January 17, 1995

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In 2015, The Factory building was chosen as one of the National Trust For Historic Preservation's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places 2015.²²⁶

In 2016, GPA Consulting was hired by the City of West Hollywood to conduct a survey of commercial resources. That survey has not been adopted. The Factory currently has an evaluation of 3CS.²²⁷

²²⁶ National Trust for Historic Preservation, "11 Most Endangered Historic Places: The Factory." Accessed June 2015. www.savingplaces.org/places/the-factory#.V0No0SMrJuU.

²²⁷ GPA Consulting, West Hollywood Commercial Survey, DPR.

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<https://archive.org/details/TrusconPermanentBuildingsStandardizedForGeneralIndustries>.

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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: SCCIC Fullerton

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 19-176819 Form prepared 12/1987

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property .95

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 34.082556 Longitude: -118.386539
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

Mitchell Camera Corporation Factory/Studio
One Disco-Backlot Theatre

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Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 11 | Easting: 372 170 | Northing: 377 970 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

The primary building occupies the full footprint of lot 8, lot 38, and approximately 1/10 of lot 7 and lot 39. The primary building occupies a small portion of lot 7 (east edge) and lot 39 (west edge). The secondary building occupies half of the full footprint of lot 7. Lots 36, 37, and most of 39 have no buildings. They are parking lots. Assessor Parcel No. 4339-009-007.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The proposed boundary of the property is the original boundary of the original parcel currently occupied by the building. ?

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kate Eggert and Krisy K Gosney
organization: West Hollywood Heritage Project
street & number: 1274 N. Crescent Heights Blvd, Apt 214
city or town: West Hollywood state: CA zip code: 90046
e-mail: kateblaine@gmail.com, kgosney@sbcglobal.net,
westhollywoodheritageproject@gmail.com
telephone: 323-481-4167
date: March 24, 2016, August 12, 2016

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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.

Photo Log

Name of Property:

City or Vicinity:

County:

State:

Photographer:

Date Photographed:

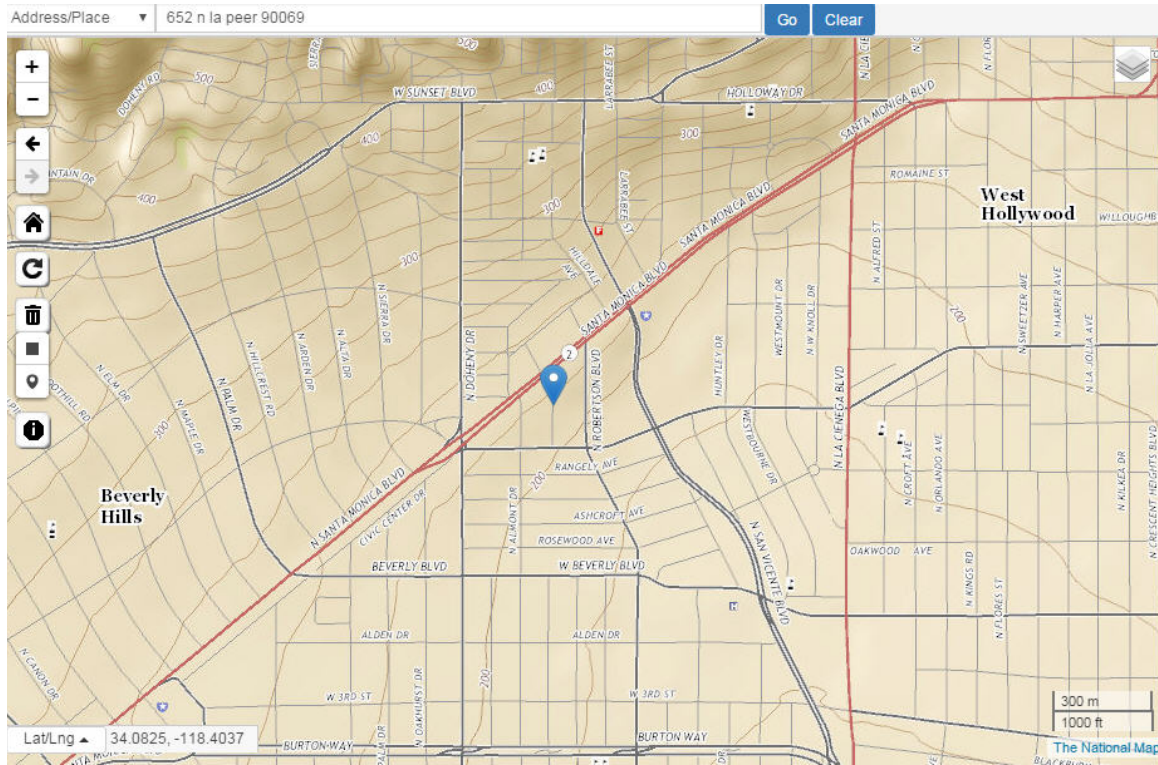
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of ____.

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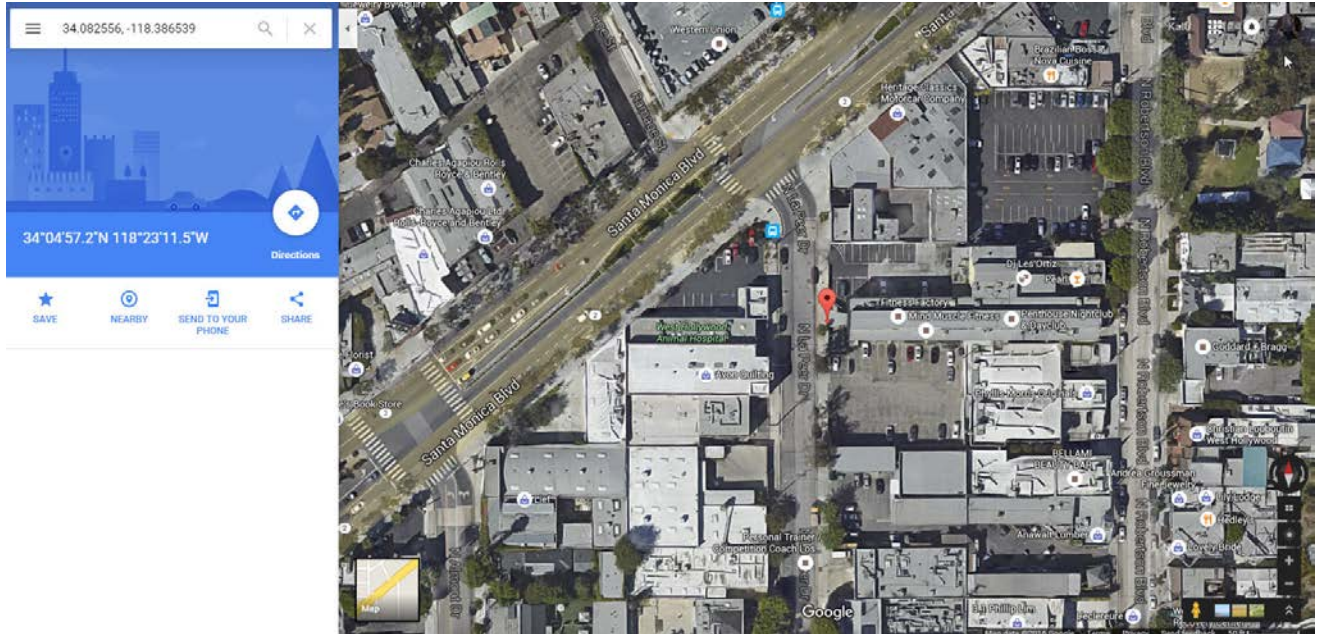
Map 1



Mitchell Camera Corporation Factory/Studio
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Name of Property

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Map 2



Mitchell Camera Corporation Factory/Studio
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Map 3



1929 Structure - Mitchell Camera Corporation Factory/Studio One Disco - Backlot Theatre

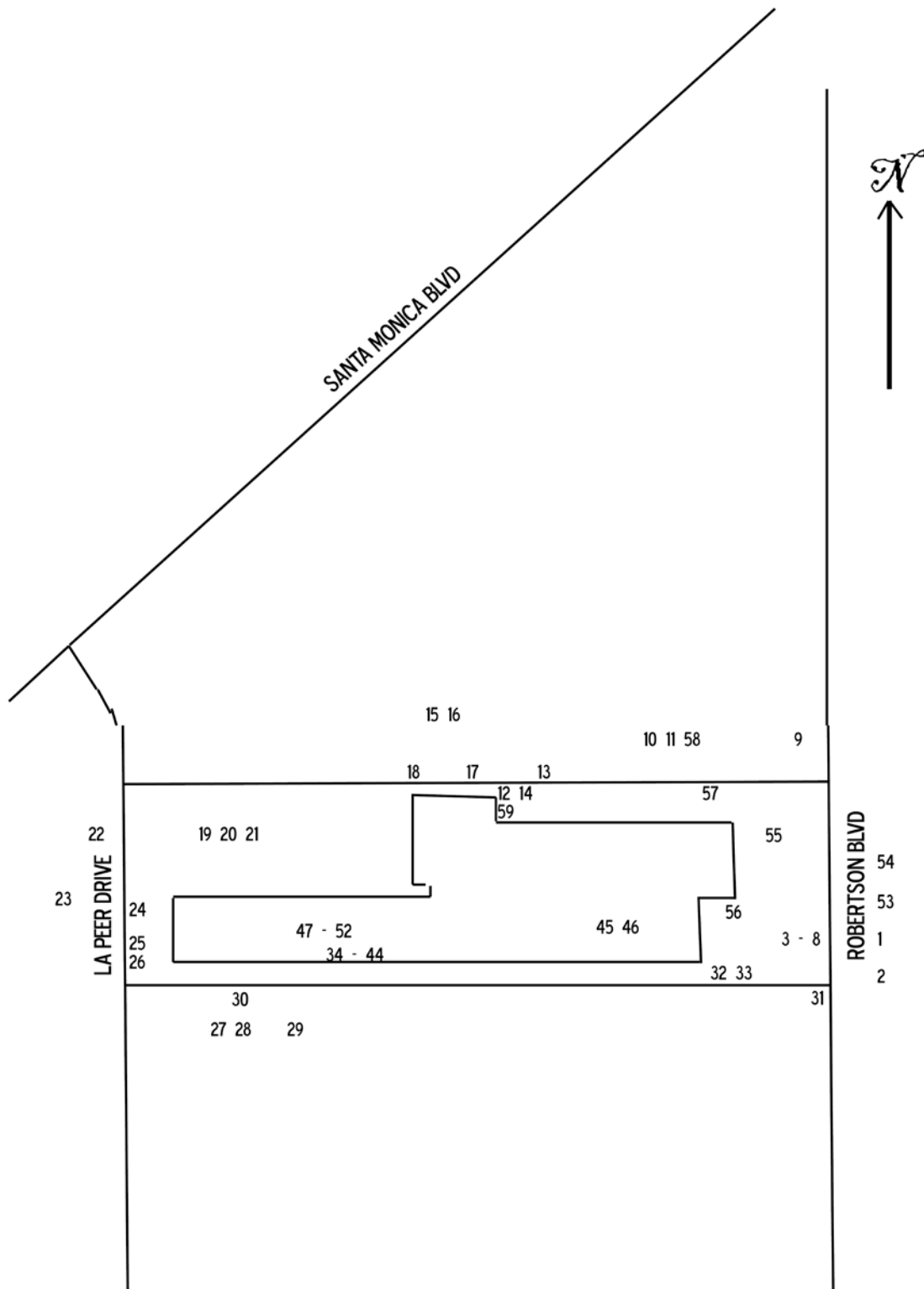
Altered 1929 structure - Mitchell Camera Corporation offices

1940 structure - Mitchell Camera Corporation drafting room

Pre-1946 structure - Mitchell Camera Corporation storage

Mitchell Camera Corporation Factory/Studio
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Photograph Log Page

Name of Property: Mitchell Camera Corporation, Studio One
City or Vicinity: West Hollywood
County: Los Angeles
State: CA
Name of Photographer: Hunter Kerhart (Photos 0001-0003, 0009, 0012-0014, 0019-0022, 0028, 0030-0031), Kate Eggert
Date of Photographs: 4/28/2015, 5/24/2015
Location of Original Digital Files: 665 North Robertson Boulevard, 652 La Peer Drive
Number of Photographs: 59

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0001
East façade, camera facing west

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0002
South elevation (left) and east façade (right), camera facing west-northwest

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0003
Upper half of east façade, camera facing west

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0004
Lower half of east façade, camera facing west

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0005
East façade, camera facing up and west

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0006
Basement of east façade, camera facing northwest

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0007
Basement of east façade detail, camera facing northwest

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0008
Staircase from basement level on east façade, camera facing west-southwest

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0009
North elevation (left) and east elevation of irregular projection and north elevation of irregular projection and continued north elevation (right), camera facing north-northwest

Mitchell Camera Corporation Factory/Studio
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CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0010

North elevation (left) and east elevation of irregular projection (right), camera facing north-northeast

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0011

North elevation (left) and east elevation of irregular projection and north elevation of irregular projection (right), camera facing north

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0012

North elevation, camera facing northeast

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0013

North elevation (left) and east elevation of irregular projection and north elevation of irregular projection (right), camera facing southwest

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0014

East façade detail, camera facing southwest

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0015

North elevation (left) and north elevation of irregular projection and north elevation continued (right), camera facing south

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0016

North elevation (left) and north elevation of irregular projection and north elevation continued (right), camera facing south

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0017

North elevation of irregular projection (left) and north elevation (right), camera facing southwest

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0018

North elevation of irregular projection (left) and north elevation (right), camera facing south-southeast

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0019

East elevation of irregular projection (left) and north elevation (right), camera facing east

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0020

East elevation of irregular projection (left) and north elevation (right), camera facing east-southeast

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0021

East elevation of irregular projection (left) and north elevation (right), camera facing east-southeast

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CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0022

East elevation of irregular projection and north elevation (left) and east façade, camera facing east-southeast

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0023

West elevation of irregular projection (left) and west façade, camera facing east

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0024

West façade detail, camera facing east-southeast

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0025

West façade detail, camera facing east

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0026

West façade detail (left) and south elevation (right), camera facing east-northeast

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0027

South elevation, camera facing north

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0028

South elevation, camera facing north-northeast

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0029

South elevation, camera facing north-northeast

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0030

South elevation detail, camera facing north

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0031

South elevation (left) and east façade (right), camera facing north-northwest

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0032

Neighboring building (left) and south elevation and east façade (right), camera facing west

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0033

Neighboring building (left) and basement level of south elevation (right), camera facing west

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0034

Interior 1st floor ceiling steel joists and open truss steel joists, camera facing upward and west

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0035

Interior 1st floor ceiling steel joists and open truss steel joists and steel sash windows, camera facing upward and west-northwest

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CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0036

Interior 1st floor ceiling open truss steel joist detail and steel sash windows, camera facing upward and west

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0037

Interior 1st floor steel sash windows (left) and open truss steel joist and motorized sectional steel door, camera facing south-southwest

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0038

Interior 1st floor steel sash windows detail, camera facing south

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0039

Interior 1st floor reinforced concrete block and copper steel sidewall panels and steel sash windows, camera facing south

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0040

Interior 1st floor reinforced concrete block and copper steel sidewall panels and steel sash windows detail, camera facing west-southwest

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0041

Interior 1st floor steel column and base detail and floor made of sawed wood blocks set in concrete slabs detail, camera facing west-northwest

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0042

Interior 1st floor concrete block wall (left) and partition of steel sash windows and reinforced plaster (right), camera facing west, northwest

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0043

Interior 1st floor detail of sawed wood blocks set in concrete slabs, camera facing downward

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0044

Interior 1st floor detail of sawed wood blocks set in concrete slabs, camera facing downward

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0045

Interior 2nd floor (formerly The Backlot) open truss steel joists and monitor, camera facing west

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0046

Interior 2nd floor (formerly The Backlot) open truss steel joists and monitor detail, camera facing upward and west

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0047

Interior 2nd floor (formerly Studio One) center span trusses (horizontal) and open truss steel joists and monitor (vertical), camera facing west

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CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0048

Interior 2nd floor (formerly Studio One) center span trusses (horizontal) and open truss steel joists and monitor (vertical), camera facing east

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0049

Interior 2nd floor (formerly Studio One) open truss steel joists and monitor with soundproof material (left) and center span truss (right), camera facing upward and north

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0050

Interior 2nd floor made of sawed wood blocks set in concrete slabs detail, camera facing downward

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0051

Interior 2nd floor made of sawed wood blocks set in concrete slabs and Mitchell Camera Corporation electric motor station bases, camera facing downward

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0052

Interior 2nd floor made of sawed wood blocks set in concrete slabs and Mitchell Camera Corporation electric motor station base detail, camera facing downward

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0053

East façade of primary and secondary building, camera facing west

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0054

East façade of secondary building, camera facing west

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0055

East façade of secondary building detail of recessed porch, camera facing west-northwest

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0056

South elevation of secondary building (left) and east façade detail of metal panel on stucco surface (right), camera facing north-northwest

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0057

North elevation of secondary building, camera facing south

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0058

North elevation of primary and secondary building, camera facing south

CA_Los Angeles County_The Factory_0059

North elevation detail of secondary building (left) and east elevation of primary buildings detail (right), camera facing south-southwest

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Mitchell Camera Corp factory promotional photograph, 1929. (Photo courtesy of American Cinematographer)

Figure 3

2016 photograph showing painted Truscon metal panels and windows, and replaced single-pane windows on second floor and monitor. South façade.

Figure 4

The Factory photographed at the La Peer Drive entrance, 1969. (Photo courtesy of Bobby Cole)

Figure 5

Studio One entrance, 1978. (Photo courtesy of Robert Bazan)

Figure 6

Sawed end grain wood block flooring (set in concrete slabs) was a special request by Mitchell so their workers would be comfortable on their feet, 1929. (Photo courtesy of International Photographer)

Figure 7

Seen here are exposed trusses and joists. Note the white enamel paint on the monitor, which reflected light down to the workers. The many windows offered ventilation and could be opened by a "Truscon Mechanical Operator." 1929. (Photo courtesy of International Photographer)

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Breaking ground at the new Mitchell Camera Corp factory and offices, 1929. (Photo courtesy of American Cinematographer)

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First floor of Mitchell Camera Corp factory. (Photo courtesy of Mitchell Motion Picture Cameras catalog, 1934)

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Figure 11

Studio One dance floor, 1976. (Photo courtesy of Jack Wheeler)

Figure 12

Studio One entrance, Gay Pride 1979. (Photo courtesy of Richard "Lightman" Lindemann, discomusic.com)

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Community Advisory Board meeting of the Los Angeles Gay Community Services Center (Los Angeles LGBT Center) at Sheldon Andelson's house, 1977. (Photo courtesy of Carol Taylor-DiPietro)

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Scott Forbes standing on the Studio One dance floor before opening in 1974. (Photo courtesy of Jack Wheeler)

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Camera Record of BNCs sold between 1934 – 1946. Note: BNCs sold in 1947 were likely made at the West Hollywood factory. (Photo courtesy of Douglas Denoff)

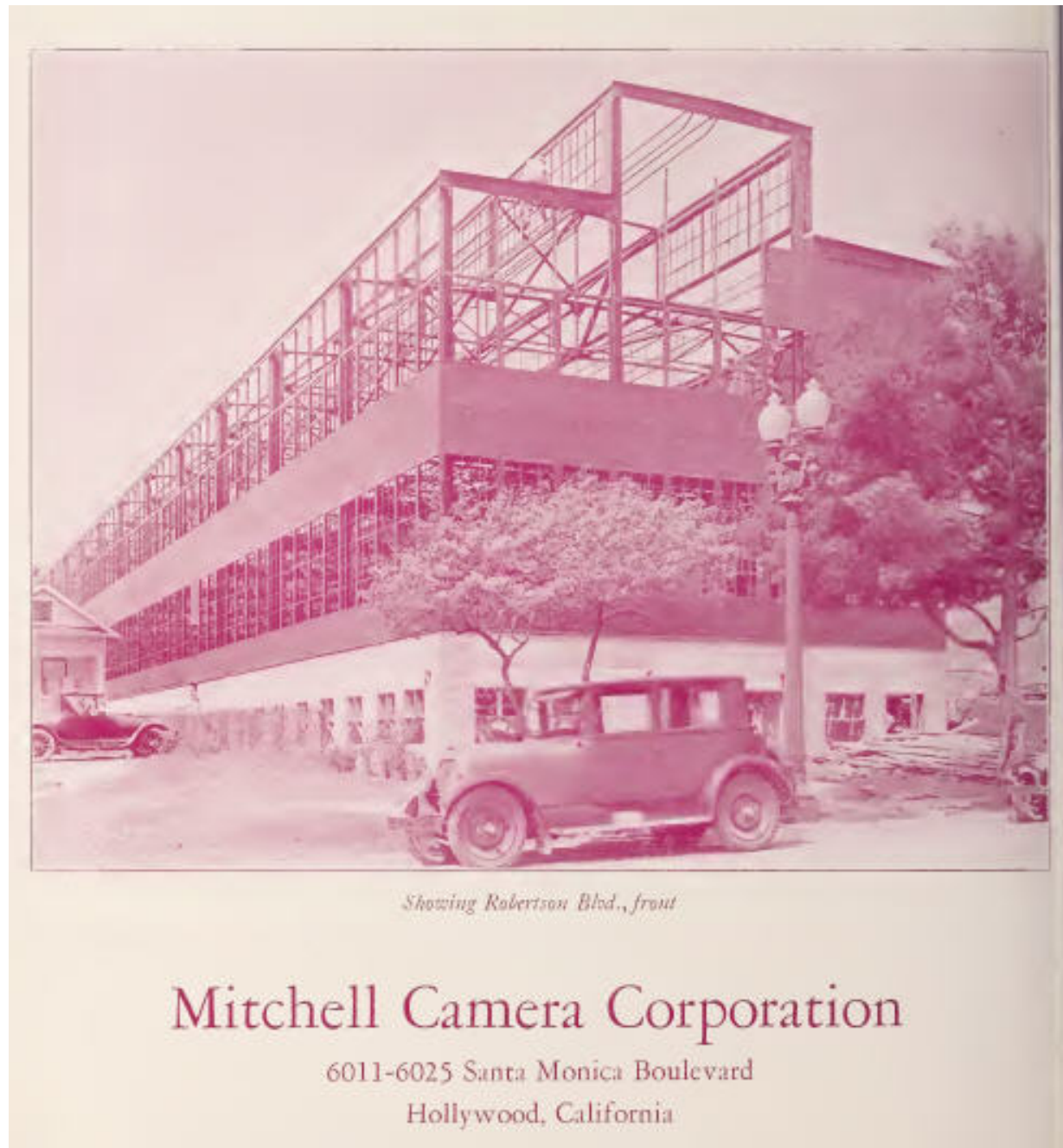
Figure 19

On the set of Citizen Kane, Orson Welles leans on Mitchell BNC-2 while cinematographer Gregg Toland talks to the crew, 1940. (Photo courtesy of RKO)

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Figure 1



Promotional photographs were featured on the back covers of *American Cinematographer* and *International Photographer* throughout the construction in 1929.

Photo courtesy of : American Cinematographer

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Figure 2



Mitchell Camera Corp factory promotional photograph, 1929.

Photo courtesy of: American Cinematographer

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Figure 3



2016
Painted Truscon copper steel panels and Truscon windows
Showing north elevation and east facade

16 replaced single-pane windows on second floor;
15 replaced single sliding windows on monitor.
23; 44

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Figure 4



The Factory photographed at the La Peer Drive entrance, 1969.

Photo courtesy of: Bobby Cole

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Figure 5



Studio One entrance, 1978.

Photo courtesy of: Robert Bazan

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Figure 6



Sawed end grain wood block flooring (set in concrete slabs) was a special request by Mitchell so their workers would be comfortable on their feet, 1929.

Photo courtesy of: International Photographer

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Figure 7



Showing Wood Block Floor, Second Floor of New Factory Building.

Mitchell Camera Corporation

6011-6025 Santa Monica Boulevard

Hollywood, California

CABLE address "MITCAMCO"

Seen here are exposed trusses and joists. Note the white enamel paint on the monitor, which reflected light down to the workers. The many windows offered ventilation and could be opened by a "Truscon Mechanical Operator."

Photo courtesy of: International Photographer

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Figure 8



Breaking ground at the new Mitchell Camera Corp factory, 1929.

Photo courtesy of: American Cinematographer

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Figure 9



First floor of Mitchell Camera Corp factory, 1934.

Photo courtesy of: Mitchell Camera Corporation, Joe Dunton

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Figure 10



Saturday night dance at the Gay Activist's Alliance leased firehouse, Manhattan, 1971.

Photo courtesy of: *Hot Stuff: Disco and the Remaking of American Culture* by Alice Echols

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Figure 11



Studio One dance floor, 1976.

Photo courtesy of: Jack Wheeler

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Figure 12



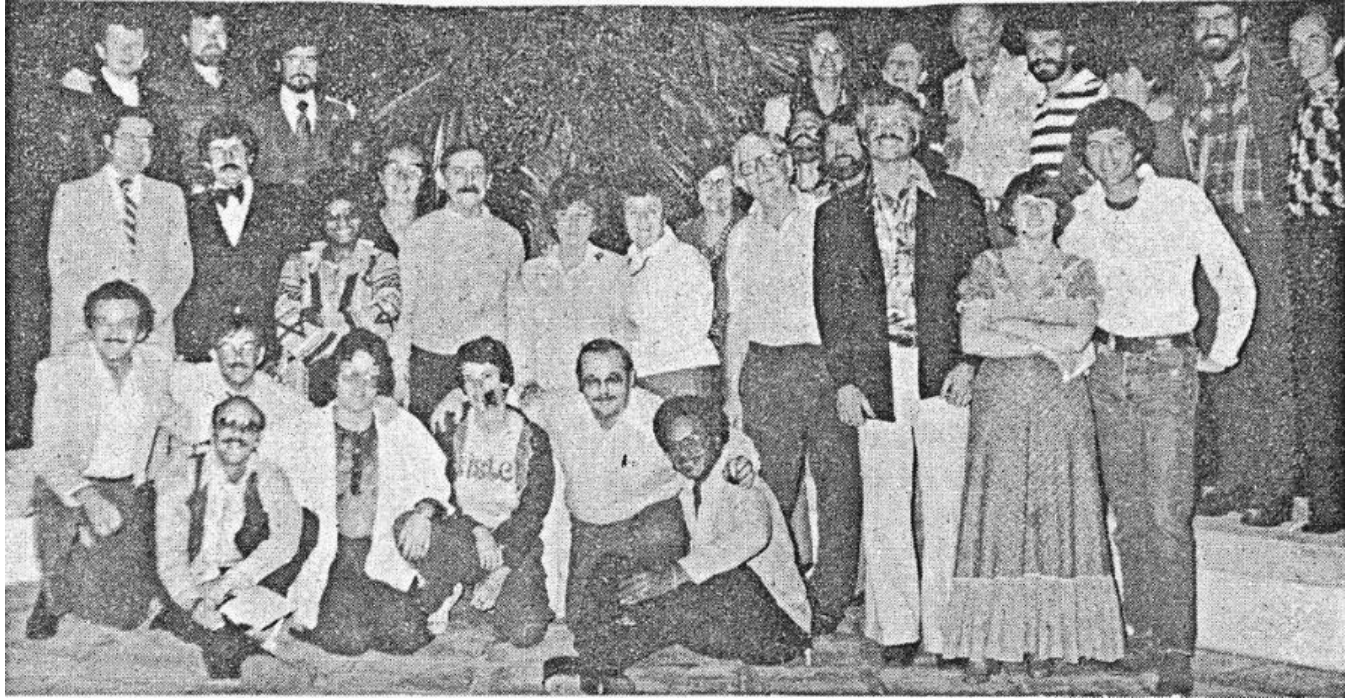
Studio One entrance, Gay Pride 1979.

Photo courtesy of: Richard "Lightman" Lindemann, discomusic.com

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Figure 13



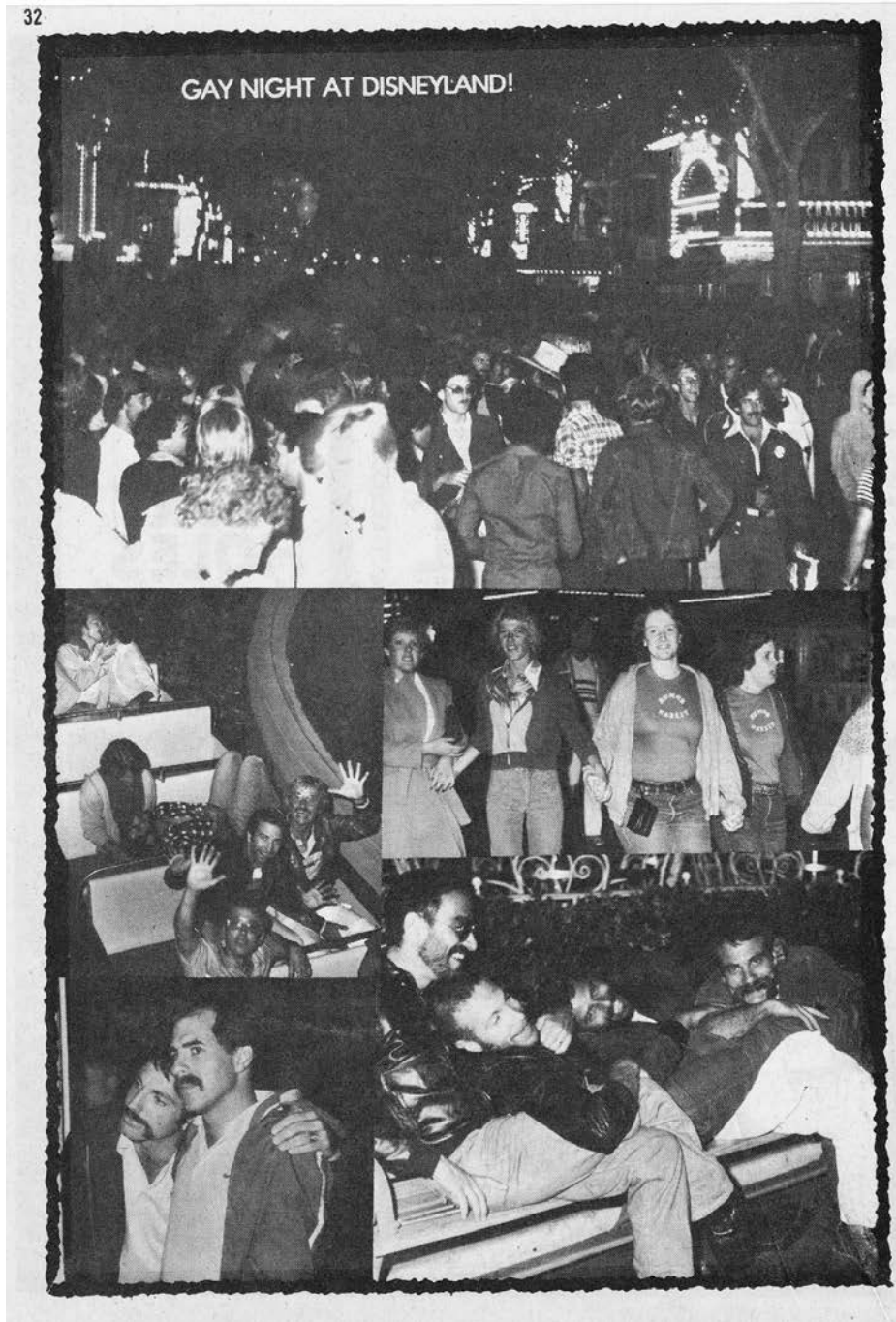
Community Advisory Board meeting of the Los Angeles Gay Community Services Center (Los Angeles LGBT Center) at Sheldon Andelson's house, 1977.

Photo courtesy of: Carol Taylor-DiPietro

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Figure 14



Gay Night at Disneyland, May 24, 1978. Photo spread likely from Data-Boy.

Photo courtesy of: Carol Taylor-DiPietro

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Figure 15



The Backlot Theatre set up for an evening show, circa 1980.

Photo courtesy of: Jude Edwards, discomusic.com

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Figure 16



Scott Forbes standing on the Studio One dance floor before opening in 1974.
Photo courtesy of: Jack Wheeler

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Figure 17



Joan Rivers' publicity poster for AIDS benefit at the Backlot, 1984.

Photo courtesy of: Dan Morin

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Figure 18

STUDIO MODEL CAMERA RECORD

IM - Name # 37 line # 20

BNC-1	8-17-34	Samuel Baldwyn, Inc. Fred. 1970 Camera Service
BNC-2	8-6-35	Samuel Baldwyn, Inc. Fred. 1970 Camera Service
BNC-3	12-6-40	Universal Pictures Inc. by J. King 7/54
BNC-4	1-8-41	Universal Pictures Inc. (London) 1-918
BNC-5	3-15-38	Hanner Bros Pictures Inc.
BNC-6	4-15-38	Hanner Bros Pictures Inc.
BNC-7	4-29-38	Hanner Bros Pictures Inc.
BNC-8	5-13-38	Hanner Bros Pictures Inc.
BNC-9	6-2-38	Hanner Bros Pictures Inc. England
BNC-10	6-10-38	Hanner Bros Pictures Inc. England
BNC-11	7-15-38	Hanner Bros Pictures Inc. England
BNC-12	7-6-38	Hanner Bros Pictures Inc.
BNC-13		No 7 1/40E
BNC-14	8-3-38	Hanner Bros Pictures Inc.
BNC-15	9-15-38	Hanner Bros Pictures Inc.
BNC-16	5-16-39	Selynick International Pictures Inc.
BNC-17	6-17-39	Universal Pictures Co. by
BNC-18	4-2-39	Motion Picture Camera Supply Co. Anthony
BNC-19	7-10-39	Universal Pictures Co. Inc.
BNC-20	10-10-39	Samuel Baldwyn, Inc. Mark Armistead
BNC-21	4/26/46	General Service
BNC-22	5/26/46	General Service
BNC-23	8/21/46	Hal Roach
BNC-24	12/21/46	Pacific International Corp.
BNC-25	9/6/46	Natl. Film Board (Up to 1946) 7/65
BNC-26	8/21/46	Solomon Salomon (NCA Corp)
BNC-27	11/27/46	Fogalphy, Ltd.
BNC-28		
BNC-29	10/4/46	Republic Productions
BNC-30	1/7/47	Skirball Manning Inc. & Jo Valentine
BNC-31	12/13/46	Queral Educational Film Corp. 1947 7/65
BNC-32	1/7/47	Queral Educational Film Corp. 1947 7/65

Camera Record of BNCs sold between 1934 – 1946. Note: BNCs sold in 1947 were likely made at the West Hollywood factory.

Photo courtesy of: Douglas Denoff

Mitchell Camera Corporation Factory/Studio
One Disco-Backlot Theatre
Name of Property

Los Angeles CA
County and State

Figure 19



On the set of Citizen Kane, Orson Welles leans on Mitchell BNC-2 while cinematographer Gregg Toland talks to the crew, 1940.

Photo courtesy of: RKO

Mitchell Camera Corporation Factory/Studio
One Disco-Backlot Theatre

Name of Property

Los Angeles CA

County and State

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.